

Speech delivered at the occasion of a Memorial Services of four fallen educators from Berbiece Primary School at Piet Rietief on the 22 July 2008

Programme Director
Members of the Executive Council
Executive Mayor of Mkhondo Municipality
Bereaved Families; Abakwa

- **Vilakazi**
- **Sithole**
- **Vutsulu**
- **Nkonde**

Members of Senior Management
Regional Management Team
Circuit Managers
Representatives of Labour Organizations
Representatives of School Governing Bodies
Principals
Religious Leaders
Educators
Media
Learner Representatives
Learners
Ladies and Gentlemen

Indeed, The Department was shocked to receive the news of the untimely passing on of the four educators of Bebiece Primary School and we are greatly saddened by this unfortunate development.

This is not only a great loss for the families, the community of Mkhondo Municipality and the school but an unfortunate setback for the whole teaching fraternity. Losing four educators at the same time deprives you the institutional memory, continuity and progress in an endeavour to deliver quality education and training to all.

The fact that these fallen son and daughters chose to make their resourcefulness and well-being available to the community of Berbice is something we should all be proud of and for that we have all the reasons to stop and pay homage to these brave fallen individuals.

Currently, there are very few educators who are prepared to teach in farm schools. This Region, I am told is hard-hit with an inadequate number of educators who are prepared to work in areas such as these. It is in that context, that we mourn and rebuke the accident that robbed us and the country of this valuable and scarce resource.

We will forever lament this tragedy because we know that the learners of Berbice Primary School and their families relied heavily on these fallen soldiers for the shaping and modeling of their future.

It is in time like these where we must all find comfort from the Holy Book, as it is the only source that should provide us with courage, hope and zeal to move forward. I therefore want all of us to get divine inspiration from Psalms 23:

***The Lord is my Shepard I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters
He restores my soul. ‘
He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.***

***Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.
I shall fear no evil, for your rod and your staff, they comfort me.***

***Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the lord forever.***

With these words we want to bid farewell to our beloved foot soldiers;
Ms Joyce Nombulelo Vilakazi;
Ms Bonisiwe Gloria Sithole;
Mrs Sithabile Maureen Nkonde and
Mr Khazamula Morries Vutsulu.

We are grateful that you have played your part, fought a good fight, brave, diligent, dedicated and patriotic in your quest to help the African Child.

Your passing on came on the eve of the Departmental Strategic Planning sessions for the next Medium Term Expenditure Framework ,and amongst other things we discussed a report on the new vision for rural schooling.

This report revealed that there is a need to develop an integrated multi-faceted plan of action for improving the quality of schooling in rural areas. It emphasised the state's commitment to social justice in all matters and especially to universal access to education for children, youth and adults living in rural areas.

It explained the complex challenges facing rural schooling as well as steps that Government and the Department needs to embark on for redress, equity and total transformation of schooling in this regard.

The Department, in that three day planning, made a commitment for the implementation of the recommendations from that report.

Our view is that educators such as these have to a greater extent laid a formidable foundation for the realization of Government's vision in improving the quality of education for all. I must emphasise that we will

forever remain joyful that we had such responsible cadres in our fraternity.

To educator unions, we know you have equally lost membership in this regard. We must work meticulously and collectively to ensure that what your members and our educators stood for is achieved. While we acknowledge that we may not be able to replace these educators, however, our view is that we can make it possible to position Berbice Primary School and all schools in this category in the pedestal for success, growth and community development.

To the families, let me say that in times like these a lot of questions may be asked. Such questions will remain a mystery and thus it is proper that we look unto God for He is the Almighty, He is the Comforter and He takes good care of the fatherless and the motherless. The love of God is without condition and endures forever. Please let us look unto God for He alone knows why.

To the learners, I want to say a good foundation has been laid by your educators. Carry on, be dedicated and disciplined in your studies and never forget the good things that your teachers taught you. Build on this foundation for the hopes and the future of the Nation is in your hands.

Once more, the Department would like to extend its profound words of condolences to the families, the school community, colleagues, friends and to all who are affected by these untimely deaths. As a Department we will continue to support you in what ever way possible.

I also want to extend our appreciation to all institutions, structures, organisations and individuals who supported the bereaved families and the school.

May the Souls of the Departed Rest in Peace!

Thank you