



Proceedings of the 2nd Further Education and Training Convention

*Expanding Learning Opportunities for
Youth and Adults*



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Poem dedicated to the FET Sector during Dr Hanson's closing speech

*I am no longer the same now;
I have changed completely.*

*I see my life differently now;
I have changed completely.
I am no longer, longer the same now;
I have changed completely.*

*I used to be weak;
I am strong now;
I have changed completely.*

*I was a loser;
Now a winner;
I have changed completely.*

*I was a victim;
Now a hero;
I have changed completely;
I was a victim;
Now a champion;
I have changed completely.*

*I am no longer an easy target;
More inspired, more than a conqueror;
I have changed completely.*

*Forward ever backward never;
I have changed completely;
Forward ever backward never;
I have changed completely.*

(Mzwakhe Mbuli)

Overview

Introduction

The second Annual Further Education and Training College Convention, held in 2002 at the St Georges Hotel: Johannesburg, was characterised by a spirit of celebration, as the FET sector together with their key stakeholders celebrated their achievements over the past year. As stated by one of the international speakers:

I was amazed by how much work had been done, and while they were not perfect, they were tentative ideas of how these colleges might look. A series of building blocks were put into place

The Convention marked as Thami Mseleku (the Director General of Education) indicated, "not the beginning of the end, but [rather] the end of the beginning".

The sector did not come only to celebrate past victories but also to discuss, debate and, to use the time together, to plan. The announcement that 2003 has been declared, by the Minister of Education, the 'Year of Further Education and Training', provided further stimulus for developing a plan of action.

This section provides a brief overview of the key highlights of the second Further Education and Training Convention. It does not provide reference to each speakers contribution, nor does it attempt to summaries all of these. Speeches and summaries of presentations are provided in sections two and three of this report. Rather, this section provides an overview of the successes over the past year and summarises the areas highlighted during the convention as areas of challenge for the FET sector. It does so by referring (where possible) to key speeches and presentations and in order that the tone and mood of the convention may be captured, by drawing rather liberally from these.

Successes

The most marked achievement over the past two years has been the restructuring of the Further Education and Training (FET) College landscape into a vibrant, multi-campus, responsive system.

Two years ago the sector comprised of 152 technical colleges: forty three percent of which had fewer than 500 FTE learners and seventy percent of which had fewer than 1000. Following the mergers, the sector comprises 50 multi-campus colleges with barely four percent of these having fewer than 500 FTEs, fifty-four percent over 2000 FTEs, and several much larger than this.

The vision is that these new colleges will become significant players in their local and regional environments, with some of them becoming nationally and internationally recognized centres of excellence in niche specialisations that serve the entire country.

The Director-General congratulated college staff in this opening address for “making decisions and taking action in the best interests of the institutions ... even where these appeared to have placed [their] own positions in jeopardy”. As stated by Dr Hanson during his closing speech, the expectation is that, during a process of sectoral merger such as the one experienced in the FET system, “while swans swim serenely on the surface, great turbulence exists under the surface” – i.e. while the restructuring occurs great turbulence and disruption to the daily work of the colleges is experienced. In the case of South Africa’s FET system this has not been the case. The merger process has not intervened in the daily work of the colleges and institutional paralysis has not set in.

Totally to the contrary of expectations that disruptions would occur to the day to day work of the colleges, the sector has shown positive strides. The presentation by Jaffe and Fisher, provided an overview of the triumphs since 1998. They indicated that FTE enrolments in the sector have grown by 17% from 1998 to 2000. Enrolments in Non-DoE programmes, a significant indicator of the responsiveness of colleges to local education and training needs, have since 1998 grown by 22%. In addition, staff qualifications had improved significantly with a marked decrease in unqualified and under-qualified staff. In addition, the presentations provided by Mr Nzimande from Mobeni College, Mrs Venter from Pretoria Campus and by Mr Fassi attest to a wealth of creativity, innovation and energy in the sector.

Challenges

Mergers are, however, not an end in itself and could constitute little more than aggregations of prior technical colleges. This was noted by many at the Convention who stressed that the restructuring process will have little long term benefit or significance unless they result in colleges delivering the programs and services needed by employers, small entrepreneurs, the unemployed and the wider community.

Supporting such concerns were presentations that showed an uneven picture in the performance of the sector. While Jaffe and Fisher’s presentation highlighted the victories of the sector, they also indicated a decrease in the national pass rate of 2% since 1998. The HSRC report, presented by Michael Cosser, paints a sombre picture. It shows that 62% of graduates are unemployed and that the monthly income

of graduates who are employed is an average of R1001 to R3000. It portrays the average graduate as a twenty one year old African male who two years post graduation, is still unemployed. The average age of learners suggests that lifelong learning remains, in the education provision of this sector, an unimplemented dream.

The progress made to date then is not without challenges. The most urgent of these is the appointment of new Principals and College Councils. We need to ensure that our colleges are appropriately managed and that there is strong and effective leadership at the top. As stated by the Director-General, the calibre of the people appointed to these leadership positions will be key and every effort needs to be made to ensure that the new principals are people who can unite the merged institution, manage a large and complex operation, promote the image and credibility of the college and the sector and build strong working relationships with employers and communities. Under their new leadership colleges must be encouraged and supported to develop and implement mission statements and strategic plans that are geared to meeting the needs of our economy, promoting community development and enterprise and providing a richer, more supportive and stimulating learning environment for our students.

Equally as critical, is the development of a funding model and an assessment of the investment that will need to be made for the FET college sector to be placed on a long term growth and development trajectory. In this regard, the Director-General indicated that preparatory work is currently underway in the Department of Education. Professor Burke, argued in the presentation that he made to Commission G, that there is a need to address simultaneously the development of a national funding model and to improve, at institutional and provincial level, the effective and efficient use of resources.

The convention was marked by support for the reform programme. Presentations by Mr Hulley and others introduced the policies that exists, specifically the Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy, Science and Technology policies, Department of Trade and Industry Manufacturing Strategy, Integrated Development Strategies and the National Skills Development Strategy. They discussed how these policies interweave to form a coherent attempt to transform South Africa both socially and economically. Despite the coherency of the policy framework, nearly all of the speakers from government (besides of course those from education) acknowledged that FET had, in their governmental department, been largely ignored.

There was acknowledgement that there needs to be closer and more effective collaboration between the Minister and Department of Education and other government Ministries and Departments. Special mention was made of the need to improve the relationship between education and labour and between Further

Education and Training Institutions (FETIs) and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). The findings of Commission B suggest that governmental partnerships contain challenges and difficulties of their own, specifically that of planning and starting partnerships and the extent to which partnerships rely on relationships between individuals. While these difficulties were noted it was recognised that we “cannot achieve our aims (as captured in the policy framework) if we do not work together” and that the difficulties of partnerships need to be challenged in practice.

The HRD Strategy – and its associated and linked programmes – is something around which all at the convention united. The need, in the HRD strategy, to involve employers in the education and training of our citizens was well recognised. Coovadia, a representative of business, argued for greater collaboration between labour and education in order that colleges may access levies and other resources. He urged colleges to respond to the training needs of industry by consulting with industry on their training needs and endeavouring, through their curricula, to meet these. He indicated that industry, on their side, is “ready, able and willing to meet its commitment to [college – industry] partnerships and is looking forward to it”. The colleges were encouraged to get more employers and employer bodies involved in the college governing bodies. Dr King highlighted in his presentation the important role that the FET systems plays, not only in providing training for the formal job market but also for the informal sector, which with the decline in formal employment opportunities, as shown by Hulley in his presentation, is currently a growing and critical sector for the South African economy. Dr Tau, in support of this, argued that FET should be training predominantly for entrepreneurship, rather than for employment in the formal economy.

There was much discussion about the way in which college-industry and college-community partnerships add value to the work of FETIs. The presentation by Mitchel from De Aar College indicated the extent to which partnerships with local government can fundamentally transform an institution. She explained that the development of partnerships enabled De Aar College to grow from a student headcount of 170 in 1988 to 740 in 2002 and to expand significantly the number and quality of their workshops. Mrs Venter, from Pretoria Campus, showed how partnerships with tourism enterprises enabled the college to gain additional resources while at the same time providing learners with work experience. Nzimande, from Mobeni College, described how the establishment of partnerships with national and local government enabled his college to contribute to local development.

While accepting that employers are a priority audience, the source of jobs, the place of work experience and possibly even funding, a developing and deepened notion of

partnerships in the sector led to the understanding that partnerships are complex, time consuming and difficult to establish and manage. The Convention however recognised that there are many successful partnership models from which lessons can be drawn. Whittaker, for example, provided a detailed account of the successes of the Business Trust, a project based on a partnership between business and government. Rabe and Isaacs presented in Commission B, from their experience in Umalusi and SAQA respectively, principles for successful partnerships. These included the need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the players in partnership; to identify common guiding principles for the partnership; to ensure that the partnership is monitored and regulated and to build a relationship based on open and honest communication.

Whilst the need for partnerships, driven by the imperatives for new and more responsive FET curricula is uncontested, the quality assurance process for current and new programmes remains unresolved. There is major work still to be done in developing and implementing quality assurance frameworks for our colleges and in ensuring that the programs offered meet the needs of employers and learners. In this regard the presentation provided by Van Der Merwe in Commission F, on the role of the recently established Umalusi, was most helpful. He indicated that Umalusi was created to “ensure that continuous enhancement of quality is achieved in the delivery and outcomes of the general and further education and training sectors of the national education and training system”. As such, the roles and responsibilities of Umalusi include the quality assurance of providers, learning programmes and learner achievements. It also includes the issuing of certificates. The launch of the Ministerial Awards at the Convention, while not a quality assurance programme, provides a set of standards, mapped by clear criteria and indicators, that the FETIs can aim for.

The new roles of FET colleges, including as it does the challenge of partnership and the development of high quality and responsive curricula and delivery modes, brings new challenges for FETI staff. Staff development programmes that enable teaching and support staff to understand and confidently cope with these new roles need to be developed and implemented. With respect to partnerships, staff require know-how on the techniques for initiating partnerships; on how to enter into contracts and on how to manage and then evaluate successful partnerships. A critical aspect of ensuring that colleges are appropriately staffed, is the need to fast-track the process of developing staff post-establishment norms.

Dr King, in his presentation on the contribution of TVET to Social and Economic development, highlighted the importance of mapping out, in any planning for the FET sector, the extent, role and contribution of the private FET sector. Focussing purely

on the contribution of public FET, he argued, could result in a skewed system in which the contribution of the private sector is largely ignored and unplanned.

The absence of a common voice for the sector was highlighted by Mr Gibson and Ms Williams from the AACC. In their presentations they discussed the way in which sectoral college associations, such as the AOC and AACC, could contribute to the future development of the sector by lobbying for increased funding to the sector, raising the public impression of the sector and ensuring that best practice is shared within the sector.

2003 – The Year of FET

Much commentary was made on the public image of the sector and on the need for more and better press related to the sector. Dr Hanson, in his closing speech, remarked that “good news is not [regarded as] news”. He indicated that the Minister of Labour remarked recently that “if Jesus was alive today and subject to the modern press that they would be more interest in Mary Magdalene than in the Sermon on the Mount”.

In this regard, the Year of FET will provide a unique opportunity to highlight the role that FET can play as a key contributor to developing our human resources and expanding access to education and training opportunities for our people. It provides an opportunity to demonstrate the vision, commitment and achievements of the sector. It provides a unique opportunity to emphasize the critical importance of Further Education and Training as a bridge between education and the world of work and between schooling and higher education.

While the convention did not generate an action plan for the Year of FET, the Commissions produced in an extremely short time period, an amazing array of information, that was expertly distilled and that provided clear signposts for future action for Departments, the sector and other key stakeholders. These sign posts provide the basis for an action plan and include the following:

1. *The need to resolve the funding strategy.* This funding strategy needs to include and/or address the following:
 - The provision of student financial aid schemes.
 - The development and basis of the funding model: i.e. will the funding strategy be programme based or calculated on the basis of FTE numbers and will it include expenditure on capital and recurrent costs?

- The mechanisms by which the FET sector and FETIs can access funds from other government funds.
2. *The need to complete the merger process.* Key tasks that remain are:
- Appointing of CEOs/ principals;
 - Building staff capacity by designing and implementing a staff development strategy; and
 - Fast-tracking the process of developing staff post-establishment norms.
4. *The need to develop quality assurance mechanism.* Key questions in this regard are:
- What are the roles and functions of different structures?
 - Which performance standards will be applied and on what basis will these be decided and how will the development of a quality assurance management information system be implemented?
5. *The need to develop learner support.* Key tasks that remain are:
- Developing mechanisms by which best practice can be shared and exchanged.
 - Funding strategies for funding learner support.
6. *The need to develop EMIS system:* Here the key tasks are the finalization and activation of the Department of Education's FETMIS and the development, at provincial and institutional level, EMIS systems.

