

**DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATURE ON THE STATE
OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS BY THE
HONOURABLE MEC FOR SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT, MRS. H.J MASHAMBA,
LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE.**

1st July 2014

Honourable Speaker;

Honourable Deputy Speaker;

Members of this esteemed House;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

All protocol observed.

We recently had the rare opportunity to interact with a newly formed youth structure in the Province.

The youth, it seems, are hungry to group themselves into organized formations that will assist their peers in growing and nurturing talent; strategise on their career paths; create job opportunities and become active in their communities. In the words of the fledgling youth service structure, the Limpopo Youth Development Agency, and I quote:

“We cannot hold our government hostage as young people... it’s time that we stand up and work with our government to eradicate poverty, unemployment and education short-fall.”

Close quote.

Honourable Speaker

The youth have not lost faith in the ANC-led government's willingness and ability to create better lives for them. These are indeed positive words coming from young people with no affiliation or motives. They are young people with a kindred spirit that wish to improve their communities and society as a whole. They realise that they are not the leaders of tomorrow, but the leaders of today, who have the ability to create positive change. They accept that they cannot sit by idly and wait for something to fall into their laps. This resonates well with the Honourable Premier's call for a multi-pronged approach to youth economic empowerment during the State of the Nation Address.

While government will be playing its part in youth development, the clarion call to civil society and the private sector is clear: We need to empower our youth in various ways.

Honourable Speaker

The youth today are displaying the same determination to forge ahead like the hundreds of young people who paid for their lives on June 16th, 1976. However, their enemies are no longer an oppressive system and sub-standard education. They now fight the scourges of abject poverty; substance abuse; teenage pregnancies and HIV/AIDS.

We are eager and equal to the task, to engage further with provincial youth structures as we continue with our programmes of vocational skills and entrepreneurship programmes. We will continue to encourage the youth to clean up around them, literally and figuratively and to rid communities of substance abuse; crime and violence.

Through the youth, we want to create a caring and self-reliant society. We are not supposed to be a crutch for our people. We are here to help our people on their feet; assist them in restoring their dignity and watch them progress for years to come.

Bangladeshi Nobel peace prize laureate Muhammad Yunus once said and I quote:

“To overcome poverty and the flaws of the economic crisis in our society, we need to envision our social life. We have to free our mind, imagine what has never happened before and write social fiction. We need to imagine things to make them happen. If you don’t imagine, it will never happen”

Close quotes.

Honourable Speaker

It is common knowledge that successful education starts in Early Childhood Development. Early childhood is a period in the development of the young child, where environment plays an important role in determining how the child will grow or develop.

There are currently more than nineteen thousand nine hundred (19 900) Early Childhood Development Centres across the country. Limpopo Province has two thousand six hundred and sixteen (2 616) registered Early Childhood Development sites and over one hundred and thirty two thousand (132,825) children are accessing Early Childhood Development registered programmes. Government will, in the coming five years, further increase access of the ECD service through non-centre Based ECD Programmes.

In order to improve the quality of these ECD's the National Department of Social Development has recently conducted an audit of these mushrooming centres to obtain information on the nature and extent of ECD provisioning, services, resources and infrastructure, in order to inform and support ongoing policy and planning initiatives. As we work towards the implementation of a two years compulsory pre-school education, this information will prove to be invaluable as we support these structures in the poorest of communities.

Honourable Speaker

In closure it is important to note that the chasm between the wealthiest and poorest citizens in South Africa still exists.

This dismal situation can only be overcome with the implementation of realistic social responsibility on the side of the business fraternity and mining sector. Government will continue with poverty relief programmes; grants and assistance for the most vulnerable members of society. However, the late Former President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela had declared that the solution is in our hands. Let us look forward to a month in which we will all use our hands to make a difference in honour and fond remembrance of the first democratically elected president of South Africa.

It is easy to sit and criticize. When time comes to work we can do best if we join hands and move Limpopo forward.

It is my conviction that the Honourable Premier is steadfast in rooting out corruption and mismanagement in this current administration and he has full support in this undertaking. Indeed we can only rise from here. When and where we had fallen, we have learned from our experiences.

I thank you!

Mayihlome!

Khanimambo!

Ke lebogile!

Ndolivhuwa!

Baie dankie!