

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, MRS. H.J MASHAMBA, ON BE ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, MME JOYCE MASHAMBA ON THE ON THE OCCASION OF THE CHILDREN'S DAY HELD AT PETER NCHABELENG SPORTS CENTRE, SCHONOORD, MAKHUDUTHAMAGA MUNICIPALITY.

5th November 2016

Programme Director;

Mong mabu, Mmakgoshi;

The MEC for CoGHSTA, Makoma

Makhurupetje;

The Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District

Municipality, Cllr; Stan Maila;

The Mayor of Makhuduthamakga

Municipality Cllr, Maladimo Bahula;

All councillors present;

**The beautiful children of our province and
their supportive parents and guardians;**

Ladies and Gentlemen;

All protocol observed.

Good morning!

Thobelang!

Thank you very much for honouring our invitation to come and celebrate this important day with the children of our province. I am very happy to deliver this message from the Premier of Limpopo, Mr. Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, who sends his warmest regards on this wonderful day that is set aside for children.

Every year on the first Saturday of November, as a country, we observe this day as National Children's Day.

Part of the objectives of this day is to create awareness and educate our people about the plight of children, as well as how to work with children.

Personally, I am very grateful for this opportunity to spend time and interact with you - the children of our province - the future leaders of this country!

You carry the promise that tomorrow will be better than today and yesterday. Your government believes in the words of our constitution that, and I quote:

“Every child has a right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect or abuse.

We believe further that a child's best interest is of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child".

Close quotes.

We also believe in the words of the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of the Child which states that the child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages.

It is for this reason that, as government, we continue to build schools and offer bursaries so that children can receive the best possible education. We are doing this because we know that access to good quality education will enable you to become responsible and productive citizens when you grow up.

We are also working hard to build hospitals and clinics so that you can access the best quality healthcare services. Everything we do in government is aimed at ensuring that our children inherit a better South Africa.

Dearest children of Limpopo;

Some children around the world are not as lucky as you are to have caring parents and a government that is committed to advance their wellbeing.

You may be aware of that currently there are wars taking place in Syria and also in Iraq. In all these places children are the worst affected victims. In fact, children are being punished for the things they do not even know about.

These children have been isolated from the love and care of their families and they are denied their right to be educated. You are lucky that you have a government that does not cause war but rather strives to make peace.

We are committed to have you grow under conditions of peace and security, so that your potential can blossom.

The central message today is to encourage you as young girls and boys to remember that your personal future and the future of this country are in your hands. As parents and as government, we can only assist you to unleash your full potential.

I also wish to take this opportunity to speak to those parents and or guardians who are neglecting their legal responsibilities towards their children.

There is nothing as shameful as a parent who is forced by the law to take care of his own children. The issue of child maintenance is a non-negotiable for parents.

I must also express our government's disgust at those who continue to abuse our children. I am happy that our courts are beginning to take a harsh approach against these heartless individuals.

All members of society carry an obligation to report any act of child abuse or child neglect. Let us break the silence. Hands off our children!

Programme Director,

All of our children are born with a God-given potential to inspire, influence and to become the greatest they can be can be.

This potential, however, needs to be nourished for it to be fully realised. Potential is nothing without guidance and hard work.

It is for this reason that, as parents that we must always be available to guide our children to ensure that their potential blossoms beyond imagination.

Potential is like a seed. If the seed does not fall on fertile soil, it will lose all potential to become a forest of trees and simply die without even producing a single tree.

In the case of our children, the fertile soil is a supportive environment that we put in place as government and parents.

Our children need to realise that they should water this seed through hard work; completing school and studying for a degree or diploma. Even children who don't come from wealthy families, but whose marks are very good, have a better chance than anyone else to reach this potential.

In certain instances, when a child works hard and produces very good results in matric, government will even provide such a child with an opportunity to study overseas.

We herewith once again implore our children to make enough time for education and to listen to the advice of parents. Children, dropping out of school is just a waste of your God-given potential. Always respect your parents, your teachers and the elderly.

In conclusion, Programme Director;

I want to wish all the children of our province a Happy National Children's Day! We are confident that together, we can do more to unleash the potential of our children.

I thank you!