Mike Hanson in his closing speech remarked that the action plan for the Year of FET, if it is to have an impact, needs "some dynamite" - it needs to: (i) define our audiences: FET needs to sell itself more to government, employers and secondary schools; (ii) to include media strategies and (iii) to be based on a co-ordinated programme.

The convention concluded on an optimistic note with Mr Lehoko mapping out the tasks that the Department of Education will engage in over succeeding months. He indicated that the Department of Education will:

- Develop, with the assistance of the Colleges Collaboration Fund (CCF), a report on the progress, the challenges facing the FET sector that will be presented on the 26th November at the Council of Educators meeting.
- Draft, with the assistance of the CCF, an action plan for the Year of FET that will be presented on the 26th November at the Council of Educators meeting.
- Launch, at the beginning of 2003, The Year of FET.
- Examine the funding of the sector with the aim of tabling, in 2003, a funding strategy for the sector.
- Establish task teams to drive the landscape and develop institutional support programs and specific intervention.
- Establish a coordination committee to run the FET awards.
- Review the NQF framework and repositioning FET colleges in this sector - in this regard, he indicated that the department is discussing the possibility of positioning the colleges to offer programs at NQF Level 5 or 6.

The convention ended with a sense of confidence. As stated by one of the international speakers, in his closing remarks,

There should be no concerns; in general the expertise needed to take the sector forward is here in South Africa

and by another of the international speakers, talking directly to the FETIs

The declaration of 2003 as the Year of FET and the attendance of senior representatives at this convention shows that you have the support of your government.

Now it is up to you!

Key Speeches

Keynote Address - By Thami M on behalf of Professor Kader Asmal, Minister of Education

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Our International Visitors and Members of the Donor Community, Representatives of Government and the Private Sector, College Principals and Council Chairpersons, Student Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The occasion of this, the second Annual Further Education and Training (FET) Convention, takes place within a context sketched by the priorities of government. The development of the human resources of the country, economic growth, the reduction of unemployment and poverty alleviation remain the major focus and objectives for the Department of Education and the Ministry. To this end, we have prioritised the provision of access to quality life long learning and the improvement of the quality of life of our people through education and training.

A transformed, high quality, responsive Further Education and Training sector is an important investment for the future of our country and all its people. The challenge is for this sector to provide effective learning opportunities and for young people and adults to realise their true potential and contribute meaningfully to the development of our country. It is this mission that informs and drives all our strategies and approaches to the transformation of the sector.

This convention is held against the backdrop of a massive skills conference hosted by the Department of Labour a few weeks ago. Most of us gathered here were part of that conference and engaged actively with the issues and questions raised. We all were reminded of the skills deficit and the mammoth task we have to countenance. It was also pleasing to hear of the progress being made in meeting the targets set towards the realisation of the vision outlined in the Human Resource Development Strategy released jointly by the two Ministries in 2001.

Last week we attended a conference on the Technical College Responsiveness Project hosted by the HSRC in collaboration with JET. That conference provided fresh insights on the destinations of the graduates of these institutions, employer satisfaction and institutional profiles. Evidence points to a number of critical issues that need further engagement and scrutiny. These major events also confirmed, as correct, our decision to prioritise this sector in attempts to transform the education system and to build a sector that meets the needs of a competitive and global economy. There is no doubt in our minds that the investment we are making in this sector, as a collective, will yield the required returns.

The Further Education and Training band is located between the General Education and Training and the Higher Education bands. As such, it has to respond to the needs for articulation between these bands, as well as respond to the changing demands of the workplace. The linkages with the changes and development in the schools component of the sector is therefore critical. So too will be the dialogue with Higher Education.

The questions that should frame the conference discussion should help us define how the sector can be supported to meet these challenges. It is therefore both pertinent and proper that we together spend the next two days seeking and applying our minds to these questions. The conference should provide strategic direction to the sector by clarifying, amongst others, the institutional responsibilities and roles, the role of government, and the ways in which key social partners can put the shoulder on the wheel in building a responsive and flexible sector. Our key responsibility is to meet the varied needs of our people, from the young who wish to access their post General Education and Training education through these institutions, to the out of school and unemployed youth who presently sit outside mainstream education and the world of work, through to adults both employed and unemployed who are keen on accessing key skills.

It is this goal we have to set our eyes on. We do not have the luxury to postpone the ushering in of a qualitative change in the lives of our people without risking a new wave of discontent and protestation. Our conferences cannot be talk shops anymore; they should deliver realistic and tangible goals. It is indeed the hope of the department that this gathering will listen carefully to the experiences of the new institutions and provide relevant guidance and support.

In the first convention two year ago, the Minister set out two major goals for the new institutions. The first was to equip the learners with intermediate and high order skills necessary for them to fit in the world of work. Our workforce has to keep up with the fast pace of technological developments in the 21st century to remain in employment. New entrants on the other hand have to demonstrate the requisite competences and skills.

However, the challenges of a changing global environment and a transforming democracy call for another set of competences and dispositions. Along with higher levels of technical skills proficiency, the new economy requires individuals who can access and manipulate information, solve problems, work in teams and respond intelligently and resourcefully to changing conditions. The development of true citizens of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist South Africa remains our major focus. These goals call for courage, commitment, dedication and lateral thinking from all of us involved in the building of a dynamic college sector. The governance and

management structures of the new institutions cannot go on with business as usual. They will be faced with a daunting task of managing and leading these institutions towards a new vision that marks a complete break with the legacy of the past. The task is bound to be daunting and characterised by turbulence. Our vision and principles should guide us and remain our beacon as we forge ahead towards the future.

If what lies ahead seems too cumbersome, we have to look back at what we have achieved. Two years ago the Minister announced that government would be taking decisive measures to restructure the landscape of Further Education and Training Colleges to build a vibrant, multi-campus, responsive system.

I wish to place on record my recognition and appreciation, and the recognition of the Department of Education, for the courage and commitment that has been shown by the vast majority of our college leaders, managers, staff and students. The past two years have been a period of considerable uncertainty and anxiety for many of you, and you have been required to make decisions and take actions in the best interests of your institutions, and indeed in the best interests of the new institutions that have been created, even where this may appear to have placed your own position in jeopardy. I want to thank you for rising to this challenge, and for setting aside personal interests in pursuit of the noble goals and expectations of our people.

Let me also acknowledge that, while the department has been ploughing much of its energies into the restructuring of the institutional landscape and the conclusion of institutional mergers, the colleges have been going quietly about their day-to-day business, of educating our people and serving their communities. The updated situational analysis of colleges by the Colleges Collaboration Fund, which will be presented to this conference later today, provides some measure of what the colleges have been able to achieve.

Student enrolments are up by 17% since 1998. The number of learners in non-formal skills programs has expanded quite significantly and shows that colleges are seeking new ways to provide relevant training and skills to their communities. The student population of the colleges is now fully representative of the demographics of our country and steady progress has been made with respect to the race and gender profile of college staff. In short, there is much for colleges to be proud of and much for us to celebrate here today.

I want to thank the Ministers of Education Councils and the many officials in the provincial departments of education who have worked together to bring this about.

Two years ago you will recall we had 152 technical colleges, forty three percent of which had fewer than 500 full time equivalent learners and seventy percent of which had fewer than 1000. Following the mergers, barely four percent of the colleges have fewer than 500 FTEs, fifty-four percent have over 2000, and several are much larger than this. Our vision is that these new colleges will become significant players in their local and regional environments and that some of them will become nationally and internationally recognized centres of excellence, with niche specialisations that serve the entire country.

The foundation has been laid and we should all celebrate our collective achievement and take pride in the progress we have made in the time. This miracle is due, to a large measure, to the effort and unwavering commitment of all. We thank you for the dedication and selfless sacrifice and are confident that you will continue the good work.

At the same time, I would be the first to acknowledge that a great deal of work remains to be done. The merger process itself must be followed through as a matter of urgency with the appointment of new Principals and College Councils. Under their new leadership colleges must be encouraged and supported to develop and implement strategic plans which are geared to meeting the needs of our economy, promoting community development and enterprise and providing a richer, more supportive and stimulating learning environment for our students.

The college mergers, in other words, are not an end in themselves, and they will have little long-term benefit or significance unless they result in the delivery of programs and services that meet the real needs of employers, small entrepreneurs, the unemployed and the wider community.

We know from the business world that many mergers fail, often on the ground of conflicting organizational cultures as well as from failures really to integrate the operations and achieve the benefits that the architects of the merger anticipated.

To paraphrase Winston Churchill, speaking in less happy times, one might say that this is "not the beginning of the end, but the end of the beginning".

Our reality, Ladies and Gentlemen is that all of our collective hopes for peace, democracy and prosperity depend on our ability to give all of our citizens the opportunity and the tools to live a decent and dignified life, free from poverty and ignorance and disease.

HIV/AIDS is devastating our population and leaving behind a generation of orphans and of shattered households whose future looks bleak. Each year our schools propel onto the labour market tens of thousands of young people who have little prospect of

finding a job and who may indeed be unemployable. We cannot and dare not turn a blind eye to this, nor can we procrastinate or waste our energies on unnecessary squabbles and disputes. We must ensure, and we will ensure, that everything necessary and possible is done to meet the challenge.

To this end, I am declaring, on behalf of the Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, 2003 the year of Further Education and Training. The year of FET will give us all an opportunity, in our different ways, to highlight the critical importance of Further Education and Training as a bridge into the world of work and into higher education, and as a key contributor to developing our human resources and expanding access and opportunity for our people.

This is an opportunity to demonstrate our vision and our commitment, and I would like to call upon everyone here to engage with us in a creative and innovative dialogue about how to put FET firmly on the map.

The year of FET is also an opportunity to celebrate what we have achieved: not least, the establishment of a new landscape of 50 large multi-campus Further Education and Training colleges which are being positioned as key providers of intermediate and higher level skills and of lifelong learning opportunities for young and old.

The year of FET must also be a year of action.

We need to see measurable progress in the consolidation of the college mergers and in the development of new institutional missions and plans.

We need to ensure that all of our colleges are appropriately staffed and managed and that there is strong and effective leadership at the top. The calibre of the people we appoint to these leadership positions will be key and we need to make every effort to ensure that people are appointed who can unite the merged institution, manage a large and complex operation, promote the image and credibility of the college and the sector and build strong working relationships with employers and communities.

There is major work still to be done in developing and implementing a new quality assurance framework for our colleges and in ensuring that the programs we offer meet the needs of employers and of our learners.

There needs to be closer and more effective collaboration between ourselves and our colleagues in the Department of Labour, to help colleges build effective relationships with the Sector Education and Training Authorities, to introduce learnerships as part of the program offering at colleges and to ensure that

mechanisms are in place to enable colleges to access the skills levy as they seek to develop a broader and more responsive program offering.

Crucially, we need to develop a funding model and an assessment of the investment that will need to be made in our colleges if they are to be placed on a long-term growth and developmental trajectory. Preparatory work is currently underway in the Department, and one of the speakers at this Convention will be addressing us on the funding of education and training. He will also, with the assistance of the Colleges Collaboration Fund, be providing the Department with advice as to the best way forward. I expect to be able to report on concrete progress in this regard in the course of 2003, the year of FET.

After the strides that we have made over the past two years, I have no doubt that when we meet again at this FET Convention, a year from now, we will be able to point to significant progress in all of the areas that I have indicated.

I am also confident that, with your continued support and goodwill, and with the strength of our partnerships with the international donor community, commerce and industry, and the cooperation and support of our other partners and colleagues, we will succeed in doing what must be done, for the sake of our country and our future.

I wish you well in your deliberations at this conference and invite the conference to submit to the department a proposed programme for the year of Further Education and Training.

I thank you.

Speech presented by Brian Whittaker, COO, Business Trust

Introduction

The partnership idea has become almost ubiquitous

Twenty years ago if I met some one who, like me, thought there was potential in public and private bodies working together for the delivery of services I would think "Ah! I have met someone who is as crazy as I am", now the whole world seems to have gone crazy! Not only is partnership terminology embedded in NGO speak, private firms and increasingly government officials use the word. "Partnership" jumps out at you from half the adverts in the newspaper.

The spirit of partnership is important for nation building

The 'spirit of partnership' is particularly important in this country with its divided past. For that reason, the encouragement of the idea by politicians, business leaders and ordinary citizens is encouraging. However, like all ideas that slip into common currency, the partnership idea is at risk of losing its meaning and more importantly blurring other types of relationships that aren't really partnerships at all, but which are vital for the construction of productive business government relationships, not least for the development of a vibrant FET system.

But is the loose terminology getting in the way of normalizing business / government relationships?

In this short presentation I will draw on the experience of the Business Trust to extract some of the lessons learnt from this large scale, multi-level partnership and identify different types and levels of partnership, their possibilities and constraints. I will ask: Is the partnership idea getting in the way of normalizing the relationship between the public and private sectors?

