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SPEECH BY MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE, PATRICIA DE LILLE

DPWI AWARDS 72 BURSARIES TO MATRICULANTS FOR BUILT ENVIRONMENT COURSES: AN INVESTMENT INTO OUR YOUNG LEADERS

NOTE FOR EDITORS: The following speech was delivered by Minister Patricia de Lille at the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure's annual Bursary Award Ceremony held in Pretoria, today 26 January 2023. Read more below...

Good morning, dumelang, molweni, goeie more

It gives me great pleasure to be here at one of my favourite and most inspiring annual events.

This time of the year comes after a long period of hard work and sacrifices for our recently matriculated pupils who are still celebrating their excellent matric results.

Today we are here to celebrate with all our matriculants and I want to congratulate you on your achievement of completing your school career.

There is no doubt that your last three years at school were challenging with the added factor of COVID 19 but today you can be proud of yourselves because you have reached this milestone.

Your education is one of the most important investments you can make into yourself to secure your future and be part of building our beautiful country.

I have seen some of your results and I want us all to applaud these young men and women for their fantastic results with some achieving between 90 and 100% for their matric final exams in Mathematics and Physics.

Achieving those results in those subjects is no easy feat and I want to congratulate you on a job well done.

You are here today because government has made an investment as you are receiving a bursary to study for a degree in a built environment course and I want to encourage you to grab this opportunity with both hands.

Continue to work hard now in your tertiary education so that you can become successful part of our country.

There are many students who also deserve this opportunity and you have been selected so be proud but understand how fortunate you are to get this opportunity.

Many of you have overcome difficult circumstances and adversity, you have risen above life's obstacles and you must continue to build your work ethic as you go into this new chapter of your life.

As the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) we are proud that we can make this investment into the lives of our young people and future leaders.

The DPWI Bursary Programme forms part of the department's Skills Pipeline Programme where pupils are encouraged at high school level to start considering careers in the built environment.

This programme by the department aims to bridge the gap with the skills we require in the public sector to deliver on our mandate of building quality infrastructure.

This programme is also an important part of our work of building a capable and ethical state as part of the seven key priorities of the 6th administration.

There is a lot of work to be done in our country and we need more skills in our country and we are starting with this investment in our young people.

This year we are awarding 72 Built Environment bursaries for the 2023 academic year.

The bursaries are being awarded to students who have been accepted at universities across the country for the following courses: Actuarial Science, Electrical Engineering, Construction Studies, Urban and Regional Planning, Civil Engineering, Quantity Surveying, Mechanical Engineering, Water Management and Maritime studies.

The total value of the bursaries being awarded this year is estimated at R165 000 per student per year.

Since 2014, the DPWI bursary programme has benefitted 452 students and with the 72 that are awarded today the number will be 524 beneficiaries.

This represents an overall investment into the education of our young people of R 180million over the past 9 years.

As we award the bursaries today, our recipients will also benefit from a University Readiness Workshop to equip the bursary recipients with basic knowledge and understanding of university life in order to set them up for the journey ahead and to ensure they make an easy transition from high school to university.

The Skills pipeline programme also sees bursary recipients being absorbed into the department once they have graduated where they receive valuable work experience and also complete the relevant professional candidate exams and processes.

Currently 177 former bursary recipients are working for the department either as a Professionals, Candidates or Interns.

Overall since the programme started, around 13% of former bursary recipients have gone on to work in the private sector and others are working in government inclusive of municipalities.

This year, the DPWI Professional Services Branch have also introduced a new programme (Built Environment Student Chapter) targeted at built environment and property students.

The Built Environment Student Chapter is platform intended to be a one stop shop for students to access topical information; industry development and innovation; researched articles and publications from various institutions. DPWI will further establish research desks which will focus on Innovative method on Infrastructure Acquisition, Delivery, Maintenance and Disposal.

The Student Chapter will further give students and professionals access to topics on professionalization of other built environment disciplines; reading and learning material or industry news.

The platform also provides information on internships or jobs advertisement and tips for applying, expert knowledge on aspects of targeted university course outcomes and articles on navigating the complexities of interdisciplinary research.

The Chapter will furthermore become a means for the department to keep in touch with the future economic contributors in the infrastructure sector.

The plan is to introduce the Student Chapter at all tertiary institutions offering built environment qualifications and enrol students for continuous engagements.

A website has been created where students are able to register and access the available information.

The Student Chapter has been successfully launched at the following institutions; University of Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand as well as the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The Chapter has been well received by both students and built environment faculties at these institutions. Plans are underway to launch at the remaining institutions during the 2023 academic year.

Ladies and gentleman, DPWI's Skills Pipeline Programme and the newly launched Student Chapter is a testament to the commitment by DPWI to seriously invest in our students who are pursuing careers in the built environment.

The careers in this sector are exciting and promising as testified by our former bursary recipients.

As mentioned earlier, there is so much more to do in the way of infrastructure development in our country and we need committed, hardworking professional to do the job.

I therefore appeal to the recipients to use this opportunity wisely and walk this journey with us to becoming one of the engineers or architects who one day soon will be part of building an important project for our country and our people.

In closing, I want to leave you with these words from one of nation's greatest leaders, Tata Nelson Mandela who said: "Everyone can rise above their circumstances and achieve success if they are dedicated to and passionate about what they do". END QUOTE

It really doesn't matter where you come from, it matters where you are going to so I wish you all the best for the road ahead and remind you again of another famous quote by Tata Madiba who said: "Young people must take it upon themselves to ensure that they receive the highest education possible so that they can represent us well in the future as future leaders". END QUOTE

Finally I want to thank some of our stakeholders and partners who have consistently supported the Schools Programme and Bursary Programme:

Prof Ramodungoane Tabane; School Director: Educational Studies: Contributing to Teacher Development in the Schools Programme; University Student Coaching and Counselling

Prof Awelani Mudau: Chair of Department: Science and Technology, Unisa: Contributing to Teacher Development in the Schools Programme

Mr. James Tlhabane: Project Coordinator, South African Agency for the Advancement of Science and Technology: Contributing to both Teacher and Learner Development in the Schools Programme; Promotion of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) career awareness; enrolment of schools in the Science Olympiads

Mr. Segomotso Kelefetswe: Founder and CEO, Outlook Foundation for assisting with STEM Career Awareness in the Schools Programme; Providing a structured University student mentorship support to our bursary holders

University of Johannesburg - Dr. Murendeni Liphadzi; Lecturer in Facilities Management – who is spearheading the Student Chapter for DPWI with various holders and who was once DPWI Bursary recipient.

I also want to extend my thanks to DG in the Presidency, DG Baleni for her support and presence here today.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you all for being here today for this special occasion for our young leaders.

Thank you for all your work of investing in them and teaching them.

Students, make your families and mentors proud and go for gold.

Anything you want in life is within your reach if you are prepared to work hard.

You are in charge of your own destiny and today we have given you a helping hand which many other young people yearn for.

Put it to good use and I wish you all the best of luck with your studies.

Thank you and God Bless you all.

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