



**MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE  
DEPUTY MINISTER OF MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY  
DR NOBUHLE NKABANE (MP)**

**CAREER EXPO**

**Ivuna Community Hall, Nongoma Local Municipality**

**23 February 2024**

Programme Director,

Deputy Ministers

Mayor of the Nongoma Local Municipality,

Principals and Teachers

Leadership of School Governing Bodies

Representatives of various government departments

Representatives of various mining companies, and other industries

Greetings to all learners

It is with a great sense of honour and privilege for me to have **visited the 3<sup>rd</sup> school** since the start of this academic year and **engaged directly with learners from over 10 schools** in three provinces: Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape, and now, my home province, KwaZulu Natal.

As we meet here now, we started by **visiting Ivuna High School** as part of our **outreach programme** whose intended purpose is to **encourage and motivate** learners and teachers as they start this academic year and **pledge our support** to the class of 2024.

This programme is anchored on government's **unwavering commitment to opening the doors of learning for everyone.**

We do this because **we value the future of this country.** We appreciate that you – our Tintswalos – are the **“the future of our nation”** as concisely defined by the late Isithwalandwe/Seaparankoe, President Oliver Tambo who further said, **“A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children, does not value its future”.**

We know that if we fail to empower you with the necessary information, we would be betraying our future, hence government remains committed to programmes such as this.

We are joined by **experts in various career fields** who will **arm you with information** required for you to better shape your future and empower you to **meet your daily challenges boldly, creatively, and efficiently.**

There can be no ambiguity in saying **education is a key to success**, and that it is **“the most powerful weapon which can be used to change the world”** as succinctly described by another Isithwalandwe/Seaparankoe, President Nelson Mandela.

Informed by the foresight and directives of these late stalwarts of our movement – President Tambo and Mandela, this **government has** for the past 30 years **invested huge efforts and resources** to expanding basic services to millions of the people of South Africa.

The story of Tintswalo as narrated by President Cyril Ramaphosa in the State of the Nation Address, tells the reality of South Africa today. Millions of South Africans have access to **no-fee school education**, free healthcare, access to clean water, electricity, housing, and income support through social security net.

Yes, we still have **enormous challenges** which we must confront and do away with collectively, however, the fact remains that the **lives of the people of South Africa have changed for the better.**

Reality of the matter is that, over the last 30 years, millions of **young people have benefitted** from government’s **transformative programmes** that seek to build a nation of **skilled, informed, and resilient young people.**

Today, nearly **every young person** of school going age **is literate**, over **9 million** of which **attend school at no-fee schools** and **receive a meal daily**. This is in direct contrast to the apartheid government which deprived the people of South Africa the right to education.

Notwithstanding the **school nutrition challenges** in the recent past, particularly in this province, and **transport related challenges** faced by many children in far-flung areas, I am certain that many of you can attest that **government has done well** in the **expansion of, and support for, Early Childhood Care**. I can assure you that the government, which I am part of, will **continue to effect improvements** in these areas.

Programme director, at the centre of our meeting today, is **to inculcate appropriate knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes** that are necessary for the development of these learners.

It is in this context that we continue to promote programmes that seek to encourage young people to take **science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)** subjects and make future career choices that are aligned with the development of our nation.

Understanding that learners from poor and working class background could not afford tertiary education due to poor economic status of their households, this government invested efforts and resources to provide access to tertiary education for all. This was enabled by a number of interventions, at the centre of which was the introduction of the National School Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), which today benefits **no less than 700 000 students**, marking a significant increase from the 580 000 recorded in 2018.

Fact of the matter is that these interventions have ***enhanced the quality of life and dignity of the people*** of South Africa and have made ***South Africa a much better place to live in*** today than it was pre-democracy.

Working together as ***government, school governing bodies, teachers, learners, and communities***, we have it within our power to provide quality education which will enable these learners to become future leaders who will transform our country into a prosperous nation that is democratic, non-racial, and non-sexist.

Let me conclude and say, forward to ***equitable access to education for all***.

***I thank you.***