

**SPEECH BY LIMPOPO MEC FOR EDUCATION ISHMAEL KGETJEPE
AT THE OFFICIAL HANDOVER OF MULTI-MEDIA CENTRE AT
MOUNTAIN VIEW HIGH SCHOOL, 22 OCTOBER 2016, MANKWENG
UNIT B, POLOKWANE, LIMPOPO**

Programme director

General Manager, MTN SA Foundation

District director

Circuit Manager

SGB Members

Principal of the school

Educators and learners

Community of Mankweng

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Programme director, at this auspicious occasion, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the MTN Foundation for providing support and kind assistance to establish a specifically customized state-of-the art multimedia center at this school. We equally applaud our learner, Khutso Mamabolo, whose passion for community service, at his age, is something so admirable. In fact his courage reminds us of the words of an American Statesman, John Quincy Adams, who served as the sixth President of the USA from 1825 to 1829, who once said: **“If your actions inspire others to dream more; learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader”**. He goes on to say **“Courage and perseverance have a magical talisman, before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish into air”**.

The profound message that we must all learn from this noble initiative is that all our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them. We are here today because one of our very own; showed courage and followed his dream of bringing change to our school. It is also clear that dreams do not become a reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work. We want our learners to draw inspiration from all these and not to think otherwise but to always remember that within each one of them, there is strength, patience and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world. We urge you to go after your dreams, no matter how unattainable others think. This is what should drive us in our quest to deliver services to our people, a commitment to action all the time because as a French-German theologian Albert Schweitzer puts it: **“Leading by example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing”**.

This past week, we have seen public-private partnership taking a centre stage and a commitment to action in the delivery of school infrastructure and learning equipment, something that demonstrates to us that indeed education is a societal issue.

Working with Meropa Casino and Entertainment World and Correctional Services, we handed over renovated and refurbished hospitality classes to Mothimako and Khaiso High Schools respectively. We were also at Fulufhelo Special School, where in partnership with Social Development and MTN Foundation we handed over specialized state of the art computer laboratory to meet the learning needs of our learners who are differentially gifted.

We are confident that learning will become more exciting with the donation of a specialized computer laboratory. Today, the spotlight has fallen on Mountain View Senior Secondary School, all because of a young man, whose participation in the SABC’s Future Leaders Programme could not just be a mere participation by adding numbers, but saw an unselfish need to do something that will not just benefit him, but the entire school that must breed future leaders. We would like to thank you, Khutso Mamabolo for

your vision and MTN Foundation for listening when a future leader engaged you on this important initiative to close an ICT gap in the school.

It shows to all of us that we have got so much more in us as people and stakeholders than we will ever know. We thank you for this fascinating facility and for connecting and preparing our children for the digital world through a lifeline of education. Reaching out to communities, especially the previously marginalized and disadvantaged areas of our society, by providing modern infrastructure and other services, as you have done here, will certainly go a long way in reducing the number of schools without multi-media centres in the province.

This initiative will further go a long way in assisting our learners to be at a level that will see them compete with the best anywhere in the world. Doors of educational opportunities are opening every day because of our private- public partnerships and we urge our learners to enter these doors and excel in their studies. It is by expanding these educational opportunities that we will deal decisively with issues of poverty, unemployment and inequality. We are all stakeholders in education and whatever contribution we get, it takes us closer to our goal of eradicating school infrastructure backlogs, through mutually beneficial partnerships such as the one we have with the MTN Foundation.

I must emphasize that the private sector is very critical in the provision of school infrastructure. We admit year in and year out that with limited resources that we get allocated, government cannot do it alone. We need a lot of billions, in fact over 20 billion, to provide optimally functioning schools across the province. So it is in this context that we welcome with both hands this teaching and learning intervention.

