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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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**REMARKS BY PREMIER LAZARUS KAGISO MOKGOSI
ON THE
ANNOUNCEMENT
OF THE
NORTH WEST NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION RESULTS
VENUE: CITY OF MATLOSANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY
DATE: TUESDAY, 14 JANUARY 2025
TIME: 10:00**

Programme Director,

MEC for Education, Ms Viola Motsumi,

The Executive Mayor of Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality, Cllr Nikiwe Num

The Executive Mayor of City of Matlosana Local Municipality, Cllr Fikile Mahlope

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal of North West University, Prof. Bismark Tyobeka

The Acting Superintendent-General of the Department of Education,

Senior Management of the Department of Education,

Association of School Governing Bodies,

The Representatives of Umalusi,

The Principals, Educators, Learners and parents here this morning,

The leadership of all recognized labour unions,

Leaders of Faith-based organizations

The North West House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders, Kgosi Thari Maotwe

Members of the Media,

Bagaetsho dumelang,

Programme Director, I am indeed privileged and honored to be part of this important occasion which heralds the beginning of a new chapter for our learners.

This journey which started twelve years ago signify the resilience that has been demonstrated by our learners, teachers, school governing bodies, government officials, faith-based organizations and our traditional leadership in the realization of this important milestone.

These results further give impetus to the enormous work that our government has carried out since the advent of democracy to change the educational landscape of our country for the benefit of all and in particular the previously marginalized and economically disenfranchised.

Bagaetsho, one cannot deny a fact that the Basic Education Act in the past was based on discriminatory policies which perpetuated inequalities in the education system.

In addressing this historical injustice, a new education act was needed to offer a better life and equal opportunities to all, irrespective of race, class, gender or creed.

It is for this reason that the country's democratic constitution in its preamble emphasizes the need to heal the inequalities and divisions of the past by building a society based on democratic values and this includes education.

The BELA Act which was recently signed into law by His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa adheres to a fundamental constitutional principle aimed at ensuring that access to free basic education is guaranteed to all children.

One key aspect that the Act seeks to achieve is the inclusion of Grade R as compulsory schooling under the South African Schools Act.

This is to ensure equitable access to education for all children.

Furthermore, this Act is aimed at revising the admission and language policies of schools by transferring decision-making authority from School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to the Head of Department (HOD).

This change was necessitated by instances of discriminatory admission practices observed in some schools.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we reflect on these milestones which also encapsulates the 70th celebration of the adoption of the Freedom Charter, we are reminded of the resolve of our forebears who in 1955 at Kliptown proclaimed that;

“The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall be Opened!” and that **“South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White”**.

Therefore, our duty is to ensure that through education we teach the youth to love their country, preserve our cultures and heritage, be ethical and be of service to humanity.

It is this through the spirit of **Ubuntu-Botho** that our country became a miracle nation.

By putting emphasis on peace on reconciliation we were able to forge a new nation based on democratic principles.

Our duty is to live up to these ideals by ensuring that education is free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children particularly in communities that are vulnerable to poverty and unemployment due to our skewed past.

The ongoing reconstruction of our economy of our social fabric and the development of our people remain meaningless if we don't centre our objectives in educating our youth.

Programme Director, on this important occasion we are inspired by the fortitude and determination of Professor Zacharia Keodirelang Matthews, a Morolong man from humble beginnings whose father was a mineworker and a mother who was a domestic worker.

An astute academic who defied the odds and became the first black person to obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree at a South African institution.

Professor Z.K as affectionately known, changed the course of history by conceiving the 1955 Congress of the People and its guiding document, the Freedom Charter.

Today we rest on the shoulders of revolutionary giants like Professor Z.K who through their efforts championed the political and socio-economic rights of all South Africans.

I am definitely sure that the founding father of our democratic dispensation Tata Nelson Mandela who was equally a student of Professor Z.K at Fort Hare University had his mentor in mind when succinctly averred;

“The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation”.

Programme Director, our nation building project which has put education as an apex is now yielding desired results.

In 1996 the country’s matric results stood at just above fifty-six percent (56 %) and is currently sitting at just over eighty percent (87%), the highest matric pass rate since the country’s democratic breakthrough.

Our province finds itself in a similar growth path having improved by six percent (6%) from 81.6 % in 2023 to 87.5 % in 2024.

Programme Director, as we reflect on the journey we have traversed in the past thirty years we need to be comforted with the fact that our education system is better than it was at the advent of our democratic breakthrough.

Upon realizing that hundreds of learners walk long distances to schools, we introduced a transport system aimed at making sure that learners do not miss a single day of learning and teaching.

To date this programme benefits over fifty-three thousand (53 000) learners at the cost of four hundred and fifty million rand (450m).

Coupled with this is the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) which benefits over seven hundred fifty thousand (**750 000**) learners at over one thousand three hundred (**1 300**) schools across the province with a budget of over six hundred and forty million (**640M**) rand.

Given the high levels of poverty and unemployment, with the latter hovering around fifty-one percent (51%) we must look at the possibility of introducing breakfast at all deserving schools to cushion our learners against this socio-economic conundrum.

Poverty as Nelson Mandela once opined **“is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. And overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life”**.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is these intervention measures which enabled us to improve our performance in our township and rural schools and in particular non-paying schools.

What is also comforting is to see designated groups such as female learners and people with disabilities obtaining remarkable results in these examinations, with the school for the deaf cited as one of the most improved schools, obtaining a sixty-six percent pass rate as compared to zero percent in 2023.

Of concern however, is how young girls are exposed to various socio-economic ills such as statutory rape, teenage pregnancy and the **“blesser phenomenon”**.

The economic challenges bedeviling our developmental trajectory largely affects poor African women.

Unfortunately, this has trickled down to our girl children.

Therefore, a multifaceted approach comprising of leaders of faith-based organizations, the House Traditional and Khoi-San leaders, Civil Society, Labour Unions and Youth formations is needed to nip this social ill in the bud.

Bagaetsho, today marks a new beginning to some of our learners who will be enrolling for various academic programmes at various institutions of higher learning.

Understanding the socio-economic needs of our learners from poor and disadvantaged communities we have set aside ten million rand through the Victor Thebe Sifora Bursary Fund in academic programmes such as engineering, tourism, sign language, film and television, veterinary science and radiography among others.

Bagaetsho, for learners who did not make it, this is not the end of the world. Through TVET Colleges government has initiated academic programmes streamlined to enable our learners obtain qualifications equivalent to Grade 12 and beyond.

Moreover, the National Financial Aid Scheme which has been converted into a full bursary is primarily targeted at learners from poor and disadvantaged households.

Equally NSFAS has initiated a funding model for students normally defined as a “missing middle.”

The missing middle debacle has been a thorny issue for some time and dominated headlines during the famous “**Fees Must Fall**” movement hence this intervention.

Dear learners your journey towards find lasting solutions to challenges confronting our province starts today.

Upon completion of your studies we expect you to be exemplary in changing the economic misfortunes of our province through your qualifications, the skill that you would have acquired and selflessness.

We expect you to be of service to humanity like Professor Z.K and Nelson Mandela did during the dark days of Apartheid and racial exclusion.

In conclusion let me leave you with the words of Lutheran theologian Reinhold Niebuhr when he says: “**God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time. Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace. Taking, as he did, the sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Trusting that he will make all things right. If I surrender to His will; that I may be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely happy with Him forever**”.

I thank you!