

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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As **5 October is World Teachers Day**, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) joins the rest of the world to honour and recognise the formation role played by teachers both in the classroom and in society. Teachers are crucial facilitators in the realisation of every child's God given potential.

"We celebrate the role teacher's play in providing quality education from early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary levels and the long lasting positive impact they have on society," said Bishop Zipho Siwa, Presiding Bishop of the MCSA.

"In the backdrop of the ongoing university of protests, we are all cognisant of the precarious condition of the education system in South Africa at this time. This however, should not prevent us from making an effort to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation for the vital contribution committed teachers make to education and economic development, a lot of the time against many odds.

Access to quality education remains a fundamental human right essential for the realisation of other human rights. Well trained, motivated teachers through education, empower young people by enabling them to acquire skills and knowledge and mould their values and attitudes, all character facets critical for their future abilities to secure their basic socio-economic needs and aid in the sustainable development of their communities and societies.

Teachers need the support of not just government or familial units, but all of society has to play a part in providing them with continuous development opportunities and giving them the required institutional support to maximise their potential. They need to be encouraged to strengthen their educational research capacity that can inform local educational reform initiatives.

As International Teachers Day gives us an opportunity to pause and focus on the issues affecting our education system, let us galvanise our efforts to improving the sector and do away with the destructive elements that have marred well intentioned protests. The education of our children, especially the poor, at various levels of the spectrum should remain our main priority.

The recently held multi-stakeholder consultation on education only served to expose the inability of the stakeholders to listen to each other. We long for an education system that is affordable and accessible by all, that will produce confident, innovative, questioning, thoughtful, tolerant and open minded young people who then can contribute meaningfully to their society and the global community.

At the core of developments towards a more sustainable funding structure for education in SA, is the ability to take all stakeholder interests, expectations and challenges to heart and openly share viable solutions to the current impasse.

We salute those who have availed themselves in service through this most noble of professions for the formation of nations.

Statement released by the office of

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