

# **Minister Pandor's speech at the launch of the Technical Education for Communities (TEC) Centre in Sedibeng**

Department of Higher Education and Training

Sedibeng College

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Mr Dosto Noge – Sedibeng TVET College,  
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Mr Gino Butera – Cummins Middle East Africa, Vice  
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My Mike Blom – Komatsu South Africa, Managing  
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Dr Raymond Patel – merSETA, Chief Executive  
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Mr Naphtaly Mokgotsane – merSETA, Quality &  
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Staff and students of Sedibeng College  
Departmental officials

It's a pleasure to be here at the launch of the Technical Education for Communities (TEC) centre today.

Many thanks to Gino Butera and his team at Cummins Middle East Africa and Mike Blom and his team at Komatsu South Africa, the MerSeta and the management and council of Sedibeng College in putting this initiative together.

In government we're immensely pleased that TEC is supporting one of our colleges. We hope that this is just the start to a long-term programme.

I'm particularly interested to understand exactly what skills our various industries require and how we can prepare our colleges and education sector more broadly to address these.

Much of our thinking and work at the moment is focused on ensuring that our curricula at colleges match and reflect the realities of the working world. However, government cannot work alone. We need business and industry to be our partners in the development process.

This programme, therefore, is an example of how such a partnership can help offer quality programmes in colleges.

My most pressing concern is the curriculum. If our industry partners are prepared to take ownership of the qualifications and curriculum design, I'm confident that that we will be able to train skilled people ready for employment.

However, the curriculum is not the only important element. Artisans need work experience. Placing students in your companies is not only essential in obtaining a qualification, but is also essential to introducing our youth to the world of work.

Extremely important values are acquired in the work experience component, such as work ethics, discipline and self discipline, working in teams, responsibility, and accountability and so on. I mention this as it seems these work-readiness skills are something that is often lacking in our graduates.

I'm pleased that today we've a number of other companies who may be prepared to support the college in work placement. We need more and more of your support for our colleges.

I would like to dwell for a moment on the importance of the TVET sector. Government has placed the TVET sector at the centre of the post school education and training sector. We have in this country (as in many other countries around the world) an overemphasis on university education. In 2009, we had 1 TVET enrolment for every 4 university enrolments. Clearly this was wrong. Today

this ratio has improved, but we have 1 TVET college student for every 2 university students enrolled.

The result is that most employers end up employing students, who are overqualified for the positions they hold and artificially increase the wage bill. It also overloads our university system and we struggle to find relevant skills to drive the economy, and these typically are the mid-level skills for which TVET colleges are responsible.

It's absolutely critical that we improve the relationship between business and our colleges so that we can have centres where quality teaching and learning take place and in which industry has confidence and trust.

Government has also set a target to train 30,000 artisans a year by 2030. As we all know the TVET colleges alone cannot train this number, as every artisan development programme is dependent on companies to host apprentices.

The support of a consortium such as this one is valuable in securing workplace-learning opportunities.

I'm under no illusion that all our TVET colleges can or do offer quality teaching and learning. My Department is working hard on improving the quality of provision.

It's clear to me that the best way of building a vibrant TVET sector is to secure industry involvement in the process.

As government we acknowledge that conditions for business are difficult. The recent ratings downgrades have made borrowing more expensive, a significant impact on business. Furthermore, the on-going contestations around the mining charter create further uncertainty for investors.

Government is, however, committed to turning this situation around and, as you all know, we are working to strengthen relationships with investors and the business community at large.

In essence, government is building a relationship of trust with the private sector. So thank you Mr Butera and Mr Blom, thank you for sharing TEC with us.

As I understand it, you will encourage other businesses to invest in the centre. As the centre develops, you will support us in making the project sustainable. I look forward to a vibrant Sedibeng, which is better aligned to industry and the community it serves.

Let me conclude by saying that while I'm pleased to be here today to launch the centre. I'm mindful that the real work now lies ahead to ensure that this centre delivers on all that it has set out to achieve.

Such a centre creates expectations and hope for the future.

I hope that your teams will continue to work to ensure the success of the centre and I know that you will touch the lives of many students and their families. Again, to the management team of Cummins and Komatsu companies, my sincere gratitude for the interest you have shown in the youth of our country.

I thank you.