

OPENING REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF MATJHABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, ME. MATHABO MOKAPO ON THE OCCASION OF THE GRADUATION CEREMONY OF EKHAYA TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT, WELKOM, 10 FEBRUARY 2007

Programme Director
MEC for Education, Me. Ouma Tsopo
Management of Ekhaya Training and Development
Pastor
Students
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

I feel privileged by the honour bestowed on me, by the management of Ekhaya Training and Development who saw it befitting that today I should grace this important occasion which is the graduation ceremony for students from our community.

I wish to express my deepest appreciation to the management of Ekhaya, who are the custodians of the project on skills development. Your contribution to the social and academic upliftment of our previously disadvantaged communities is acknowledged and appreciated.

Your efforts in this regard are in line with what government has continuously agitated for, i.e. a multi sectoral response to the many challenges that confront us as we grapple with the task of transforming our country.

Owing to disparities and inequalities associated with our past, our communities continue to face a serious challenge with regard to shortage of skills, especially those that were a domain of an elite in the past dispensation.

Also, coupled with the fact that our economy currently, has a dual character or the two-economies divide, it is critical that all stakeholders should embrace the notion of skills development so as to ultimately bridge this divide.

It is in the light of the above, that initiatives pursued by Ekhaya mitigate the negative impact of skills shortage and further contribute to the overall development of the rainbow nation we are seeking to build.

Keep up the good work that you are doing in this regard.

To our students, who will be graduating today, my message is that "Congratulations and well done in your achievements". Remember that this is not the end or the beginning of the end, but it is rather the end of the beginning. In other words, as the Matjhabeng Local Municipality we hope to see you attain more academic skills that will enable you to face the many challenges that relate to the working world.

Also, remember that formal employment in our economy is a thing of the past. Therefore, as you seek means for survival, try to diversify your options. The reality we face as a country is that our economy cannot absorb all graduates due to structural realities that are beyond our control.

Therefore, I implore you to consider pursuing entrepreneurships, learnerships through the SETA's, small micro medium enterprises and other business ventures.

Our government has created a user friendly setting through legislation/ policies and the necessary funding mechanism to ensure that as graduates you are able to pursue any of the above ventures.

Lastly, as the Matjhabeng Local Municipality, all stakeholders represented here today have done us proud.

Let this event attain its intended objectives and good luck.

Thank you.

EXECUTIVE MAYOR MATHABO MOKAPO