

MINISTER, MR TW NXESI: KEYNOTE SPEECH

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LEADERS & MEMBERS OF NATU

Allow me to take this opportunity and thank you for inviting me as we rename this institute to Alan Thompson & celebrating the Worlds Teacher's Day under the theme **“The Teachers We need for the Education We Want: The Global Imperative to Reverse the Teacher Shortage.”**

The theme of this year fits well into today's event when both FEDUSA and NATU leaders and members celebrate the World Teachers' Day with the renaming of this Teacher Development Institute. It fits well primarily because when we invest in the training and development of educators, we don't only invest on individual teachers but also on the development of the leaners and society.

The theme speaks to "the teachers we need for the education we want". This is more relevant primarily because every developing nation needs properly trained & fully development teachers to meet global challenges which include technology and the changing education system. Our country can never compete with other nations if we ignore the fundamentals of ensuring that teachers are trained & empowered. It is for that reason that we want to join you in celebrating this milestone.

In my other life as a teacher & union leader we used to have a slogan that said, "Thinking Globally but acting locally". I see that the theme once again speaks about Global Imperative to reverse the teacher shortage. It for this reason that I'm reminded of that old slogan because whilst we think globally, we must be able to turn those thoughts into proper actions that will also benefit our people locally.

I am certain that the location of this Institute in this small area of Emadadeni in Newcastle will not only benefit national leaders but also local schools and teachers around this area. Historically our training institutions & universities had neglected poor and rural areas like Emadadeni but you as NATU you have woken up to that

reality in ensuring that such communities are part of your developmental agenda. For that reason, I salute you.

As I near my closing allow me to speak to the other aspect of this year's theme which is of teacher shortage. Since my days as a teacher, a Union leader but more as the former President of Education International Education International, we used to petition countries globally to invest more in education by training & employing more teachers. In fighting the scourge of Apartheid education, we went further in South Africa by calling for improved teacher- learner ratio. Those of you who were with us in the battle trenches will recall even after Madiba had call for the back-to-school campaign our classrooms in township schools were overcrowded leading to the shortage & need for more teachers. That call for more teachers is still relevant but now that I have crossed the floor and became a Minister, I will be the first to admit that the call raised by today's theme to reverse teacher shortages is faced with a number of reality and challenges.

One of the challenges is that whilst we had done exceptionally well to open the doors of learning & access to millions of children & further feeding them in schools we are faced with a shrinking economy & difficult economic time in our fiscus.

I therefore call upon you that as we celebrate today Teachers' Day, we must also through this institute named after a gallant fighter & an education leader Alan Thompson think of better & sophisticated ways of resolving such challenges.

I join you in celebrating the Word Teachers Day but more in renaming this Institute after my friend Alan, wishing you well in all your future endeavours.

I thank you.