

**SPEECH BY EDUCATION MEC ISHMAEL KGETJEPE AT THE  
AVENG 2015 TOP PERFORMERS AWARDS CEREMONY, JANE  
FURSE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HALL,  
MAKHUDUTHAMAKGA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, 29  
JANUARY 2016**

Program Director,

Executive Mayor

Mayor

Chairperson of Aveng Community Investment Trust

MD of Kutlwanong

District Senior Manager

Circuit Managers

Principals

SGBs

Parents

Our distinguished learners

Esteemed guests

Ladies and gentlemen

It is an honour and privilege for me to be part of today's awards ceremony, presented by the Aveng Community Trust celebrating the hard work of the matric class of 2015. It is always gratifying to be associated with ceremonies that reward and recognize excellence more

especially when our young ones are involved. It assures us that the future of our country is safe and will be in the safest of hands boasting enough skilled people.

Programme director, a couple days ago, we were together with Domba Trust hosting and congratulating the province's top ten learners. These are learners who have made us tremendously proud as a province even though we did not achieve our provincial target of 80percent as directed by the Premier of our Province. This district is represented in that top ten by a young man, Lentsoana Ramakgwale Mahlogonolo from St Marks, who has since registered for Actuarial Science at WITS University. If Vhembe has five learners in the top ten, followed by Capricorn with three, Mopani and Sekhukhune with one each and Waterberg with nothing, it tells a story of how much work that still needs to be done in some of these districts.

It is this kind of initiatives as undertaken by Aveng that give us some semblance of hope that we can introduce necessary interventions to remedy the poor matric performance that continue to terrorize this district in particular, year after year. It is our expressed conviction that all is not doom and gloom especially if we are honest with ourselves in our analysis of the situation moving forward.

Programme director, tempting as it is, this day is not a day to mourn the dismal performance of the district but to celebrate those of our learners

who have put in hard work against all the odds. We are happy today that, working together with Aveng Community Trust, are gathered here to celebrate another group of determined young people who have made us very proud in the area of mathematics and Physical Science. We are saying to our learners that your achievement makes us very proud and we accordingly congratulate you. It is a true reflection of how much you all want to succeed and better your lives and the communities that you come from. You never gave up and sacrificed your weekend times to be active participants in this programme. Against all the odds, you continued to chase your goals of being the best in mathematics and physical science. Today we are here and you have proven to your peers, community, parents and educators that nothing is impossible if you put your mind to it. You have not wasted the resources as invested by Aveng Community Trust in this programme that continues to prove year after year to be a successful intervention in our quest to produce good results in mathematics and science. It is because of this consistency that Aveng Community Trust will be investing more resources in this academic year, both for the programme and bursary support to top students for tertiary education. Our appeal to our learners is that they must keep working very hard because help can only go where there are results and hard work. While help is available, there are those young people who choose not to work very hard, so for being a top learner, you should be very

proud of your achievement because it came through hard work and not lottery.

We are pleased that this flagship programme of the Aveng Community Trust is for Mathematics, Science and Technology targeting learners from historically disadvantaged communities. We are pleased simply because more and more graduates are needed in careers such as science, technology, mathematics and engineering. We need such people who must form part of the human capital that we need to nurture to feed the next generation of scientists, researchers and engineers in line with our National Development Plan. Our vision for 2030 clearly places science, technology and innovation at the centre of the country's socio-economic development.

It gives us hope that with hard working learners like we are awarding today and initiatives like the Kutlwanong Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology, we can achieve a lot and contribute to government's efforts to fight poverty, inequality and unemployment. It is in this regard that one of our major tasks is to work together as social partners to build an education system that provides quality opportunities for all our people.

It is fundamentally important that our children are prepared sufficiently

in order to compete with confidence in the international arena. The world has become a global village and we urgently need to ensure that every one of our children has access to a world class quality education. The teaching of mathematics and science is critical in this regard and equally critical is ensuring that our learners excel in these subjects. It is initiatives like this that will see us continuously contributing in ensuring that our children fulfill their potential. If we were to talk the language of investment, you will agree with me that there is no other investment that yields as great a return as the investment in education. This programme has proven to be a success and we can only build on it and do more for its sustainability. We must ensure that there is proper infrastructure such as computer and science labs for the practical part of these subjects. Equally important is to ensure that our educators get the necessary support in order to deliver the subject matter with competence and excellence.

It is imperative that we must continue to work together in designing ways and means to remove stumbling blocks which could prevent learners from accessing quality learning or pursuing their dreams and educational goals. Stumbling blocks such as protests that are not related to education but blocking the education of our children. Parents who mobilize learners to be part of community protests during school hours

must be discouraged from doing so and be shown channels of engagement while learners are at school. Our job as parents must be to take active interest in the education of children by providing the necessary support and guidance to our children. If parents do the opposite given their influence, it means we shall continue to be a district that has schools producing zero percent pass rate. We shall continue to occupy position five in terms of district performance and that will be a bitter pill as there will be consequences for poor performance.

This programme is yet another investment in the human resource development of our education, and it is our expectation learners must continue avail themselves to be assisted to make a sustainable living.

The point here is we need highly educated and qualified young people to drive the National Development Plan and to be at the forefront and drive these developments. Our people can protest every day for better jobs, but if we do not empower our children through education it will amount to nothing. You have no idea how fortunate you are as a district to have this progressive programme and we encourage our learners to make good use of it.

In conclusion, we applaud Avens Community Trust for this initiative and together we must protect and ensure the right to basic education. We

have a responsibility to provide our learners with all the requisite support that will ensure that they not only access basic education but that they succeed. Success is a community effort that requires dedicated learners, educators, parents, government officials, service providers and the entire community.

To you our dear learners, we urge you to go out there and be the best that you can be. Your success will inspire us together with our social partners to work even harder to fix the challenges in the education system and attain excellent results. We call on you to contribute to the continuing journey of building a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa. Make it your mission to better yourselves, families, communities and the rest of the nation. Become new cadres of development for our country. Be part of the solution rather than the problem.

I wish you well in your future endeavors and encourage you to put in an extra effort in your studies and future careers. Anything is possible with the right attitude.

**I thank you and enjoy the rest of the day.**