

CEO SPEECH: HIGHVELD HIGH SCHOOL CSI PROJECT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Deputy Minister of Transport Hon. Sindisiwe Chikunga, MP
- MEC for Education in Mpumalanga Ms. Regina Mhaule
- MMC for planning and economic development: Cllr. Q Thabethe
- Councillor of Aramburg ward 10, Cllr. Emelly Mkhabela and other Councillors present here.
- CEO of Airports Company South Africa: Mr. Bongani Maseko
- Principal of Highveld Secondary School: Mr. Magagula and other principals from neighboring schools
- Teachers present here
- Pastors from different churches
- Business sector
- Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen

It is indeed an honor for me and ATNS to be part of this collective – present here today, to witness fruits of our labor – the opening of this multipurpose and high tech library complex.

Deputy Minister, all this is happening at the beginning of the school calendar, which simply shows yours and our commitment to the “education of an African child”. Attending school builds confidence and cohesiveness. Educated children are more likely to invest in improving their community when they are grown. And the follow-on effects of basic education quickly multiply, as children who have benefited from schooling themselves strive to secure even better opportunities for their own families.

ATNS is an organization focusing on CSI initiatives that addresses pertinent societal issues. Chief among those are:

- Improved Quality of Basic Education.

The provision of resources and infrastructure such as this library, are critical to improving the quality of learning at secondary and high school levels. We see this as a pipeline for our Air Traffic Control (ATC) recruitment process. At the end of this year, we want to see a 100% matric pass rate. We want you to apply – provided you meet our requirements, to become a qualified Air Traffic Controllers.

- Addressing the twin challenges of poverty and unemployment.

We recognize the fact that every corporate organization is a citizen of the country and as such - has to play a pivotal role in addressing these societal issues for the good of the country and its people. Training and retraining to build up human capital and marketable skills, such as basic literacy for vulnerable groups, are critical to the integration of the poor into the labour market. Our investment will surely go a long way in addressing these challenges.

Deputy Minister, we hope that the community of Elukwatini accepts, embrace and protect this new development. It is through the goodwill of this community that we are able to address the school's needs. We aim to create and maintain a strong and respectful relationship with this and similar other communities - of which we are a part. We will seek regular engagement about issues that may affect them. And we aim to contribute to the creation of more prosperous and empowered communities. Our presence here means that we have a special responsibility to uplift and bring prosperity to host communities.

Deputy Minister, our aim is to provide ICT centers in schools located in rural areas. These Centers are intended to accelerate socio-economic development in a particular and/or specific region and to achieve freedom from distance by linking all parts of the region with the rest of the country - through good telecom and internet services. They are meant to enhance learning capabilities of students using technologies and applications like e-learning. Exposure of students to education through ICT will develop inquisitiveness among them. As I speak, digital book contents and course curriculum are fully uploaded in this center.

In a paper titled "Integrating ICT into Rural South African Schools - Possible Solutions for Challenges", Dennis Yao Dzansi and Kofi Amedzo, from the Department of Business Support Studies, Faculty of Management Sciences, Central University of Technology, Free State, Bloemfontein, mention that "The influence of ICT in schools cannot be overemphasized as its utility is changing the way students learn, teachers teach, and support staff work". As ATNS we agree wholeheartedly with Messers Dzansi and Amedzo. It is essential for South African schools no matter where they are located to integrate ICT into their day to day administration and the teaching and learning process. It makes absolute sense to spare no effort in integrating ICT into rural schools so that rural school learners become equally employable just like their urban counterparts do.

The private sector, parastatals and NGOs should join forces to support the government's effort to build ICT Infrastructure in our schools.

In closing, we would like to acknowledge Meso and ACSA - who partnered with us to provide these much-needed ICT solutions in this school.

THANK YOU