

**SPEECH BY EXECUTIVE MAYOR ZEPH MHLONGO AT THE FUNCTION
DEDICATED TO THE TOP 5 ACHIEVING STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT
SCHOOLS AROUND RANDFONTEIN AND LAUNCH OF THE MAYORAL
BURSARY FUND ON 29 JANUARY 2010.**

OUR HONOURABLE GUESTS – THE STUDENTS

PARENTS WHO ARE PRESENT HERE TODAY

PRINCIPALS AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE SCHOOLS: MR. BUHNER, MR.

KATZKE, MS. HENNING, MS MAYEKISO, MR. MOLEFE, MR MORRIS, MR NGOBENI,

MR SHELA AND MR BHANA

MAYORAL BURSARY SELECTION COMMITTEE

THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

COUNCILLORS

COUNCIL OFFICIALS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I WOULD FIRSTLY LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE GOD AND THANK HIM FOR MAKING THIS DAY POSSIBLE, AND FOR BLESSING US ALL WITH THE DESERVING AND HARD WORKING ACHIEVERS WE HAVE IN OUR MIDST TODAY. I STAND BEFORE YOU THANKING AND APPLAUDING ALL OUR PARENTS AND TEACHERS FROM THE SCHOOLS IN THE GREATER RANDFONTEIN FOR ALL THEIR HARD WORK, DEDICATION AND EFFORTS.

TODAY'S FUNCTION EPITOMIZES THE CLIMAX OF THE TOIL AND HARDWORK OUR LEARNERS HAD TO CONTEND WITH OVER THE YEARS. SIMILARLY, IT CONSTITUTES

THE COMMENCEMENT OF A BRIGHTER AND ILLUSTRIOUS FUTURE WHICH STANDS TO BENEFIT THE WHOLE NATION.

THIS IS A CELEBRATION OF THE EXCELLENCE THAT YOU, THE CLASS OF 2009 GRADUATES, HAVE ATTAINED. YOU WOULD NOT HAVE ACHIEVED THIS LANDMARK WITHOUT HAVING MET A PARTICULAR STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE. SO, THIS IS YOUR DAY. AND, IT ALSO IS A CELEBRATION OF — AND, A DAY OF GRATITUDE FOR — ALL OF THOSE WHO SUPPORTED YOU. IN A VERY REAL SENSE, YOUR EXCELLENCE IS THEIRS.

OUR WORLD IS FILLED WITH BARRIERS THAT CAN EASILY MAKE A PERSON QUIT THEIR DREAMS, BUT YOU DID NOT, YOU MARCHED ON IN A FOCUSED MANNER AND WENT AHEAD TO ACHIEVE WHAT YOU SET YOURSELVES TO ACHIEVE, AND YOU DID SO WITH FLYING COLOURS - THAT IN ITSELF IS A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION.

I AM INFORMED THAT TODAY I AM SHARING A TABLE WITH THE CREAM OF THE CROP OF THE ACHIEVERS CLASS. IT IS A PITY WE DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO ENGAGE BUT I WAS GOING TO ASK OUR FUTURE ECONOMISTS WHAT THEY THINK OF THE CURRENT RECESSION WE ARE IN, TO OUR PROSPECTIVE SCIENTIST I WAS GOING TO OPEN A DEBATE ABOUT THE SO CALLED SCIENTIFIC PREDICTION OF THE WORLD COMING TO AN END IN 2012. TO OUR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, EDUCATORS AND JUDGES IN WAITING, I WANTED TO EXPLORE THEIR THOUGHTS ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.

I KNOW FOR SURE THAT IF WE HAD TIME THEY WOULD HAVE ENGAGED ROBUSTLY IN THESE TOPICS AND WITH POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS. HOWEVER, FOR NOW WE WILL LEAVE THESE QUESTIONS TO THE EXPERTS, OUR YOUNG ENTHUSIASTS WILL JOIN THE DEBATE AT THE INSTITUTIONS THEY ARE GOING TO.

THIS YEAR, PRINCIPAL BUHNER HAS PRACTICED ONE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE FREEDOM CHARTER WHICH STATES THAT 'PEOPLE SHALL SHARE', AND IN THE TRUE SPIRIT OF THIS CHARTER RIEBEECKRAND GAVE THE STAGE TO THE PRINCIPAL, MRS

HENNING FROM RANDFONTEIN HIGH TO SHARE IN THE GLORY OF TOPPING ALL THE SCHOOLS IN RANDFONTEIN THROUGH THE HARDWORK AND DEDICATION OF A YOUNG MAN BY THE NAME OF CAMERON CLARENS.

