

**ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, MRS H.J MASHAMBA, AT THE EVENT OF THE LAUNCH OF THE SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS WITH CHILDREN LIVING WITH DISABILITIES.**

**17<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

**Programme Director;**

**The HOD for Social Development, Ms.**

**Daphne Ramokgopa;**

**Our Agencies SASSA and NDA;**

**Management and staff of the Department and sister departments;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**All protocol observed.**

Good morning!

Thobela!

Avuxeni!

Macheroni!

Goeie more!

It is truly heart-warming to see the interest that parents and family members take in our citizens with special needs. Society refers to them as people living with disabilities. We prefer to call them our brothers and sisters who are differentially gifted!

Programme Director;

We can, however, not shy away from the fact that our differentially gifted brothers and sisters have special needs. Their parents, families and caretakers therefore need all the support they can get, to better understand and deal with the needs and challenges that exist daily.

It is of utmost importance that these family units get the support that they need. It is also more relevant to get that support from others who also understand their unique position.

We are therefore today launching the Support Group that have the aim of giving the parents and family members of these special citizens, all the help they can get to ensure that children living with disabilities are afforded all the opportunities they need to develop physically, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and socially.

Programme Director;

The family unit is the first reference that these children have when it comes to community life.

Families therefore need to provide stability to its members, by building strong family relationships and interdependency amongst family members.

The family unit needs to, among others, provide social and emotional support; contribute to the social and material resources for the family and also to develop its various members, including the vulnerable.

These support groups will help enable family units and especially the heads of families, to fulfil this important role, with special reference to its vulnerable members - but keeping in mind that every member of the family is important!

Stability and routine will ensure that the more vulnerable members, such as young children and persons with disabilities, understand their roles within the family unit and society at large.

Programme Director;

So much can still be said in this regard. But we are also gathered here today to engage in dialogue about the challenges and experiences of persons living with disabilities. Brothers and sisters: the platform is yours. We want you to open up and tell us all we need to know. We hope that this session will ensure progressive outcomes.

Remember that, for a caring government, our people's voices and opinions matter most because "nothing about us, without us!"

Let us continue down this road of open communication.

I thank you!

Ke a leboga!

Ndzi khensile!

Ndo livhuwa!

Baie dankie!