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**SPEECH BY KOERT PRETORIUS, CEO: MEDICLINIC SOUTHERN AFRICA  
PNIEL PRIMARY SCHOOL ICT PROJECT**

Good afternoon Minister Grant, members of the governing body, teachers, parents and learners of Pniel Primary School, ladies and gentlemen. It is an honour and a privilege to represent Mediclinic Southern Africa here today.

Education, like healthcare, is one of the cornerstones of our society, and a project such as this is the ideal opportunity to unite our two disciplines in supporting this community.

As a responsible corporate citizen, Mediclinic believes that sustainable development is fundamental to the future of our country. There are many definitions around the concept of sustainable development, but the one that seems the most apt in this case is from the World Bank, which says: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

In other words, we have to leave something worthwhile for our children to inherit and build upon. We know this can be achieved in various ways. One of which is community involvement, and over the years Mediclinic has joined forces with various and diverse organisations and institutions to try and make a difference in people's lives.

We have worked with departments of health across the country to help alleviate their surgical backlogs as well as provided other non-surgical support. The most recent project was a collaboration with Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Gauteng to perform 19 successful non-invasive gynaecological procedures at Mediclinic Sandton. We have also donated equipment to provincial hospitals in Limpopo and assisted with funding for breast cancer screening in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Cape. Closer to home, we have supported the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital in their Saturday Surgeries initiative, where they created an additional surgical day to take care of minor procedures.

Our staff is also encouraged to actively engage with local communities. They give of their time and expertise by participating in volunteerism projects. Their activities can range from donating clothes and food to painting nursery schools and old-age homes to planting food gardens.

In this instance, our information and communication technology department partnered with one of their suppliers, Structure Connectivity Solutions, to deliver a fully integrated network structure with connectivity in every classroom at Pniel Primary School. They also provided 30 laptops refurbished to the school's specifications to allow teachers to conduct their administrative tasks digitally.

We trust all such projects, including this one, will have a positive impact and change lives for the better. By giving back to the communities through corporate social investment, we believe we are able to help build a brighter future for all South Africans.

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These eager young faces in front of me represent that future. These children are the country's next generation of scientists, teachers and leaders in all spheres of life, with the potential of making a valuable contribution to society. For that to become a reality we have to invest in them by providing quality education. We see the need for this in our own discipline, and for this reason we help to address the critical shortage of medical professionals in the country by being a registered tertiary-education institution.

We currently have six learning centres and two satellite campuses where more than 1 000 nursing practitioners are trained every year. We also contribute financially towards training doctors and other medical professions. The scarcity of healthcare skills is a universal problem and we believe that a solution for this and other challenges within the sector is only attainable through the collective efforts of all the role players.

The imperative to work in unison is true of almost any field, therefore Mediclinic is proud to be part of this school's educational programme by providing this equipment and technology. It is here at primary school level that we lay the solid foundation on which we can place the bricks and mortar of learning in the years to come, and which will allow our children to live up to their promise.

I am sure that in the future each of these Pniel Primary School learners will make a valuable contribution to our country in whatever field they choose to pursue. Perhaps we will see some of them choosing a career path into the world of healthcare, and even become part of the Mediclinic family.

Minister Grant, honoured guests. I thank you for your time.

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