The Business Trust

The Business Trust was established in July 1999. It is an initiative of companies in South Africa working in partnership with government to expand job opportunities and develop human capacity. The Trust aims to benefit the disadvantaged while the economy is put on a growth path that will provide sustained improvements in the lives

of the majority of South Africans. By so doing the commitment of business and the value of the business / government partnership will be demonstrated.

- *Consultation:* Through intensive consultation between business and government leaders, a strategy was worked out to assist in job creation, to build skills capacity, and to enhance trust and cooperation between business and government.
- *Broad support and joint oversight:* The Trust aimed to secure broad business support and joint oversight by business and government.
- *Strategic engagement and policy synergy:* It was understood from the start that while the programmes of the Trust could give new impetus to job creation and capacity building and help to sustain hope for the disadvantaged they could not, on their own, resolve the challenges facing South Africa in these areas. This realization resulted in the proposal for a consultative body to serve as a meeting ground between senior cabinet ministers, government officials, and business leaders, for discussion of critical national issues, particularly those pertaining to the economy.
- *Focus on a coherent programme:* The Trust settled on tourism as the sector most likely to yield sizable numbers of job opportunities in the shortest time. It set its sights on improving the international marketing of South Africa as a tourist destination, on stimulating appropriate training, and on encouraging tourism enterprise. Second, the Trust sought to build capacity in South African schools and technical colleges. It aimed specifically at improving: (i) efficiency, by improving the reading and writing ability of primary school pupils; (ii) quality by improving the performance of secondary schools; and effectiveness by enhancing relevance to the workplace of South Africa's ailing technical college sector. The third point of focus was on two of the most serious impediments to economic growth: crime and in respect of tourism, malaria.

The initiators were looking for an efficient means of implementing the agreed programmes so as to get the bulk of the resources to the intended beneficiaries in the most efficient way.

An unusual partnership developed to implement the strategy

Assets of partnerships: The Business Trust is founded on a corporate partnership of 145 companies across industries and sectors in South Africa. It has mobilised multiple stakeholder partnerships at strategic, governance, operational and implementation levels. This has created an extraordinary set of public /private

partnerships which have raised awareness of the development challenge for the business community and the value of the business contribution for government and other actors. It has brought sponsorship, mentoring and other business resources to bear on South Africa's major challenges and established a structured basis for responsible local community interaction that supports national policies and strategies.

Corporate partnership: 145 of the leading companies operating in South Africa have agreed to work together on a defined strategy in partnership with government and NGO and other organisations. They are bound together by a **vision** of South Africa as a stable, prosperous country in which business is a trusted social partner, by the **strategy** they have agreed to implement, the **formula** on which funding is based and by irrevocable (written) **undertakings** to fund the Trust over an agreed five-year period. This has resulted in the most substantial venture of its kind undertaken in South Africa. (By comparison, a similar commitment to contribute 0.15% of market cap by a similar spread of companies in the US economy would require \$8bn to have similar weight).

Strategic Partnership: At inception the Business Trust proposed a consultative body to facilitate interaction between senior business and government leaders on national issues. President Mbeki agreed and established the President's big business working group (BBWG). He subsequently established similar groups for small business, labour and agriculture. The BBWG is drawn from the leaders of the major corporations associated with the Business Trust who meet with senior cabinet members under the chairmanship of the President. Its purpose is to provide the President with leadership opinion on a range of national issues. These opinions do not seek to represent the mandated positions of business or any of its representative bodies. Neither do they purport to be expert opinion. While addressing issues from a business perspective, the BBWG aims to present those views in what it believes to be the national interest. The BBWG operates in a spirit of cooperativeness and in the belief that an exchange of opinion between business and government leaders will help to develop a shared appreciation of the challenges and opportunities South Africa faces and thereby enhance our ability to respond.

Governance partnership: 22 directors and trustees and their alternates govern the Business Trust. These are made up of 12 business appointees and 8 government appointees (including 5 cabinet ministers) According to the deeds decision making is by consensus.

Operating partnerships: Operating partnerships have been established at a number of levels. In the Trust three main operating areas exist. Liaison committees have been established to manage the alignment of the work of the Trust with national priorities and objectives. The most senior members of the departments of Education,

Environmental affairs and tourism and the justice and safety and security departments meet with management of the Business Trust. These are governed by agreed operating protocols.

Service partnerships: Partnerships for the direction of projects drawn from leaders of Business, government, and the management of the NGOs and other agencies tasked with implementing are established for each project. They include the commitment of considerable time by business leaders to serve on project governing bodies. Implementation partnerships are established at the level of local schools, businesses and training agencies. These include agreements signed by over 1000 local schools, the commitment of time on a voluntary basis by local firms to develop training qualifications, for both employed and unemployed people, and forging of linkages between big and small firms.

The National Business initiative established a special purpose vehicle to manage the Trust under the direction of the Trustees. It does so without interfering in Trust decisions and in terms of a contracted set of services at a cost of less than 5% of contract value.

The results underscore the value of the partnership. The Trust started operating on 1 July 1999. Within 30 months the Trust had achieved substantial results:

- R888 billion of the targeted R1 billion had been secured.
- Business plans worth R1.8 billion had been approved for implementation with co-funding mainly from government.
- A set of schooling programmes incorporating over a million pupils, 15000 teachers and 1500 schools in all nine provinces had been launched. These will improve reading ability by 2 years and writing ability by 4 years for a million primary school pupils, produce a 10% improvement in Mathematics and Science results for 400 000 high school pupils and develop world class technical colleges.
- A tourism marketing campaign had been launched in the USA and Europe, which in its first year was seen by 60 million people. A training programme that will improve the skills of 15000 people in the tourism sector and an enterprise support programme, which in its first year assisted 100 small firms and supported 1877 jobs, back this. Over 1000 small firms will benefit by the end of the programme.
- A programme to support the integration of the justice system had been supported which has demonstrated, among other things, a 40% reduction in waiting trial time for prisoners in pilot centres.

- The President's Big Business Working Group had met on a number of occasions and agreed on a framework for the encouragement of fixed investment and held high-level discussions on issues such as Zimbabwe and Land Reform.
- A programme to control malaria in South Africa, Mozambique and Swaziland was initiated and has resulted in a reduction in the prevalence of malaria from 63% to 38% in an area covering 45000 homesteads

Lessons

The Business Trust was founded in a spirit of partnership. Its success however, has been build on the conversion of that into practical action structured on shared objectives, an agreed strategy, a pooling of resources and sharing of risks and rewards and some form of agreement (contract) at each level of the partnership.

At the start of the Trust, considerable effort went into the development of a strategy that would guide the pursuit of the objectives of creating jobs, developing capacity and enhancing trust. Behind the shared objectives, lay particular interests, for government to accelerate delivery and for business to demonstrate commitment. A sharply focused strategy has made decisive action possible. Some tough decisions were needed. For example, the decision to focus on just three sectors (tourism, education and crime reduction), undertake only a handful of large scale projects and not entertain unsolicited applications for funds could not have been seen through without a clear sense of strategy.

The partnership is strongest where resources, risks and rewards are shared

One of the definitions of "partnership" is a relationship between two or more parties with a common objective in which the risks and rewards are shared. While an "equal" balance of those "3 R's" (resources, risks and rewards) among the partners is not usually necessary (or achievable), our experience has been that the closer the balance the tighter the partnership. For example, the government financial investment in the Trusts tourism programmes is much greater than in education. That has had an impact on the way the partnership has developed. Resources are however not only financial. For example business understanding of the market in which tourism operates has been an important resource. Risks are also measured in different currency for the different actors. In the Trust's Colleges Collaboration Fund, the bulk of the finances came from the Trust. The risk for the companies in the trust was that the R109m originally invested was wasted. For government the risk was quite different. The DoE carries responsibility for the restructuring and development

of the sector. If the programme agreed by business and government through the Trust fails, the DOE carries formal accountability, not the private funders of the CCF.

Common objectives should not blur distinctive roles

In public / private partnerships it is most important to be clear about those functions that can best be performed by public bodies, on the one hand and private on the other. An agreement to work in partnership should not blur distinctive roles. This is particularly significant in SA where through the years of an illegitimate state, private (non profit) bodies took on surrogate state roles. Now almost 10 years into the new democracy, it is important for external actors to remember that they are not the government. (Just as it is important for government to realize that it can't do it all on its own).

The structure of relationships should be manageable

It is particularly important for external funders of partnerships to ensure that manageable relationships are created. Frequently, external funders fund service providers to provide services to a third party (often a government department). The service provider presents itself as provider of the service and controller of the funds that pay for the service. That is difficult to manage and inherently unhealthy. In cases where this has been most problematic the Trust has moved to require the service provider to enter into a service agreement with the department concerned and the trust will fund only those services agreed to and through a mechanism where the department accepts that the services provided were received.

Partnerships should be built around core partnership agreements

In the case of the Business Trust a number of partnership agreements have been developed:

- The corporate partnership is built on a prospectus on which funds were solicited, a funding formula against which funds have been raised (all funders must provide 0.15% of market cap or 2% of earnings) and written undertakings to provide funds over the five years of the Trust.
- The strategic partnership in the Presidents big business working group is generally built around an agreed investment framework.
- The Governance partnership is based on the Trust deeds which set out the agreed strategy and specify participation and decision making arrangements.

- The operating partnerships with the key government departments are built around memorandums of understanding and implemented through liaison committees.
- The service partnerships with the implementing agencies are built on performance contracts. In some cases the service providers have further implementation agreements, for example with schools.

Public private partnerships for the delivery of a vibrant FET system

A vibrant FET sector must be part of the market

This is the component of the education system that is closest to the private sector and should be thoroughly part of the market.

An FET sector that provides an effective bridge between education and the world of work is vital for economic development and the improvement of the life chances of hundreds of thousands of citizens. The ground work has been laid by the development of a policy that envisages responsive FET organisations and the declaration of 50 new institutions. This is just the start of a process that must lead to increasing numbers of South Africans benefiting from vocational and technical education and training. The challenge is to develop the incentives, structures and competences that will make those institutions truly responsive. To do so these institutions must operate in a market place. They must ease access to the labour market for students, provide services to industry to contribute to economic development and earn income to develop the institutions. The move to implementation will require that FET institutions become thoroughly part of the market and for the private sector to provide strategic and governance support.

Service partnerships – Building markets of service providers in which colleges are both providers and recipients of services

The development of a vibrant FET sector will in the short term require substantial support for FET institutions. This support may include the conduct of labour market studies; Strategic planning and organisation development for the new institutions; training for personnel etc. These are all services that can be purchased in the private sector.

As the new FET colleges develop, they will need to begin to provide services to industry. This could include the provision of training of employees under the Skills

Development Act. Colleges could also provide services to SETA'S for the training of the unemployed and to government departments for the training of officials. The Skills Development Act contemplates a competitive market of training providers. Colleges would have to compete with private providers.

The resources available for this work **are** considerable. The funds generated by the levy / grant scheme, those allocated to the national skills fund and the **1%** of payroll to be allocated to training by government departments are all measured in billions of Rands per annum. And to this should be added the value of training budgets of private firms.

A Strategic partnership that places the development of colleges under the guidance of business and government leadership

A strategic partnership could bring together the departments of education, labour, and business.

While there is a market of private training providers, FETIs will need support to become effective players in the market. The manner in which the market is built and how the entire FET sector develops could be substantially advanced by the establishment of a high level body that brings together representatives of the private sector and the departments of labour and education.

Governance partnerships that tie colleges into the markets and communities they serve

The move to involve private sector players onto the governing councils of colleges needs to be accelerated. If colleges are to meet the needs of students and business in a manner that responds to the local labour market, one of the best ways to achieve that is to have people from local companies on college councils. A business perspective should also help colleges deal with the management of change and add an important non executive dimension to the deliberations of those councils. The involvement of business on these councils is not new. Neither is it a panacea and the mobilization of business people is not as easy as it sounds. It does however add an important dimension to the college and provides an opportunity for business people to contribute within their areas of knowledge and expertise.

Conclusion

Possibilities and constraints

From the perspective of the lessons learnt through the development and management of the Business Trust, this should presentation concludes that there is considerable potential to build a vibrant FET system around public / private partnerships. To do this a number of constraints must be overcome.

Like many powerful ideas, the central constraint lies at the core of the idea. The power of the partnership idea is that it brings together parties with different interests to pursue common objectives without giving up their own identities. The spirit of togetherness is vital in a rapidly polarizing world. The constraint this engenders is that this spirit of togetherness in fact obscures interests, blurs identities and drives objectives to an unhelpful level of abstraction.

Partnership support

The constraints can best be overcome by the parties being as clear as they can about interests, objectives, resources, risks and rewards and by the development of appropriate mechanisms for different types and levels of partnership. The mechanism for a strategic partnership may well be some form of council. Governance partnerships for colleges are contemplated in the legislation for the structuring of college councils. A constraint here will be the effective mobilisation and support of a business contribution. What is loosely referred to as a partnership for service delivery ought to be mediated by properly regulated markets in which councils buy and sell services in a market place. It is in this area where loose partnership talk is frustrating the development of a vibrant market. The development of markets and mobilization of business support at the strategic and operational levels is unlikely to happen to occur spontaneously. A support mechanism will be required that can help colleges develop productive market relationships. At least three functions could be performed by such a partnership support facility.

