

**MESSAGE OF SUPPORT BY LIMPOPO MEC FOR EDUCATION
ISHMAEL KGETJEPE AT THE FAREWELL FUNCTION FOR THE
WINNERS OF THE 2017 SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH WATER PRIZE, 25
JULY 2017, THE RANCH, POLOKWANE.**

Deputy Minister

Mayors

CEO of Lepelle Northern Water Board

Senior officials of our government departments

Parents

Educators

Our 2017 national winners

Our distinguished guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning,

Today represents one of the most delightful moments of celebrating the efforts of our learners and the efforts of working together as various sectors to advance our academic mission. Paramount amongst other things is to prepare our children for exciting and adventurous future, ensure that we avail opportunities that were unheard of before the dawn of democracy and guard against limiting our children to assignments that do not innovate their thinking and challenge their creativity.

We have on previous occasions expressed ourselves in support of this initiative and today we are once more honoured and privileged to reaffirm our support with a renewed sense of optimism. We must accordingly thank the Department of Water and Sanitation for this empowering project and the objectives for which it seeks to achieve for our young learners. Of course we thank our educators for the guidance they continue to provide our learners in this journey of discovery and invention.

We fully give support to initiatives and programs that give concrete substance to education, motivate the youth, provide opportunities and ensure youth participation in community development projects. Technological innovation is sought after by every country and South Africa is no exception in this regard. We are delighted of course that our learners continue to demonstrate in a myriad of ways the talents and commitment that makes Limpopo a unique environment for learning, research and active citizenship. This achievement by our learners in this program gives us some good sense of vibrancy of our academic community. It gives us a good sense of talent in our rural schools, innovation, research and commitment to advance themselves, schools and the communities they come from.

What we must emphasize in the light of this achievement is that, we need our schools and young people to play leading roles in many fields in the sciences, technology, social sciences and humanities that depend increasingly on applied data science. It is in this regard that we must start creating state-of-the-art facilities essential for continued success and momentum of our learners in this program and other related initiatives that will see our learners engaging and competing with other learners around the world.

We are really delighted that Limpopo has been a shining province since the inception of this program and be rest assured that there is still more where these learners came from. It is indeed a special occasion for all of us here in Limpopo for having sustained such a feat and for our learners' eagerness to collaborate with other learners. We would like to justifiably take our hats off to our 2017 winners in Mokgotho Temogelo Thami, Mmola Desmond Kutullo and Nkwane Wayne Luka from Lebeko High School of Mashishimale village in Mopani District. You have not just challenged yourselves but also conquered and triumphed in the journey of self-discovery.

Your participation in this competition dispels once again, a myth that schools from previously disadvantaged communities cannot show their competitive edge when opportunities to do so present themselves. Today learners from such a community are proving such people wrong and you have emerged as victors en route to Sweden. The competition has undoubtedly triggered an area of interest in your learning and this is an area that would not have been discovered had you not taken part in this competition. It is against this background that we applaud you for your inventions and we are here to say your adventure and journey of self-discovery is just beginning.

We cannot overemphasize sufficiently the importance of water and you know what they say about water being life. We are living in a fast growing technological world and we cannot be left behind in as far as the latest water engineering methods and technology that will see us valuing and saving water more. Your solutions to water safety will surely go long way.

We are aware that adventures of this nature have a tremendous impact on inculcating skills development, physical recreation, adventurous journey and the virtue of community service. We are also aware that you will as you continue in this journey acquire knowledge and skills to grow to be self-reliant, responsible and selfless. You will also make an impact in the classroom and school environment as you practice the values that you might learn in this adventure. Your stories will one way or the other influence your peers to think outside the box. This will largely benefit us as a department because we will be producing creative learners who are well equipped to be masters of their destinations.

There is no turning back for you but forge ahead as you pursue your dreams of a better life. As we often say, South Africa is alive with possibilities and today proves exactly that. We urge you not to allow your present circumstances to define your future and what you will be. This is a great feat and we urge you to be agents of change and development. We are right behind you every step of the way in this endeavor. So do not let us down or yourselves down. We know you can do it. Make us all proud.

I hope that all of us here are as excited as I am about the prospects that lie ahead for these learner. The journey, is sure to see even more notable developments as we work together to advance our academic mission.

Represent us well and we wish you all the best luck.

Together we move South Africa forward.

I thank you.

