

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY HIS WORSHIP COUNCILOR S.W MDABE ON THE
OCCASSION OF THE LAUNCH OF NATHI MTHEMBU BURSARY AND
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME, Ebandla, Ballito, 1st October 2010**

Programme Director;

Your Majesty; Hlanga Lomhlabathi; Isilo Samabandla Onke;

Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, honourable Jeff Radebe;

MEC, Arts Culture, Sports and Recreation, honourable Weziwe Thusi;

Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councilors present today;

Amakhosi present; Inkosi Ngubane, Chair of iLembe House of Traditional Leaders
and Inkosi Mathaba;

The Mthembu family;

Chief Executive of FNB Public Sector Banking and your delegation;

Senior government officials present;

Leaders of the corporate sector present;

Distinguished guests;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentleman:

It is an honour and privilege for me to welcome all our valued guests, in particular His Majesty the King for agreeing to grace this occasion and Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development for agreeing to be our guest speaker tonight.

I would also like to convey Council's deepest felt gratitude to the leadership of the business community, from small business to big captains of industry who have yielded our call for partnership in establishing Nathi Mthembu Bursary and Scholarship Programme.

I would also like to express my sincerest gratitude to the First National Bank Group for being our primary sponsor for this project.

I would also like to express my earnest thanks to MEC Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation for partnership and support that has been given to us towards the realization of this august event.

We have chosen to name this project after the son of the soil-Nathi Mthembu who had played a pivotal role in the struggle for national liberation and emancipation of our people in the education sector under the banner and leadership of the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC).

During his tenure as Regional Secretary of the NECC, Nathi together with the collective leadership of the democratic movement and the NECC in particular were confronted with new challenges arising from the eminent transition in the early 90's from apartheid education system to the new democratic one.

It was during this period that the NECC leadership in consultation with the broader democratic movement sort to establish a new alternative education system by among other things setting up Education Policy Units in higher education institution with a view of proving new models for future education system.

This led to the establishment of the national co-ordinating body of specialists and researchers referred to as the National Education Policy Investigation, known as NEPI, which was charged with a historical task of translating the vision of the democratic movement from a slogan into policy option.

Charged with this historical task, NEPI had to translate slogans such as people's education for people's power and prepare options about the funding model for post secondary education system, governance structures, access and curriculum development.

As iLembe District Municipality, we intend to carry the legacy of Nathi and others by engaging in partnership with willing corporate partners for the delivery of infrastructure for schools in the area and financial assistance to financially needy students.

In the past sixteen years, government at all spheres has spared no effort towards the realisation of a better life for all.

However, the government's commitment to delivering a better life for all continues to be constrained by lack of sufficient resources to meet all the needs of all South Africans.

Through out the past sixteen years government has been communicating a consistent message that if South Africa is to realise its objective of a better life for all, it will need to work in partnership with other stakeholders in the private sector and civil society to eradicate the damage that was done to our people over three hundred years of colonial domination.

It is in line with this kind of thinking that we as the leadership of the municipality seek to forge partnerships with willing corporate partners to deliver educational

assistance to students who are financially needy and have an academic potential to succeed at higher education level.

iLembe District Municipality like many other municipalities across the country is still characterised by patterns of poverty and wealth that are somewhat reminiscent of the old apartheid days.

The legacy of apartheid finds concrete expression through the realities of existence of visible areas of affluence and even opulence on the one hand co-existing with areas of absolute poverty and squalor on the other.

This situation is untenable in that it belies the government's commitment to socio-economic transformation; continued poverty and its exacerbation has far reaching effects for the people who are born to poverty and the type of outcomes they are to expect out of life.

The situation becomes even more pernicious when considering that the children born to poverty have a likelihood of remaining in that vicious cycle for the rest of their lives.

It is out of these considerations that we seek to intervene in a manner that breaks the vicious cycle of poverty, through the establishment of Nathi Mthembu Bursary and Scholarship Programme, whose chief aim is to address the critical question of scarce skills and human development as part of our strategic objective encapsulated in the IDP to develop our people.

The intention is to ensure that at the very least the municipality in partnership with the private sector intervenes in a manner that provides hope and assures the children born to poverty that their circumstances can and will change for the better.