- Enabling colleges to procure the services they need by developing a competitive service provider market and enabling colleges to interact with it.
- Supporting colleges to understand and respond to market demand in the in areas of operation
- Supporting private sector participants on college councils and on a high level strategy group to help guide the development of the sector.

Abstracts of Presentations

Maximising the contribution of TVET to social and economic development - By Kenneth King (Edinburgh University, United Kingdom)

Dr Kenneth King, by discussing the World Bank's report on 'Vocational and Skills Development in Sub Saharan Africa' highlighted the importance of including, in any planning for the FET sector, the extent, role and contribution of private FET institutions. While he critiqued the World Bank's report for its understanding of FET in South Africa and its apparent bias towards the private sector, he indicated that it provides a useful framework for analysing this sector as it distinguishes between four types of private FET providers and by so doing providing a useful analytical framework. These four types are: (i) enterprise based training in the formal economy; (ii) enterprise based training in the informal economy; (iii) private for profit training provision and (iv) private for non-profit training provision, specifically NGO training.

He suggested that the Private FET sector may be significantly larger than the public sector and may be addressing a totally different audience. While, for example, the public FET sector trains predominantly post-school youth, the private sector trains mainly those already in employment. He indicated that the most invisible aspect of private FET provision is the training that it undertakes in the informal sector. In this regard, he argued for the importance of recognising, at this time of decreasing employment opportunities in the formal sector, the imperatives of training for the informal economy. He warned that "this [training in the informal economy] is a sector that needs to be dealt with creatively or face disaster".

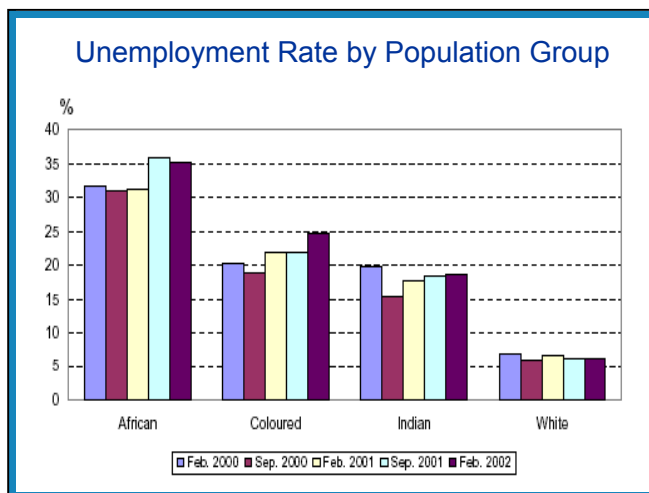
He concluded by suggesting that the development of closer partnerships between the private and public FET sectors may contribute to addressing the problem of the 'inverted triangle' that currently exists in education and training in South Africa.

The Role of colleges in expanding learning opportunities for youth and adults - By Ken Fassi (Head of Campus, New Central Johannesburg College) and Rod Hulley (Chairperson of Council, False Bay FET College)

Fassi and Hulley provided a dynamic, two-pronged presentation on the role of the college sector in South Africa's economic and social development.

Hulley presented the key legislation impacting on the FET college sector, specifically the FET Act, the Skills Act and the Sector Skills Levy. By presenting statistics from the Labour Force Survey 2002, he focussed on the need for FET to address the skills gap existing between high unemployment (particularly in the formal economy) and the intermediate and high level skills needed to compete in the global economy.

Within this context, he argued for improved synergy between the DoE and the DoL, in a manner that enables the DoL to identify the skills gaps and the DoE, to respond to such.



Fassi, by presenting innovative case studies from New Central Johannesburg College, provided numerous examples of how colleges could, by being responsive to the needs of their local communities and industries, become more effective at providing employable skills to their learners. In this regard, he spoke specifically about the following:

- The importance of ensuring that the curricula is diverse and relevant to the needs of both the formal and informal economy
- The need for colleges to develop diverse modes of delivery that include mix traditional campus based instruction with distance/ opening learning systems and off campus tuition.
- The need to ensure that college educators are upskilled, re-skilled and multi-skilled so that they remain up to date with the latest technology an information.
- The importance of providing student support, particularly to our historically disadvantaged learners. Here Fassi suggested: pre-enrolment counselling, post study placement, learner tracking and student financial support schemes.
- The importance of the FET sector marketing themselves efficiently by means of both traditional means, schools, media, community centres as well as through corporates, companies and chambers of commerce.
- The importance of college councils undertaking efficiently their responsibility of creating a mission for the college; ensuring an effective strategic plan; enabling

the development of relevant programs; implementing quality assurance mechanisms; assisting with raising funds and ensuring that the college has sufficient human resources to implement such.

Hulley and Fassi discussed the different kinds of partnerships that could and should be created. Hulley focused on partnerships between colleges and SETA's, private providers, companies, NGO's and Metropolitan council while Fassi focussed on partnerships between colleges and their local communities and industries.

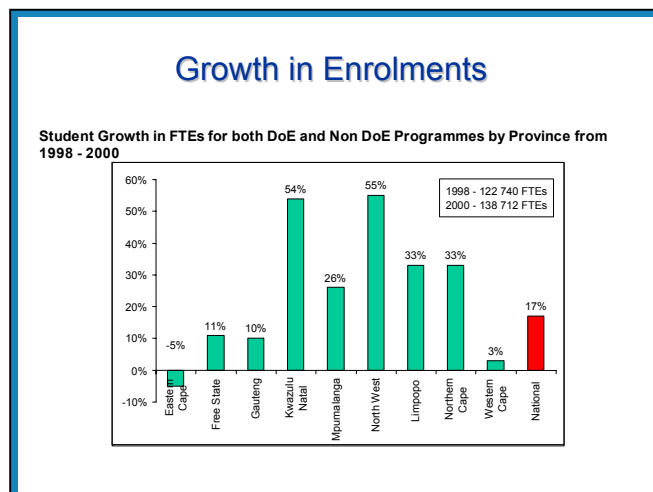
Fassi and Hulley concluded that colleges, despite the difficulties of the transformation challenge and the enormity of the demands made of them, must face their challenges and find innovative solutions to them.

A portrait of the colleges three years on - By Glen Fisher (NBI's Education and Enterprise Unit Director) and Ros Jaff (NBI's Colleges Collaboration Fund's Programme Manager)

Fisher and Jaff presented findings from the research study titled, '*Quantitative Overview of the Further Education and Training College Sector - The New Landscape*' published by the Department of Education.

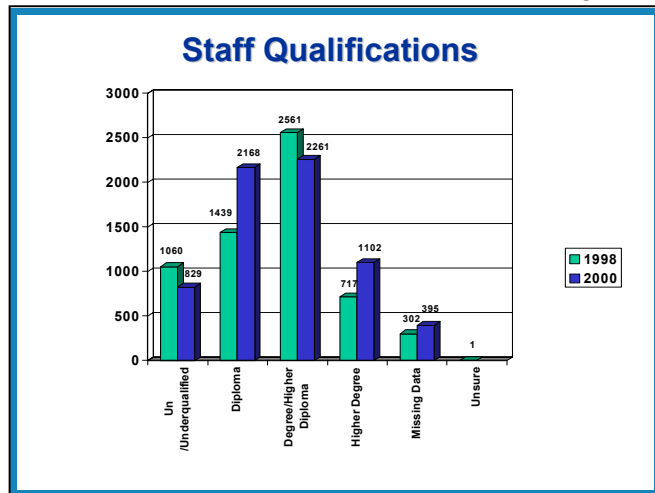
They highlighted, from the findings of the study, the key areas of progress that had been made since 1998. These include:

- The Merger process has changed the landscape from 152 colleges in 1988 to 50 in 2000.
- Student enrolments have grown by 17%.
- Enrolments in Post N3-Level programmes have decreased, in line with the Department of Education's strategy towards delivering programmes at FET level.
- The student profile changed from 17.6% African in 1990 to 75% in 2000, reflecting more equitably the demographics of South Africa.
- Enrolments in Non-DoE programmes, an indicator of college responsiveness, increased by 22%.



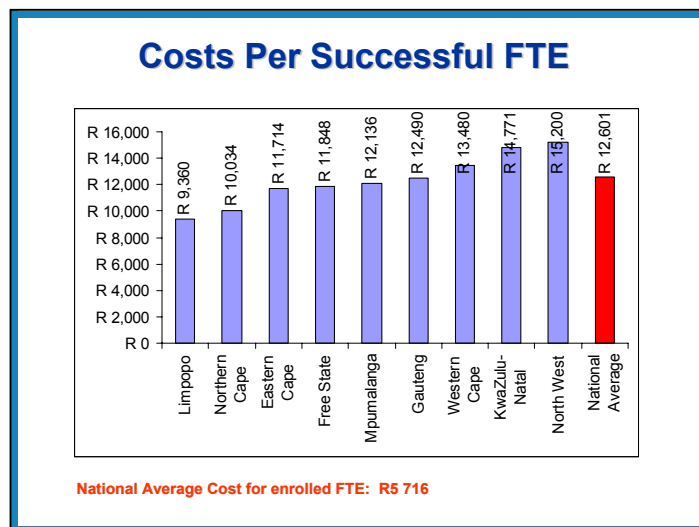
- Staff qualifications have improved markedly since 1998 with a decrease in unqualified and under-qualified staff and a marked increase in staff with higher degrees.

Fisher warned that failure to safeguard the gains of restructuring will result in the colleges being mere aggregations of the old technical colleges. In this respect he highlighted a number of key areas that needed urgent attention. These included concerns regarding:



- The racial and gender profile of teaching and management staff. He indicated that the racial profile of teaching and management staff has changed only marginally since 1998 and at senior post levels are predominantly still largely male and white.
- The needs of rural colleges that face specific logistic problems.
- The management and leadership capacity required to run large scale institutions.
- The lack of programme diversification. He indicated that more than 80% of enrolments are in two vocational fields: viz. business studies and engineering and that this represents too narrow a programmatic range.
- The number of non establishment staff. Non establishment staff numbers have increased, as a percentage of the overall staff component it has grown by 1% from 1998 to 16% of the total staff complement in 2000.
- The overall academic performance which decreased by 2% from 1998.

Fisher indicated that FET colleges are funded provincially, with the average FET budget being under 2%



of the total provincial education budget. The cost per successful FTE is R12, 061 with

the cost of each enrolled FTE being R5,716. He argued that while some colleges have financial reserves and investments for development, that this does not replace the need for government funding, as not all colleges have equal access to such reserves. An added concern is the diversity in tuition fees which range from R705 to R2678.

The speakers concluded by noting that the main challenges facing the sector are to raise participation rates, grasp new opportunities such as learnerships and cope with the disparities that exist across the rural/urban divide. Immediate concern rests with the capacity available to managing large multi campus sites and develop realistic and relevant strategic plans. These concerns, together with the need to diversify programmes and provide staff development key issues, were regarded as critical challenges facing the sector over the short term.

Expectations and contributions of the private sector towards improving the country's skills - By Cas Coovadia (General Manager, Banking Council of South Africa)

Mr Coovadia indicated that the private sector, a partner of government in ensuring an effective and efficient FET system through the Business Trust, recognises the centrality of skills development in the social and economic development of South Africa.

He indicated that the important thing is not only to maintain, but to create opportunities and conditions that enable and create private sector involvement in the colleges through working partnerships. In this regard, he suggested steps or actions for the FET sector that would enable and encourage a closer relationship with business. These included:

- Colleges must begin to address more directly the needs of business. He urged the sector to embrace "Letsema", collaboration between labour and education to unblock FETIs access to levies and other resources.
- Colleges should include private sector representation on their councils.
- Colleges must develop dynamic and resolute leadership who understand the private sector and can engage them effectively.
- Colleges must understand industry needs and endeavour to match skills to jobs and in association with the private sector should support with the development and implementation of learnerships.

- The FET sector should consult with the private sector in developing programs and curriculum offerings that are constantly updated to maintain economic relevance.
- Colleges must use more effectively the SETA accredited learnership programs.

He concluded by saying that he is confident that the platform has been created for a sustainable partnership between business, government and other stakeholders to ensure that we have FETIs that will be able to deliver the people and skills needed for economic and social development. In this regard, he stated that the “private sector is ready, able and willing to meet its commitment in that partnership and is looking forward to it”.

The FET Awards Scheme

The Minister’s FET Award Scheme, launched at the convention aims to:

- Support the transformation of Public FET Colleges.
- Support the implementation of FET legislation by rewarding change.
- Ensure that best practice in the FET sector is showcased and widely disseminated.
- Create public awareness of the sector.

The five categories of the awards are: (i) student support services, (ii) curriculum innovation, (iii) college industry links, (iv) governance and management and (v) responsiveness in relation to the merger process. The award winning colleges will receive grants, technical support and branded logo’s that can be used in the marketing of their college.

