



Serving You, Serving the Nation

Re Sebeletsa Uena, Re Sebeletsa Sechaba

Remarks by the Commissioner General of the Lesotho Revenue Authority Mr. Thabo Letjama at the National High Schools Debate Competition - Awards Giving Ceremony held at the Lehakoe Club on Friday, 29th June 2015.

Master of Ceremonies, Distinguished Guests, Colleagues and Debaters; allow me to start my remarks by first recognizing the presence of:

The Hon. Minister of Education and Training, Dr. Mahali Phamotse. We feel very much honoured to have you in our midst as our Guest of Honour at this special event that marks the 6th year of the unique partnership between the LRA as a Government Agency and the Ministry of Education and Training;

I also wish to recognize the presence of:

The Acting Principal Secretary in Ministry of Education and Training, also here with us this afternoon;

Management and staff of both the Lesotho Revenue Authority and the Ministry of Education and Training;

Other Government Officials here present;

The School Principals;

Adjudicators;

Coaches;

Debaters, whom we have gathered here to honour;

Members of the media;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is always a pleasure to all of us in the LRA family to play hosts to you all as we stand together to honour excellence. These students have over the years represented their schools by so eloquently expressing their viewpoints on key taxation topical issues. These high schools debate competitions came as a result of the recommendations of the Customer Satisfaction Survey that was carried out in 2007 and indeed the preceding survey as well, in which the LRA was urged to come up with robust and future looking tax education drive that would help enhance tax education in a sustainable manner and thus improve tax compliance amongst the current and future taxpaying community.

As the Lesotho Revenue Authority (LRA), we are responsible for promoting voluntary compliance by all the Taxpayers. As such, this objective can only be achieved if the Taxpayers themselves are cognizant of their responsibilities as citizens and their obligations with respect to tax laws. The benefits of taxation cannot be over-exaggerated.

Master of Ceremonies, Distinguished Guests,

The intention of partnering with the Ministry of Education and Training was crucial in assisting the LRA to extend tax education at the learning institutions especially at high school level. The idea was indeed to catch the future Taxpayers while they are still young in order to breed a culture of compliance among them. Education remains one of the most effective ways to uplift a developing country such as ours and create economic opportunity which is a prerequisite for taxation and development.

What was astonishing about the debates was the level of understanding that was shown by the students in tax matters throughout the years, since we started with this joint noble initiative. The manner in which these students put their points across leaves no doubt that we have a generation of responsible citizens who will help us in spreading the gospel of taxation amongst their peers and indeed encourage tax compliance amongst the current and future Taxpayers. On the other hand this initiative, I believe, has contributed immensely towards learners' ability to think rigorously and critically. In support of this assertion, "I have learnt that Lesotho's top student in last year (2014) Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE) examinations; Mr Khesa Borocho, is actually our last year's 3rd best speaker of this competition. Knowing that with this initiative we have somehow contributed to his success makes us very proud.

May I therefore take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Education and Training for their steadfast support and unwavering dedication in ensuring the success of this initiative of which we are closing its first chapter this afternoon as we go back and review its impact. This collaboration has been a tremendous investment towards attainment of our common goals. Next week Friday we will be at Ligoabing Primary School in Rothe where we will be handing-over newly constructed school facilities that include classrooms, toilets and staff office to the school board through the Hon. Minister, Dr. Phamotse. This clearly shows how far we have come with this partnership.

Master of Ceremonies, Distinguished Guests,

I am pleased to congratulate the winners who are here with us today. They have researched well and have shown diligence in their preparation for this competition. Given the fact that you have come this far to compete at the national level, having out-competed your fellow students at your various districts it's a clear demonstration that indeed you deserve the title of being referred to as winners.

To the principals, teachers and coaches, you are the ones who built the foundation for the students' efforts that we have witnessed today, and you have to be proud of the sterling work that you have done over the years and that you continue doing.

Allow me to thank officials from both the LRA and the Ministry of Education and Training who have been working tirelessly in the background in ensuring that this initiative becomes a success it is. We are grateful for your efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I emphasise that as the Authority, we are very much committed and proud to be part of this collaboration that exists between ourselves and the Ministry of Education and Training. We firmly believe that it is through partnerships of this nature and greater collaboration between public and private institutions that we are able to make meaningful contribution that would help bring prosperity to our beloved Lesotho for the betterment of the current and future generations.

Molimo o boloke Lesotho le Basotho!