

**ADDRESS BY THE ACTING MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, DR. PHOPHI RAMATHUBA, AT THE EVENT OF CHILD PROTECTION WEEK LAUNCH, NKOKONE TRIBAL AUTHORITY, GA-MASENYA, MAPELA, MOGALAKWENA MUNICIPALITY.**

**30<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

**Programme Director;**

**MEC's and MPL's present here today;**

**The Executive Mayor of Waterberg District Municipality, Cllr.**

**Morris Mataboge;**

**The Mayor of Mogalakwena Local Municipality, Cllr. Andrina**

**Matsemela;**

**The Provincial Commissioner SAPS Limpopo, Brig. Gen**

**Sister departments;**

**Members of the media;**

**Ladies and gentlemen;**

**All protocol observed.**

It is such a joy to have a very young audience here today. They are the reason why we have Child Protection Week.

They are our most valuable assets because they are the future of South Africa. Among them here are the future president, ministers, Premiers, MECs, scientists, astronauts and doctors.

Who here wants to become a doctor one day?

Programme Director;

Today is not about long speeches about why we are observing Child Protection Week. The reasons are obvious. Despite our best efforts, our children remain vulnerable to abuse, neglect, abduction and even worse. They are subjected to dying under the most horrible circumstances.

In 2013/14, 29% or 18 thousand 524 of sexual offences reported to the police were children under the age of 18 years – equating to 51 cases a day. This is a situation that simply cannot be allowed any longer. We cannot treat our children this way.

This year of 2017 is celebrated as the Year of Oliver Reginald Tambo and the great leader used to say:

### **Quote**

**“The children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future.”**

We are therefore observing this year's Child Protection Week under the theme: "Let us all Protect Children to Move South Africa Forward". Indeed it is a combined effort that does not begin and end with one entity or one department.

Children, while we are fighting for your rights to be safe in South Africa, one thing that you must do from your side, is to remember that you are the bosses of your own bodies. It is your body that God gave you and nobody is allowed to hurt you or touch you in a way that does not feel right.

Boys AND girls... try not to walk alone anywhere. When an adult comes up to you, be polite but don't get into any conversation with him or her. It is better to be safe than sorry. If you have to, be rude. Tell them "sorry sir or sorry madam, I have to get home". You never ever go with a stranger to his or her house or away from your home or school. He or she does not have sweets or toys for you. They want to harm you! Don't get into a stranger's car. If you see your friends acting in this way, call a grown-up you trust.

If a grown-up you know touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable or hurts you in any way, you need to speak up. We will take you away from that person. You never have to

be afraid. Even your own parents or siblings don't have the right to hurt you.

Remember: You have the right to go to school. You have the right to be safe in your homes. You have the right to get a nutritious meal every day. You have the right to be protected by authorities. You cannot be turned away by anyone if you want to report that you are in trouble.

Programme Director

The ANC-led government in this Province is very concerned about the disappearance and apparent increase of abduction of young girls. We know that these young women are taken for one reason only. Human trafficking and to be sold to the sex trade.

Young girls I have a strong message for you. It doesn't matter what a man and especially an older man promises you. A career in the film industry, or a business of your own, or a nice car or house. His intentions are not pure. He wants to take you far away from all your loved ones and sell you!

We also want to emphasize that we remain steadfast in condemning the so-called "sugar daddies". Men who lure young

girls into a relationship, promising them many material things. This is an evil practise that has to stop. It ruins young lives and in many cases leaves these young girls pregnant. We are concerned about the number of teenage pregnancies in Limpopo. Our girl children have the right to complete their education and go on to a tertiary education and a career. They are not objects to be used to men.

In closure, Programme Director;