

**REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF THE
MINISTER, RENDERED BY THE LIMPOPO MEC
FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, MRS. HAPPY
JOYCE MASHAMBA, AT THE EVENT OF CHILD
PROTECTION WEEK AT TRY AGAIN SPORTS
FIELD, HUMULANI VILLAGE, BA-PHALABORWA
MUNICIPALITY.**

5th June 2014

Programme Director;

Minister Bathabile Dlamini;

The Deputy Minister, Ms. Hendrietta

Bogopane-Zulu;

The Executive Mayor of Mopani District

Municipality, Cllr. Joshua Matlou;

The Mayor of Ba-Phalaborwa Local

Municipality, Cllr. Anna Sono;

All other councillors here present;

Our esteemed traditional leader, Hosi Mlungisi Ntsanwisi;

The Deputy Director General of Children and People with Disabilities, Mr. Mzolosi Toni;

The Head of Department of Limpopo Social Development, Ms. Daisy Mafubelu;

Management and representatives of all government departments;

The Representative of the International Organisation for Migration, Mr. Hasan Mohamed;

Our special guests, the learners here present;

Comrades and Friends;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

All protocol observed.

It is indeed a privilege and an honour to have our National leadership here today, at the beginning of our tenure. We are here today to join hands and combine efforts, in easing the plight of our children. It is no coincidence that we are having these celebrations in the month of June – a time in which we will be commemorating the June 1976 students' uprising and their contribution to the struggle for freedom and democracy.

Programme Director

Twenty years have passed since the birth of our democracy in 1994. Amid our celebrations of 20 years of the emancipation of all our people, we are taking stock of what we have achieved as the ANC-led government, but also where we can continue to improve lives.

Major strides have been made in making life-altering services available to our people. A paradigm shift towards protecting and assisting the most vulnerable members of society, has certainly taken place from the onset of our new democratic dispensation.

Children, the elderly, people with disabilities and those living in abject poverty, have been awarded the assistance, protection and dignity they deserve.

The 21st century has brought with it an ever-changing and fast-paced world, full of societal ills that threaten to overthrow the progress we have made towards peaceful, stable and progressive communities. Many false promises are made to entrap our people in the scourge of alcohol and substance abuse.

More and more young people fall prey to low moral standards that go hand in hand with health problems; teenage pregnancy; HIV/Aids; violence against women and children; neglect and abuse.

Abject poverty is another reality to contend with and is seemingly a contributing factor to the societal ills I alluded to. Further to this, decades of neglect of the rights and welfare of the majority of our people, has created a legacy that still has an impact on morality and wellbeing today.

However, it is not all doom and gloom. As a caring government that recognises the rights of all members of society, we continue to put firm focus on the protection of those who are most vulnerable.

Legislation; social grants; Early Childhood Development Centres; awareness campaigns and all our programmes aimed at uplifting and protecting our precious children will continue to be our weapons in the struggle against poverty, neglect, abuse and degradation.

Indeed we are not alone in our endeavours as the Department of Social Development. It is a collective effort of sister departments, the SAPS and civil organisations – to name but a few. We thank them for their contribution. Together, we will protect and nurture our children, who will one day be the responsible adults of a progressive and healthy society.

Programme Director

We have, in the past number of weeks, been made aware of the most horrific murders of small children by parents or people known to them. We have read in the media, about a father abusing and neglecting his wife and children for years, without the knowledge of their neighbours. While all is being done to protect women and children, the onus is still on us as communities, to take responsibility. We need to instil in our communities good family values and practices. We implore you to report neglect and abuse to the authorities. We will ensure that such cases are attended to immediately and that the guilty parties face the full extent of the law.

Programme Director

It is not only the children of South Africa that need our protection and assistance.

Children from countries across our borders seem to fall prey to abuse and exploitation, as they cross into South Africa without the necessary documentation and sometimes unaccompanied by an adult. This situation needs our intervention and will be at the centre of our discussions here today.

I therefore wish to introduce to you now, without any further ado, Minister Bathabile Dlamini.

Bathabile Olive Dlamini was born in Nquthu and grew up in Nkandla (Matshensikazi), in the Province of Kwa-Zulu Natal. She cut her political teeth in the student movement and is one of the founder members of Imbali Youth Organisation, which was affiliated to the United Democratic Front (UDF). The organisation worked very closely with the South African Students Congress (SASCO) and Imbali Civic Organisation.

In 1985, she joined the South African National Students Congress (SANSCO) and was one of a few women who participated in student and community politics. She studied for a Bachelor of Arts Degree (Social Work) and graduated from the University of Zululand in 1989.

From 1991 to 1993, she worked as a social worker at Pietermaritzburg Cripples Association, a Non-Governmental Organisation which focused on people with disabilities in Pietermaritzburg and surrounding areas. After the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994, she was appointed as one of the first group of black female Members of Parliament. She served in various Parliamentary Portfolio Committees including the Correctional Services and Social Development.

In 1998, she was elected the Secretary General of the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL). She held this position until to 2008, making her the longest serving Secretaries-General of the organisation.

During her tenure, she distinguished herself as a good mobiliser and organiser and was actively involved in the formation of the Progressive Women's Movement of South Africa.

She was elected to both the National Executive Committee (NEC) and the National Working Committee of the African National Congress at the 52nd National Elective Conference in Polokwane, Limpopo in December 2007. She is also a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANCWL. In 2008, she was appointed as the ANC Sectoral Convener in the office of the ANC President.

After the 2009 National General Elections, she was appointed the Deputy Minister of Social Development, a position she held until she was appointed Minister of Social Development in October 2010.

She was re-elected to serve on the ANC NEC and the National Working Committee at the ANC's 53rd National Elective Conference in Mangaung, Free State Province in December 2012. After the 5th South African General Elections in May this year, Bathabile Dlamini was re-appointed as the Minister of Social Development for the second term.

Minister Dlamini, it is your time. Be assured of the support of the people of Limpopo. We commit ourselves to the vigorous and passionate protection and uplifting of our children and other vulnerable members of society.

(Mayihlome!

Khanimambo!

Ke a leboga!

Baie dankie!

Ndi a livhuwa!

Thank you very much!)