The Awards programme commences in 2003, and colleges will be invited to apply early in 2003.

The Human Resource Development Strategy-By Sibulelo Mokhobo-Nomvete from the Department of Labour

Ms Mokhobo-Nomvete focussed her presentation on the role that the FET college sector should play in HRD in South Africa. To this end, she outlined the objectives of the HRD strategy and the National Skills Development Plan. The objectives of the HRD strategy are to: (i) improve the foundations for human development; (ii) improve the supply of high quality skills; (iii) increase employer participation and (iv) support

employment growth. The objectives for the National Skills Development Plan are to develop a culture of high quality, lifelong learning, and fostering and stimulating skills that support productivity, employability and small businesses.

She indicated that the institutions supporting the strategy would be SETA's and Provincial Labour Centres. The primary function of the SETA's is to study the needs of skills in various sectors, pay grants to firms that train, develop learnership programmes and quality assure learning. The task of the Provincial Labour Centres is to provide employment services for employers, workers and training providers; to register work seekers; and to help people access educational programmes.

In the market for education and skills, the Ministry of Labour operates mainly on the demand side, while the Ministry of Education operates mainly on the supply side. The Skills Development Strategy of the Ministry of Labour provides a framework for determining the training needs in the labour market and the funding mechanisms for training. The FET policy framework provides, in the main, a strategy for suppliers of education and training to respond to the labour market needs as identified by private and public employers and as outlined by the Ministry of Labour.

She argued that the FET college sector, as an education and training delivery system, can make a contribution to HRD only if they work collaboratively with those structures and bodies that function on the demand side. In this regard she announced that an HRD co-ordinating committee has been established that includes both the Ministries for Labour and Education, with each taking mutual responsibility for supporting with the implementation of the principles of the NQF and SAQA.

At an institutional level, areas of practical collaboration that will support the NQF and SAQA policies include the following:

- SETA's provide sectoral labour market information to FETI's.
- SETA's and FETI's design vocational qualifications.
- SETA's and FETI's collaboratively develop teaching, learning, assessment methods, learning material and learnerships.
- FETI's provide for the theoretical components required by learnerships.

She recommended that FETIs should try to manage learning for work. She provided, as an example, the case of Spar Groups partnership with a FETI. In this case, the Spar group training centre wanted to provide learnerships to their employees. In order to achieve this they partnered with an FETI that provided the teaching staff who

then developed and delivered on the theoretical and some aspects of the practical training.

Case Studies in College Responsiveness - Mr. MW Nzimande, Head of Mobeni College

Mr Nzimande discussed the way in which Mobeni College has responded to the developmental needs of their local context. He explained that Mobeni College, situated South of Durban, is located in an environment that needs economic, social and infrastructural developmental. In order to address this need Mobeni College developed partnerships with the DoL and local government for the provision of local services and tendered to participate in and provide services in local development projects. One such project is the 'Ushaka' project, which aims to provide low cost housing.

One of the steps taken by Moboweni College was to ensure that there was a provincial DoE representative on the Provincial Skills Development Forum. He suggested that other FETIs do the same as such representation ensures that the FETIs are constantly informed about the education and training needs in their province. In addition, he recommended that FETIs develop relationships with the labour centres and align their programmes to the skills register and unit standards.

Case Studies in College Responsiveness - Mrs. Mitchell, De Aar, Training Partnership

Mrs Mitchel, sharing the experience of De Aar College, indicated how partnerships with local and national government has made it possible for De Aar College to contribute to the local economy and at the same time strengthen the College. She indicated that De Aar college, in partnership with government, has played a major role in providing education and training for the unemployed, in re-training staff currently in post and providing lifelong learning and skills.

She introduced to the convention the location and situation of De Aar College. She indicated that De Aar is located in the upper Karoo region, a poor farming region, with little or no industries and vast distances between places.

She indicated that the development of partnerships has enabled In addition, it has enabled De Aar College to develop the workshops and a training restaurant.

With respect to the partnerships she indicated that indicated that De Aar College has built up partnerships with most of the government departments in the area which has

resulted in De Aar College growing from a student headcount of 170 in 1988 to 740 in 2002 and developing a number of workshops. The partnership, she indicated, are critical for De Aar as the college combines theory and practice by providing six months of training followed by an incubation period where students do practical work.

She provided a list of the key partnerships that De Aar college is currently engaged in. These include:

- A partnership with the Department of Water Affairs in which De Aar College provides training in brick laying, carpentry, sowing, carpentry, welding, hospitality. This practical component of the training takes place in eight workshops all of which are accredited.
- A partnership with the Departments of Labour and Public Works in which De Aar provides training sessions.
- Partnerships with local schools that offer computer science. In these partnerships De Aar College offers the N3 subjects for local schools.
- An international partnership with a college in Sweden in which the Swedish college assists De Aar to develop the area of under floor heating and air conditioning.
- A partnership with the Department of Nature Conservation in which tourism students undertake practical training with the possibility of being employed by the Department.

Case Studies in College Responsiveness - Mrs. Venter (Head of Pretoria Campus)

Mrs. Venter, from Tshwane North College FET (Pretoria campus) argued that the formation of mutually beneficial partnerships have a number of positive outcomes for all parties. For the college it means additional funds as well as enabling students and staff to gain invaluable insights and experiences into the working world. She continued by arguing that partnerships should be formed not only nationally, but also internationally as this enables benchmarks for evaluation to be established that raise the quality of provision at South African FETIs.

She argued that the formation of partnerships enables colleges to adequately prepare students to be competent in diverse settings and to meet the challenges of the new economy.

She provided, as examples, numerous innovative specific case studies of partnerships that Pretoria Campus is currently engaged in. These include:

- Partnerships with many embassies in Pretoria that has enabled the college to attract foreign guests.
- Partnerships with a number of game farms. These partnerships enable staff members to access these facilities without paying and it allows catering and tourism students to get experience while working at these facilities.
- A partnership with the Tshwane Metropolitan Council in which tourism students conduct tours for them.
- A partnership with the Katholieke Hogeschool Mechelen from Belgium and the Seychelles College for Hospitality and Tourism Training which involves student and staff exchange.

FET College Responsiveness Study Report – Mr Michael Cosser (HSRC)

Mr Cosser presented the findings from the HSRC's study, "Investigating responsiveness": This study involved a graduate tracer study, an employer satisfaction survey, a socio-economic profile, institutional profiles and an overview of the local labour market. The graduate tracer study component focussed on:

- Graduate destinations after achievement of N2, N3 or NSC qualifications.
- Uptake of technical college graduates in the labour market.
- The extent of employed graduates' satisfaction with employment situations.

The findings showed the following:

- There was a 35.8% response rate (3508 graduates). The average age of graduates is 21 years old, with the majority (56%) being between the ages 20-24.
- 81% of respondents had achieved a grade 12 qualification before 1999 and 70% of respondents achieved a qualification after 1999. At the time of the survey, 62% of respondents were enrolled for levels N4-N6 with 70% studying at technical colleges.
- Electrical engineering had the largest number (59%) of graduates.

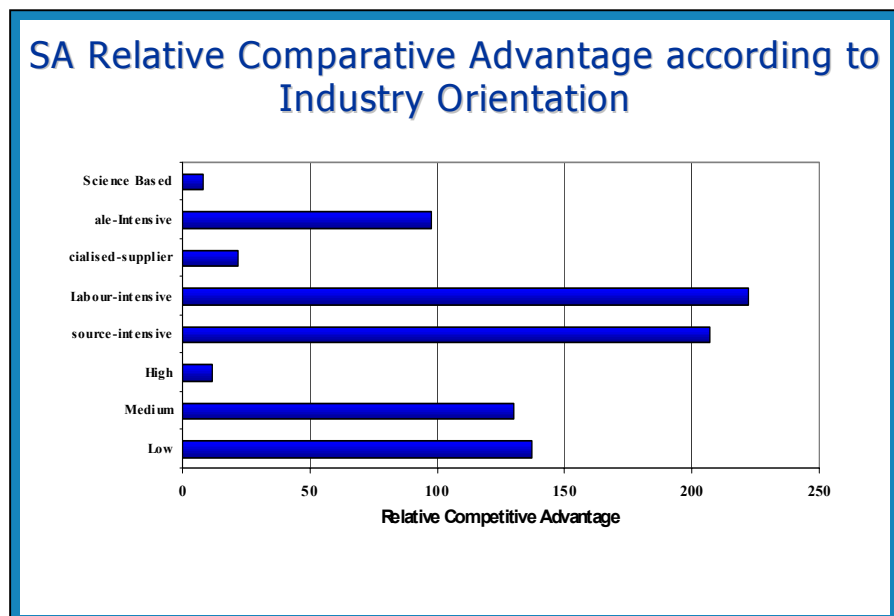
- The reason for subject choice showed that 61% selected their subject area out of interest for the field of study as compared to 24% who selected their area of study to ensure that they get a job.
- 62% of graduates are unemployed, with 70% of those being African and 24% white.
- 28% of graduates were employed by a company or organisation, with 6% either self-employed or assisting in a small business. The employment experience of graduates by occupation and gender and sector shows that gender is the strongest predictor of a graduate's occupation, both a discriminating and a discriminatory factor.
- The monthly income of graduates shows that the majority (45%) earn between R1001-R3000 per month, with 36% earning less than R1000 p/m. 80% of African and 86% of white graduates earn less than R3000 p/m while 80% of male and 87% of female earn less than R3000 p/m
- In the quality of college provision, the quality of teaching scored the highest (with a mean of 4.4) while practical instruction the lowest (a mean of 3.3).
- On the question of career guidance and job-related assistance, 2 out of 5 received no guidance on their study direction on enrolment and two thirds received no job-related assistance from their college.
- Regarding work experience, 78% of graduates acquired no work experience during their studies, while of those who did, 54% found work by themselves with no assistance from the college. 89% of graduates were not apprenticed under an industry training board and 91% did not qualify as artisans during or after their studies.
- After graduating, 53% found work through personal contacts and only 14% secured jobs with the help, direct or indirect, of their college.
- In the question on job satisfaction, income is the least most important factor after: (i) content of work, (ii) working condition; (iii) opportunity to learn while working; (iv) opportunity to use skills acquired at college and (v) job security.
- Graduates of all population groups were positive about choosing the same subjects and technical college.

The conclusion of the Graduate Tracer Study is that the typical graduate, at the end of 1999, was an African Male, 21 years old, qualified with an N2 or N3 in engineering and two years after graduating, was still unemployed.

The Role of government in improving the skills base for economic development and growth – Dr Alfred Tau, Department of Trade and Industry

Dr Tau, citing from research undertaken by the International Labour Organisation, argued that there is a positive correlation between technical education and the number of jobs created. Citing from the United Nations report he argued that South African enrolments in basic education, science and technology are below international standard and that improvement is required in these areas. Furthermore,

that there is a tendency for education providers to train for jobs in the formal economy. He argued that education and training providers, the FET college sector included, should focus rather on producing entrepreneurs.



With respect to the role of DTI, he indicated that the DTI sees itself playing an important role in HRD in general. They do this by publishing an integrated strategy that provides a sense of where the country should be in 10 or 20 years. Their goals are to improve the quality of life and enhance wealth by paying attention to global competitiveness and how South Africa relates to the global community in terms of production of goods, services and trade. Here the DTI is specifically interested in where South Africa ranks in terms of manufacturing value added per capita (MVA), rather than in terms of raw materials production. The drivers of this competitive industrial performance index, viz. the MVA, are skills, technological advance and infrastructure.

He introduced the convention to THRIP and SPY, both research programmes that DTI is involved in that aim to assist industries and communities build the necessary human capital.

He concluded by highlighting concern with the lack of co-ordination between government departments and indicated that he hoped that the convention would enable some progress in this matter.

Dr Tau indicated that while much of their programmes are in research and development, an area of activity not undertaken by FET, that the FET sector could assist the DTI by providing access to communities. He indicated that “The DTI has programmes that can benefit communities, but because we are not close enough to the communities we need people who can take them there. We are currently trying to build relationships with city councils so that we can deliver to them. If you can link together with us, then through those relationships we might be able to deliver where there is the most need”.

The Role of government in improving the skills base for economic development and growth – Dr. B O Tema (Department of Science and Technology)

Dr Tema argued, in her presentation, for closer collaboration and synergy between government departments and the FET sector, in order that the FET sector can benefit from the resources available in these government departments. In this regard she argued that each department plays a role in improving the skills base for economic growth. How this role is interpreted depends on the mandate and capacity of the specific government department.

As a representative of DST, she indicated that DST’s mandate was to support with the development and now implementation of the science and technology innovation policy. She explained that the innovation policy is based on the understanding that modern economies are driven, not so much by natural resources, but increasingly by a knowledge based economy. She provided as an example the case of Nokia in Sweden.

