



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Q&A at the MTN Online School Launch held at the Galleria, M1 Place 10 Eastern Service Road Sandton

21 October 2021

Gugulethu Mfuphi – Our Host

Godfrey Motsa – CEO MTN South Africa

Jacqui O’Sullivan – Executive: Corporate Affairs, MTN South Africa

Kusile Mtunzi-Hairwadzi - Foundation General Manager, MTN South Africa

Ladies, Gentlemen

Q 1: This solution was developed in partnership with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT). Minister Motshekga, please tell us about the department’s vision for quality basic education

A1. Our vision for the schooling sector is anchored in the National Development Plan (NDP), which states that if we are to overcome the legacy of apartheid, it is essential that everyone has access to

basic education at a high standard, regardless of who they are where they live.

The NDP recognises that education is the cornerstone upon which a nation that provides opportunities for social mobility, equity, social justice and democracy will depend.

The NDP envisions that by 2030, schools will provide all learners with quality education, especially in Literacy, Mathematics and Science- with the ultimate aim of ensuring that 90% of learners pass these subjects with at least 50% by 2030.

Since the last general election in 2019, we have crystallised 12 basic education priorities to take us to 2024.

Due to time constraints, I will talk about only two interlinked priorities and the digital divide matter.

The first priority is improving the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy, especially “reading for meaning”.

As we know, the President of the Republic has directed that every child must learn to read for meaning by the age of ten.

To achieve this lofty goal of improving reading for meaning, we are rallying all South Africans to work together to take public schooling to the next level of productivity, focus and improved learner outcomes.

Interlinked to improving literacy is the task of changing our fortunes in numeracy.

To achieve the acceptable literacy endeavours to reach the gold standard of reading for meaning, we have two interlinked policy positions: the *Mathematics Teaching and Learning Framework* and the *Integrated National Reading Sector Plan*.

The Mathematics Framework's key takeaway is an ideal of 'teaching of mathematics for understanding.'

This means a learning-centred classroom methodology designed to help teachers to attend to the challenges associated with the teaching and learning of mathematics so that learner outcomes are improved.

The Mathematics Framework supports the Maths Science Technology (MST) Education Strategy (2019-2030).

The broad outline of the strategy is to ensure that every classroom is a space where quality learning and teaching takes place.

At the heart of basic education reform is imperative to eliminate the digital divide by ensuring that all schools and education offices access the internet and data within six years.

All learners must access digital workbooks and textbooks on a digital device such as tablets during the same period.

To this end, by 2019, we completed the digitalisation of Computer Applications Technology (CAT) and Information Technology (IT) Grade 10 -12 state-owned textbooks (high enrolment subjects).

As I speak, more textbooks are being digitalised.

We have provided 100 schools with an e-Library solution, with enough external investment to the sector; we hope to increase this every year until all learners are connected.

We launched the new *Integrated National Reading Sector Plan* two years ago to address the conundrum of reading for meaning.

The reading plan aligns with our policy lodestar, the *National Development Plan (NDP)* that seeks to achieve critical developmental milestones by 2030.

The *National Reading Sector Plan* is an overarching evidence-based strategy that will alter the country's entire reading and literacy landscape.

It complements rather than replaces all existing literacy initiatives, including the *Read to Lead* Campaign, the *Primary School Reading Improvement Plan (PSRIP)*, and other reading/literacy initiatives.

The main thrust of our comprehensive *National Reading Sector Plan* is to ensure reading for meaning across the curriculum, in all grades, and in all schools throughout the country.

Our plan is to ensure that we teach all our learners to read well and read for meaning.

By 2024, the plan would have been successfully implemented throughout the system, meaning: wall-to-wall coverage, circuit by circuit, district by district, and school by school.

I am proud to announce the Basic Education Department has designed and launched its first-of-its-kind online programme dubbed: *The Comprehension Across the Curriculum* to turbocharge reading for meaning.

It is no surprise that we are announcing the partnership with the telecoms giant to launch The MTN Online School today.

This new innovation allows us to have all learning resources in one portal designed for learners and teachers with our experts in the Department and MTN Foundation.

As you might know, education, skills development, and jobs are vital national imperatives.

We are proud that MTN has responded positively to the NDP's clarion call for partnerships to improve education for all.

As a collective, we are certain to achieve more in nurturing and supporting our society's next layer of leadership.

Thanks to meaningful MTN's partnerships with various education departments and us across SA, now we boast a partner with their heart in the right place, and they put money where their mouths are, as it were.

Together with the innovation and commitment to societal change by MTN and its staff, today's launch of the MTN Online School is a significant leap forward for education and ushers in positive change for communities across South Africa.

We thank you.

Q2: Minister Motshekga, any closing thoughts from you on this amazing portal?

The MTN Online School is a fit for purpose digital tool to take our basic education to the next level.

The online portal is agile, innovative and modern.

This is a clear indication that MTN takes corporate citizenship more than seriously beyond compliance issues.

The investment made by MTN to public schooling today has a ripple effect of benefiting the next generation of learners.

As a country, we must learn not to spend our children's inheritance; instead, we must be investing to benefit the next generation.

Through productive public/private partnerships like this, we can build Better Communities Together.

Thus, having MTN as a partner is a boon for the basic education sector and millions of our learners. May you prosper, Everywhere You Go!