I am deeply honoured and privileged to stand before you today to express my heartfelt gratitude to MAIS and our sponsors. Your unfailing love, generosity and financial support has transformed my life in ways I could have never imagined.

Warm greetings to all esteemed guests, my name is Queline Muniongo. I was born and raised in Johannesburg - South Africa, but both my parents come from Congo (DRC). I have never been to Congo, but I hope to visit one day. I am 25 years old and come from a big family of 9 children, where I am the second last born. Today, I live in Norway where I work, and study and I am proud to share my testimony. I am pleased with the person that I have become and know that the future holds greater opportunities for me, and this is all possible because of MAIS and our sponsors.

MAIS has been there for me since the beginning of my journey by providing for my welfare and school tuition from primary school to university level. I began living in St. Christophers from the age of 6 where I was given a new and even bigger family because all the children there were in the same situation as myself. In this home I was sheltered with love, given the basic needs every child deserves and received a good education. I also have a very fond memory of every time our sponsors from MAIS would come to visit us in South Africa. We would prepare some beautiful songs and dances; have nice comfort foods like pies, cakes, sodas, sweets; receive presents such as clothes/shoes/bags or money; and share joy and laughter. I remember always thinking to myself “WOW, I also want to go to Italy one day and see how life is that side-” And God is so good because here I am today. I get such a good feeling when I remember this aspect of my childhood and want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for making it a memorable one for me. MAIS investment in me allowed me to enjoy a good childhood, access a quality education and build a better future for myself.

With that said. I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your invaluable support. I have received an education that has opened many doors of opportunity for me and experiences that have shaped me into the person that I am today. I work hard, strive for excellence, and have overcome many challenges along the way because of your unwavering support. I hold a bachelor and honours degree in Development studies from the University of Johannesburg, South Africa; and I am currently pursuing a master in Energy and Environment degree at the University of Stavanger, Norway. I also work as a researcher for
a project called ENERTOWN which is in collaboration with the European Union, Norway and Romania, to alleviate energy poverty in Romania. Not only am I in a better position to access many opportunities, but I am also able to do important work and effect change. Having a good education is important because it paves way for endless possibilities. Having an education has changed my life and allowed me to get to where I am today.

Now, I can work in world-leading organisations/companies who seek to find solutions to our world energy problems, resource crises, sustainable development, (green) energy transitions, renewable energy technologies, decarbonization of industries, energy policies, climate change and so much more. I am excited about what the future holds and pray that I too can make a difference in this world, the same way you made a difference in my life and continue to change many other students lives. Please continue to do the good work you have always done and support many more students so that they too can have a better future. For instance, I previously mentioned that I grew up in South Africa, which has a high unemployment rate. And it is even more difficult to get a job when you are a foreigner in the country, but having a good education will increase the chances of being employed. I know this because as a Congolese citizen who lived in South Africa, I was restricted and did not enjoy many benefits because I was not a South African citizen. However, having a university qualification definitely helps you stand out in the crowd and exhaust many opportunities, like myself, who now resides in Europe.

Words cannot express the depth of my gratitude for the significant role you have played in my life. Your kindness, generosity, and compassion changed the trajectory of my life and empowered me to achieve my dreams. In my heart, I carry with me the lessons I have learnt from your kindness and generosity. I am committed to paying this gift forward and making a positive difference in the lives of others around me and our society at large. Once again, from the bottom of my heart, I express my deepest gratitude to MAIS and our sponsors for your continuous support. Thank you for making my education and career aspirations become a reality.

I am forever indebted to you.

Queline