AS THE MUNICIPALITY WE APPLAUD YOU YOUNG MAN AND WISH YOU AND YOUR FELLOW CLASSMATES OF 2009 ALL THE BEST THAT THE WORLD CAN GIVE YOU.

BUT BEFORE I FORGET, LAST YEAR IN THIS PODIUM, FOR THE SAME FUNCTION I SPOKE IN LENGTH ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY AND I QUOTE 'REMEMBER, ANY POSITIVE IMPACT YOU WANT TO MAKE IN YOUR LIFE, AS A SCIENTIST, DOCTOR, LAWYER, ATHLETE, MUSICIAN, STARTS AT HOME. THE RELATIONSHIPS YOU HAVE WITH YOUR FAMILY-YOUR PARENTS AND SIBLINGS, AND OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR IMMEDIATE FAMILY ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ONES IN YOUR LIFE. GUARD THEM FIERCELY AND PROTECT THEM AGAINST THE NEGATIVE INFLUENCES OF SOCIETY. I ASK YOU TO THANK THEM FOR THE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION THEY HAVE MADE IN YOUR LIVES AND WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE; AND TO YOUR PARENTS, I ASK YOU TO REAFFIRM TO YOUR CHILDREN THE VALUE THEY HAVE BROUGHT TO YOUR LIVES AND IN YOUR HEARTS. ALL OF US SHOULD NEVER FORGET TO ASK OURSELVES HOW WE CAN CONTINUE TO DO BETTER TO SERVE, LOVE AND PROTECT OUR FAMILIES.'

IN THE SAME BREATH, I WANT TO CHALLENGE OUR COUNCILLORS, AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE, TO MOBILISE COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SCHOOLS. WE NEED TO REVALITISE OUR SCHOOLS AND ENSURE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES ATTEND SCHOOL. TOGETHER WE CAN IMPROVE THE EDUCATION SERVICES THE STATE PROVIDES FOR OUR CHILDREN. LET US RE-ENERGISE THE SYSTEM AND IMPROVE OUR ACCOUNTABILITY. TOGETHER WE CAN DO MORE.

TO OUR TOP ACHIEVERS, I WANT TO PLEDGE TO ALL OF YOU, THAT WHEN YOU BASK IN THE LIMELIGHT OF SUCCESS, NEVER FORGET WHERE YOU COME FROM, REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE A ROLE MODEL AND KEEP IN MIND THAT YOU CARRY IN

THOSE TINY SHOULDERS OUR BIG DREAMS AND HUGE ASPIRATIONS. GOD BLESS YOU AS YOU MANEUVER YOUR WAY THROUGH THE NET OF SUCCESS AND MAY HE GRANT YOU ALL THE DESIRES OF YOUR HEARTS AND BLESS YOU ALL.



FRIENDS, THE SECOND PART OF TODAY'S EVENT IS THE LAUNCH OF OUR BURSARY SCHEME.

AS YOU MIGHT KNOW, THE CREATION OF NEW KNOWLEDGE IS ABSOLUTELY VITAL FOR A DEVELOPING ECONOMY LIKE OURS, IT IS THAT WHICH MAKES US TO BE ABLE TO COMPETE GLOBALLY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN I WOULD BE PREACHING TO THE CONVERTED IF I REITERATE ANY FURTHER THE FACT THAT THE FOUNDATION FOR AN IDEAL SOCIETY WITH ADEQUATELY SKILLED MEN AND WOMEN, CAPABLE OF BRINGING ABOUT ALL-ROUND DEVELOPMENT, IS ROOTED IN THE SOUND EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM.

IT IS THEREFORE IMPERATIVE THAT ALL PERTINENT STAKEHOLDERS IN THE BUSINESS OF EDUCATION, INCLUDING HOMES, SCHOOLS AND THE GENERAL COMMUNITY OF OUR TOWN STRIVE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS OBJECTIVE BY BRINGING ABOUT TANGIBLE PROGRAMS, SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES THAT WILL MAKE THIS TASK TO FURTHER THE ALL ROUND DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CHILDREN.

FOR A START, WE HAVE LEARNT WITH GREAT EXCITEMENT THAT THE WEST RAND HAS SURPASSED ALL OTHER REGIONS IN GAUTENG WITH THE HIGHEST MATRIC PASS RATE, TO US THAT IS A CLEAR INDICATION THAT OUR CHILDREN WHO PASSED MATRIC HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO FURTHER THEIR STUDIES.

