

The Deputy Minister of Public Works, Mr. Ntopile Kganyago, MP, gives an address on the occasion to hand-over computers to a school

Venue: Magoshi Primary School, Ga-Maribane, Limpopo

Date: 27 January 2007

Time: 09h00

- The Representative of the Chinese Government, Minister Councillor Zhou Yuxiao
- The Mayor of Aganang Municipality, Mrs. M Masehela
- All Local Councillors present today
- Senior Government Officials
- The Principal of Magoshi Primary School, Mr. Manamela
- Educators, Parents and Learners
- The Programme Director: Ms Julia Marakalala
- Ladies and Gentlemen:

Firstly, let me take this opportunity to welcome all of you – teachers, parents and learners back to school in 2007. I hope the December holidays gave everybody a well

deserved rest and that you are all looking forward to a busy but challenging new year.

Our sincere gratitudes as a country need to go to the people and the government of the People's Republic of China, for their courtesy. I personally got the chance to sample first hand, the Chinese hospitality when I was warmly welcomed during my visit to China last year (2006). I was impressed by their diligence which is manifested through the brisk rate of their economic growth.

In a short period since the People's Republic of China was formerly established in 1949, the economy of China has grown tremendously and today it outpaces many major economies in the world. This is because the Chinese people are hard-working and show dedication in everything they do - be it commerce, sport, industry, science or technology. In fact, China is the world's second biggest spender on research and development in science and technology.

It is important to understand that countries like China, will continue to prosper and dominate the world economy because their people are hard-workers, their standard of

living is rapidly improving and about 98.9% of their youth population is literate and many parents are highly committed to their children's education, often investing large portions of their family's income on education and recreational activities of their children.

The computers that the Chinese Embassy is donating to our school today, are welcomed. We view them as seeds that will grow to stimulate the interest of our children in science and technology.

I remember when this government launched the Year of Science and Technology in 1996 / 97, one of the scientists who unselfishly gave his time to motivate our children, was Professor Malegapuru Makgoba, a son of Limpopo. This renowned scientist today heads the University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal and is a constant reminder that we can all rise up to achieve international prominence.

I call on teachers and parents to work hard together to ensure that children grow interest in science and technology. We need to see these children learning computer skills, from

an early age, so that they can have a competitive advantage when they advance to secondary and tertiary institutions.

Our government particularly the Deputy President, Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, is driving a priority skills development initiative known as a Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA), to help the country identify and acquire critical skills needed to accelerate economic growth. Computer skills are part of the Information and Telecommunication group of skills identified under JIPSA. Therefore learning how to operate, programme, assemble and repair computers, at this early age, should put our children on par with many in the developed world who on daily basis interact through, and with computer technology.

I want to express how lucky we are to have friends like the people of China who care about our development. The greatest luck is the opportunity we are given, through these computers, to make a difference in our lives and the life of the community we inhabit.

I thank you.