She explained that the difference between the DTI and the DST is that the DTI is responsible for selling and competitiveness, while the DST is responsible for producing the knowledge and technology and make them available to the DTI.

In terms of innovation, she reported that South Africa spends 0.75% of GDP on research and development while in Europe they spend 2%. She indicated that the research and development expenditure has to be raised to 1% as without adequate

investment in financial and human terms South Africa will be dependant on the knowledge of others. During 1998, for example, R1,5 billion was paid abroad for the use of copyright, designs, patents and trademarks.

In this regard, she argued that it is imperative that schools equip South Africa's youth with the a culture of creativity and investigation rather than rote learning in science. "We need students to go into universities and technikons. We need more people doing research". She implied that the FET sector should consider how they too can contribute to the national system of innovation as "we cannot only think about developing researchers at tertiary level".

The findings of the Foresight suggested that ICT, advanced materials and biotechnology are critical sectors for South Africa's knowledge development. As such, the DST has developed a strategic plan for 5-10 years that includes: (i) a focus on the research strategy; (ii) human resource development strategy and (iii) infrastructural investment strategy. In order to achieve these goals, the DST has implemented 'Thumisano' (the technology stations programme), the national Biotechnology strategy and GODISA (a national incubator program to support SMME's). The motto of the GODISA program is "to increase economic growth and employment creation through the enhancement of technological innovation, improvement in productivity and accelerated international competitiveness of South African SMME's".

The Role of government in improving the skills base for economic development and growth – Mr. Sam Morotoba (Department of Labour)

Mr Morotoba provided an overview of the approach that the Department of Labour has adopted to address economic development in growth.

He indicated that the government has, since 1994, made great strides in creating conditions for job creation and has successfully managed to prevent many jobs from being lost. Interventions have been across the five key policy domains: fiscal, trade and industry, labour market, social development and human resource development. With respect to the HRD strategy, he indicated that this strategy brings together four complementary sets of policies in the areas of schooling, childhood development, adult learning and the post school environment and research and innovation.

Quoting the International Labour Organization, he stated that "employment should not be a residual but an overarching goal. It should not be a sector policy but the successful co-ordination of all policies". He reported, that as such, the Minister of

Labour is currently working together with other ministries to ensure that South Africa's HRD policies are implemented.

A further strategy has been the development of SETAs. The SETA's have been established to play a major role in ensuring that the education and training provided in institutions such as FETIs and HEIs is responsive and responsible to the needs of the labour market – FETIs will not be able to achieve this responsivity or accountability with the SETAs. The challenges for SETAs, on the other hand, is to look at the participation rates for employers and employees, to have accountability and to campaign for more learners to participate in learnerships. The SETAs, in turn, cannot achieve this without the FET sector.

The Role of the UK's Association of Colleges (AoC) in supporting FET colleges - Mr David Gibson (CEO of AoC)

Mr Gibson indicated that the AoC has multiple roles. Critical amongst these is the role of leadership and advocacy. In this regard, the AoC works in policy development by making sure that the experience of colleges is placed at the heart of policy making; by lobbying for improved funding and by finding better opportunities for learners.

The AoC undertakes public relationship both within and for the sector. Here the AoC has weekly briefings, a newsletter program and a help line service, all of which provide help on best practice. It also has an Awards Scheme and special events to recognize the individual successes of colleges. The external relations of the AOC encompass the areas of media – promoting the college sector and the positives in further education, funding and research.

The association strives to develop communications, curriculum and quality management services and international relations by forging links with FE organizations around the world.

The curriculum and quality directorate of the AOC has regular meetings with the department of education and skills; provides regular briefings to members on issues related to curriculum and quality and organizes events and conferences related to curriculum and quality.

The employment directorate provides advice and guidance to employers on employment, health and safety matters, advice in key developments in the law and best practice. It also co-ordinates national and regional networks of personnel managers, governors, payroll and health and safety managers who then share best practice, consultation and policy.

The Role of the American Association of Community Colleges in supporting FET colleges – Dr Carolyn Williams (AACC)

Dr Williams started her speech with an introduction of the AACC. Founded in 1920 and located in Washington D.C, it serves as the national voice for 1,151 accredited two-year colleges and their 10,2 million students. Currently 95% of all accredited two-year colleges are AACC members. She indicated that the association works with other sectors of the higher education community, state and federal governments and business to serve the needs of the students, colleges and communities. The AACC provides leadership and service in key areas such as policy initiatives, advocacy, research, education services and co-ordination and networking.

She reported that the community college sector, starting nearly 100 years ago, is well entrenched in society, with 46% of all first time college freshmen attending community colleges. Colleges have an open admission and low tuition fees with enrolments reflecting a rich diversity with people of all ages, ethnic and cultural heritages and socio-economic backgrounds: statistically, 30% of college students are members of minorities. 15% are older than 40, 63 attend part time and 50% of students work full time.

The AACC's report "Building Communities", states, "We define the term community not only as a region to be served but also a climate to be created". These words are the rallying point for the community college movement. As such, responding to local needs is an integral part of community colleges, with a multifaceted curriculum providing training for the future workplace and new technologies. Many people with college degrees attend the colleges for computer courses or to update work skills. While occupational and technical programs are the focus for many students, attaining credits that transfer for a Bachelors degree continue to be the goal for a large segments of the college population.

As tuition fees have increased, so too have the number of students receiving federal bursaries, with nearly one third of these funds going to students enrolled at community colleges. The colleges focus primarily on teacher and student learning and throughout their history, community colleges have hired part time instructors for the occupational and business expertise they bring to the classroom.

She indicated that one of the key roles for the AACC is to advocate for its member colleges. Community colleges are the primary portal to higher education and employment for those who might not otherwise have access. In addition to the congress and federal administration, the association works closely with coalitions of other associations and organizations to achieve their goals and objectives. It also actively pursues international linkages. It has an active relationship with USAID that

supports college activities in developing countries and the AACC supports activities aimed at internationalizing the college curriculum.

Community colleges are emerging as the ideal learning institutions for the new economy, equipping graduates with a mix of applied and academic learning that is increasingly necessary to sustain careers in modern economies. Colleges have also begun to realize that a market exists for external providers of employer sponsored training programs. Two-year colleges train nearly as many workers to obtain their current jobs as do formal company programs and further skill improvement is more likely to happen at a college

Partnerships between colleges and employers allows each institution to do what it does best. Colleges are a good substitute for formal employer training as they have the potential to increase the efficiency of the work and learning transitions into the workplace.

Dr Williams summarised the core values of the AACC, as identified by its major stakeholders and partners, as being: (i) to provide a national voice and advocacy for the community college mission; (ii) to serve as a national information resource; (iii) to create opportunities for peer networking, professional initiatives, dialogue and community building; (iv) to facilitate collaboration and teamwork among staff and stakeholders; (v) to engender a shared commitment to the community college movement and (vi) to offer leadership and career development opportunities.

The Commissions

Commission A: Developing mega, multi purpose, responsive centres of excellence in the FET system: The role of institutional development and support strategies. Governance, management and instructional leadership issues.

*Chair: Makano Morojele (National Skills Fund),
Rapporteur: Anthony Gewers (Joint Education Trust).
Presentation by Wally Brown (Liverpool College principal)
and respondent JA Duarte (Tshwane North Colleges
Council).*

Wally Brown in his presentation focussed on the critical areas needed for the establishment of mega-responsive centres of excellence in the FET system. These included:

- Establishing in the college a culture of student centred provision that is shaped by diversity and inclusion and unpinned by quality.
- Defining the curriculum as the core of institutional planning. The curriculum, guided by the national agenda and labour market information, then informs all other areas.
- Planning must be geared to continuous improvement that includes the establishment of clear targets and timeframes, a regular process of review and the introduction of national benchmarks.
- Appointing leaders that have a clear vision of the future institution that is well articulated and understood by all and threaded into all activities.
- Managers must give clear messages and must provide constructive challenges for college leadership.

John Duarte indicated that opportunities for colleges are and will be created by developments in the local and national arena. Colleges, in turn, must recognize these and respond effectively. In order to do so colleges should:

- Plan effectively and in a manner that is guided by local needs, demographics and underpinned by a commitment to equity.
- Undertake continuous and rigorous self assessment against sets of performance indicators that have clearly articulated.

- During the process of mergers, conduct (despite the frustration of restructuring and the confusion of change) business as usual.
- Develop strong allies with the community in a manner that secures their involvement in the college activities.
- Shift from the notion that government is there to provide them support.

The commission concluded by recommending the following key actions:

- Appointment of new principals must be made immediately.
- The need to fast-track the process of developing post-establishment norms is critical.
- The need to distinguish between national and provincial competence in terms of national and provincial government's roles and responsibilities.
- The urgent need to fast-track the collapsing of MIS's into one (DoE).
- Institutions must not wait for national/provincial government. Institutions must take ownership for defining governance roles, management roles, a cost-centered approach to funding and staff development.

Commission B: Partnerships for the advancement of the NQF principles: Towards increased access, success, articulation and progression:

*Chair: Lesley Powell (L.Powell and Associates),
Rapporteur: (Candice Harrison (Consultant), Panel
Discussion that included: Dr Qhobela (Department of
Education), Mr Isaacs (SAQA), Mrs Rabe (Umalusi) and
Temba Ndhlovu (Department of Education)*

This session was marked by a discussion of partnerships that spanned partnerships at different levels of society: from partnerships between and even within institutions to partnerships between government departments.

While there was general acceptance that partnerships are a key strategy for implementing the strategies of the NQF, it was noted that the establishment of partnerships are not without difficulties. Key to these, were the difficulties captured in the presentation provided by Mr. Ndhlovu in which he indicated that partnerships

have failed, that they are difficult to plan and to start and that they are often reliant on personal relationships between individuals.

In this regard, he argued that the most important aspect of transformation in education is the provision of quality education that responds to South Africa's social and economic needs and expanding access to educational opportunities. He concluded by arguing that while partnerships are a useful and valuable strategy for achieving transformation in education, that they are not the only strategy and that they should never be undertaken at the expense of the driving imperatives facing our education system.

Dr Mashele, Head of Pretoria West Campus, provided many examples to indicate that institutions cannot make partnerships successful without the partner's co-operation. He indicated, using the example of FETIs, that partnerships with industry is dependent on industry's participation. In the case of rural colleges where no industries are located close to the colleges, the establishment of college-industry linkages is particularly hard to achieve.

In order that partnerships add value to the education and training system and to FETIs the commission agreed that there are three key guidelines that should be adhered to. These are:

- We should have guiding principles to fall back on;
- We should understand the local and national contexts before initiating partnerships;
- We should ensure that the key drivers of education, viz., participation, articulation, performance and progression, are achieved.

Whatever the level or kind of partnership discussed, all speakers agreed that partnerships should be:

- Governed by commonly shared guiding principles or a common moral purpose
- Co-operative
- Mutually beneficial
- Based on articulated and common interests
- Based on joint decisions and joint implementation plans
- Underpinned by negotiation and compromise

- Based on clearly identified roles and responsibilities
- Based on an understanding of complexity at an institutional level and of systemic change at a national level and
- Participation, articulation performance and progression

A number of guidelines for resolving the difficulties inherent in partnerships at the level of government to government partnerships were made during the discussions and presentations. These included:

- Ironing out inconsistencies and finalising unresolved matters in national legislation and policy before establishing partnerships
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the players in partnerships
- Identifying common guiding principles for partnerships
- Ensure that partnerships are monitored and regulated
- Ensure that communication is open across the systems and partners so that blockages can be identified

Commission C: the public and private sector partnership for the delivery of a vibrant FET system. Possibilities, constraints and lessons learnt

*Chair: Mr Paul Helepi, Rapporteur: Ros Jaffe (NBI),
Presenter: Brian Whittaker (Business Trust), Presenter
Barry Masoga (British Council). Respondent: Mr Barnes.*

Mr Whittaker, in his speech, mentioned two proverbs that encapsulated the essence of partnerships: *“If we do not hang together, then we shall surely hang separately”* and *“If you have 4 hours to cut down a tree, spend 2 hours sharpening the axe”*.

He used the proverb, *“If we do not hang together, then we shall surely hang separately”*, to highlight the importance of partnerships as a critical strategy for the economic and social development of South Africa. He indicated that partnerships don't happen spontaneously, and that much work needs to be done to find the right partner. He warned that failure to establish clarity on agendas and agree on the vision and mission could result in the partnership failing. He mentioned there should be a balance in the investment made by the different partnerships to what he called the “Three R's” that is, Resources, Risks and Rewards. No partner should carry all

the risk, get all the rewards and supply all the resources, the balance lies in the distribution between them and the inherent mutually inclusive benefits in a partnership where these Three R's are shared.

He used the proverb, *"If you have 4 hours to cut down a tree, spend 2 hours sharpening the axe"*, to indicate that partnerships must be based on solid groundwork that ensures that expectations from the partnership are clear and that the right partners are selected and that the core agreement between partners must be based on what each can bring to the party. He mentioned that the distinctive roles between partners, particular in public-private partnerships, should not be blurred. Here he said that each partner must be clear about the functions that they can each best perform and the mandate that they hold to do so.

