

CEO of the GPAA, Mr Krishen Sukdev addresses members of the staff who graduated through the GPAA bursary programme

Date: 01 February 2019

Venue: GPAA Head Office

Fellow colleagues,

Good afternoon.

It is my highest honour to stand here this afternoon to address you on this joyous occasion of the graduation of our fellow colleagues who were the recipients of our bursary for the past few years.

It is indeed humbling to see so many of you graduate, and what really stands out is the commitment shown over the years.

Today we are gathered here to celebrate your success. You can be proud of yourselves and walk with your heads held high up because you have overcome so many challenges that life threw at you when you were pursuing these qualifications.

I know it was not easy- but then again who said it will be easy? But you did it anyway and you should take a moment to pause and celebrate the greatness that you are. When others were sleeping, you were wide awake studying. Many of you abdicated many social responsibilities just to ensure that you achieve your goals.

The world needs people who are able to adapt and move towards a direction where bettering themselves is key, and the best way to unlocking that future is only through education.

Fellow colleagues, the late Nelson Mandela was a great advocate of education. Amongst many of his well-known quotes on the matter this is my favourite *“Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.”*

Education is indeed a key in unlocking the future of so many of our people in the country. It is through education that many families are able to put food on the tables and send their children to schools. I was inspired by a story that I read in the papers last year- this is a story of a young man who worked as a security but managed to complete his LLB through Unisa.

This story and many others that you know colleagues, show that indeed where there is a will there is a way. Nobody should ever come up with excuses on why certain things can't be achieved. Money, especially for a GPAA employee should never be an issue as we have these bursaries that we advertise on a regular basis. Time should also not be a limiting factor as we give you plenty of time to prepare for your examinations and so for. You are more than welcome to check our HR policies in this regard.

The organisation and the government as a whole is continually undergoing through massive changes. These changes range from political to economic. These shifts require people who will change their thinking and embrace the culture of learning as a new approach to life. For an organisation of our size to celebrate 20 graduates in a year is really commendable and it makes me really proud.

I am proud to know that today we are not only celebrating those who are getting their first degrees. Amongst us we have those who have obtained their advanced diplomas and honours degrees.

I also love the fact that this is a mix of people in terms of levels within the organisation. We have both junior and senior staff members taking advantage of the bursary opportunity and that is highly commendable.

I feel it is worth mentioning that as of the year 2016 we have been taking our colleagues who couldn't obtain their Grade 12 qualifications through that. This goes to show that we are not only concerned about post matric qualification, but would like to see a situation where all of our employees have at least matric. Most of those will be writing their examination in May and it will give me joy to see them graduate like this one day in the near future.

The adage "not even the sky can limit you" should be practiced by all and sundry. These group seated here today is a true testament to that. This should serve as an inspiration to all the colleagues who are still hesitant to further their education. One just needs to take the first step and the rest shall fall into place.

Ladies and gentlemen or should I say graduates... I implore you, to please take this message here to all your colleagues in all of the GPAA operations. The organisation is willing and we have the resources to make sure that everyone stay at the GPAA and public service is mutually beneficial.

I hope people will grab this opportunity as presented and ensure that one day they do not leave the same way they came. If you are not sure how, please feel free to visit our HR training unit and they will be able to assist in making an informed decision.

In conclusion, as I am seeing some of you for the very first time this year- allow me to wish you success in all your endeavours. May 2019 be your greatest year yet.

I thank you.