



**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE SEDIBENG DISTRICT EXECUTIVE  
MAYOR, COUNCILLOR MAHOLE SIMON MOFOKENG ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
HUMAN RIGHTS CELEBRATION IMBIZO**

20 March 2009.

As a Municipality, we recognize our responsibility to uphold human rights, both in our learning and work-places and more broadly within our sphere of influence.

In the Sedibeng District Municipality, we address human rights through our policies, by embedding them in our core values, culture and functions, thus infusing a common respect for our approaches on a number of issues affecting the day-to-day living of our people.

- Ms. Angie Motshekga, Member of the Gauteng Provincial and of the Executive Committee responsible for Education;

- Ms. Maipato Tsokodibane, Member of the Mayoral Committee of the Sedibeng District Municipality responsible for Health, Social Development & Community Safety, and fellow councillors who are present;
- Mr. Paul Sehlabelo, representative of the National Department of Education, responsible for oversight work in the underperforming schools;
- Ms. Dorah Moloi, Director of the Gauteng Education Department Sedibeng District Director;
- Senior Officials from the National, Provincial, Regional Departments of Educations and from our Municipalities;
- Educators, Members of the School Governing Bodies and Learners;
- Members of the press;
- Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen;
- The people of Sedibeng.

Colleagues and our Grade 12 learners from our underperforming schools Isizwe Setjhaba and New Ratanda Secondary Schools.

Our Grade 12 learners from our 3 schools which are classified as underperforming because they dropped by more than 10% but attained provincial target of more than 60% - Meyerton, Thuto-Lore and Khanya Lesedi Secondary Schools.

And, Ratanda, Mohloli, Lekoa Shandu, Rust-Ter-Vaal Secondary Schools, our four project schools because we want them to sustain their performance, on behalf of our Offices in the Sedibeng District Municipality, its three Local Municipalities of Emfuleni, Midvaal, Lesedi, the National, Gauteng Provincial and Sedibeng District Departments of Education, I greet and welcome all of you to the Gauteng Department of Education Human Rights Celebration Imbizo, which is held in Sedibeng, the birth-place of human rights struggle in South Africa.

This Imbizo is even more welcomed in our Region where many of our adults are illiterate; thousands of our children have no access to school, and countless children, youth and adults who attend school or other education programs fall short of the required level to be considered literate in today's complex world, as guaranteed by the Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Freedom Charter.

Thus, **colleagues**, the Declaration of Human Rights and our very own Freedom Charter are the common programmes enshrining the hopes and aspirations of all the progressive people of South Africa. Without the right to education, so many others, such as the rights to work and security become unobtainable.

The emphasis of this Imbizo, which is aimed at entrenching a culture of learning and of teaching in our schools, as should be understood by all of us; is on the interface of education and human rights, drawing on the disciplines of politics.

In 32 days to come on the 22 April, South Africans who are over the age of 18 years, illegible to vote and have registered, will be joining long queues at the voting stations to cast their votes for political parties of their choice, with best promises. The same will be expected from all of us.

Each vote in the Elections, which is a phenomenal world-wide form to advance and protect freedom and democracy will also be important to help our country to continue in its next step towards free, dynamic and compulsory education

**Comrade MEC Motshekga,**

As a component of the South African democratic government, Sedibeng District Municipality's activities reflect a commitment to its learners, a commitment which is in line with the vision of the Freedom Charter, and one which will help us to defy the legacy of our horrible past.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Our government is about protecting these human rights, including in our communities through its Outcome-Based,

Early Child Development Programmes and many other initiatives, such as poverty alleviation and scholar transport. Our successes are dependable on the support and cooperation of communities, learners and learners, and when students will cease from carrying weapons to schools premises and abusing drugs and illegal substances.

These, **colleagues**, are but some of the examples of our commitment to fighting illiteracy in our society. Sedibeng District Municipality, and its 3 Local municipalities of Lesedi, Emfuleni and Midvaal, have bursary schemes, which I want to invite our learners, especially those from indigent families within our Region to make use of.

Our learners and students must also make use of our over 40 Youth Advisory Centres that are found all over the Region, and are offering career guidance and youth development skills. Addresses and contact details for Advisory Centres can be obtained from ward councillors or my office in Vereeniging.

**MEC Motshekga,**

Ours is a vision of schools, where there are structures, discipline and predictability, with pupils who are likely to achieve educational success. That we owe to the victims of the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1960 massacre, Hector Peterson, Emma Sathekge and many other students who have died on our way to the land of free, dynamic, compulsory and non-racial education system.

I thank you for your patience.

Thank you.