**Text: Courageous strategy needed for youth employment**

Unemployment, especially among South Africa’s youth, is an albatross around our economy’s neck and prospects for national development. Lack of jobs and opportunities also create a sense of hopelessness for the future and is a driver of crime and violence.

While the ANC-led government has made a difference in the lives of our people by delivering the most basic services, even when the country had its highest Gross Development Production (GDP) growth in the mid2000s, it could not turn this growth into sustained job creation nor significantly decrease unemployment.

Since then, the jobless rate and our inability to create new work has worsened, with South Africa reaching an all-time high of 35.3% in the last quarter of 2021. This number has improved marginally to 32.9% for the third quarter of this year.

The youth continue to bear the brunt of unemployment as the jobless rate among youngsters is much higher than the national average. The latest figure from statistics shows that the jobless rate is 45.5% for those aged 15 and 34 years. South Africa continues to rank among the highest in the world on youth unemployment.

This situation is a powder keg waiting to explode. There are numerous reasons for this crisis, ranging from an education system that does not give youngsters the right skills for our job market, to the country’s focus on capital-intensive projects that do not generate enough work for unskilled youth.

**ANC Deputy President Paul Mashatile**