This view is based on the thesis that high education provides both individual and public benefits.

As it might already be discernible from the introduction, there are myriads of problems associated with existence of poverty within iLembe District.

For the purposes of this proposal, the identified problem is that of inadequate existence and provision of educational assistance in the iLembe area.

The municipality has areas that range from the affluent suburbs of the dolphin coast to the middle-income suburbs all the way down to urban townships, peri-urban, rural and deep rural areas. Within the municipal areas, there are localities that provide world-class education supported with world-class infrastructure and properly equipped facilities and well trained educators.

On the other hand there are areas that do not even have classrooms where children learn under the trees without any form of infrastructure, equipment and training aides.

Added to these is the related problem of children who through out their schooling lives never ever own a text book, have no access to library and completely have no laboratories for scientific subjects.

The implications of the poverty on schools are far-reaching and varied. They become more acutely expressed in the type of learners that such schools produce. In the first instance most of the learners in such schools never pursue their schooling further than primary education.

Those who proceed to secondary schooling are faced with the fact that theirs is an inferior education that hardly prepares them for work, nor for further post Matric education. How can it be expected of a learner who has never had access to even

prescribed books to do well and compete with children who have unlimited access to books and other knowledge facilities?

The problems stated here are well known to government at all spheres and it is doing everything it can to change this status quo.

However, given the extent of the national educational backlog, waiting for government to do something might mean the current cohort of learners loose out on the opportunity to get an education.

The conditions on the ground require that action should be taken and be done by yesterday. It is in this spirit that we as iLembe District Municipality seeks to engage Corporate partners to redress the immediate challenge of education facilities and infrastructure in schools.

There are myriad of reasons why the private sector is identified as a partner regarding the provision of infrastructure. In the first instance South Africa is already replete with examples of private sector players partnering with government to provide critical infrastructure and in delivering services.

The implication of this is that this is by no means unprecedented.

However, as KwaDukuza Municipality we have not benefited from the generosity of the private sectors like other areas in the country.

In the second instance government has always been clear about its commitment to partnership with the private sector. This is borne out of the realisation that the private sector has the means and the willingness to assist government to create a society of shared opportunities. The private sector has already proven that the government's faith in it is not misplaced through coming to the party time and time again when it is called upon.

In the third instance globally the private sector has committed to playing a role in addressing socio-economic needs of the societies where they operate.

Such commitments are expressed clearly in programmes such as the Millennium Development Goals, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the resolutions of the Climate Change Summit etc. By calling on the private sector to partner with us as government, we are at the same time providing them with an opportunity to walk the talk of responding to our country's developmental needs and challenges.

In the fourth instance philanthropy and development financing is a measure of civilisation and corporate citizenship that is cognisant of the need to contribute to the welfare of society in which the private sector does business.

Philanthropy and corporate citizenship displays that the private sector is interested in more than its profit as a bottom line. By making request for this type of philanthropic donations, we are at the same time interested in building relationships that would help in addressing the pressing demands of our communities.

Our call is for in kind partnership that would help fast track the provision of the critically needed financial assistance to our youth to further their studies. The sector identified is the education sector. There are various reasons why the education sector. It is our firm belief that in a country like ours that interested in creating a society of shared opportunity; education has a pivotal role to play.

Education is proving to be a greatest determinant of the future prospect of any individual.

The fact that there are children who are denied education because of their economic backgrounds means that their fate is sealed and they are doomed and condemned to poverty.

On the other hand through provision of quality education, we are assured the recipient that they stand a chance to compete in this world where ignorance is a vice.

We would welcome support and partnership with the private on these matters scarce skills, human development and infrastructure in schools.

In 2009, we hosted a corporate gala dinner under the theme, “Our history, our heritage, our legend”. Out of the proceeds from that gala dinner, we were able to assist students in the following fields:

Brian Dlamini	: Actuarial Science (Frees State University)
Siyabonga Sibisi	: Bachelor of Law (UKZN, PMB Campus)
Melusi Mabaso	: Electrical engineering (Durban University of Technology)
Sphelele Xulu	: Microbiology (University of Zululand)

We hope out of the proceeds of this year’s gala dinner, we will be able to assist more learners.

I thank you for attention.