



basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Address by the Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie
Motshekga, MP, at the Official Opening of the Waterkloof
Hills Estate Schools held in North West, Rustenburg**

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Programme Director

Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy Mr Gwede Mantashe

Chairperson of Royal Bafokeng Platinum plc

CEO and Senior Executives of the Royal Bafokeng Platinum plc

Senior officials from the Basic Education Department and North West

Department of Education

Teachers, Parents and Learners

Distinguished Guests

It is indeed my singular honour and privilege to address you today on this extraordinary occasion, namely, the official opening of the newly built Primary and Secondary Schools here at the Waterkloof Hills Estate.

This occasion is unique because this project is a joint venture between the North West Department of Education and Royal Bafokeng Platinum Public Limited Company.

It is a testament to the South African spirit of working together to solve intractable problems facing our people.

Our country's fundamental problems today are the high unemployment, poverty and inequality levels, as referenced by the National Development Plan (NDP).

In this regard, basic education is foundational in our attempts to reverse the legacy of apartheid, eliminate poverty and reduce inequality.

As any educationalist will tell you, basic education helps remedy many other issues that can keep people, families, and even whole communities vulnerable to the cycle of poverty.

We must break the cycle of poverty, want and neglect.

At its core, a quality basic education supports a child's developing social, emotional, cognitive, and communication skills, thus making them productive members of society.

Research has concluded basic education reduces the burden of diseases on society, strengthens democracies and often contributes manifold to the country's economic growth.

In other words, any investment in basic education goes beyond the mundane triple Rs (Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic) but addresses the core of building a nation, enabling a Better Life for All, as it were.

To achieve improved learning outcomes, the NDP calls for strategic partnerships amongst social partners, of which the private sector plays a leading role.

Thus, last week, I delivered an opening address at the Anglo American event, where they announced an investment of over 400 million rands in basic education.

Clearly, His Excellency President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa was spot-on in his inaugural State of the Nation Address to characterise the mining industry in South Africa as not a sunset industry but a sunrise business.

According to government reports, the mining industry is an integral part of the South African economy, contributing **480.9** billion rands to the country's GDP in 2021.

Furthermore, the mining industry employed a total of **458,954** people in 2021.

In the 2021/22 financial year, mining contributed **R127** billion in tax out of the total corporate income tax of R318 billion, according to the SARS report.

Interestingly, South Africa recorded a current account surplus because of the high prices of iron ore, coal and rhodium in the last two years.

Our minerals beneath the soil comprised more than 60% of South Africa's exports, an impressive figure indeed.

The mining industry's contribution to the well-being of our fiscus is set to increase as Transnet seeks to improve its supply lines and allow private sector participation in logistics.

Transnet (the state-owned logistics company) believes that enabling the first phase of 3rd party access to the container corridor and automotive flows is the first step toward liberalisation of the rail sector.

Programme director, the idea of building schools in this estate really added icing to the cake.

The Waterkloof Hills Estate is exclusively owned by the Royal Bafokeng Platinum Company to house its employees in a sought-after address, in a beautiful landscape surrounding and in a top-notch housing estate.

At the heart of this Waterkloof Hills Estate is to restore the dignity of the miners while simultaneously investing in the host mining communities.

This estate and the schools we are launching today will stand as a monument of sustainable mining long after there are no minerals to mine on the ground.

Royal Bafokeng Platinum Company is genuinely a sunrise company thinking beyond mining and definitely not inward-looking.

We are proud that the people of Bafokeng are the real owners of minerals beneath the soil as demanded by the people in the Freedom Charter.

We welcome this strategic partnership with the Royal Bafokeng Platinum as the beginning of something beautiful to leapfrog basic education in the host mining communities to greater heights.

Our overarching vision, as stated in the NDP, is that if we are to overcome the legacy of apartheid, everyone must have access to education at a high standard, regardless of who they are and where they live.

Crucially, the transformative nature of basic education requires us to increase opportunities to access education for girls, the poor and the vulnerable.

The new schools we are opening today seek to address the educational needs of working-class children.

We must deliberately focus on the girl child.

According to UNICEF, girls who receive an education are less likely to marry young and more likely to lead healthy, productive lives.

They earn higher incomes, participate in the decisions that most affect them, and build better futures for themselves and their families.

Girls' education strengthens economies and reduces inequality between men and women, black and white, rich and poor.

As a country, we have made great strides in advancing universal access to basic education over the past 28 years.