THE QUESTION BECOMES, WHAT IS IT THAT STOPS THEM FROM DOING SO? THE ANSWER IS QUITE SIMPLE: BARRIERS TO FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

THEREFORE, IT IS FITTING THAT AS WE CELEBRATE THE ANNUAL TOP FIVE MATRICULANTS OF EACH SCHOOL, WE ALSO LAUNCH THIS PIONEERING, NOBLE, IMAGINATIVE AND FORWARD-LOOKING PROJECT OF THIS MUNICIPALITY WHICH IS TO BE KNOWN AS THE MAYORAL BURSARY FUND.

I AM GLAD TO ANNOUNCE THAT, TODAY WE WILL HAND OVER BURSARIES TO THOSE STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN SELECTED IN THEIR APPLICATION FOR THIS FUND.

I WILL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT IN OUR QUEST OF MAKING THE SELECTION PROCESS TO BE FAIR AND OBJECTIVE, IT WAS TEDIOUS, LONG AND EXHAUSTING, BUT STRANGELY, VERY REWARDING TO ALL WHO TOOK PART. I AM NOT GOING TO INDULGE IN THE PROCESS BUT MRS. PINK VENA KIBI, FROM RAND URANIUM, OUR POTENTIAL PARTNER IN THIS INITIATIVE WILL LATER DO US THE HONOURS OF TAKING YOU THROUGH THAT PROCESS.

AS THE MUNICIPALITY WE ARE OF THE VIEW THAT THIS INITIATIVE WILL GO A LONG WAY IN ADDRESSING THE HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF THE TOWN, THE PROVINCE AND THE COUNTRY. ITS MAIN INTENTION IS TO FUND THOSE STUDENTS WHO ARE DESERVING OF ASSISTANCE BY SHOWING THEIR COMMITMENT AND DEDICATION TO MAKING A BETTER LIFE FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR COMMUNITY.

IT IS OUR FIRM CONVICTION THAT THIS CONTRIBUTION WE ARE MAKING TODAY, WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROGRAM OF GOVERNMENT, THAT OF ADVANCING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, AND IT WILL FURTHER STRENGTHEN OUR FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL

EXCLUSION; BY PROVIDING LEARNERS FROM DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS QUALITY EDUCATION.

IN ADDITION TO THAT, WE BELIEVE THAT BY MAKING THESE FUNDS AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE, WE WILL BE CONTRIBUTING IN ENSURING THAT WE AS A SOCIETY SUPPORT OUR FUTURE LEADERS IN RECEIVING THE SOUND EDUCATION AND SKILLS THEY WILL NEED IN THE FUTURE. SUCH A SOCIETY WILL ENCOURAGE AND EMPOWER ITS INDIVIDUALS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EMERGING KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY AND SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

BUT THE MUNICIPALITY CANNOT UNDERTAKE THIS MAMMOTH TASK ON ITS OWN. IT NEEDS SOLID PARTNERS AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORT TO MAKE THIS VENTURE TO SUCCEED. THIS THEREFORE IS A CHALLENGE TO THE BUSINESSES WITHIN OUR TOWN TO PARTNER WITH US IN ADDRESSING THIS MONUMENTAL TASK.

BY FUNDING THIS VENTURE, BUSINESS IS NOT ONLY ENSURING THAT IN YEARS TO COME WE HAVE MORE GRADUATES, BUT IT ALSO PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF ENSURING THAT THE RECIPIENTS OF THE BURSARIES HAVE BETTER OPPORTUNITIES OF SUCCESS IN THEIR HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES.

AS I CONCLUDE, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THOSE WHO APPLIED FOR SHOWING INTEREST, AND SYMPATHISE WITH THOSE WHOSE APPLICATIONS WERE TURNED DOWN AS A RESULT OF CERTAIN REASONS POINTED OUT IN THE LETTERS WE SENT THEM. I WOULD PLEAD WITH THEM TO RECTIFY THESE AND APPLY IN THE NEXT ROUND. I CONGRATULATE THOSE WHO ARE OUR FIRST EVER BENEFICIARIES.

LASTLY, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE STAFF OF THE MUNICIPALITY WHO HAVE ASSISTED WITH THE LOGISTICS OF THIS PROGRAM, THE CFO AND THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER FOR MAKING THE FUNDS AVAILABLE. SPECIAL WORD OF THANKS GOES TO THE REV. MZONDI, PRINCIPAL MARLON BHANA FROM LUKHANYO

SECONDARY, MRS. PINK VENA KIBI FROM RAND URANIUM, MMCS GAMA AND MATAKANE FOR BEING A DEDICATED TEAM THAT CONSTITUTED THE SELECTION COMMITTEE FOR THEIR OBJECTIVITY AND HARD WORK.

WITH THOSE FEW WORDS, WE SAY **AYIHLOME IFUNDE! GOD BLESS YOU ALL.**

I THANK YOU.