

Speech to be delivered by the MEC for Education at the occasion of the Education Prayer Day at Ermelo Civic Centre on 12 August 2010

Programme Directors

District Executive Mayor, Cllr Gamede

Local Executive Mayor,

Head of Department; Mrs. Mahlasedi Mhlabane

Pastors

Members of the Moral Regeneration Movement

Members of Senior Management

Circuit Managers

Parents

Educators

Teacher Formations

Ladies and Gentleman

I take this opportunity to extend my appreciation in that we have been able to gather in this manner. I want to upfront appreciate the leadership of the Moral Regeneration Movement and Pastors from all fraternities for heading to our invitation.

Education remains the only key towards making the lives of our people better. It is the only vehicle to free our communities from the bondages of hopelessness, ignorance and fear.

Without the delivery of quality education our county and people will not prosper and their emancipation will be delayed.

It is for this reason that government has put education top on its list of priorities.

Government shares a view that if there are programmes that must be leveraged to free our communities from poverty and misery, it must be education.

We can go to town on the impact and significance that education plays towards the growth and development of our communities.

It is for these reasons that government and the department in particular makes it its obligation to ensure that all structures, institutions and communities play an active and pivotal role in ensuring that there is sustainable focus to improve the delivery of education in Mpumalanga to be specific.

When the department launched the quality learning and teaching Campaign in 2008, it made it clear that there must be an ongoing effort by all interested groups and individuals to participate meaningfully on matters related to education.

Today, we are interfacing with the most influential fraternity and our collective view is that this now we are doing the right thing.

The church played a pivotal role towards ensuring that South Africa gained the freedom we are all enjoying today.

When addressing the congregants at Randburg, Johannesburg, 15 March 2009, President Jacob Zuma emphasized the significance and the role of the church on education delivery.

He said "As you are aware, we have made education a priority for the next five years. We want to promote a new culture of effective learning and teaching, and adherence to norms and standards in our education system. The church has historically played a key role in education, and we hope to receive support in the transformation of education.

Churches are the only institutions that are found in every corner of the country, even remote rural areas. The church will therefore be a key partner in our proposed rural development initiative".

It for this reason that today we are joining hands with all denominations in an effort to leverage our education system.

Let us make education work by working closely with educators, school management teams and school governing bodies.

We must work such that the intentions of the department are emphasized by the church on a continuous basis and vis a vesa.

Through the power of prayer and working together we can ensure that all children of school going age are at school learning and developing socially, culturally and otherwise.

We can ensure that schools are embraced by our communities as true centers for community development.

Working together we can ensure that all social ills such as abuse of children, sexual harassment, violence, racism, discrimination, alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancy do not find space in our schools.

We must do this because these ills are a hindrance on our quest to provide education to our children. These divert our attention from our core business which is teaching and learning.

As we pray let us ensure that the church plays a central role in rekindling acceptable value systems in all our communities. Let us make it our obligation that the good of education is talked about in all our services.

Our communities must bemoan a situation where school children will be seen in the streets during teaching and leaning ours and situation where schools are unable to produce an acceptable pass mark at the end of the year.

Schools must account to communities and at the same time communities must create an enabling environment for schools to excel in everything they do.

The success of the FIFA World Cup must be something that our schools would want to emulate and sustain.

We will not only pray and fold our arms but will work hard side by side with all education stakeholders to make education the pride of our nation.

A programme must be developed in consultation with the religious community on the extent to which they will play a meaningful role in making our schools work.

This programme must be developed in a manner that can ne measurable and sustained.

I take this time to thank all who made it to this event and those that are praying in the different parts of our province. I am delighted that the SABC has embraced this programme. The enthusiasm and excitement that is in this house must be leveraged through out the province.

I wish all of you the best of luck in everything you do.

Thank you.