

South Africa has delivered on Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals calling for the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2015.

According to Engendering Statistics, 2009: 2, the primary enrolment rates of girls about doubled in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa, rising faster than boys' enrolment rates. This substantially reduced large gender gaps in schooling.

Reflecting on the country and department's successes during an Inaugural Women's Legacy Dialogue on Friday, Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga said research has shown that 98 percent of young people aged 7 to 15 are involved in education programmes.

"Youth literacy in South Africa is at 90 percent, which is above the average of developing countries. The adult literacy rate has reached 77 percent, bringing South Africa in line with the average for developing countries," the minister said.

"Clearly, South Africa is committed to transforming gender relations and to women's empowerment," Motshekga said, adding that the country has a progressive constitution that guarantees the right to education.

The department has also developed a comprehensive Action Plan for improving basic education - Action Plan to 2014, Towards the realisation of Schooling 2025.

She told delegates that the country has introduced gender-sensitive legislation, like the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act.

Motshekga acknowledged that despite these successes, the country also had challenges, including the implementation of Outcomes Based Education (OBE).

Many teachers believe that the way the curriculum is organised places too many burdens and too great a workload on them, she said.

Therefore, a review committee, which aims to reduce these burdens by making the curriculum easier to read and understand and by reducing the marking and reporting requirements, was established.