

**ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT, MRS. H.J MASHAMBA, AT THE
EVENT OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
PROVINCIAL YOUTH CAMP, SCHOEMANSDAL
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE.**

2nd September 2014

Programme Director;

The Speaker of the Vhembe District

Municipality, Cllr. M.C Fungheni;

The Speaker of Makhado Local Municipality, Cllr

L.B Mogale;

All other councilors here present today;

The HOD for Social Development, Ms. Daisy

Mafubelu;

The Executive Manager of Social Development

Vhembe District, Ms. Nkhumeleni Mulaudzi;

**The leadership of Lovelife, the SA Youth Council
Limpopo, SA Association for Youth Clubs and
others;
Government officials;
The Youth of Limpopo gathered here today;
All other esteemed guests;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and gentlemen;
Comrades and Friends;
All protocol observed.**

It is heart-warming to see all these young people gathered here as the youth of Limpopo, who are eager to make a positive change in their own lives as well as the lives of the people around them. The great Greek philosopher Aristotle once said, and I quote:

“Good habits formed at youth make all the difference”.

Close quotes.

I believe what will be happening here this week, is the forming of good habits.

Allow me to elaborate a bit on the Youth Camps:

The Youth Camps Programme is an initiative of the National Minister of Social Development and is aimed at mobilizing and conscientising these young people on the social ills affecting their communities and hampering their growth and development. These camps also have in mind to give them the golden opportunity to share ideas and experiences across cultural lines, to build a non-racial; non-sexist society.

The Programme had its origins in 2012, when Limpopo sent 53 youths to the National Youth Camp in Mangaung in the Free State and 98 to Lohatla Military Base in the Northern Cape. This year, the Province will be sending another 100 young people to the National Youth Camp in December 2014, which will be in the Western Cape. In this way, we ensure continuous engagement amongst all the youth of the country, to truly contribute towards a developmental state.

Programme Director

We have witnessed the steady decay in moral standards in our communities as well as the increase societal ills such as substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, school drop-outs, violent attacks and more.

We believe that we should address these issues at grassroots level and discuss it with the youth, who seem more susceptible to these ills but who we also view to be a powerful force in fighting these scourges alluded to.

Whenever the youth mobilise themselves behind a cause, change is inevitable. Let us remind ourselves of the 1976 Soweto Student Uprising and the effect this significant historic act had on the fight for freedom, equality and the shaping of our current democratic dispensation.

However, these camps are not a one-way street of communication. The Programme also gives us, as government and decision makers, the opportunity to learn first-hand from these young people about the challenges they are facing daily.

These camps will raise awareness for their plight and make it easier for us to be more effective in our programme planning and policy formulation, aimed at the youth.

Programme Director

The youth comprises the largest portion of the population and they experience the effects of poverty, unemployment and inequality the same as – if not more – than adults. The youth from the rural areas of the Province are worse affected. We will therefore focus on youth development by addressing three critical issues contained in the National Development Plan, namely active citizenry; inclusion; and youth as active drivers of development.

The programme will further promote activism, patriotism and social cohesion among the youth, while providing them with leadership and other skills to be true ambassadors of their respective communities and their Province.

Young people of Limpopo:

We are celebrating 20 years of freedom and democracy. We need you to take this hard earned freedom forward.

This is your chance to take charge in shaping your lives and taking responsibility for the future of this country. You have your whole life ahead of you and we want to empower you in this way for all your future endeavours – especially for your competitiveness in the job market.

Because we are a government that believes in participation and open dialogue, this week is your chance to air your views; take part in discussions and ultimately help make the decisions that will affect your future and your livelihoods. We herewith implore you to actively take part and to air your opinions.

You are the change agents in your own communities; the Province and ultimately South Africa. We need you to join hands together over cultural barriers, in order for you to understand one another better. We are confident that you can assist us in building a responsible, caring and self-sustainable society.

Our hope is that when you leave here, the positive spirit and renewed commitment you will have experienced will filter down into your communities. It is important that you take this momentum further and organise yourselves in such a way that you contribute meaningfully towards your development - as well as the empowerment of others – as a group of committed young people.

Please take to heart this investment in your future. Become volunteers in your communities and strive towards the upliftment of your people and the environment you live in. When you return home, be the change agents I alluded to earlier. Make a change in your communities!

In closure, Programme Director, I wish everyone an enjoyable, meaningful and successful Youth Camp.

We are confident that great strides will be made here and that South African legends are in the making!

Tata Nelson Mandela has given us our marching orders at the celebration of the very first Nelson Mandela Day, when he said:

“It is in your hands to create a better world for all who live in it...”.

I thank you!

Mayihlome!

Khanimambo!

Ke a leboga!

Ndo livhuwa!

Baie dankie!

