

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, MRS. H.J MASHAMBA, AT THE EVENT OF THE PROVINCIAL GOLDEN GAMES AND LAUNCH OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MONTH, THOHOYANDOU STADIUM.

7th October 2015

Programme Director;

The MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture, Ms. Nandi Ndalane;

The Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality, Cllr. Tshitereke Matibe;

The Mayor of Thulamela Local Municipality, Cllr. Grace Mahosi;

Councillors present here today;

The HOD for Social Development, Ms. Daisy Mafubelu;

**The acting HOD for Sport, Arts and Culture,
Mr. Mabakane Mangena;
Senior management and officials from
municipalities and the respective
departments;
Representatives from Age in Action and the
Older Persons Forum;
Our guests of honour - the participants in
the Golden Games;
Ladies and Gentlemen;
All protocol observed.**

Good morning!

Macheloni!

Avuxeni!

Thobela!

We are gathered here today to celebrate life!
Today we see living examples of how it is never
too late in life to be active and healthy.

Last week we were all together in Sekhukhune, to celebrate International Older Persons Day. It is an honour for me to yet again share this day with you - our custodians of knowledge and culture; our senior citizens!

Programme Director

The month of October is set aside for the Department of Social Development, to commemorate Social Development Month. This month gives us the opportunity to intensify awareness of the services rendered by the Department.

The activities of the month aims to place emphasis on government's provision of comprehensive social security and social relief of distress, including income support and a safety net for the destitute – something which remains the cornerstone of government's key programmes to fight against poverty affecting children, people with disabilities and older persons.

Here, at the gathering of so many of our Province's senior citizens – some of whom are grant recipients – we especially want to ensure an understanding of what government can offer the most vulnerable citizens of the Province.

We have hailed the benefits of active ageing on many occasions, but despite the best of our efforts, we cannot ignore the effects of old age; disability or disease that leads to mental illness.

We will therefore be raising awareness of the fact that so many of our people and especially older people, are affected by this, during World Mental Health Day activities on Friday the 9th of October in Mopani District.

We will then be meeting again in the Capricorn District on the 15th of October, during International Day for the Eradication of Poverty celebrations. This day is especially significant in the Limpopo Province, which is especially vulnerable to extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition. We further acknowledge that our older persons also feel the brunt of poverty and have a lot to contribute as we find ways to once and for all rid our communities of the scourge.

Programme Director

The Department has a mandate to assist Non-Profit Organisations in the Province, with technical, monetary and other assistance. We will therefore be inviting those NPO's who render social services – both those funded and not funded by the Department - to an NPO Indaba, which will focus on capacity building, accountability and sustainability of NPO's in the Province. This event will take place on the 22nd of this month in the Capricorn District.

A sad reality is the growing number of people falling victim to drug abuse in the Province. We have found that especially here in the Vhembe district, there is an alarming number of especially young people, who are abusing substances.

Even some of our senior citizens and those living in poverty are falling into the trap of substance abuse, as a way of escaping from their

circumstances. However, there is hope in the form of the Seshego Treatment Centre, which will be officially opened later in this month. The Seshego Treatment Centre is the first government treatment centre of its kind in the country and the first such centre in Limpopo. The Province currently does not have in-patient services and have to refer patients to other provinces. The centre will, once fully functional, be a lifeline for those who wish to be free from substance abuse. It is important to note that the Department continues to render out-patient services and anti-substance abuse programmes throughout the year.

Programme Director

This day is, however, all about our older persons taking part in sporting activities for their own health, longevity. Indeed, the constitution protects their rights to participating in recreational and other uplifting activities. Apart from the fact that this will ensure the restoration of their dignity and the opportunity to interact with older people of all cultural groups, it also serves as an example to follow, for younger generations. If we all emulate them, we will surely see a healthier, drug-free, progressive society.

I wish you all a safe and successful tournament. We will be supporting Team Limpopo all the way, when they proudly represent the Province in the Northern Cape later this year. It is currently very hot in Limpopo and we urge participants and officials to make sure they stay hydrated at all times.

I now declare the 2015 Provincial Golden Games
officially open!

I thank you!

Ndo livuhuwa!

Ndzi khensile!

Ke a leboga!