MINISTRY
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, MP, THEMBI SIMELANE, DURING THE OCCASION OF THE VINCENT TSHABALALA EDUCATION TRUST FUNDRAISING GALA DINNER

20 NOVEMBER 2026

KILLARNEY COUNTRY CLUB, JOHANNESBURG

Programme Director,

Patron of Vincent Tshabalala Education Trust, Hon. Paul Mashatile

Chairperson and Board of the VTET,

CEO and Executive Management,

Esteemed Stakeholders,

Beneficiaries,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening.

I want to start by sending my profound appreciation to the Patron and the leadership of the Vincent Tshabalala Education Trust for the opportunity to render an address at this prestigious event.

It is my pleasure to join you for this gala dinner, following a wonderful day on the golf course. We are gathered not only to celebrate the event, but also to support the work of the Vincent Tshabalala Education Trust and help create opportunities for young people.

The strategic goal of this gala dinner is to celebrate a significant milestone of twenty-two years existence of this towering Education Trust and ask for sponsorship from our traditional and potential donors.

The Trust has done enormous work in uplifting a black child from a typically working-class community of Alexandra through empowering educational initiatives. Its work is undergirded by the philosophical foundation that Black lives matter.

The Education Trust is named after Vincent Tshabalala, a Bethal born icon, and I suspect that’s why I was chosen to be a guest speaker at this prestigious occasion because I was also born in Bethal, a small farming town in Mpumalanga, known for its famous 1959 potato boycott or strike.

We pay homage to the friends and comrades of Vincent who established the Trust in honor of the significant contribution he made to the struggle and ultimately kept his legacy intact and alive as a source of inspiration for the youth of Alexandra.

This Education Trust stands as fitting tribute to his outstanding commitment to equal, quality education and a better non-racial, non-sexist, and prosperous South Africa.

The Trust aims to inspire and support hardworking, committed young people while promoting service, solidarity, and civic responsibility among the youth of Alexandra and broader community.

Among its many goals, the Trust seeks to mobilise community support and collaboration with the education stakeholders. This is important to note because a social compact for education is indispensable toward better learning outcomes and equal opportunities.

This social compact for education should serve as a shared agreement among various stakeholders, including government, educators, and communities, that outline the responsibilities and expectations for education.

Importantly, understanding the sociological perspective on education reveals that it is not just about individual learning, but a broader social process embedded in societal structures. It is against this backdrop that we call for the whole of society approach to education.

The Trust has enjoyed a recognisable support of the sponsors, donors and the community in the last 22 years, and that support has made significant life changing moments to many young people of Alexandra, and we wish to invite them to keep on pledging their ongoing unwavering support to the Trust to enable it to achieve its strategic objectives.

Importantly, the support of the sponsors for the Trust has not only made positive impact to the primary and secondary learners of the schools of Alexandra, but it has also touched lives of the ordinary and vulnerable groups of the community.

The Trust adopted and supported grannies and child headed households for a year programme that has since benefitted 200 households and established various partnerships and solidarity initiatives within the community of Alexandra and beyond through various programmes.

These include a successful monthly clean-up campaign of schools and public spaces to protect our environment.

The National Development Plan vision 2030 aims to build an inclusive society through education by ensuring that all South Africans have access to quality education.

Former President Nelson Mandela once said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,”. Those words remind us that education is more than a path to personal opportunity, it is an investment in the future of our communities and our country.

We must continue to support and equip the youth not only with strong foundations, but also with the skills needed for a changing world. This includes skills in fields such as artificial intelligence, digital technology, and innovation.

By helping youth to access these opportunities, we can build a skilled workforce, strengthen our economy, and ensure that South Africa can compete and contribute on the world stage. Investing in the education of our youth is, ultimately, an investment in the future we share.

To all our sponsors and everyone who contributed to the golf dayand this evening, thank you. Your generosity and support make this work possible. The funds raised will help students take the next step in their education, and that is something we can all be proud of.

Thank you for your attention. Enjoy you evening.

I thank you.