

Speech delivered by the MEC for Education, Mrs. Reginah Mhaule at the occasion of the official handover of Sibongamandla S School Infrastructure Project on 24 March 2015.

The Executive Mayor of Emalahleni Local Municipality; **Cllr Salome**

Sithole

Speaker of Emalahleni Local Municipality

Members of the Mayoral Committees

Councilors

Political Structures present

Representatives of Anglo American Coal South Africa led by **Mr. Themba**

Masondo

Representatives of Anglo American Inyosi Coal led by **Ms. Yoli Balfour**

Representatives of Kriel Colliery led by **Mr. Bonke Ntimane**

Members of Senior Management

Members of the District Management Team

Circuit Managers

Members of the School Governing Body

Parents

Principals

Educators

President of the RCL;

Learners

Representatives from the Media

The Community of Emalahleni Local Municipality

Distinguished Guests

The Provincial Police Brass Band Members,

Sanibonani

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to address this gathering. We feel humbled and privileged indeed to be part of and to officiate in this august occasion.

What gives us contentment is that this occasion is co-inciding with the celebration of Human Rights Month. The donation of this school infrastructure by Anglo American is adding impetus on our quest to ensure that the doors of leaning and culture are open to all as espoused in the freedom charter as we are celebrating **60** years of its existence.

The Department of Education and Anglo American are enjoined by the desire and determination to improve the potential of every citizen by ensuring that their right to basic education is fulfilled.

There cannot be any better way to display that determination than what has been done here at Sibongamandla.

Indeed Sibonga Amandla we Anglo American and their partners for their visionary leadership and foresight that made this project of note to come to fruition.

Today and through this infrastructure our children will be able to excel in Mathematics and Physical Science and be able to demystify the myth that these subjects are difficult.

They will be able to make the prophets of doom turn in their graves, I mean those who did everything in their power to ensure that a black child especially girls are not exposed to these subjects for in their own narrow thinking a black girl's place was in the kitchen.

Of additional significance, is that this noble gesture will help us to propel the vision that is clearly articulated in the National Development Plan which is the country vehicle for growth and development.

"This plan envisions a South Africa where everyone feels free yet bounded to other; where everyone embraces their full potential, a country where opportunity is determined not by birth, but ability, education and hard work."

This means that we must reciprocate by working around the clock to make our country what it should be; *"A Country full of possibilities"*

ADDRESSING LEARNERS

My children you need not doubt yourselves because in you lies our future and South Africa's prosperity. Look around you and make the best out of what is at your disposal. Take advantage of the opportunities that are availing themselves. Know that time waits for no men and make hay while the sun shines. Know that you and only you are the custodian of your own fortune and that your future is in your hands.

Government and Anglo American have already created an enabling environment for you to excel in everything you do. Be appreciative by focusing on your studies and by inculcating in you the desire to be the best amongst the best.

Those of you who are in grade 12 should always strive to be role models by doing what the community of Thubelihle can be proud of.

Please be informed that government has set aside money to ensure that those of you who pass Mathematics and Physical Science convincingly will qualify to receive a full bursary from the Provincial Government.

The bursary from the Department caters for almost everything from tuition, study material, meals, accommodation and to top it, beneficiaries will also get pocket money every month until their graduation.

In case a learner does so well in the grade 12 examinations to be part of the provincial top ten, such a learner will get a hosts of presents as a prize for the achievement. The overall best learner in the province will be presented with a brand new car on top of other prizes. This is another effort to ensure that the only challenge facing you should only be studying books and nothing else.

Your school has not disappointed with regards to the 2014 Grade 12 results for it managed to get 87.4% under the challenging conditions it was in then. Now that you have these excellent resources, we have agreed with the principal that 100% is possible.

To achieve this though, you must stay focused at all times , respect your teachers and parents, attend your classes on time and free yourselves from anything that may divert your attention such as mischief, drugs, sex and other social ills.

PARENTS

I want to take this opportunity to request parents to make this school an institution of growth and development for this community. Please protect it jealously and support the hard working teachers and the principal.

Encourage fellow parents to attend school meetings and be involved in matters of discipline of these children. Don't be on the sidelines.

Let's make sure that in the next 30 years this school will still be as beautiful as it is today.

TEACHERS

I wish to extend our deepest appreciation to teachers from this school. We have seen what you are capable of doing. I am aware that if it were not your hard work, we were not going to be telling this good story today.

Please continue to monitor our learners and never get discouraged in them because they are an investment for our country. Please unearth the talent and potential of each one of them and make them perform to the best of their abilities.

The Department will through its Teachers' development programmes continue to ensure that you benefit in more ways than one.

EXECUTIVE MAYORS AND ANGLO AMERICAN

I wish to thank my colleagues, the executive mayors for making time to grace this occasion. I have been informed that Anglo American is intending to commence with the second phase of this project. This phase as Mr. Bheki Khumalo put it, consists of the school hall and recreational facilities.

It will be prudent therefore to ensure that should the municipalities be required to come to the party by providing technical and other logistical support, we do so without hesitation.

We say so because we are aware that government alone will not be able to fulfill all the demands but working together we can indeed move South Africa forward.

Thank you once more to Anglo American and your partners for such generosity. Indeed, I am the happiest person in the country today for you have displayed that our learners matter most.

President Jacob Zuma summed it very well when presenting an eulogy during reburial of the remains of Mr. John Beaver Marks on Sunday when he said:

“We welcome as well the investment of mining companies in communities that they draw labour from. Many have built state of the art schools and other facilities in rural areas.”

On that note I wish to thank everyone who made this possible.

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Ngiyabonga.