

Speech delivered by Acting Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality Cllr Mathukha R at Vhembe District grade 12 Excellence Awards held at Redeeming Showers of Grace Church on Sunday the 27th January 2019 at 09h00.

The Mayor of Thulamela Municipality Cllr Tshifhango A
All Councillors
District Director Dr Rambiyana and Mr Ravhuanzwo
Circuit Managers
Teachers Unions
Principals, Educators, SGB and Learners
Representatives of Government Departments
Representatives of Faith based organisations
Leadership of Business community
SANCO leadership
All invited guests

Education continues to be our number one priority. The ANC government has made great strides in ensuring that education and training is available to all and in addressing the injustices of the past. Focusing on reversing the systematic impact of apartheid, Government has put in place a comprehensive and integrated education system.

Our country spends about 5% of its budget on basic education and 1.4 % on higher education. National Development Plan has also identified education as a most important priority and urges government to direct and invest more resources on education and training. South Africa is currently facing serious technical and accounting skills deficiencies.

Programme directors

Once more again the people of Vhembe have gathered here today to celebrate their achievements. For many years, we as a district continued to lead the Province, make significant and noticeable contributions at a national level. Our district is a home of many well-known academics and excels in various aspects of life. The secret of our district is that we take education seriously and prioritise it.

Let me take this opportunity on behalf of 1.5 million people of Vhembe to thank the District Directors Dr Rambiyana and Mr Ravhuanzwo for their tireless efforts in ensuring that Vhembe is always producing better results in our Province. Together with their Circuit Managers, Principals, Educators, Teachers Unions, Learners, SGBs, Parents and other stakeholders they have made us proud.

Since from 2011 Vhembe remain the pride of our Province, It is important to note that for the past eight years the district is performing above both the provincial and national pass percentages. All these achievements are as a result of hard work and commitment. Our district is amongst the top ten districts in the country. Therefore it is evident that schools coming from poor communities are demonstrating good performances which will be harnessed in the coming years. The notion that the schools from the more elite communities are propping up the pass rate it is therefore invalid.

Programme director, Vhembe is one of the poorest districts in our country but continued to produce better results than many developed districts of our country. Vhembe has demonstrated that success is not determined by the geographical location and the background of your area but it is all about hard work and commitment. With all the challenges and the obstacles mostly created by the historical imbalances of the past, our district has emerged and managed to produce a best learners, schools and circuits in our Province. Let me take this opportunity to highlight some of the district achievements; Three schools out of ten best schools in the province are from our district which is Mbilwi,

Tshivhase and Thengwe. In the category of top twenty schools in our province 7 are from Vhembe. What is also encouraging in our district is that good and quality results are produced by historically disadvantaged and rural based public schools and this is against the national trend. Other districts are being boosted by Former Model C schools and private schools. Our task as leadership is to ensure that we mobilise community to have confidence and support the leadership of our various schools. A top learner who represented the Province at National Level came from our district, at Thengwe Secondary School and her name is Khaarendwe Mudzielwana who makes us proud.

It is also pleasing to note that our learners are taking mathematics and physical science seriously. We have noticed tremendous improvements in both mathematics and physical science. Many of our learners have obtained distinction in mathematics and have also obtained distinction in physical science.

Programme director, since 1994 our government has invested more resources in ensuring that education is accessible to all South Africans irrespective of race and gender. The commitment of our government is guided by the belief of our former President Nelson Mandela "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world".

The intention of our government is to ensure that higher education should be accessible to all irrespective of financial status or background. To realise this commitment National Government has increased the budgets of National Student Financial Aid Scheme to more than **R9 billion** to meet the rising demand. All Provincial government departments have also set aside funds for bursary relevant to their mandate.

In supporting the efforts of both Provincial and National Government, Vhembe District Municipality has set aside R 3 million annually to

support the needy learners from the disadvantaged families. From its inception in 2008 to 2018, the bursary has assisted more 700 learners. Just two days before this event we have awarded bursary to 60 first year students and more than 39 students for second and third year's students.

We have noticed the emergence of a new culture in our communities that need to be dealt with it by all of us. This tendency of disturbing lessons whenever there is an issue in the community must come to an end. Learners must be given an opportunity to learn without any disturbances. We have witnessed such occurrences in some of the villages. Why when there is a municipal issue and matters related to ritual murders people always prevent learners to learn. We are urging the leadership of SANCO to make pledge that there will be no lessons disruptions under their watch.

Let me conclude by congratulating all the winners. Let me assure that next year awards will be more prestigious in terms of prices. We will mobilise more resources for the awards.

I thank you