



**Keynote address by the Premier of the Northern Cape, Ms
Sylvia Lucas, at the Teaching Awards 2018**

Mieta Seperepere Convention Centre

29 October 2018

Programme Director

Members of the Executive Council

**Head of Department: Mr GT Pharasi and all senior
government officials**

Representatives of COSAS and SASCO

Teacher Unions

SGB Associations

Stakeholders and Partners in the Education sector

Representatives from Liberty and Old Mutual

**Most importantly, the Educators, the Provincial Finalists of
the 2018 Northern Cape Teaching Awards**

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my distinct pleasure to be in your company tonight as we pay tribute to excellence in the education sector. Education remains the engine of our economy, it is the foundation of our culture, and it's an essential preparation for adult life. We all have a responsibility to educate the next generation of informed citizens, inculcating in them a love of knowledge and positive discovery. Education needs to be about the practical business of ensuring that young people receive the preparation they need to not only secure a good job and a fulfilling career, but to have the resilience and moral character to overcome challenges and succeed.

I join you tonight as we honour passionate, creative educators who challenge, inspire, and support their learners every day. You are fine examples of incredible educators who have made a world of difference within their communities, and who continue to inspire, not only your learners, but also your fellow educators. Today is a celebration of seeing our teachers succeed, and recognising their success. You have proven your metal and gone far beyond the call of duty in what are sometimes challenging circumstances. The quality of our South African education system depends on expertise; meaning there should be an understanding of the curriculum, content knowledge and

teaching skills and most importantly a commitment by you, the teachers.

Teachers bring out the best in their learners, and develop their love for learning. When I visit schools, I see this in the daily activities of the teachers, and some even go beyond the activities of the school and this is noteworthy. We all know what a difference this can make to the learners' lives. Their care and concern is the beacon of hope for many of our learners when they are faced with challenges, whether in their school exams, difficulty coping with grades, different aspects of school life or the difficulties of teenage life. In most instances our teachers make a difference with a listening ear and a caring heart.

We all know our teachers go beyond the classroom to take care of our children. A teacher's care has always made a great impact on a learner's holistic development, and on his or her overall social and emotional well-being. This is of great importance in this modern era, where our students are bombarded every day by the digital maze. Our teachers play an important role in helping them navigate this mass of information at a very young age; about learning the values of mutual respect, responsibilities and how to treat each other. More importantly, how to ensure their moral compass guides them in life.

Teachers are at the heart of the Education system. They take it upon themselves to guide, creating the time and space for learners to better understand themselves, their strengths and weaknesses and even interests and passions. They know that it is more important for a child to grow into a confident, empathetic and resilient individual – all the attributes that make a complete person.

Tonight I wish to commend the tremendous effort teachers put into the training of the country's future manpower and this awards presents us with an ideal opportunity to do just that. As we do so, we want to say to you that we are fully aware of the high level of sacrifice, selflessness, dedication and great sense of responsibility that your daily duties entail.

I would, therefore, like to take this opportunity to salute all teachers for giving it their best as classroom teachers. At some point in every person's life, a teacher's influence is very important and often has life changing effects. In most instances, teachers act as the guides for life, show the path towards success and enriches the personality of his/her learners by imparting academic, professional and ethical knowledge.

Teachers bring out the untapped talents in their learners and sharpen such hidden talents in order to bring out the best results in our learners. This is achieved mostly at the expense of the personal welfare of teachers. Of course, as the saying goes, **“a good teacher is like a candle; it consumes itself to light the way for others”**.

As I conclude I want to remind our teachers, that for our nation to develop, we all need to play our individual roles and do so to the best of our ability. Let us all discipline ourselves to do what is right and important, although difficult. I also urge our teachers to also take advantage of the various opportunities for continuous education and self-development in order to sharpen your teaching skills in these times of constant change. This way, you will always remain current and will be in a better position to impart modern and relevant knowledge to your learners.

Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to appreciate the role of all Teacher Unions in the manner in which they supported the National Teaching Awards. Our Teacher Unions are our important and valued stakeholders and we want to thank you for your dedication to the noble cause of educating our nation.

I also would like to thank and acknowledge the invaluable sponsorship by Liberty Life and Old Mutual as our partners in education.

When we say that education is a societal responsibility, this is what we really mean. Thank you very much for your generosity and commitment to the education of our future leaders. It is indeed partnerships such as these that will enable us to provide quality education to our children.

I also want to congratulate all the recipients of the prestigious teaching awards. I am convinced and trust that you will fly the Northern Cape flag high at the National Teaching Awards. As you receive these awards; let it serve as a reminder that you hold the hopes of the parents and learners of this beautiful Province so you should constantly strive to deliver on the commitments to our people by improving their lives through Education and Training and in so doing help us move this beautiful Province forward.

Enjoy your evening with us!

I thank you.