

**SPEECH BY MEC FOR PUBLIC WORKS, HON MR. HOWARD YAWA,
MPL ON THE OCCASION OF THE HANDOVER OF FATHER
SMANGALISO MKHATSHWA COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL, ON
THURSDAY 27JULY 2006 AT SLOVOVILLE-WINTERVELDT**

Programme Directors

Pastor Toka

The Representative of Executive Mayor of the City of Tshwane-

Honourable Councillor Subesh Pillay

President of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa-

Honourable Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa

Honourable Members of Parliament and the Provincial Legislature

The Ward Councillor and Member of the Mayoral Committee

responsible for Housing-Honourable Councillor Shadrack Dlamini

The CEO of the Council for the Build Environment-Dr Neluheni

The CEO of BKS-Ms Dania Magugumela

Senior Government Officials

Chairpersons and Members of the School Governing Bodies

The School Manager Rre Maimane

Educators

The Professional team and Contractors

Representatives of Business and Community Based Organisations

Honourable Councillors

Representatives of organised educator organisations, i.e. SADTU
and Naptosa

Distinguished Guests

Parents and Members of the Community

Members of the Learner Representative Council

Learners

Comrades and Friends

The Chilean Nobel Prize Winning Poet, Gabriela Mistral in her poem His Name wrote,

“We are guilty of many errors and many faults

But our worst crime is abandoning the children

Neglecting the fountain of life

Many things we need, can wait,

The child cannot....

To him we cannot answer tomorrow

His Name is Today”

Today is an important day for the Department of Public Works, the Council for the Build Environment (CEB) and our partners in the private sector as it marks the commencement of National Construction Week, which is a nationwide campaign to promote the profile and image of the construction sector.

On the occasion of the sod turning for this Project on the 8 July last year, we appealed to the community of Winterveldt to support the contractor to ensure the delivery of the project on time, on budget and to a higher standard of quality.

Today we are here to celebrate the delivery of Father Smangalis Comprehensive High School three months ahead of schedule. The performance by the Architect, the Quantity Surveyor, the Civil and Structural Engineer, the Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and the contractor has demonstrated their partnership towards the eradication of the inherited classroom backlog and “the learners under trees phenomenon”.

We appreciate the contribution of professionals in the build environment and construction sector towards infrastructure development. Given the critical shortage of professionals in the sector however, we wish to encourage maths and science learners to opt for this exciting and vibrant sector as a career destination of choice.

In order to meet the shortage of skills for major capital projects on infrastructure and the developmental needs of our country, the build and construction sectors need to attract new entrants. To expose learners to opportunities available in the built environment and construction sector, the CEB is sponsoring an awareness programme that is targeted at maths and science learners in Grade 10.

Today the CBE is hosting 120 learners at the Holiday Inn in the City of Tshwane for presentations by professional councils and site visits to construction sites in the afternoon. Eighty (80) of the learners are drawn from schools in Winterveldt. They are to

be more specific from Winterveldt High School and Father Smangalis Mkhathshwa High School.

The awareness campaign programme that learners from this school are part of is supported by BKS Group (Pty), a large engineering company with 40% black ownership. Its Chief Executive Officer present in this function, Ms Dania Magugumela was introduced earlier to us.

Tomorrow afternoon, our partners in development, i.e. engineers, architects and quantity surveyors from Africon, EHK Architects and GT Chaane Quantity Surveyors and will also accompany on an awareness campaign at Seleje Secondary School in Madibe Makgabana Village.

In partnership with professionals executing our projects, my department will also host 40 learners for project site visits to Matlosana Secure Care Centre Construction Project and the Vryburg Hospital Revitalisation Construction Project on the 2 and 3 August respectively.

The objective of the project visits is for learners to experience the construction process and offer practical insight of the involvement of the various professions in the built environment. We are therefore honoured by the presence of Dr Neluheni, Chief Executive Officer for the Council for the Built Environment in this event.

President Thabo Mbeki, in his State of the Nation address in 2003,said that we must ensure that enough classrooms are built in the shortest possible time to ensure that no student has to learn under trees or in the open air.

Since the expansion of the definition of the term “under trees” to include learners who study in mud schools, or under dangerous conditions that expose learners and educators to the element as was the case with learners at this school, my department has stepped up its delivery programme to ensure that we meet the expectation of our client, the department of education.

Today represents the celebration of a new age of hope. It represents a celebration of a People’s Contract between government represented here by my department, the department of education as our client, the City of Tshwane and the community of Winterveldt.

The 8,1 million school building project we are handing over today has created 77 job opportunities for locals. 36 of the jobs created went to Youth, 29 job opportunities went towards local labourers and 12 women.

The facility includes an administration block, 4 heads of department’s offices, eighteen (18) classrooms, 2(two) special function rooms, 4 (four) stationery stores, 2 special rooms and thirty six (36) toilets.

We wish to congratulate the people of Winterveldt for this magnificent facility and for their patience and for believing in their government to address inherited infrastructure backlog that the twin evils of colonialism and apartheid had created in our communities.

We wish to reiterate our congratulations to the community of Winterveldt for recognising and honouring the contribution of a selfless, dedicated and humble servant of our people and the continent, the Honourable Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa.

As decades of deprivation and neglect give way to a new age of hope and development, let us jealously protect what Freedom and Democracy has brought for us.

In conclusion, I think most of us would agree with what the African genius and Poet, Ben Okri wrote in his book, 'A Way of being Free', that:

"There are no joys without mountains having been climbed.
There are no joys without the nightmares that precede them and spring them into light...
The joys that spring from the challenges are profound. "

It is my honour to hand over keys to Honourable Councillor Subesh Pillay Member of the Mayoral Committee representing the Executive Mayor of the City of Tshwane to officially open the

school on behalf of my colleague the Honourable MEC for the Education, Reverend O.J.Tselapedi.

Ke a leboga.