

ADDRESS BY MR SAM MALULEKA, CHIEF DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE, ON BEHALF OF THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MR NORMAN MOKOENA, MPL, DURING THE *BMW SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT (SEED) PRIZE GIVING CEREMONY* AT THE LOWVELD BOTANNICAL GARDENS IN NELSPRUIT, MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.

Friday, 09 November 2012

Programme Director, Mr S. Makhabane;

Representatives from the *BMW SEED (School Environmental Education Development Programme Focus*, Ms E. Langa and Mr B. Bezuidenhout;

Director for Environmental Empowerment Services in the Department, Dr Almarie de Lange;

A representative from the Provincial Department of Education, Mr. W. Terblanche;

A representative from Luggedlane Primary School, Ms. Nsimbini;

Learners from Maqamela Primary School; Luvolwetfu Primary School; and Sitintile High School;

Officials from the Department and other government Departments;

Members of the media;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning!

On behalf of the MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Mr Norman Mokoena, I would like to welcome you to yet another prestigious ceremony, sponsored by *BMW South Africa*. Let me start off by passing a sincere apology from MEC Mokoena, who wanted to be with you this morning, but due to unforeseen circumstances, he could not be here this morning. However he has requested me to pass his god wishes to you all.

Ladies and gentlemen;

I'm deeply humbled and honoured to be part of this partnership, which is a sign that *BMW South Africa* believes that everything is possible through partnership. As government, we acknowledge and appreciate any form of partnership, as long it is intended to benefit our people. This is because we believe that **“Working together, we can do more to improve the living standards and quality of life of our communities.”**

Just over two (2) weeks back, the Honourable Premier, Mr D.D Mabuza signed a partnership agreement with *Sasol* in order to enhance human capital development with special emphasis on amongst others; skills development, improvement of mathematics, science and technology in the province. I'm mentioning this partnership with *Sasol* to show you the commitment of the private sector, in the wellbeing of our people. Like *BMW South Africa*, *Sasol* is committed towards improving the educational and skills status of the province.

Because of this commitment, our government has committed to ensure that the Science Faculty of the envisaged Mpumalanga University is located in Secunda in order to tap on the required skills base at *Sasol* – *a decision which the company has welcomed with both hands*. They have assured us that they will support this initiative as well.

We therefore hope that this partnership with *BMW South Africa* through *the SEED Programme*, will grow bigger and better and further support other government initiatives aimed at creating environmental awareness across all schools in the province. We hope this partnership will grow bigger and also support our infrastructure programmes which will benefit our people.

Our economy requires skills such as engineering, technical, information communication technology, environmental management, to mention but a few.

We therefore urge BMW South Africa, to provide assistance in the form of bursaries to well deserving learners to pursue careers in the above mentioned fields, which will assist in boosting the skills base in the province. These are some of the skills required to propel our provincial economy.

Ladies and gentlemen;

Our country's progressive Constitution mandates us to collectively, and I quote: ***“prevent pollution and ecological degradation; promote conservation; and to secure ecologically sustainable development and the use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.”***

Through the *BMW SEED Programme*, which is aimed at empowering schools and learners to become active agents of sustainability, whilst improving their living standards and quality of life, we are optimistic that we will fulfil the mandate as given in our country's Constitution.

Our government, in particular the Department, is proud to be associated with such partners that support life-long learning, skills development, sustainable development and poverty alleviation. This is against the backdrop of the stubborn triplets of **unemployment, poverty and inequality** which continues to plague us.

Working together, we can do more to fight unemployment, poverty and inequality in order to improve the lives of our people.

For over a decade now, this partnership with *BMW South Africa* has flourished and proven its sustainability. It is through partnerships and co-operative interactions like this one, that enhanced combined effects are created. Indeed, the value and performance of dedicated partners is greater than the sum of their individual efforts and effects.

From the laying out of the garden plots right through to the harvesting process, learners continue to learn and to integrate environmental concepts and the subject matter such as numeracy, biological principles, waste management, soil types, composting, organic farming and water saving. We are convinced that the improved knowledge, skills and competence that participants have gained, is beneficial now and will be later in life.

One of the outstanding outcomes of the *BMW SEED Programme* is the Learner *SEED* Garden. Through this garden, groups of learners start their own gardens that are replicas of the initial plots. This gives the learners the opportunity to practice their skills that they have acquired in the *BMW SEED Programme*.

This programme has changed the lives within the school communities by improving the image of the school grounds, whilst benefiting from the harvest of the gardens. In some instances, permanent gardens supply fresh produce that support the feeding schemes at the participating schools, and in the process, they get paid for the produce and thus generate an income.

Ladies and gentlemen;

We must continue to teach our children about the importance of planting trees, in the light of the ever changing climate. As you might be aware, our weather pattern has changed. We can no longer draw a line between the winter and summer season, as a result of climate change.

By planting trees, we can mitigate the impact of climate change given that trees have the ability to absorb the greenhouse gases which influence this unfortunate weather phenomenon. By doing so, we will be contributing towards "*Saving Tomorrow Today*." Our most important plea is, let us carefully consider the role each one of us can play in mitigating the impact of climate change through smaller environmental footprints, energy

efficient lifestyles, sustainable waste management practices, sustainable consumption practices and sustainable transport practices. You and I can make a difference even when doing something small. When these tiny changes are aggregated among all our people, we can truly make a real difference!

To the learners, well done! – whether you are a winner or not. This is because you have individually and collectively contributed in the achievement of good results.

To our sponsor – *BMW South Africa*, thank you very much. An imprint that you are making in the future our children is highly appreciated. To all officials from government and the private sector, your hard work and commitment have made a great difference in the lives of our learners gathered here today. It is our shared duty to join hands to improve the knowledge, skills and competence levels of the people of our province so that we can contribute in the creation of a better life for all.

Let us all draw inspiration and commitment from the wise words of the Honourable Premier, Mr DD Mabuza, on the occasion of signing a memorandum of understanding with Sasol on the 15th of October 2012, when he said and I quote:

“While everybody has a vision, it is only the people with long-term vision who can succeed. It will help us as a country if we put our resources together and speak in one voice because if we plan together, we can achieve a lot. This is the beginning of the journey we must travel together.”

Working together, we can do more to improve the lives of our people. It is only through partnership that we can speed up service delivery.

Working together, we can *“prevent pollution and ecological degradation; promote conservation; and secure ecologically sustainable development and the use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.”*

This is the mandate that must never fail to carryout, lest we are blamed by future generations for having let them down.

I thank you!