



**Address by the Executive Mayor of the Sedibeng District Municipality: Cllr Mahole Simon Mofokeng on the occasion of the Academic and Exam Prayer Seminar held on the 09<sup>th</sup> October 2011 in Sharpeville, Sedibeng.**

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Programme Director

Rev Ratshikopha

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The Leadership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa

Our Distinguished Guests

The Young Minds and Future Leaders of Sedibeng here present.

It is with great pride and honour that I came here today. This pride stems from the fact that in the face of ever the changing world, the likes of which my father would not have imagined not even in his wildest dreams, together with the young leaders in the Evangelical Lutheran Church here in Sedibeng are once again on the forefront preparations for the exams.

Unlike anywhere else in the country, the issue of examinations will only come to the fore when there are problems or immediately when the press complains about the low pass rate.

I have been charged with the responsibility to speak on the various career options open to our future leaders and the youth in general. What can I say, the opportunities are endless. To illustrate these opportunities, I will take my cue from the four elements which make up our world, namely air, water, earth and fire.

One may ask, what about them, well I dare say everything. It is in the light of Climate Change, a World Summit of which will be held in Durban, South Africa later this year that the entire world is worried about the quality of air.

We are affected by the quality of air we breath, the plants are affected by the quality of air, the fires we use have an impact on the quality of air.

Sedibeng District Municipality, our Region as an industrial hub of the entire Gauteng Province, is emitting many gases into the atmosphere which have an adverse effect on our climate and quality of life. We are beginning to have unseasonal flooding and very adverse weather patterns because of the gases we release into the atmosphere.

Sedibeng as an Air Quality Authority, is in need of Air Quality Controllers. They will also be needed by virtually all Municipalities as we begin to come to grips with the ever changing climate. There I said it, we will find all the necessary careers from even the air that we breath.

It is as we develop Sedibeng and provide human settlements here in the Region that another element comes into play. We will not build new townships and settlements unless water is provided.

We will not proceed with new settlements unless the issue of water borne sewerage is answered. We cannot continue with new developments until we deal with the water degradation caused by raw sewer.

For a Region which prides itself of the Vaal River and the Vaal Dam, we need very stringent water monitoring here in Sedibeng. We have to deal with the pollution of our waters more so now than ever before. There is a need therefore for us to have a qualified detachment to preserve our water resources and heritage. Did I just give another career path, I believe I just did.

As if the challenges we face with Climate Change are not enough, with the adverse climate changes we are called upon to deal with food security. The climate will affect the manner in which we produce our food.

Three months ago the price for a bag of 10 kg of potatoes was R 23.00, today check again, a bag of 7kg of potatoes is R45.00 because the rains are late in coming and we had more seasonal rains in winter which affected the output.

We need young men and women to work the land, the soil in order to have a serious impact on our campaign to roll back the frontiers of poverty. We need everyone of us to deal with a very uncertain future.

With the unseasonal drought becoming the order of the day, veld fires are becoming more common. We need firefighters with skills and expertise to deal with this. Fire stations are being built in our areas and these needs experienced people to manage.

I know that some of you watch a lot of movies. In all the best thrillers, there is a part where a big fire erupts as a result of the action. Guess who manages this fire, a Piro-technician, whose primary role is to make controlled fires which make our movie experience so rewarding.

These are some of the opportunities we have out there. Just look a little a little closer. At the Polokwane conference of the ANC, it was noted that one of the most effective ways of eradicating poverty is through education. A resolution was taken to progressively introduce free education for the poor until undergraduate level.

It is as the government opens up opportunities for the young to study that we look up to you to prepare yourselves in the best possible way. In this regard, our theme today is very instructive, namely the Key to Success.

I hope that all of you will give the coming exams your best shot. I know that you are prepared. The Universities and Technicians are waiting for you. Big industry is waiting for you. The world is indeed waiting for you.

It is as you prepare yourselves for the world out there, that I hope you will always aim for the top. I always tell my children to aim for the top of the food chain. If you are going to be at the bottom of the food chain, you run the risk of being food for others.

Just take a look at this illustration. A worm eats its way through leaves, a frog eats the worm, the frog becomes breakfast to the fish, the fish becomes a snack to the fish eagle. Always aim for the top I say, if you are to become the worm, you will be long gone by the time the fish eagle has its snack.

In short, rather than being the consumer of jeans and T-shirts which are sold to you at high prices, why don't you produce the jeans and T-shirts yourself, Loxion Culture did it. Better yet, why don't you provide the finance for the production of these T-shirts or create a production line for your clothing.

I look forward to the time when the youth in Sedibeng will be mass producers of goods and services rather than being the consumers of products by the boys and girls in China and Ethiopia.

Our government has indeed created channels for your empowerment. Kindly apply your minds and take charge. The world is your oyster. On Friday the newspapers were full of stories of the death of Steve Jobs.

Steve who you ask? He is the man who created Apple computer applications which led to the I-pad, I-pod and the I-phone. While he was not a graduate, he applied his mind to the fullest to have a fortune of R 65.25 billion at the time of his death.

He started his business out of a garage. Imagine all this. The world is waiting for you. Take a little more effort in what you do. Push a little hard, persevere, the world is waiting for your talents, If at first you do not succeed, try and try again. In this phrase, lies your Key to Success.

**In conclusion,** I take this opportunity to wish the Class of 2011 the best of luck in their endeavours as they take a leap of faith into the world of work. The world is your oyster, go out and make your mark. Take a look around you, we as a nation and the African village are looking to you with hope and expectations to make our lives as a Nation a little bit better and bearable. **I Thank You!**