

Speech to be Delivered at the Occasion of the official Handover of Tsakane Special School on 16 October 2014

**Programme Director and Head of Department, Mrs Mahlasedi
Mhlabane**

**MEC for the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport, Mrs
Danisile Nhlengethwa**

**Executive Mayor of Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, Cllr Reinus
Khumalo**

Chairperson of the School Governing Body, Mr Kenneth Khumalo

Counsellors present

**Head of Department for the Department of Public Works, Roads and
Transport, Mr SK Mohlasedi**

Members of Senior Management

District Director of Bohlabela District, Ms Lorraine Goba

District Officials

Principal of Tsakane Special School, Mrs Mnisi

Circuit Managers

Educators

Learners

Representative from the media

Ladies and gentlemen,

Sanibonani

We are delighted that the day for the official handover of the first state of the art special school within the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality has come to fruition to.

Tsakane Special School 's coming to being confirms the commitment of government not only to improve teaching and learning but also to improve the lives of our people. This hand over event also qualifies our vision of a better South Africa where everyone will prosper through education.

It bears testimony to the fact that nothing can or must hinder anyone from attaining an education in this country and in this case not even physical disability.

This is a kind of a school that invokes emotions when you look at it. Tears floods one's eyes because of the fact that it can only be made possible by a caring government and a democratic dispensation inspired by meeting the special needs of its people.

The existence and handover event of Tsakane Special School instills a sense of pride and belonging in a person's inner being and propels everyone to look forward to a next day with dignity.

This is a kind of a school that conforms to what the ruling party in government, the African National Congress has been saying all along that there is a good story to tell.

We take pride in that we lived to witness and enjoy such benevolence from our government with the community of Bohlabela and we derive joy and get fulfilled that this is not something we read about from the history books but is what we have all contributed towards its realization.

Parents who have learners who require special attention will henceforth be contend and sleep peacefully knowing that just next door there is a center of excellence which will make their dreams and that of their children possible.

Mpumalanga Province has 17 institutions catering for learners with special needs and Tsakane Special School marks the 18th one. We are indeed

encouraged by this development because we appreciate the value and significance of having such an institution at our door step.

Our view is that poverty and hopelessness including ignorance will be a thing of the past in this community thanks to the advent of schools including the Tsakane Special School which we are handing over today.

We call this a special school because it caters for high to intense levels of support, severe intellectually or multiple disabilities for learners between the ages of 7 and 18.

Disabilities referred to here are:

- Physical disabilities (physically disabled, cerebral palsy)
- Sensory disabilities (hard of hearing, partially sighted, blind, deaf)
- Neurological disabilities (epileptic)
- Cognitive disabilities (severe intellectually and profoundly intellectually disabled) and
- Pervasive developmental disorders (autistic)

Those Learners who qualify to be enrolled here need to be supported at all times by our communities and their parents.

This school will follow the national curriculum statement (adapted according to the needs of the learners) and presents the following pre-vocational skills:

- needlework
- cooking
- gardening
- weaving
- beadwork
- office practice
- house keeping
- car wash
- arts and crafts
- nail & beauty care

I wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all of you who played a pivotal role to bring such an institution of note to realization. My

colleague from the Department of Public, Works, Roads and Transport and your entire team thank you very much.

I know the Executive Mayor must be the happiest person in town today, we are aware that you needed from time to time to make a stop around here to monitor on our behalf if things were moving in the right direction, thank you so much to you and your team.

I do not wish to single any one out as I express my appreciation because I may end up omitting some very important ones.

Chairperson of the School Governing Body, Mr. Chunweane, I wish that you can work together with this community to ensure the safe keeping of this school as well as the learners. Give these children all the love, care and support at all times.

In so doing you will be adding impetus to the quest of government to realize its 2030 vision as espoused in the National Development Plan.

On Grade 12 Learners

We are also mindful that as we speak today, the grade 12 learners are only left with 11 days before they start writing their final examinations. I request that we support them as well and all our learners this time around.

Tomorrow, all Grade 12 learners are expected to sign a pledge that they will adhere to the rules and regulations of this important examinations. This will assist in ensuring that we manage an incident free and credible examination process. The results will be announced on 06 January 2015.

The Department has taken a decision that any learner who is disabled who will pass the grade 12 examination will automatically receive a bursary from the department.

In conclusion

This school represents a true legacy of our democracy and hard won freedom. It must forever be a beacon of hope for all our communities.

The founding father of our democracy the late Dr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela summed this up as says:

“The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement. Let freedom reign. God Bless Africa”.

Ngiyabonga.