

**SPEECH BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF MATJHABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY,  
ME MATHABO MOKAPO ON THE OCCASION OF THE GRADUATION CEREMONY:  
STANFORD COLLEGE, WELKOM**

Programme Director  
Management and Lecturers of Stanford College  
Graduands  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Management of the College, who saw it befitting that today I should be part of this graduation ceremony.

An occasion of this nature triggers both bitter and happy memories to our graduands, who for the past years or months worked tirelessly to attain what they are achieving today. Your perseverance and commitment throughout your studies qualifies you to be called graduands of Stanford College today. Indeed this moment should be a watershed in the life of your careers.

During the evolution of philosophical thought, in medieval times, many philosophers converged to the view promoted by the great philosopher Aristotle - that acquiring knowledge is an essential requirement to lead a happy life. I firmly believe that your achievements will certainly open doors to the happy life that this great philosopher envisaged.

I feel proud to see all of you, dressed in your academic regalia. To me this symbolizes that as the Matjhabeng community we are indeed on course, for it demonstrates willingness on the part of our youth to arm themselves with the only weapon in modern times, which is education.

I wish to emphasize to everyone gathered here that education of the nation is a key that can open all doors in life. And for this reason we need to inculcate a culture in our communities to take studies or education matters with the seriousness that they deserve.

As a nation, as we grapple with the daunting challenge of reconstructing our country from the ashes of apartheid, education is one of the critical areas that will need the attention of every concerned citizen. During this era of democracy students should take note that opportunities abound, for those of you who take their studies seriously. For no one will ever again be denied an opportunity on the basis of race, sexual orientation or creed. Our country is on its way to becoming a fully fledged democracy that affords all its citizens equal opportunities on the basis of merit.

In the process of pursuing your studies you simultaneously acquired virtues and attributes that will be essential as you enter the domain of employment and adulthood. This confirms that you have not only be groomed to undertake employment in your various fields, but also to be able to face the many challenges that pertain to life.

Today, we live in a world that is highly globalized, with a modern economic system that requires an array of skills from those entering employment. Because you are graduating today, take note that our economy needs your skills, and I believe this occasion gives testimony to the fact that you are ready to join the working world. As you do so, be conscious of the fact that due to structural realities, our economy cannot absorb all our graduates. Hence the need for you to diversify your options.

The engagement of everyone in formal employment is now a thing of the past. Therefore I encourage you to explore all options, including participation in the informal economy through small businesses, entrepreneurships, professional services and participation in SMME's.

Our government has put systems in place in trying to resolve the issue of jobs, through the creation of learnerships and SETA's. And I would encourage you to explore these options.

I must also caution you to say that, as graduates now, who will be entering the working environment, you will be faced with other challenges that will dictate that from time to time, you become ethical and professional in the manner you conduct business.

On this note, I wish to congratulate all the graduates, and wish to say –**This is not the end, or the beginning of the end but it is rather the end of the beginning.**

**Thank you**

**COUNCILLOR MATHABO MOKAPO  
EXECUTIVE MAYOR**