Remarks and Guest of Honour Introduction by Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, at the 2023 National Teaching Awards held at the HeartFelt Church, Thaba Tshwane, Pretoria

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Programme Director

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MECs for Education

HoDs of Education

Mr Mathanzima Mweli: Basic Education Director-General

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The winners, our honoured teachers, who are our VVIPs

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a distinct honour and privilege to address the 2023 National Teaching Awards.

Of course, we warmly welcome our new Guest of Honour, His Excellency Deputy President Paul Mashatile. We thank him for making the time to join us today.

Ladies and gentlemen, today is a day of profound importance as we congregate to honour the dedicated individuals recognised at the National Teaching Awards (NTAs) for 2023.

It fills my heart with immeasurable pride and deep-seated admiration as we celebrate these unparalleled educators for their undying commitment to the venerable cause of basic education.

Firstly, I wish to congratulate Mr Mokolwane Eric Masweneng from Dithothwaneng Secondary School in Mphanama, Limpopo. His achievement of being named one of the top 50 for the Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize 2023 showcases the sterling quality of our NTAs on the world stage.

In addition, a special acknowledgement is due to Ms Vasiliki Viki Mpompola, endearingly termed "Ms V" by her Kimberly Technical High School students. She epitomises dedication as our African Union Continental Teachers (AU) winner for 2023 and an esteemed NTA Ambassador in the Northern Cape. Her mentorship has inspired former students, with one now walking the path of teaching and participating in the NTAs.

The National Teaching Awards are more than mere accolades. They are affirmations of the relentless fervour and love our educators infuse into their classrooms daily.

This year's theme, "Transformation of Education Begins with Teachers," lucidly expresses the core of the endeavours undertaken by our award recipients.

Beyond being disseminators of knowledge, they have been the torchbearers of hope, inspiration, and the guiding principles that shape life's journey.

To each of our honoured recipients, I offer my deepest congratulations.

Your innovative approaches, boundless energy, and undying dedication to our students' growth have raised the bar of excellence. The futures you have helped shape, and the flames of curiosity you have kindled will light up the world for years to come.

While spotlighting our award winners, let's pause to appreciate the vast sea of educators nationwide. Their daily endeavours are the bedrock upon which our society's future rests. Each contributes to the tapestry of our nation's progress, and their impact is invaluable.

In July 2023, the National Language Policy Conference heralded a pivotal change. The unanimous resolution to adopt Multilingual Education across our schools and emphasising Mother-tongue-based teaching for the initial six years of schooling is revolutionary.

We laud the Eastern Cape Department of Education for providing empirical evidence that this vision is achievable. With the Department's support, we'll continue developing resources, including enhancing vocabulary for our nine African languages, enriching them and facilitating a broader scope of communication.

In summation, let the laurels of today's event be a reminder of the transformative might of basic education.

To our NTA awardees of 2023, your journey and dedication stand as a beacon of hope and inspiration.

Let's strive together, ensuring that our nation's education continually evolves, touches more lives, and shapes a brighter future.

Thank you, and heartiest congratulations once again.

Introduction of the Guest Speaker

Let me introduce our guest of honour, Deputy President Paul Mashatile, born at Geraldsville, Pretoria, in Gauteng Province, on 21 October 1961.

During his early political activism, Mr. Mashatile held various leadership positions, including joining the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) while studying at Alexandra High School. Together with other young people in Alexandra, they established the Alexandra Youth Congress (AYCO), where he later became its first President. He was elected General Secretary of the United Democratic Front (UDF) from 1989 until the unbanning of political parties in 1990 when the UDF was dissolved.

Due to his political activism, he was detained under the State of Emergency regulations declared by apartheid State President P.W. Botha. He spent more than four years in prison without trial. While in prison, he pursued academic studies.

In 1992, he was appointed General Secretary of the South African Communist Party (SACP) in Gauteng, a position he held from 1992 to 2010. He was also head of political education for the ANC Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) region.

In addition, the Deputy President has also risen through the ranks of the African National Congress (ANC). He was elected the Chairperson of the Gauteng Province in 1992 and also selected as the Provincial Secretary of the ANC, a position he held for six years; in 1998, he was the Deputy Chairperson of the ANC in Gauteng.

Deputy President Mashatile has vast experience in governance where he held several positions in Government, including:

- Leader of House Gauteng Legislature from 1994 to 1996
- MEC for Safety and Security
- MEC for Housing from 1999 to 2004;
- Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Finance and Economic Affairs from 2004 to 2008
- Premier of Gauteng Province from 2008 to 2009
- Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture from 2009 to 2010
- Minister of Arts and Culture from 2010 to 2014
- Chairperson of Appropriation Committee in Parliament 2014 – 2016

In 2017, he was elected the Treasurer-General of the Party at its 54th National Conference; during his tenure as the Treasurer-General, he also acted as the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General of the ANC.

He was sworn in as Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa on 07 March 2023 following his appointment to this role by President Cyril Ramaphosa.

As Deputy President of South Africa, he has been delegated responsibilities as follows:

- Leader of Government Business in Parliament.
- Led government efforts to fast-track land reform and coordinate Government programmes to accelerate land reform and agricultural support.
- Implement Rapid Response interventions on service delivery and trouble-shooting in service delivery hotspots.
- Assisting the President in the roll-out of the District Development Model through effective coordination of the different spheres of Government, which will improve the functioning of municipalities and address community concerns.
- Leading the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) and the country's integrated response to the challenges of HIV and AIDS.
- Special Envoy on South Sudan and leading peace missions on the continent as required.
- Leading the National Human Resource Development Council and fostering collaboration between Government and social partners towards addressing the shortage of skills in critical sectors of the economy.

- Promoting Social Cohesion Initiatives with a particular focus on Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders and Military Veterans.

Deputy President Paul Mashatile also chairs the following Cabinet Committees

- Governance, State Capacity and Institutional Development
- Justice, Crime Prevention and Security

Ladies and gentlemen welcome the son of the soil, His Excellency Paul Mashatile.

I thank you.