NATIONAL EDUCATION COLLABORATION TRUST

MEDIA STATEMENT

For immediate release | **23 November 2026**



Photographed at the launch of the NECT on 16 July 2013

IN LOVING TRIBUTE

Dr Phumzile **Mlambo-Ngcuka**

Founding Patron of the NECT

- **Teacher**
  Where her career of service began
- **Leader**
  South Africa's first woman Deputy President
- **Advocate**
  Executive Director of UN Women
- **Patron**
  Beside the NECT from its launch in 2013

A TRIBUTE FROM THE NECT

In Memoriam: Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

With profound sorrow, the Board, patrons, management and staff of the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) mourn the passing of Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, one of its founding patrons, who passed away on 20 November 2026.

In 2013, Dr Mlambo-Ngcuka joined other senior leaders to lay the foundations of the NECT, an education improvement structure that brought government, business, civil society and organised labour together in support of better education for every South African child. Drawing on her wealth of experience in government and her deep roots in civil society, she spearheaded the consultations and negotiations that brought education NGOs together to work collaboratively, giving South African education another breath of life. Through the NECT and its sister structures, she remained a steadfast champion of this cause to the very end.

We celebrate a life of courage, humility and service. Her vision, wisdom and generosity of spirit continue to live on in those who forge ahead with the education improvement course.

We are deeply grateful for her time, skill, networks and commitment, which have enabled the NECT to reach millions of learners, hundreds of thousands of teachers, and their respective provincial departments and districts. Her legacy is a lasting gift to the nation.

We hold her family in our thoughts. We are grateful that they shared her with us and the nation.

Hamba kahle, Mama Phumzile.

May your soul rest in eternal peace, and may all honour you by carrying your work forward.

Issued by

The National Education Collaboration Trust

STAY CONNECTED

www.nect.org.za

National Education Collaboration Trust

@The_NECT