

Issued by The Department of Women, Youth & Persons with Disabilities
Attention Journalists and News Editors
Pretoria, 08 October 2019

THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO HOST A DIALOGUE ON THE SAFETY, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane will lead a dialogue on the safety, social and economic empowerment of women, youth and persons with disabilities in Spit Spunt, Village, Limpopo, Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality, Sekhukhune District, Limpopo, on 12 October 2019.

The dialogue forms part of the department's efforts to deepen democracy through public participation events. The objective is to create a platform for Minister Nkoana-Mashabane and Deputy Minister Professor Hlengiwe Mkhize to engage the public on various cultural and religious practices that are harmful and violate human rights as well as to identify interventions for the social and economic empowerment of women youth and people with disabilities including creating a safer environment. The platform will also identify what policy changes are needed and what the priorities going forward would be for substantive women's and youth empowerment, gender equality and disability rights.

A number of incidents that violate human rights were witnessed in various rural areas including areas under traditional leaders. Incidents include brutal killings and xenophobic attacks, burning houses of the elderly people, killing of elderly people and women accused of witchcraft, abduction of young boys for compulsory initiation practices, abduction of young girls for forced marriages, murdering of people with albinism for rituals and sacrifices, beating, raping and killing gender non-conforming persons for the so called uncultured behaviour, intolerance for same sex marriages and unfair treatment for gays and lesbians. Such incidents continue to alienate the community and entrench divisions and intolerance amongst people.

Strengthening social cohesion among communities, tolerance, and managing challenges associated with inequalities within areas of jurisdiction of traditional leaders is essential towards a cohesive community.

Spit Spunt is a small village located on the border of Mpumalanga and Limpopo, approximately 60km from Marble Hall. Equality, access to opportunity and fair treatment by all within the community is fundamental in developing the community and contributing towards stability and unity in diversity. Fair treatment

and representation of all the people within the community especially on decision making is paramount. It is against these observations that it is necessary to coordinate information sessions to raise awareness and create platforms for the promotion and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups against harmful/ unconstitutional cultural and religious practices.

The dialogue will build on government's Khawuleza District Based Coordination Model, which aims to drive integrated service delivery, and see communities participating in sustainable interventions.

The dialogue will provide the opportunity for the community to openly engage with each other to find common ground and help build safer communities. Furthermore the dialogue will allow for different levels of government to work with local community leaders to identify support, resources, and sought after services. On the day of the event, the National Youth Development Agency, Commission on Gender Equality, Legal Aid (amongst others) will be present to provide services on site.

Members of the media are invited to the event as follows:

Date: 12 October 2019

Time: 10h00

Venue: Tau Tlou Primary School, Spit Spunt Village, Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality, Sekhukhune District, Limpopo

For engagements with Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane contact Ms Mmabatho Ramompi on 076 240 3513 or mmabatho.ramompi@women.gov.za

For engagements with Deputy Minister Professor Hlengiwe Mkhize contact Ms Kea Motlokwa on 066 077 7347.

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