Mr Masoga pointed out that partnerships are essential for the development of the FET sector. He indicated that many colleges, located in urban areas, have been and are forging strong industry – college partnerships.

Mr Barnes spoke about the difficulties faced by rural colleges, which have no industries in their nearby locale with whom to partner. He argued that partnerships must be related to a local and a global context and cannot be based only on the skills needed in their own area, but also on the gaps that exist in the general market.

The commission concluded by recommending the following key actions:

- Staff need training on how to initiate partnerships and enter into partnership contracts.
- There is a need for more research on possible areas for partnerships.
- A better understanding of market related issues of skills and the labour market needs to be developed.
- Strategies and ways to share best practice needs to be developed.

Commission D: Creating an effective learner Support System for improved access and success

Chair: Piet Manota (NBI), Rapporteur: Knolisile Mazaza (NBI). Presenters: Dame Pat Morgan Webb (International New College Nottingham) and David Thomas (CRAC). Respondent: Raymond Preiss (AFETISA)

Dame Pat Morgan argued that the barriers that learners face in the FET system are individual, institutional, systemic, social and political. Individual factors are lack of confidence, financial problems and situational and logistical barriers, while institutional barriers are: lack of ethos and ambience, curriculum and accreditation, leadership and staff and organizational structure.

She argued that interventions in this regard should be systemic. In this regard she suggested the following critical interventions:

- The need for the NQF to allow and facilitate progression from FET to Higher Education.
- The need for a national funding framework with rewards for recruitment, retention and achievement rates.
- The need to widen participation. In this regard she indicated that some of the global strategies include fee remission, the development of a standard fee structure, and the provision of additional support services such as learning and personal support.

Mr Thomas presented the mission of CRAC as being to make interventions that change lives. In this regard, he provided an overview of CRAC's programmes:

- *The Insight into Management Programme* helps people to manage their careers. The programme is based on experiential learning in which young managers facilitate skills development and share experiences.
- The *Insight Plus Programme* provides a framework for the development for employability. It aims to turn casual work experience into learning experiences and into progression to employment. The programme is based on mentorship and is an accredited programme.

Mr Preiss shared the South African experience. He indicated that, with respect to learner support, the following aims were the driving imperatives shaping the structures and strategies being adopted:

- Overcoming barriers to access and success
- Developing learner-centred support services
- Providing systemic interventions. One such strategy, in the South African scenario is the Recognition of Prior Learning.

He argued that the current scenario, however, is such that that learners and teacher expectations are not aligned; that here is a high rate of learner drop out and that inadequate funding support is provided. With respect to learner needs he argued that there is a need to move towards programmes that are responsive to learner needs, appropriate recruitment and retention skills and a comprehensive learner support system.

The commission highlighted the following actions to be taken:

- Officials and staff must be trained
- Curriculum review and revamp
- (National funding framework
- Integration of a wide variety of learner support activities

Commission E: Funding models and practices to develop and sustain a high quality responsive FET system

*Chair: Dr Mike Hanson, Rapporteur: Hershela Narsee,
Presenter: Gerald Burke (Monash University) and
Respondent: Andre Donaldson*

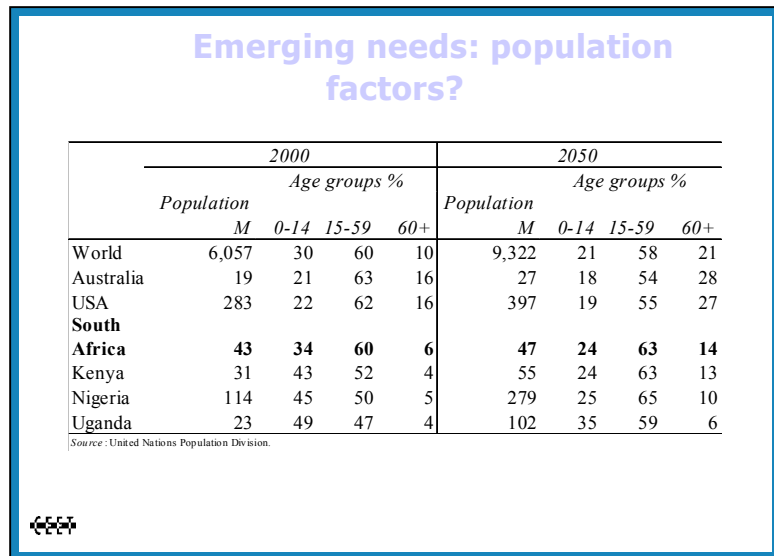
Prof Burke's presentation highlighted three main themes: (i) Existing and emerging needs; (ii) The current funding model and possible funding sources and (iii) Improving the effective and efficient use of resources.

With respect to the theme of existing and emerging needs he indicated that the current need is to expand access to education and training by youth and adults.

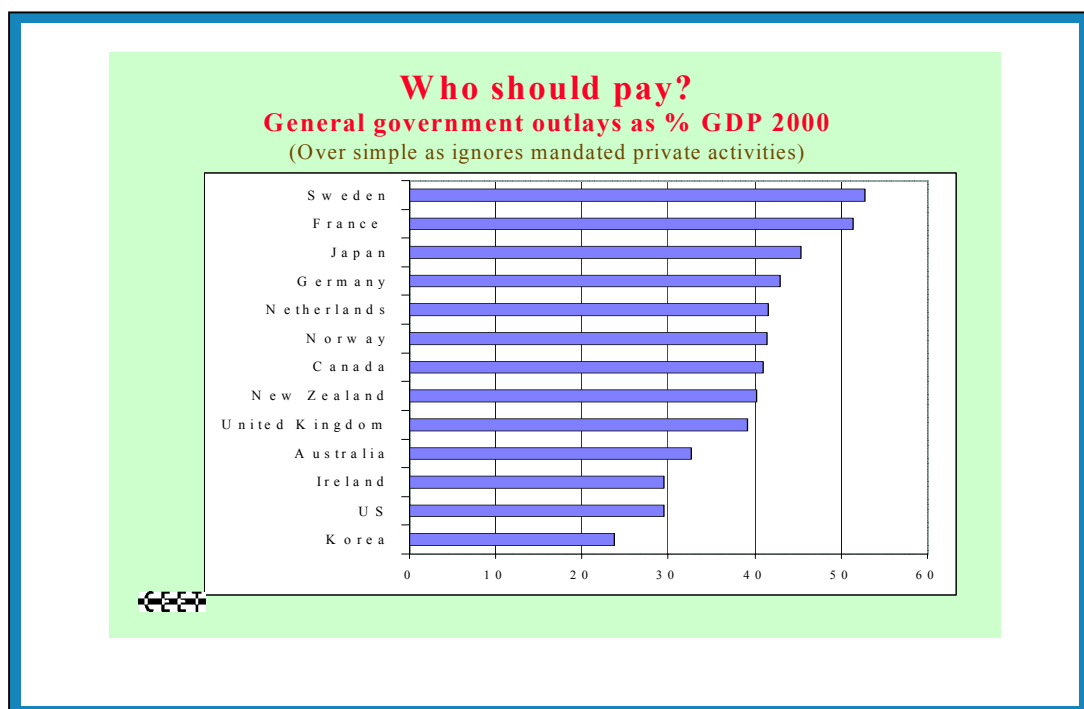
With respect to the emerging needs he indicated that the critical need is to respond to the changing nature of the economy, the demand for higher levels of skilled labour,

the demand for re-training and opportunities for lifelong learning. He presented, as indicated in the figure alongside, the age profile of the population in different countries to argue for increased and widened access to FET.

He argued that the current funding, derived mainly from provincial education department budgets, is low by international standards. He indicated that other sources that could be (or are being) tapped are: individuals, employers and national and provincial government departments.



With respect to improving the effective and efficient use of resources, he argued that the effective use of resources will result in public funds being used more effectively. In this regard he suggested a review of teacher salaries; the use new technologies and that colleges seek economies of scale. Another strategy that he discussed is the promoting of internal and external efficiency, which he believes can be done by improving accountability measures and having a separate capital budget.



Currently, the FET sector is very small by world standards, and perceived to be weak. There is a dichotomy between the type of skills provided by FETI's and that required by current industrial policy. The student profile has also changed, previously it was mostly part time and employed, now it is full time and unemployed. Many Colleges also have a poor infrastructure. The future of the sector entails having increased access for youth and adults, improved quality and redress, increased responsiveness to the state policy environment, efficient use of resources and proven quality assurance.

The actions to take are:

- Reviewing of staffing norms
- Developing of comprehensive funding strategy
- Establishing norms and standards for FETI's
- Implementing financial aid schemes for students
- Improving internal efficiencies.

Commission F: Quality Assurance a critical lever in the design and delivery of effective and efficient systems

Chair: Botshobela Maja (HSRC), Rapporteur: Glen Fisher (NBI), Presenter: Alti Van Der Merwe (Umalusi), Presenter: Prem Naidoo (Higher Education Quality Committee) and Respondent: Nzimande (Umlazi Campus)

Dr van der Merwe's presentation focussed on the functions and role of Umalusi. These were identified as being the quality assurance of providers, learning programmes, learner achievements and qualifications and also the issuing of certificates.

Umalusi was created to "ensure that continuous enhancement of quality is achieved in the delivery and outcomes of the general and further education and training sectors of the national education and training system". As such, Umalusi has a critical role to play in accreditation. Although public providers are deemed to be accredited this does not mean they are excluded from adhering to the criteria for accreditation. Umalusi will develop quality promotion criteria and engage in quality promotion with providers. Providers need to adopt a Quality Management System (QMS).

Umalusi will both promote and monitor quality improvement. Monitoring will take place through institutional visits, assistance in the processes of self evaluation and assistance in the development of provincial action plans. Quality Management systems need to have both an internal and external focus. Responsibility for quality assurance should be shared throughout the organisation, as there is a need to develop a “Quality Culture” in FETIs.

Dr Prem Naidoo focussed on the lessons that FET can learn from Higher Education and the specific challenges facing FET and the implications of these for quality assurance. He stated it was important that Quality Assurance systems should develop into an enabling tool for transformation rather than another bureaucracy. The lessons that can be learnt from Higher Education is the need to understand vocational training and to develop quality around that meaning. This would mean promoting quality at all key components of vocational and work-based learning. He argued that this, in turn, would point to the need to develop work based contracts. Various issues that arise in the development of these contracts are ways to meet the needs of both the institution and the employer and that agreement is reached on timeframes, learning outcomes and evidence of achievement, and methods of assessment. He too, like Van Der Merwe, argued that quality assurance needs to be central to the learning process.

Mr Nzimande, the respondent, raised several issues. These included:

- The need for an evaluation of the quality assurance systems and processes that are currently in place and those being developed.
- The articulation and progress from General Education, to FET, to Higher Education.
- The need for clear direction from the DOE regarding the issue of quality assurance.
- The need for the establishment of minimum targets.
- The need to develop the capacity, particularly in college staff and managers, to implement a Quality Management System.

Dr van der Merwe’s advice was to use, in the absence of other specific tools available for the FET sector, the SAQA guidelines. As to the direction FET needs to move in terms of Quality Assurance, it was agreed that the following actions are critical:

- The process of Quality Assurance needs to be simplified and coherent.

- The number of ETQA's needs to be reduced
- A quality assurance forum, that enables best practices to be shared, be established
- Relationships between the colleges and the SETA's improve.
- Quality managers be appointed at both an institutional and provincial level to monitor and develop quality assurance.

Closing Remarks

Closing remarks by International College representatives - Key points raised by David Gibson, Carolyn Williams, Dame Pat Morgan and Wally Brown

The international speakers congratulated the sector on what has been achieved over the past two years. Their comments included the following:

"I would like to commend those who are part of the reform program. You are on the cutting edge of providing pathways to a reformed educational system in South Africa and to lead the way forward for the rest of the world"

"I was amazed by how much work had been done, and while they were not perfect. They were tentative ideas of how these colleges might look. A series of building blocks were put into place"

My experience here is based on a small snapshot: based on a few visits to SA, hosting a few Tirisano staff placements. That cross fertilization of ideas has fed into your system – someone said to me "we've learnt from your mistakes and we've Africanized the best practice to apply in SA".

"People are ready to move on to the next phase. Before making the next ascent, just look back down the mountain to see how far you've actually climbed. To see where you have started from and how far you have climbed"

"Despite the changes, the fact is that the sector has grown significantly. Instead growth is taking place, rather than shrinking as we would have expected during the merger process"

Whilst congratulating the sector for the progress made to date, the speakers identified a number of areas, highlighted during the convention, that need attention over the forthcoming years. These include the following aspects:

1. The need for government departments to work in closer collaboration with each other.
2. The need to manage carefully the change process, especially with regard to college staff. Here the international speakers indicated that a critical priority is the appointment of the principals. In addition, the international speakers suggested that a programme for staff development, that enable college staff to confidently cope with their new roles and the changes take place in colleges, be implemented.

