



## basic education

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### **Opening Remarks by Deputy Minister of Basic Education Dr MR Mhaule at the 7th Basic Education Lekgotla, 26 January 2022**

Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning and a very warm welcome to you all! It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 7th annual Basic Education Sector Lekgotla! The past two years have been unlike any other years during which this event took place. Whilst many of us mourn the lives lost as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the education sector has also suffered devastating, long term effects caused by the pandemic.

We lost leaders in the education sector, teachers and support staff, as well as learners, although few, but one death is just too many for us.

However, we have also learnt new ways of conducting business. These ways include online teaching, home schooling, etc. Further, the pandemic has resulted in a positive development for over 500 000 youth by creating job opportunities through the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative. Although these accomplishments are a drop in the ocean as compared to the negative impact of COVID-19, they are indeed stepping stones towards a better future.

Last year we had our annual Lekgotla fully on a virtual platform, this year, due to the allowing Lockdown Restrictions, we have managed to organise the Lekgotla through a hybrid model and have done our best to ensure rich and meaningful participation from a wide range of our key education stakeholders.

Our Minister, Mrs AM Motshekga, a very warm welcome to you. We are also joined by our Members of the Executive Council (MECs), the Heads of Departments (HODs), national, provincial and district officials. We further have in our presence, both physically and virtually, the Teacher Unions, Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of our Entities, Higher Education Institutions and our key stakeholders and partners who share our interest and goal of providing quality basic education to all our children, especially during this complex time where we have to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic.

A very special welcome to our local and international speakers, who are experts in their respective fields and are here to share their knowledge and experience.

As I had already mentioned, we are hosting our Basic Education Sector Lekgotla through a hybrid model. We have approximately 200 attendees in the physical venue to ensure adherence to social distancing. We also have participants who are part of the proceedings, joining us through the virtual platform, Zoom. As per the programme, this is a three-day event. The first day will focus on plenary presentations and discussions. On the second day, we will re-converge again at plenary and then break away to Commissions after lunch. On the third and last day

of the Lekgotla, we will receive report back presentations from Commission rapporteurs here at plenary.

The overall focus of this Lekgotla is to highlight the impact of COVID-19 (including learner drop out and the extent of learning losses); examine learning recovery approaches and the DBE framework; and assess progress made in the implementation of programmes/mechanisms to equip learners with knowledge and skills for a changing world. But finally we as the DBE hope that at the end of the Lekgotla we will come up with Lekgotla Recommendations and Action Plan which will include a comprehensive recovery plan on how the system is going to continue to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and recover the learning losses. Furthermore we are hoping that the Lekgotla will emerge with consensus on what will be done to reboot and rebuild the basic education system, even for future pandemics/crises.

Documents were distributed to you prior to the Lekgotla and these include:

- The Basic Education Sector Lekgotla Programme; and
- The Guidelines for presenters, chairpersons, facilitators and delegates which provides advice that will help us have a successful virtual Lekgotla.

At the end of each day, presentations will be added on the registration link for delegates' ease of access. <https://www.preregister.co.za/>

We are happy to announce that this year, unlike last year, participants joining us on the virtual platform will be able to raise their hands and speak in order to engage with speakers/presenters. In addition, delegates are still able to leave questions and comments on the chat facility. There are moderators appointed to review and manage comments and questions left on the chat facility.

For our speakers and presenters, the Chairperson and Facilitators will manage the time allocated to you. We urge all speakers and presenters to please adhere to your time allocation, as we have a packed programme to complete.

I further wish to inform all delegates of the House Rules, which should be adhered to at all times:

- All participants to participate actively in the deliberations in the Lekgotla;
- Provide contributions based on their experience and knowledge in the specified field;
- Please observe the starting times and duration of the breaks and return punctually; and
- For our virtual participants - Videos and microphones to be off during the discussions.

Delegates are advised to remain connected throughout the day, where possible. More tips are available in the guidelines.

I now have the pleasure to present to you the host, the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, to give the opening address.