We are indeed showing progress in our collective efforts to end the dominion of illiteracy and underdevelopment. Currently as we speak computers have a tremendous influence on the way in which we communicate with each other. Information communication technology skills are essential for everyday functioning in the world of work and leisure. Today symbolizes a commitment to promote to empower our learners on

the use of modern information and communication technologies. We must ensure that our learners are not left behind on technological matters and we are determined to deliver important services that characterize the modern times that we live in.

This is a very important resource that will ensure that our learners and communities become active participant and role players in a world that has become a global village, all because of technological advancements that take place every day. Information technologies have opened up a variety of possibilities for learning and this multi-media centre will certainly familiarize our learners with computers, it will give our learners access to information about the world and it will introduce learners to the world of research. I am sure that like many other countries, we also want to be one of the top countries for research citations in subjects like physics and mathematics. We must therefore improve our performance in these subjects because in the last two years, the performance in this school has been under 35% and has never been above 40% in the past four years.

Competence in both mathematics and science promotes the kinds of innovations that we need to take this country to greater heights. Needless to say, more and more sectors rely on technology and more companies require people with advanced analytical and research skills if they are going to compete and compete to win.

The reality is that it is vital for us to be up there with the best for the sake of our national future. Each and every country has its developmental goals and for such goals to succeed, we must not shy away from enhancing our human and institutional capacity in mathematics and science. The other reality is that Mathematics is becoming ever-important to the economy. It plays a vital role in social and economic development.

We must bear in mind that tomorrow's world relies on today's pupils and we want this generation and many of the next generations to realize that we need more pupils from less affluent backgrounds not to miss out on opportunities as provided by partnerships such as this one. Our boys and girls must not see mathematics and science as hard subjects best kept and

reserved for certain people. We want our boys and girls to see these subjects as subjects that can be mastered. Our learners must not see these subjects as niche but as the basis for a number of careers.

It is important that as various stakeholders, we must continue to provide information about the value and potential of these subjects for a wider appreciation. We also need great teachers who will encourage young people to reach their potential, challenging stereotypes about mathematics and physical science.

We must as government, do our part by ensuring that there are quality schools which will see us making serious inroads in the building of interest and scientific capacity. So, early introduction of learners to the beauty and thrills of mathematics and science is very critical. We must also ensure that such interest is not lost along the way so that we are able to produce a huge pool of lovers of mathematics and science. If we do that, we will be able to turn our performance in science as a country and as a province particularly

We want our learners to explore the creativity that ICT can offer. This investment should not only benefit the school but also the community at large. The opening of this centre creates the opportunity to make significant changes to the way we teach and learn at this school. We believe with the best use of this facility, the foundations of learning at the school will be strengthened and improved. We expect the school to pick up its performance in terms of its grade 12 results which in the past two years stood at 55%.

Allow me as I conclude, to wish all learners success in the coming examinations, starting this coming Monday. We are ready as a province to administer these exams and we appeal for support from every community stakeholder to throw their weight behind our learners in these important times of their academic lives. We urge parents to be there for our learners like they have been throughout the year. To our learners, the future is almost here. We are saying let every day during these exams count and make it count by focusing on your studies, because other things will not

assist you in achieving your academic goals. Do not let anyone take away your hope. Don't give up your dreams

We wish the school and the community every success with this computer laboratory. This is your treasure and it is progress in terms of facilities that our schools need but all this progress is at stake if we don't look after this centre for use by future generations. We urge you to guard this property and let no one think that they have a right to vandalize it.

We thank once more MTN Foundation for their kindness and understanding. Indeed, our collaboration and what we do together changes how we live and better the lives of our people. We have a responsibility to leave a better future for our kids. There is still more work to do, but let us celebrate the progress and how far we have come. What is true more than ever is what Nelson Mandela described when he said: **“Our society needs to re-establish a culture of caring”**

MTN, thank you so much for showing you care for people. To young Mamabolo, we thank you greatly for ensuring that your dreams are bigger than your fears and keep following your dream.

Together we move South Africa forward!

I thank you!