It is the time to focus exclusively on the girl child.

Our partnership with Royal Bafokeng Platinum is a gold standard of what can be achieved when businesses and government work together in building the country of our dreams.

This groundbreaking investment in basic education by Royal Bafokeng Platinum in partnership with the government makes more than just business sense.

Still, it changes the fortunes of working-class children, girls, the poor and the vulnerable.

Therefore, the Royal Bafokeng Platinum joins others such as Anglo American as amongst the most significant private-sector contributors to South Africa's basic education system.

Therefore, I am happy to call Royal Bafokeng Platinum a responsible corporate player, making itself one of SA's best companies we can all be proud of.

However, we must never lose sight of our collective endeavours as a society to right the wrongs of the past.

We must do so by healing the past's festering wounds by unlocking basic education opportunities for the children of the poor, girls and vulnerable members of society such as the LGBTQIA.

We must work without ceasing to free the potential of each child in our homeland.

No single child must be left behind irrespective of age, gender, race or socioeconomic standing.

Our children must be truly treated as the national assets that they are.

As I have said before, our constitutional duty is to extend equal opportunities to all our learners to thrive.

We must find innovative solutions to bridge the gap between urban and rural schools, rich and poor schooling communities, information-rich and information poor.

We do so to meet the injunction of our Constitution that all human beings are born free and equal, thus worthy of equal opportunities.

Programme director, we converged here at the start of the 2022 Women's month.

As part of celebrating our women, we remember the gallant efforts of those who came before us.

Thus, since 09 August 1995, we celebrate the women cohort of 1956 who took the Dompas struggles to the doorstep of the apartheid regime.

This year's National Women's Day and Women's Month will be celebrated under the theme: "Women's Socio-Economic Rights and Empowerment: Building Back Better for Women's Improved Resilience."

On 09 August 1956, the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW), led by four women, Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, and Sophia Williams-De Bruyn, delivered petitions to the then Prime Minister – J G Strydom's office in the Union Buildings.

The rallying cry was for women not to carry the humiliating Dompas of the time.

The 1956 Women's March was one of the largest demonstrations in this country's history and was underpinned by adopting the Women's Charter of 1954.

Thus FEDSAW challenged the idea that "a woman's place is in the kitchen".

Instead, they declared that a woman's place is "everywhere".

As education mandarins, we say the girl child's place is in the classroom.

A woman's place is in the boardroom.

In other words, the women's place is where she fancies being without fear or favour.

In our lifetime, we must seek to use investment in basic education as a force multiplier to advance the notion of women's rights as human rights.

The flowers of the nation deserve better, not less.

As a feminist and activist for women's rights, it pains me that in 2022 we still face the horrors of male chauvinism that manifest through rapes and murders of women.

The weekend gang rape of eight women in Krugersdorp makes my stomach turn.

I condemn the wanton disregard of human dignity of the Krugersdorp 8.

I call upon the law enforcement agencies to do whatever is necessary within the confines of the law to bring all perpetrators of this dastardly deed to book.

Our judicial system must show no mercy in sentencing these animals heavily disguised as human beings.

If convicted, they must never see the sunrise ever again.

As a society beyond our borders, we must raise boy children better.

We must have serious conversations with our husbands, sons and men in general about the value they should place on women's dignity and human rights.

We must ceaselessly advance the notion that women's rights are, in fact, human rights.

As a society, we must move mountains to protect the girl child and women in general.

Indeed, we deserve better hence the need to open up more opportunities for young girls to acquire an education and enter the workforce as empowered individuals.

We owe to the 1956 cohort of women activists.

We owe it to all women who have been raped, maimed and murdered.

We owe ourselves to build a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, prosperous society.

We owe it to posterity.

We are in this together to end illiteracy and poverty of the mind.

Let's renew the spirit of our beautiful land, endure together and rebuild better for posterity.

In his autobiography, *My Life: A Spoken Autobiography*, former Cuban revolutionary Fidel Castro diagnosed the disease facing many nations.

Castro said: “Ignorance is the root of many ills. Knowledge must be the fundamental ally of nations that aspire, despite all their tragedies and problems, to become truly emancipated, to build a better world.”

In conclusion, I thank the Royal Bafokeng Platinum bright sparks who conceived of this housing estate and school projects.

My gratitude extends to the North West government, Education MEC, and our Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy, Mr Gwede Mantashe.

Your contribution to the national efforts to build a better nation won't go unnoticed.

I thank you.