

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, MRS. H.J MASHAMBA, AT THE EVENT OF THE SOD TURNING CEREMONY FOR THE CIPLA ECD, MOOKGOPHONG.

11th December 2015

Programme Director;

The Executive Mayor of Waterberg District Municipality, Cllr. Rosinah Mogotlane;

The Mayor of Mookgopong Local Municipality, Cllr. Sarah Monyamane;

Councillors here present;

Mr. Mlungisi Khumalo from the Presidency;

The representative from the Cipla Foundation, Ms. Daphney Thwale;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

All protocol observed.

Today we make history once more as a caring government that believes in joining hands with civil society and the business sector, in our efforts to create a better life for all. We wish to thank the Cipla Foundation without further ado, for their vision in supporting and ploughing back into communities that are the most vulnerable. The Cipla Foundation has heeded the call to invest in the future of this country, by supporting the Early Childhood Development or ECD programme.

This project was born from an initiative by the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa. The initiative seeks to facilitate the construction of ECD centres, to support needy communities in selected provinces, through Public Private Partnerships.

The Deputy President announced this partnership between Government and the private sector following the commemoration of World TB Day on 24th March 2015. Cipla generously offered to build an ECD centre for a needy community in one of the districts of Limpopo that has a high prevalence of tuberculosis or TB. Our programme here today, signals the symbolic start of this project and aims to open up discussions on how we can take these types of projects even further.

Programme Director

The ECD programme is significant to the development of children, by providing early stimulation and provision of nutrition. This programme is also regarded as one of the APEX priorities of the South African government and integral to the National Development Plan.

We have seen, time and again, the benefits of this programme in terms of ensuring preparedness of the child for the school environment, as well as the provision of a safe place in which to prosper, learn and grow. Children who have been part of the ECD programme seem to perform much better later on in their school careers, than those who were not exposed to the programme.

It is a sad reality that only eighteen percent (18%) of the population of children, birth to five years of age in the Limpopo Province, are currently accessing the registered ECD programme. Currently, the population of Mookgophong includes three thousand nine hundred [3 900] children between the ages of birth and 5 years, of which about eight hundred and ninety five [895] are accessing ECD services from nineteen [19] registered ECD centres.

Based on these figures, the Minister for Social Development, Mme. Bathabile Dlamini, pronounced that ECD access should be expanded through non-centre based ECD programmes, specifically mobile ECD and toy library programmes. This Cipla donation will therefore also increase access in this regard, since there are so many children in the area who are not receiving ECD services.

Programme Director

In closure we therefore take this opportunity to encourage more business entities to invest in communities in this manner. Their support is of the utmost importance, if we are to take this country forward.

As it takes a village to raise a child, we realise that it is not up to government alone, to ensure the wellbeing of our little ones and we therefore count on civil society and the business fraternity alike, to support us in our ventures. In this way of joining hands and forces, we aim to create a caring society, together.

I thank you!