

**SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT,
DR MT MASHININI AT EHLANZENI EDUCATION INDABA
24 JULY 2004 AT ELIJAH MANGO (FORMER COLLEGE OF EDUCATION)**

Programme Director
Regional Director Mr MJ Lushaba
Honorable Mayor, Mr JS Ngomane
Member of Senior Management
Mr PC Dumisa
Ms V Green
Dr L Jita
Dr KC Moloi
Representatives of stakeholders
Ladies and gentlemen

This day has been specifically set aside so that we can all come here together, consciously and purposefully with the intention to position ourselves, our energy and our commitment to improve the tactics and strategies we use to educate our people.

Programme Director, you will recall that after the 14 April 2004 general elections, a new leadership for departments and provinces was appointed by our honorable President Thabo Mbeki.

This leadership was then mandated to accelerate the implementation or realization of the contract that government and the electorate entered into.

In our case, MEC Siphosizwe Masango embarked on an extensive consultation programme. Within a month, almost all stakeholders were consulted. Above that, stakeholders were given an opportunity to reflect on the gains of 10 years of democracy within education.

What came out of these consultative meetings was that time and effort has to be set aside in a structured way for all stakeholders to position themselves on the roles they can play for the country to realize its objectives, being that of opening the doors to education to all.

You will also recall Programme Director that the President has also set out about eight priorities for Education in this financial year. One of those is that there must be no learner who should be taught under hazardous conditions.

These priorities were translated into the Policy and Budget Speech delivered on the 29TH June 2004 by the MEC.

It is the latter speech wherein he said amongst other things we need to make the Education Enterprise everybody's business.

Today we have gathered here not only because the MEC said we should, but because stakeholders from the consultative meetings also saw the need.

Talk shows were co-ordinated this week on this Indaba and I understood that the general public welcomes this initiative. Some are saying it is long overdue.

This therefore means that the outcome of this Indaba is of public interest.

As I open this sitting officially, please be mindful of this fact:

This will require us to concentrate on the issue of education at all levels and through all its forms. In particular, we will have to focus on the issue of the quality of education and training given to the young and the adults.

This Indaba must enjoin us to address issues such as our national identity and our value systems. It must help us re-write our history, our strategies and tactics and must enhance our discovery, development and encourage all of us to be true angels of change and custodians of the transformation agenda.

The idea of holding an Indaba in each region has been engineered so that participation is maximized and also to ensure that issues confined to regions are dealt with in-house. However, a Provincial Indaba will still take place on the 21 August 2004 where every thing goes according to plan. The Minister of Education and the Premier, Thabang Makwetla will attend. The recommendations from this Indaba will be consolidated and translated into a realizable action plan.

It will be fair and just that we become conscious of the priorities and resolve on better means to make sure that they are realized.

To this end, the Department of Education is making a clarion call to everyone, young and old, to play a meaningful role towards the attainment of our national vision.

**Robert Frost said,
“I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence;
Two roads diverted in a wood, and I –
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.”**

Let us therefore all commit, as Proudly South Africans, freely and openly to turn the tide around.

You may have noticed that this year in all our official letterheads, we have a footnote which reads “A people united to build a better education in our Province.”

I am humbled by your presence and I wish that we have constructive engagements throughout the day and that at the end of it all, we do not disappoint the South African public, especially people of the province of the rising sun.

This Indaba is now officially opened.

Let the interaction begin.

Mayihlome Ifunde.