

**Communications Input to be
delivered
at the Internal ABET Indaba
22 – 25 November 2004
Emnotweni Arena**

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen

First, I must extend profound words of appreciation for the opportunity given to our sub-directorate to present this input in this workshop.

This ABET Indaba should be seen in keeping with the vision of the Department, that of providing quality education to all.

By all, we include adults as it is stipulated in the Constitution of this country.

Communications, therefore, strives to promote the department's policies, programmes, achievements and constraints in a manner that is simple, clear and free from ambiguity.

I must also indicate that the Indaba takes place at the appropriate time, that time when the Department intends to consolidate the gains of freedom and democracy.

Colleagues will recall that after 1994 the focus of government was mainly policy development. Integrating the previously marginalized

structures and departments, and mobilizing all role players to actively and purposefully take a centre stage on the development of Education, was the immediate and key focus. A lot has been achieved in that area.

Currently, and for the coming five years, the vision of the department, nationally would be to focus on:

1. Quality Education for all

This will mean that there must be

- Monitoring of education outcomes
- Increased access to quality education opportunities
- Continuous impact assessment conducted
- Continuous teacher development

2. Skills Development

Meaning that:

- Further Education and Training Systems will have to be improved
- Mathematics and Science teaching and learning must be expanded
- Curriculum implementation should be improved
- Focus on Arts and language development
- Improvement of ABET programmes

3. Institutional Development

This means:

- Improvement of institutional culture and management
- Improvement of infrastructure

- Efficiency and outputs in funding and resourcing

We have been guided to focus on all efforts in order to articulate these 3 focus areas.

It is therefore imperative chairperson, that as we think of Communication endeavours regarding ABET, that must be considered in line with the mentioned broad vision.

This will greatly require that from here there must be clear commitment on:

1. How data collection mechanisms are going to be improved?
2. How internal research is going to be conducted?
3. How stakeholders' participation is going to be enhanced with special bias to big business?
4. How teacher development and conditions of service are going to be improved?
5. What constant evaluation systems are going to be put in place.

This will be necessary and will have a tremendous impact on our Communications endeavour. Remember we have committed ourselves to be free from ambiguity.

Our approach in terms of advocacy includes:

- The co-ordination of talk shows
- Issuing of press statements
- Updating the departmental website
- Developing brochures and newsletters

- Face to face interaction with our clientele
- Exhibitions
- Acknowledging outstanding performance
- Advising management on public perceptions
- Managing the toll free line
- Co-ordinating campaigns

This workshop can suggest or propose how it intends to tap from these mechanisms. I am of the opinion that you will as custodians of ABET programmes indicate your priorities for purposes of advocacy.

It must be noted that regions have fully-pledged communicators who are readily available and willing to go an extra mile to communicate government programmes.

Our political principals must find delight in our work, and where political intervention is needed, we surely will obtain such assistance we must be free to do so.

Not long ago, all sections were requested to indicate four areas which should be included in the State of the Nation address for next year.

I want to believe that we have contributed.

The Minister of Education, Ms Naledi Pandor, emphasized the need to conduct our own investigation and research. However, I want to present to this Indaba findings of research that was conducted recently by the Human Science Research Council on behalf of the Mpumalanga

Department of Health and Social Services on the experiences and needs of older persons in Mpumalanga.

It took ten most prominent needs ranging from transport, housing, safety and welfare services and so on.

Regarding: skills that require reading, writing and numeracy, its findings are as follows:

- 79% cannot read basic print
- 28% cannot work with money
- 70% cannot write their names
- 84% cannot fill in a deposit or withdrawal slip at banks and post offices

They recommend that:

1. We must review current ABET models - find innovative specific skills development.
2. Lobby with bands to run programmes to educate older people regarding the use of commercial banks.

I want to think that the above is enough emphasis on the need to move with speed regarding the ABET programmes.

