

Mrs. Mkhize, Principal,
Mr. Radingwana, IDSO,
Mr. Mlambo, School Governing Body Chairman,
Mr. Garlick, President of the Pretoria Sunrise Rotary Club,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good morning.

On behalf of the whole team of the Embassy of the Czech Republic I would like to thank you for the invitation to this hand-over ceremony.

I need to acknowledge how much the school has developed since our first visit in 2012. It has grown in terms of the number of learners, which is important as Tshegofatsong is the only school of its kind in Mamelodi. And the school environment has also evolved, most notably after the massive renovation which has just been completed.

I would like to pay tribute to Mrs. Mkhize, Principal, and the whole staff of the Tshegofatsong Special School, for their efforts. We have always admired their determination, dedication and the vision for what they are doing.

On this occasion, allow me to briefly outline the engagement of the Embassy of the Czech Republic with the Tshegofatsong Special School, who have already had a relationship for 2 years. An not only that. We became friends.

We first visited the school in 2012, had a meeting with the Principal and her colleagues. We discussed the needs of the school and its students and the challenges that they are facing, had a tour around, and looked in almost all the classrooms. And we promised we would come back.

Last May, we officially handed over the “Tshegofatsong Special School Skills Project“, which consisted of the donation of instruments and material for the woodwork and beadwork in the amount of 22.000 rands to support the skills development, which is so important for preparing the learners for their future vocation.

The project was implemented in the framework of the Official Development Co-operation of the Czech Republic as a so-called small-scale development project.

We are now working on a continuation of last years´ project and are contributing the amount of about 45.000 rands, which will make it possible for the school to acquire sewing machines as well as wood and beads for the workshops. Furthermore, material for the construction of the young adults´ sheltered workshop will also be at least partially financed under this project. The workshop will not only create further opportunities for learners, but could also generate a modest income.

The staff of the Embassy of the Czech Republic also participated in last years´ Nelson Mandela Day activities and we are planning to come this year again and in higher numbers, to assist in the preparation of the school garden.

Last October, we invited a group of children to perform their dances, including the Tsonga dance we have just seen, at the National Day Reception. Products made by the school were also displayed. I can assure you that the dances were much appreciated by all the guests.

We were also here last Friday, 6 June, for the screening of short cartoon stories about a Little Mole. We, the Czechs, all grew up with these stories and we all like the Little Mole. We were convinced that the children in Tshegofatsong would like him. And it proved to be true. I should say the Little Mole is a cute and clever personality, friendly, handy, helpful to others, full of imagination and ... he doesn´t

even talk. All the emotions are expressed by little sounds... Not only are they entertaining, the stories are also educative. We will be more than happy to offer the DVDs for further use by the school.

Thank you again for inviting me to this Ceremony and also for the good and worthy work that you have been doing in the School. It is also an inspiration for us. On behalf of the Embassy of the Czech Republic I would like to wish you all the success.