



**ADDRESS BY THE SEDIBENG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY EXECUTIVE  
MAYOR, COUNCILLOR MAHOLE SIMON MOFOKENG, ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE SEDIBENG YOUTH VOTER EDUCATION  
FESTIVAL**

- Program Director,
- The leadership and membership of all youth formations in Sedibeng;
- The people of Sedibeng;

I rise to extend my heartfelt greetings to all you, including those we have left back home, some are at work, churches and on the wrong side of the Law. It is important that I start my short speech by paying tribute to all of our young people – not only to express my great appreciation

to your organizations, to the service of which I have devoted more than half of my life, but also because the crucial role played by your Organizations is of utmost relevance to this special occasion, to draw the attention of and encourage youth participation in political processes.

**Friends and colleagues,**

The experience today is such that low levels of civil involvement and political apathy remain a dominant feature among young people. Evidence seems to indicate that youth participation in political processes is declining. This is reflected in the low proportion of newly eligible voters who register and/or cast their ballots, and the widespread attitude among political elites that young people do not have sufficient political knowledge to be included in planning and decision making processes.

Although participation in elections is only one measure of civil participation,

many young people do not know who their political representatives are, much less know about how to effectively influence politicians. Because many young people are less likely to vote, their interests are less likely to be represented. It would appear that opting out of the democratic process is an indication of the cynicism that young people feel about politics and people involved in politics.

### **Colleagues and friends,**

Unless our people, especially young people, have faith in democratic institutions and unless they engage in large numbers with various processes of self-governance such as your own formations, democracy might end up being no more than an empty shell, devoid of substance and merely providing a veneer of democracy for dictators and authoritarian regimes. Young people are accordingly the largest interest group in society: they are stakeholders in elections.

Young people must wake up to reality. They have a choice to make. Is either you are in or out. That decision is yours and yours only.

The doors of our Local Municipalities in Emfuleni, Midvaal and Lesedi are wide open for those who have made the right choice. If you do not know where your Municipality is, please talk to your friends. Only those who are 18 year older and above, and have registered with their names appearing on the voters roll will be illegible to can put political parties and representatives of their choice in government. It is never too late, register to vote in the provincial and national elections of the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009. You can register with your temporary Identity document. Every vote counts.

And lastly, **my colleagues**, I also want to emphasize to you the importance of education. I want us to invest all the time we have now towards our education.

That will help to make us better people in future. We should **learn** from the wisdom of Oliver Tambo, **produce** a Nelson Mandela amongst ourselves and **fight** like Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu in defense of the gains made by our parents and ancestors.

I thank you for your patience, and please respect your elders and drive safely home after your function. Your future and that of our District and Country is in your hands.

I thank you.