3. The need to plan in a manner that ensures that there are three year plans and three year funding plans – all of which contain clear targets and benchmarking.
4. The need to develop mechanisms by which good practice (in both management and teaching) can be shared within the system.
5. The need to develop, at institutional level, efficient and effective use of FET funding in a manner that ensures that resources are shared and bureaucracy minimized. In this respect the speakers argued that government's role should be to provide the vision and strategy while the colleges must deliver the goods.
6. The need to plan for the 2003 Year of FET in a manner that enables South African colleges to develop case studies that can be presented at the World Congress of FET to be held in Sandton in 2004.
7. The need to increase college-industry linkages.
8. The need to improve the profile of the colleges by developing positive relationships with the media.
9. The need to establish a college association such as the AoC or the AACC that can represent the college sector and be the common voice for the sector.
10. The need to resolve concerns related to the articulation of FET to Higher Education.

The speakers concluded by saying that “there is much to be proud of”. In this regard the Ministerial Awards Program, the high quality of Tirisano Fellows and the interest and support of government for the sector, was highlighted. As stated by one of the speakers, “There should be no concerns; in general the expertise needed to take the sector forward is here in South Africa”. Another speaker, talking directly to the FETIs said that, “the declaration of 2003 as the Year of FET and the attendance of senior representatives at this convention show that you have the support of your government. Now it is up to you”.

Key Points Raised by the Convention - Dr Mike Hanson

Dr Hanson provided in his presentation commentary on each of the intended results of the convention. Summaries of these are provided below.

- *Objective –Draft an Action for ‘2003 – The Year of FET’*: It was hoped that the Convention would produce an Action Plan, while this was not achieved (possibly because it is unrealistic and inopportune for a gathering like this to set such

milestones), the Commissions produced in an extremely short time period, an amazing array of information, that was expertly distilled and that provided clear signposts for future action for Departments, the sector and other key stakeholders. This provides the basis for an action plan.

- *Objective –Strengthened support for the reform programme:* This conference has won increased support for the reform programme. The presentations that we've gotten indicates that there is a coherent public policy framework. Discussion and argument was made not on the transformation path that had been selected, but rather on why progress was not more sure and more swift. These discussions included presentations on the nature of the public policy that exists – specifically, the HRD Strategy, S&T policies, DTI Manufacturing Strategy, Integrated Development Strategies and NSDS – and how these policies interweave and are part of the same whole that attempts to transform South Africa both socially and economically.

Economic growth and sustainable development is one side of the coin and social inclusion is the other face of the same coin. It is salutary to reflect that the Scottish economist Adam Smith – to many the father of capitalism – was a professor of moral philosophy, not economics. Before he wrote his seminal book, *A Theory of the Wealth of Nations*, from which many of the ideas of free trade and competitiveness derive, he wrote his definitive work, *A Theory of Moral Sentiments* – arguing that a stable society is built on 'sympathy' – a moral duty to have regard for your fellow human beings. A nation at work for a better life for all, the HRD Strategy – and its associated and linked programmes – is something around which we can all unite – and about which we have learnt more during the last two days. Do more to get employers involved: College Governing Bodies, SETAs and at plant level.

Kenneth King reminded us that our policies and programmes are inclusive and address the needs of the formal and the informal economy, they are concerned with economic growth and productivity, but also with the alleviation of poverty, our concern is with the learning of the employed and the unemployed.

- *Objective: To increase the public profile of the sector:* Commentary has been made on the public image of the sector. The need for more and better press related to the sector. The need for the DDG to do more media appearances. But we are also more informed and each one of us a Public Relations Officer for the sector. But good news is not 'news'. My Minister commented recently that if Jesus was alive today and subject to the modern press that there would be more interest in Mary Magdalene than in the Sermon on the Mount.

The establishment of 2003 as the Year of FET is an important opportunity in this regard.

- *Objective – Launch the Ministerial Awards:* The ministerial awards have been launched and established. The principles and criteria have been established. Now that a standard has been established the sector has an objective to aim for.

Objective – Promotion of Links with Employers: The convention has shown that there is a disappointing number of employers present. We understood more about dynamics of partnerships. We accept that employers are a priority audience, the source of jobs, work experience, funding and that there is much that the college sector has to offer them.

This Convention has also provided the opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the sector.

- Mergers are progressing. While swan swims serenely on the surface great turbulence exists under the surface. If this is the case then most people are not aware of it. The restructuring process has not intervened with the vital daily work of colleges. Institutional paralysis has not set in and we heard from Ken Fassi and Rod Hulley about how this has been achieved – *Batho peli* principles first. In fact, to the contrary, the sector has been showing positive strides. There has been a growth of 17% in the numbers of learners. There is a wealth of creativity and energy. The presentation made by Mrs Mitchell from De Aar and that made by Mr Nzimade from Mobeni College highlight the innovative partnerships that colleges, reaching outside their borders and stretching themselves to be more responsive, have made. This is a sector that should not be likened in any way to the Titanic – a well designed system sculptured by a combination of indecision, questionable captainship and ill-luck. Perhaps we should look to Mark Shuttleworth for more appropriate transport analogies that can apply to this sector.
- A more professional approach is clearly evident. Planning, data collection, analysis and the use of information – the quantitative study presented by Glen and Ros; and the promise of more financial data to come; the wealth and richness of reports commented on by Kenneth King – are all indicators of this. In the presentation of this information there is perhaps a danger that we shall learn the cost of everything, but not appreciate its value. We should heed the words of the political philosopher Frantz Fanon – *What matters for us is not to collect facts and behaviour but to find their meaning*. This is not to suggest that facts and data are not important. They are, but we need to get behind

them – to see the ‘bigger picture’ - if we are to truly understand the nature of our work, its purpose and its value.

- There is a commitment to change: The DG in reviewing the male dominated, questionably irrelevant Scout Association of yesteryear spoke of those who within the movement longed for change by subversion. In this revolution people and government unite.

But the progress is not without challenge:

- There is not a picture of consistent improvement in performance: colleges are not winning a bigger share of the national cake and some institutions and their infrastructure are not of the best and will not give to clients and customers a sense of confidence; the HSRC Report paints a sombre picture that showed that the average FET college graduate is 21, male, African and unemployed after two years and the age of learners suggests that lifelong learning remains a dream.
- National concerns have been informed and challenged by a wider view. The World Bank study has suggested that in Southern Africa private is best. Sebolelo rehearsed the principles for good education and training that are defined by the ILO – we are on the right course: our policies are relevant and appropriate. Alfred Tau (DTI) presented to us the DTI’s extrapolation of UNIDO data and showed how much there is to do to remedy our national skills deficit. And our colleagues from the UK, USA and Australia have given us much to think about – not least David Gibson and Carolyn Williams – in talking about the possibilities of an even stronger, independent FET voice in the nation’s debates and the scope for self-help and mutual support.
- We have a policy framework. Despite this, nearly all of the speakers from government acknowledged that FET has been largely ignored in the pursuit of high skills and development in the economy.
- Recognition too that there has not been a level playing field between FET and HE.

But also new opportunities to be pursued:

- An amazing array of programmes and initiatives and the willingness of government departments to open up a dialogue.
- NSDS resources are available equally to technical colleges and technikons.

- There is a clear need for communication to colleges about initiatives and sign-posting – is this relevant – how can we get involved?
- The need to develop learning support for our students. Students particularly see FET as a highway, not a cul de sac. Elaborate the image - opportunities for progression – off ramps and on ramps too and lanes that allow for different speeds. If indeed choosing the FET route is a barrier to HE then something is wrong – and one must ask what is the value of a NQF that makes such a situation possible?
- The roles and authority of the national department, provinces and colleges is an issue. No organisation – or individual – is autonomous, particularly those that are stewards of public funds with an accountability to parliament and ministers as well as to clients and stakeholders. But the exercise of ever greater authority by institutions charged to deliver services is an objective of the PFMA – within a framework of systems, plans and agreed outcomes and performance standards. Exercise of greater authority by FET Institutions not achieved ‘overnight’ or by all at the same time. Process needs to be clear – and the standards to be reached – contractual framework (MOUs); systems, a period of unqualified audits – whatever criteria – should be clear and not changed.
- Opportunities for the sector – learnerships and NSF. Evident good practice and headway being made, but more to do – links with SETAs, provinces of DoL for example. Climate of competition – technikons, private providers – and skills development legislation does not give a guaranteed place to public institutions. Confident about what you can offer.

The commissions raised a number of recommendations for the sector. At the sectoral level these included addressing and resolving the following: (i) the completion of the merger process; (ii) seeking greater clarity in roles and responsibilities; (iii) working in partnership; (iv) resolving the difficulties in developing successful public and private partnerships and the way in which we can (by defining our expectations and goals) ensure success; (v) providing learner support, (vi) developing a funding mechanism for the sector and (vii) much developing systems for quality assurance.

At the institutional level the following issues were raised that need to be addressed and resolved: the appointment of the CEOs, fast-tracking staff post-establishment norms and implementing a management and information system. There was particular urgency around the need for staff development and the appointment of governance.

The sign posts for an action plan highlighted during the conference include the following:

1. *The need to resolve the funding strategy.* This funding strategy needs to include and/or address the following:
 - a. The provision of student financial aid schemes
 - b. Is the funding strategy going to be programmatic or based on FTEs?
 - c. Will it include expenditure on capital and recurrent costs?
 - d. Accessing funds from other government funds
2. *The need to complete the mergers.* Key tasks that remain are:
 - a. The appointment of CEOs
 - b. Building staff capacity
 - c. Developing a communication strategy
3. *The need to develop quality assurance mechanism.* Key questions in this regard are:
 - a. What are the roles and functions of different structures?
 - b. Which performance standards will be applied and on what basis will these be decided and how will a quality assurance management information system be implemented? My English teacher once asked me what are you going to be teaching. I said English, geography, etc". He said, "No, you are not. You are going to be teaching children".
4. *The need to develop learner support.* This includes:
 - a. Developing mechanisms by which best practice can be shared and exchanged.
 - b. Developing Funding strategies for funding learner support.
5. *The Year of FET is less than 50 working days away. The action plan needs some dynamite, we need to :*
 - a. Define our audiences – FET needs to sell itself more to government, employers and secondary schools

- b. We need media strategies
- c. We need co-ordinated programmes if there is going to be any impact

If this 2003 is the Year of FET then we need to be sure of what FET is. Someone indicated that she knew nothing about FET and when she asked people what it was, they replied that it was about what schools and universities don't do. You in this country have too much history to define things with negativities.

Closing Remarks - Khetsi Lehoko, DDG of the DoE

In the year 2004 we will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of democracy in this country. We will also be hosting the world congress of FET in 2004 and that congress will be part of the celebration of our democracy.

While we are celebrating our achievements over the last 2 years, we are also witnessing the beginning of a new chapter in this sector. It is a shift that reflects a move away from an exclusive focus on broad systemic issues towards a focus on what happens in our institutions. The inputs that were made by the various speakers pointed to the fact that we must look closely at what happens in our institutions. We must begin to look at curriculum, quality teaching, student support services and quality assurance issues. We need a clear 2nd phase strategy to negotiate the different issues. It is not going to be a one-size-fits-all approach. We need to know what each institution needs in terms of support and define specific intervention.

Over the next few weeks we intend to:

- Develop, with the assistance of the Colleges Collaboration Fund (CCF), a report on the progress, the challenges facing the FET sector that will be presented on the 26th November at the Council of Educators meeting.
- Draft, with the assistance of the CCF, an action plan for the Year of FET that will be presented on the 26th November at the Council of Educators meeting.
- Launch, at the beginning of 2003, the Year of FET.
- Examine the funding of the sector with the aim of tabling, in 2003, a funding strategy for the sector.
- Establish task teams to drive the landscape and develop institutional support programs and specific intervention.
- Establish a coordination committee to run the FET awards.

- Review the NQF framework and repositioning FET colleges in this sector - in this regard, he indicated that the department is discussing the possibility of positioning the colleges to offer programs at NQF Level 5 or 6.

List of Attendees

[To be inserted by CCF]

Abbreviations Used

ABET	-	Adult Basic Education
AFETISA	-	Association of Further Education and Training in South Africa
CCF	-	Colleges Collaboration Fund
ETQA	-	Education and Training Quality Assurance
FET	-	Further Education and Training
FETIs	-	Further Education and Training Institutions
FTE	-	Full Time Equivalent
HE	-	Higher Education
HEIs	-	Higher Education Institutions
HRD	-	Human Resource Development
ICT	-	Information Communications Technology
ILO	-	International Labour Organisation
NQF	-	National Qualifications Framework
NRF	-	National Fund
SAQA	-	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	-	Sector Education Training Authority
SMME	-	Small Medium and Micro Enterprises
THRIP	-	The Technology & Human Resources for Industry Programme
TVET	-	Technical Vocational Education and Training