



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
HON JEFF RADEBE, MINISTER OF ENERGY
ON THE SCHOOL ENERGY DAY AND HAND-OVER OF SCHOOL SHOES
EVENT HELD AT PORTIA SHABANGU SECONDARY SCHOOL IN
MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

01 MARCH, 2019

Programme Director: Honorable J.L Thabethe, Member of
Mpumalanga Legislature

Cllr Sibusiso Mathonsi, Executive Mayor of Mbombela Local
Municipality

Cllr Jester Sidell, Executive Mayor of Ehlanzeni District Municipality

Cllr Mandla Msibi, Speaker of Mbombela Local Municipality

School Principals

Educators

School Governing Bodies

Senior Government officials,

Distinguished learners present,

Representatives of Energy Companies,

State Owned companies,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning,

I am pleased to be here in Mbombela, my second home as part of the Department of Energy School Energy Day and go back to school campaign. As the Department of Energy, our mandate is to ensure a secure and sustainable provision of energy for socio-economic development. Energy demand in South Africa is growing and therefore requires significant investments in the sector to increase capacity.

We have chosen the School Energy Day as one of our key programmes to ensure that we empower our youths with information on the energy value chain and career opportunities the energy sector offers. This will also provide the learners with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions when choosing careers in STEM, which stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

We are meeting here today, at the time when South Africa is completely different from what it was before 1994. Our democratic government has since 1994 endeavoured to change the socio-economic landscape of our country. Challenges abound but many strides have been made.

I am humbled and grateful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors and those whose participation in the liberation struggle helped usher

in our political freedom. Our task as government is to translate this political freedom into a lived socio-economic freedom. But we can only achieve comprehensive socio-economic freedom when all of us as a people work together, be it labour, the private sector, civil society and all tiers of our government.

Our learners today, despite their vastly different social and economic contextual factors choose career paths of their choice without any hindrances. But we will emphasise STEM to enable economic growth and development. Our country has a shortage of technical skills particularly, with regards to engineers, artisans, project managers, environmentalists, technologist and other skills. These are critical skills needed to drive economic growth and social development.

You as our future professionals and leaders need to consider careers that are mostly required by the economy. I would greatly encourage you all to consider taking careers in the energy sector to help us ensure a sustainable supply of skilled workforce in the sector.

And we also know that the World Economic Forum has predicted that of the learners entering school for the first time by 2017, over 65 % of them would be in jobs that do not exist today. This is due to the advent of the 4th Industrial Revolution that promise the change the face of the global economy and how as individuals participate in it.

We are encouraged by the class of 2018 which improved the matric results to 78,2% from 75,1% in 2017. Mpumalanga Province attained 80.4%, an improvement of 3.8% from the 76.6% achieved in 2017. Government has taken note that a major obstacle for families and learners in pursuing higher education is how to pay for it. Government has made great strides in removing this barrier by making higher education fee-free for all those unable to pay for their education in South Africa. This is to ensure access of learners to higher education.

The government will continue to expand free education for students from poor and working class backgrounds to cover both first and second year students. The Fee-Free programme will be progressively rolled out further over the following years. The financial support covers tuition, accommodation, transport and study materials for qualifying students enrolled at public TVET colleges and universities.

Skills development is one of the significant solutions to close the historical inequality gap in the economy occasioned by apartheid. This intervention will make sure that we produce young black qualified engineers, project managers, energy analyst, technologist and artisans. I hope the different career opportunities in the energy sector will motivate you to be part of this sector.

As we are all consumers of energy we must ensure that we use energy in a responsible manner so that we contribute to climate change mitigation. As South Africans we need to be an energy efficient nation. We must reduce amount of energy we use by choosing energy-efficient appliances and services, and ensuring we do not waste energy. Some of the energy efficient tips include amongst others:

- a) Reduce geyser temperate to 55 degree Celsius
- b) Keep the lid closed on the pot when cooking
- c) Close the doors and windows when the heater is on
- d) Boil only the water you need instead of boiling the full kettle
- e) Switch off lights, fans, heaters, computers and TV when you leave the house
- f) Iron your clothes at the same time and
- g) Use energy efficient bulbs

These are some of the energy efficient tips you can start applying from today to become an Energy Efficiency Agent. We count on you to achieve our national goals in this regard.

The government is moving swiftly to address youth unemployment. There are a number of interventions that have been put in place to reduce unemployment amongst youths in particular. I will also encourage that young people must effectively utilize the institutions such as National Youth Development Agency. The Youth Employment Service Initiative as announced by the President last

year in 2018 is making serious strides to reduce youth unemployment.

In order to address some of the challenges affecting youth in the energy sector, the Department is drafting the Youth Policy for the Energy Sector. The policy is aimed at amongst others ensuring that:

- (a) energy sector is more accessible to youth by providing information,
- (b) strengthening partnership with role players in the energy sector to advance the youth interests;
- (c) creating conducive environment for the youth to empower themselves and exploit their potential; and
- (d) providing the mechanisms to monitor and evaluate Youth development programmes implemented by the Department and the sector;

I would like to urge you our learners and youth alike to study hard to access opportunities in the energy sector and more importantly to change our societal economic circumstances. The youth should take advantage of the training opportunities that are available to them from different sources.

The 4th Industrial Revolution is upon us. This is the moment that cannot be postponed. As the President has announced during his State of the Nation Address, the roll-out of tablets in schools will commence as soon as possible. This is the time that South Africa

becomes competitive in introducing technology in the classrooms. This is the initiative that our communities must support and safeguard.

As a caring government, today we are donating 500 pairs of school shoes to our learners who come from disadvantaged households and families. The shoes have been donated by the Central Energy Fund, our State Owned Company. These shoes will give dignity to our learners. CEF has also established a scholarship programme. The CEF group will give you details so that you can apply in the future.

Allow me to thank all stakeholders who participate in moulding learners into the adults that will inherit this country. Teachers play a crucial role in the life of every nation. I therefore urge all learners to respect them and cooperate with them in their duty to impart knowledge that will help you as learners for the rest of your life. I am able to read today because a teacher taught me how to read and write. Allow me to thank the principals, teachers, SGB's and community representatives who are here today to lend a hand as all of us say thuma mina ezizweni. Thuma mina to help educate the youth of our country to create a better nation!

I thank all our learners, presenters, educators, partners and exhibitors who have supported this initiative.

I thank you!