



water affairs

Department:

Water Affairs

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEAKING NOTES – MINISTER MOLEWA DURING HER SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY EVENT - SCHOOL SHOES HAND OVER CEREMONY

27 August 2013

THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

EDUCATORS

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

MEMBERS OF THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE – MALIBONGWE!

PARENTS AND LEARNERS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I would like to thank the Principal, the Educators as well as the SGB and Parents for allowing us the opportunity to share this day with you and possibly make a difference in some of the pupil's lives. I must emphasise though that my office takes pride in getting involved in initiatives of this nature as we believe that people of South Africa especially the previously disadvantaged deserve a dignified life. We take social economic development very seriously, and that should explain our involvement in this initiative.

There are many positive human developments that can only improve and better the children and parents' living conditions. Today we seek to focus on what my office calls "walk a child a mile project" as well as the plight of women and children. Providing water for the nation is still the core function of the Ministry, but it is also through initiatives such as the charity golf day and our social responsibility program,

that we would be able to contribute towards the Government's greater goals of creating employment and reducing poverty.

It is a well known historical fact that a healthy society is created through the social and economic health of its rural or underprivileged communities. It is precisely this sector which delivered to the world most of the world's great minds and heroes. Our former president Nelson Mandela and many others came out of exactly such conditions.

During my visit to the informal settlements of Hartbeespoort earlier this year, I made clear my intentions of implementing various community projects which will serve as Ministerial Community Service or Outreach Programs. On that day the focus was on resuscitating seven boreholes and making sure that our communities have clean drinking water. As we speak, the communities of Refentse and 10 Rooms are now enjoying the clean water they deserve.

The visit led to sourcing donations and sponsorships from the corporate world to dig into their social responsibility budget and offer anything no matter how little which will go a long way in offering assistance to previously disadvantaged communities.

This also gave rise to the Charity Golf Day that we held in May with the aim to assist poor rural schools and unemployed women to become economically independent. Your school was then identified as one of the beneficiary schools along with others. The proceeds generated by the Charity Golf Day and other fundraising initiatives that we intend embarking on will help me to be able to donate computers, sewing machines, over lockers, embroidery machines, gardening tools and equipment to the beneficiary schools and surrounding communities. It is not an easy process but it's worth giving it our best efforts. The charity golf day will be an annual event and can go a long way in helping us sustain the projects envisaged for the beneficiary communities.

During the day, parents will develop vegetable and fruit gardens to feed the children, and sell to the community. The idea of manufacturing school uniforms below inflation for surrounding schools also comes to mind. It will also assist unemployed parents to earn a salary and to protect the projects to make them successful. If all goes

according to our plans, we intend kick-starting the projects as early as October of this very year.

As South Africans, we come from a very dark past, however, We have got no time for excuses – not because the bitter legacies of apartheid and abuse have vanished entirely; they haven't. Not because racism and discrimination no longer exists; it is still out there. It's just that in today's hyper – competitive world, nobody is going to give you anything you haven't earned.

And whatever hardships you may experience because of your previously disadvantaged status, they pale in comparison to the hardships previous generations endured and overcame. Think of the men and women who sacrificed being with their families and were thrown in jail for opposing the unjust system of the oppressor. Think of the women who marched to the union buildings demanding respect and dignity for the women of the world. These brave women were your mothers, grandmothers and aunties. We have to continue honouring their sacrifices and keeping their names on the world map.

I want to encourage our educators to be the best they can be, our parents to be the best parents they can be, and you my children to be the best kids you can be; because nothing is more important.

Our parents who were able to be with us here today, let us remind each other that we all bear responsibility for every child, because we're counting on everybody else to help look after ours. That sense of shared responsibility will help us meet the obligation of caring for our children and our fellow citizens, and finally make us a better society.

Are we really prepared to say that we're powerless in the face of abuse to women and children? Are we prepared to say that abuse and violence experienced by our children year after year after year is somehow the price of our freedom? We know the perpetrators of violence and abuse because they live among us in our communities. Let's break the silence and report abusers to the police.

If you were successful, somebody along the line gave you some help. There was a great teacher somewhere in your life. There was a good parent or guardian somewhere in your life. Somebody helped to create the democracy we are enjoying

and that allows us to thrive. Somebody invested in roads and bridges. Somebody brought water and electricity to your homes. Those who still don't have are in the queue and their plight will be addressed soon.

Among the challenges we face in the water sector is lack of adequately skilled and trained individuals to help us in this mammoth task of providing good quality drinking water to the masses of our people. It is therefore imperative to create awareness and generate interest among you the learners of South Africa to take up courses relating to the water sector.

It is also a known fact that the country has a shortage of engineers and is faced with a challenge of dilapidated and ageing infrastructure that does not receive the necessary attention. It is of paramount importance and in the best interest of the country that we continue to move with speed in acquiring the relevant skills needed to tackle the country's water challenges.

We depend on you our learners to take up studies in the water sector and help move the country forward. We have very strong institutions that are efficient, effective, sustainable, and are waiting for you to help in the management of our water resources and around education on water management and conservation. It is advisable to stand up and find out about careers in water and choose a good life. Remember, water is life, we have to conserve it, respect it and enjoy it.

I will be failing if I don't to extend my department's sincerest thanks and gratitude to the sponsors for their generous contributions. This will be a very special day to remember and hopefully will be one to mark as the start of greater things to come.

Walking barefoot to school should stay in the past and never come back. Today I am here to give away pairs of socks and school shoes to some of you who are not lucky enough to afford such. Put your feet in and walk tall. Concentrate on your education and do your best. One renowned author once said "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step".

Let me end by emphasizing that we can make a difference by working together to achieve common prosperity, social progress and stability in our country.

I wish you great success and a very pleasant day.

Thank you.