

HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING, MR BUTI
MANAMELA, TO THE COASTAL COLLEGE
GRADUATION CEREMONY
COASTAL COLLEGE, KWA ZULU NATAL.

20 JULY 2018

Programme
Principal of Coastal College – Mr SB Ndlovu
Regional Manager of the DHET – Dr Nzimande
Professor Mtapuri from the University of Kwa Zulu Natal
Distinguished
Parents
Graduants

Director
guests

I am always excited to participate in graduations because it is important to celebrate achievement. This type of achievement, and an opportunity to see beautiful young men and women slaying a graduation gown.

This is a special day for all of you graduating, together with your parents and family members who are accompanying you. It is the culmination of hard work, long hours of studying and applying yourself to your selected area of study.

I know that it did not come easy. Sometimes you probably wondered if the paper that will be conferred to you is worth the sleepless nights you spent burning the midnight oil. Some of you may be the first one's in your families to graduate, and are thankful of your parents and siblings for having made this sacrifice.

There may have been days were you had to hustle for lunch money, or even transport, or compromise this or that just so that you can have books; and whatever the route you took to this destiny, trust me, it was worth it. Now you can go and brag because no one can take this away from you.

As graduates of the Business and Engineering Studies disciplines, you have a critical role to play in building our economy, creating jobs, contributing towards the desperately needed innovation and probably going on further to study or research in your area of trades. You are joining hundreds of thousands of students nationally who have succeeded in their education.

You are also, in a way, like Nelson Mandela, a law graduate, and Albertina Sisulu, a nurse, whom we are celebrating their centenary this year. They both recognised the significance of higher education and training for their personal growth, career prospects and livelihoods.

Although the apartheid system limited their career aspirations and their educational pathway, both patriots understood the importance of higher education and training, not only for their own life prospects but also for contributing to the struggle against apartheid and for social justice.

There was a time in our country when TVET colleges were seen as a poor substitute to universities. There was an incorrect perception in our society that the first option for high school graduates was to consider a university education.

If you cannot get into university, then only would you consider a TVET college education. Some in our society still hold on to this perception.

I went to study in a TVET college exactly twenty years ago because of a collusion of different unrelated factors, including the one's I've raised above.

However, I experienced some of the most exciting years of my student life in Mamelodi College where I studied Electronics Engineering up to N5 level. I may not have pursued a career in electronics, but believe that those years contributed a great deal of who I am today.

I want you, as graduates of TVET college, to join me in becoming champions of our system because this is a wrong perception to have. It does not correlate with the reality that the country faces.

The data and analysis tells us that we need more technical skills, we need more artisans, and we need more people with practical technical experience.

There is a shortage of artisans in South Africa, and I call on some of you to go and pursue training as artisans in the many training centers that we have as a country. TVET colleges are a high priority for government because they can play a critical role in addressing our current skills gaps.

Stronger TVET colleges will expand the provision of mid-level technical and occupational qualifications that will lead directly into paid work for the growing numbers of young people leaving the schooling system. In other words government wants more young people to attain skills and competencies that will help them find jobs or create their own enterprises. It is for this reason that government is investing intensely in TVET colleges.

Following the President's announcement in December 2017 on fully subsidised fee free higher education and training for the poor and working classes, the National Treasury increased the bursary allocation for TVET Colleges from R2.437 billion in 2017 to R5.164 billion in 2018.

This represents a 112% increase in the allocation. This additional funding will assist with taking the programme funding level of TVET colleges from the current 54% to 69% in 2018/19 with the target of 80% being reached in approximately 4 years.

For 2018/19, an additional R2.5 Billion will be made available for student fees including travel and accommodation allowances.

This additional funding will ensure that qualifying TVET students will be fully subsidised for student fees and travel or accommodation where relevant.

As we significantly invest in the TVET sector, we are also working towards better quality TVET programmes and strengthening college performance.

We want to see more stable, functional, better governed TVET colleges that offer high quality programmes. Three years ago, we launched and declared 2014-2024 as the Decade of the Artisan with the sole aim of creating a pipeline of qualified artisans to address the scarce skills shortage and to grow the economy.

The status and profile of artisans is being elevated through this campaign. I will continue visiting employers at their workplaces to pursue closer collaborations and for employers to open up their workplaces as training spaces. TVET colleges are an important part of our country's future. Their role cannot be underestimated because the critical technical skills that South Africa will need has to come from TVET colleges. This is the foremost reason why government is investing now and beyond in TVET colleges.

This does not mean that money alone will improve the state of our colleges, but we are beginning to see more changes.

We are working towards improving the qualifications offerings.

We are working towards a more effective enrolment planning system.

We will grow new qualifications over time and streamline examinations and certification.

We are improving college governance and management.

We are further developing our lecturers and ensuring that there is a better lecturer to student ratio.

We are realising higher retention, throughput and exit level outcomes.

So, TVET colleges are our future. As you graduate today, I hope that this is not the last time that you will be achieving academic success.

I know that you will continue with your learning pathway. That you will challenge yourself to further your studies, to learn new skills and to specialise.

Your graduation today must set you on a path to achieve better and greater heights.

I wish you all the best and much success for your future.

I thank you.

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