

**ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT, MRS. H.J MASHAMBA, AT THE
EVENT OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING
WORKSHOP ON INTEGRATED POVERTY
ERADICATION.**

7th August 2014

Programme Director;

The Executive Mayor of Vhembe District

Municipality, Cllr. Tshitereke Matibe;

Mayors here present;

**Speakers and Chief Whips of the respective
municipalities;**

All other councilors here present;

The PEC member of the Community

Development Working Group, Cllr. Sibanda;

Municipal officials;

Comrades and friends;
Ladies and Gentlemen;
All protocol observed.

It is a pleasure to join you on this occasion when we gather to find answers to one of the world's biggest problems – something which is not unique to Limpopo; South Africa and indeed the whole of the African continent. Indeed as the South African government we have undertaken the eradication of poverty and the creation of progressive communities, as a key priority, as our country still faces the triple challenge of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

We live in a world where a huge imbalance of wealth and power exists.

Since the birth of our democracy in 1994, government has been toiling endlessly to reverse the legacy of an unjust system and to eradicate poverty. Emphasis has been placed on the plight of the poor, those living with disabilities, women the elderly and the youth. The reality, however, is that many years of ignoring the plight of the most vulnerable members of society has further increased the gap between the wealthiest and poorest citizens of South Africa. Eradicating poverty, therefore, requires a mammoth effort from all of us as concerned citizens of South Africa.

Government has many programmes and projects in place to support those who live in abject poverty, but also to assist those who wish to seek employment or start their own enterprises. We have seen economic growth in South Africa at around 3.2 percent per year, from 1994 to 2012, despite the global recession.

However, the unstable economic climate of the world has, to a large extent, impacted negatively on growth in South Africa, making it even more challenging to ensure that emerging entrepreneurs flourish.

Programme Director

As we are amidst celebrations of Women's Month, the spotlight will once again fall on the immense contribution of women towards the struggle for freedom, as well as their contribution to society today. It is no secret that the tenacity of women of all walks of life has, on many occasions led to the successful fighting of poverty and inequality. Women, being the natural mothers, nurses and teachers of society, will simply not stand by idly as their families suffer.

It is therefore more significant that inequality and marginalization also be addressed in our holistic approach towards eradicating poverty.

A magnificent woman, who devoted her life in aid of the poor, Mother Teresa, once said and I quote:

“Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty, than the person who has nothing to eat.”

These words are to remind us that the most vulnerable members of society need our assistance if we are to succeed in creating healthy, progressive and self-sustained communities in Limpopo.

As public servants and therefore servants of the people, we need to direct our energy and focus towards the betterment of the lives of our brothers and sisters. Let us become creative in our planning, when we address the demoralizing effects of poverty and inequality. When we strategise, we should be conscious of the long term outcomes, in the provision of basic services to all communities. Impoverished communities need special attention and our meticulous planning will ensure progressive development towards Vision 2030, as envisaged in the National Development Plan.

Let us never think that certain commodities are luxuries for impoverished communities.

The provision of something like sporting facilities or a library, will not only restore a community's dignity but will assist them to break free from the bondage of poverty and inequality, which they had to endure for many years, prior to the birth of our democratic dispensation. We cannot deny our people the right to raise their children in a society that is active and healthy. The vicious cycle of poverty is seen in children being idle on the streets; abusing substances; engaging in unhealthy practices and not finishing their education. Let us, apart from creating poverty safety nets for our people, rather create developmental spring boards, which will allow them to become self-sustaining.

Programme Director

With these few words, the hope is that the attendees of this workshop will be inspired to take up this challenge with vigor and enthusiasm. We all know that it is within our grasp to break the cycle of poverty that is affecting each and every one of us, regardless of our place in society. When we leave here and the work starts in all earnest, let us spread the message among our people that we remain concerned about them and that we are still working tirelessly to ensure that their plight does not go unnoticed.

I therefore wish SALGA and all delegates present here today successful deliberations and planning. May your efforts here today leave a lasting legacy for the Province and your respective municipalities as together, we move Limpopo forward.

I thank you!

Mayihlome!

Khanimambo!

Ke a leboga!

Baie dankie!

Ndi a livhuwa!