

**Speech to be delivered by the Honourable MEC for Education,
Mrs. Reginah Mhaule at the Occasion of the Official Handover
of Batlagae Primary School on 26 March 2014.**

Programme Director, Mr. Harrison Mashabela

**The Executive Mayor of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, Cllr. M
Masina**

Mr. Crause Mabudafhasi Executive Director, Vuna Mining Enterprises

Mr. D Matlou, Executive Director Corrobrick PTY LTD

Mr. Musa Ntshangase, Executive Director Corrobrik

Mr. Ben Nolan, Vuna Mine Manager

**District Director Mr. JJ Mabena and Members of Senior Management
from the Department of Education**

Mr. A Moukangwe, Chairperson of the SGB

Representatives from Vuna Mining Enterprises

Representatives from Corrobrik

Departmental Officials

Sanibonani,

I take this opportunity to extend our profound appreciation of your setting aside some of your most important activities to attend to this event.

As the Mpumalanga Department of Education, we have over the years been saying that education is a societal phenomenon and that every citizen of the country should partner with government towards the success of the education system and the smooth educational progress for our children and learners.

We have gathered here to epitomise the interests that Vuna Mining Enterprises (Pty) Ltd and Corobrik (Pty) Ltd take in the moving forward of the nation through education. The official hand over of

Batlagae Primary school to the school community of Doornkop marks a milestone in the history of the development of the people of South Africa in general and particularly the community of Doornkop in Middelburg.

I am really thrilled by the positive developments that transpired as a result of the corporate social Investment programme driven by Vuna Mining Enterprises (Pty) Ltd and Corobrik (Pty) Ltd to the Mpumalanga Department of Education. These patriotic acts of social investment feed into emotions of hope and confidence for the future prosperity of our kids and learners. It affirms the fact that as a Nation we are indeed moving forward.

As the late Former President Mandela once said, "***Any society which does not care for its children is no nation at all.***" I am thus glad that your CSI programmes which cater for the labour sending areas resonate well with the words of the founding father of our democracy.

Gratitude to VUNA

On behalf of the people and the Mpumalanga Provincial Government, I express our deepest gratitude for your consideration of the interests of the local communities with regards to their educational and socio-economic development.

The construction of Batlagae Primary School is at its best a legacy programme that contributes towards improving the quality of education by upgrading the required school infrastructure, not

addressed or partly addressed by the Department of Educations' whole school transformation plan.

I am thus thrilled that the construction of the new eleven (11) classrooms and one (1) admin office is part of the Vuna Social Labour Plan to implement a range of local economic development and human resource development programmes within the local labour sending community.

I am also informed that these programmes include amongst others the Academic Upgrade Programme as well as Whole School Transformation which has translated into the adoption of Middleburg Combined School in Nazret, Middleburg and Batlagae Primary School in Doornkop.

The Mpumalanga Department of Education expresses its gratitude to Corobrik Ltd for the donation of the bricks to construct the school that would house more than 900 learners in an environment that is conducive for teaching and learning.

Let me also express our gratitude to all persons and organisations involved in the establishment of this project from the onset. In this instance, our gratitude also goes to the Doornkop Property Association, Dr. Bham, Mr. Caswell Pokwana and the Circuit Manager, Mr. Tonga who were instrumental in ensuring that the land upon which the school is built is secured for the project to succeed.

Significance of Enhanced School Infrastructure

It will be appreciated therefore that this kind of school infrastructure translates into enhanced learner performance and of course outstanding results.

Of significance would be a situation where the Doorkop community takes ownership of Batlagae primary school, protect it jealously so and ensure that vandalism, stealing of school property and burglary do not occur.

If it happens, our communities must report such incidents as well as the perpetrators to the nearest law enforcement agencies for the rule of law to take its course.

Schools are centres for community growth and development and warrant communities to value and safeguard them all the time.

A Call to Parents and Learners

The Department of Education will appreciate that learners who are in our schools understand and appreciate that the only reason for them to be at school is for them to learn and empower themselves academically, socially and otherwise.

Our learners should be taught to respect their teachers and to adhere to the rules of their respective schools.

Our parents should participate and get involved in school matters all the time and encourage their children to study and do their homework everyday.

Our teachers need to be supported consistently to render quality teaching and learning and should by all means possible be in class teaching, enthusiastic about their work all the time.

I call these basic fundamentals and share a view that if we can implement them, half of the problems we are facing in education will be resolved.

Conclusion

As I draw close to the conclusion of my speech, let me speak directly to the learners. My children, you are getting a beautiful school and that is the best thing that can ever happen to you. I want you to know that Vuna, Corrobrik and the Mpumalanga Department of Education are associated with good achievers, please do not disappoint us. This is your school, look after it for years to come. You will use it to educate your children in the future. Use this glorious opportunity to learn and focus on your studies as the ball is now in your court to produce good and excellent results.

The building of the physical school infrastructure has remedied the lack of warmth and electrical energy that existed in the past. All this is done by Vuna for the advantage and well being of our learners. Let me remind parents and learners that there could be no greater love than what Vuna Mining Enterprises PTY LTD has demonstrated to this community.

Your goodwill goes a long way and cannot be left without appreciation. We deeply appreciate the willingness with which you came on board without any hesitation.

Allow us to extend our warmest regards towards the growth and endless success for your organizations.

We are looking forward to more collaboration and partnership between the Mpumalanga Department of Education, Vuna Mining Enterprises and Corrobrik in the future.

Nelson Mandela once said:

“Education is the great engine of personal development.

It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation.

It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another”

On this note, I want to thank you and say that this is but one of our good stories to tell as the Department of Education in partnership with Vuna Mining Enterprises and Corrobrik.

Indeed, as articulated by government, *Today is better than yesterday and tomorrow will be better than today. Working together we can do more.*

I see light at the end of the tunnel.

Thank You.