

**SPEECH BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, MR CHUPU MATHABTHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE THUTHUZELA CARE CENTRE BY GLENCORE ALLOYS SA, DILOKONG HOSPITAL.**

Programme Director

The MEC of Health Dr. Phophi Ramathuba;

The Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality, Cllr. Julia Lata Mathebe;

Your Worship Mayor of Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality, Cllr. Eddie Maila;

The Chairperson of the provincial House of Traditional Leaders, Hosi Ngove;

Our Esteemed Traditional Leaders Kgosi Maroga, Kgosigadi Riba, and Kgosigadi Phasha;

Leadership of Glencore Alloys South Africa;

Representatives of the Department of Social Development;

Representatives of all our Non-Governmental Organisation present;

Representatives of the South African Police Services;

Management of Dilokong Hospital;

Government officials;

Members of the media;

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen:

I want to start from the beginning, and my beginning is to comment Glencore for this great initiative. The work we are celebrating today worth all the celebrations.

Glencore did not just note that our country holds the shameful record of being the un-safest place for a woman in the whole world.

Glencore made a decision to contribute something positive against this negative and terrible reality of our time.

The opening of this Thuthuzela Care Centre coincides with our national launch of 16 Days of Activism Against Women and Children Abuse.

This is an important calendar event in our country and across the globe.

Internationally, the United Nations commemorates this day as 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

As South Africa we have customised our commemoration to make it more relevant to our unique circumstances.

In South Africa, the abuse of women is directly linked with the abuse of children. The distinction between the two is merely academic.

As government, we appreciate the support and active participation of the private sector in the fight against Gender-Based-Violence.

There is no doubt that violence against women and children remain a pandemic of unequal proportions in our society.

We see a shameful fightback against entrenched rights which women have been enjoying over the years.

There are tendencies which seek to take us back to the stone ages where women's rights were not regarded as part of human rights.

We see people, including politicians wanting to make decisions about women without the voice of women themselves.

Patriarchy has made men to believe that they have an anointed right to make decisions for women and to act on behalf of women.

The result of this way of thinking is unmitigated levels of violence against women and children.

Those who believe that they can think, decide, and act on behalf of women also think that they have a right to do whatever they wish to do with a woman's body.

They believe they have a right to pass whatever remark they wish to pass about a women's body,

They believe they are entitled to a woman's body,

They believe that they can express their masculinity by unleashing violence against women and children.

Often, this toxic masculinity is expressed through assault, rape and the killing of women and children.

So many women in our country bears the scars of violence perpetrated by men.

These scars are either psychical or emotional. Some women bear both the physical scars and the emotional scars from abuse.

The first thing women need is an end to this vicious cycle of abuse. Ending the abuse of women and children is a non-negotiable imperative.

As government we are channelling effort and resources towards this epic battle. We are assured of victory.

However, in the meantime, those women who have experienced abuse and victimisation need a reliable shelter, a safer space.

This National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide is a response to this phenomenon of abuse.

Gender Based Violence has caught the attention of our President who is himself a great campaigner against Gender Based Violence.

In his own words, President Ramaphosa says that:

***“This is a scourge that affects black and white, young and old, rich and poor, heterosexual and homosexual gender-conforming or non-gender conforming, urban and rural.***

***Women and girls are being abused, assaulted and murdered in our country every day - at the hands of men. We are in the throes of a deep crisis that must be brought to a decisive end.”***

We are inspired by the words of our President, and we are saying that ***‘We will spare no effort until this country’s women and children are safe, can live, work and play in freedom, and their rights upheld.’***

### **Programme Director**

As government we do not have sufficient words to express our appreciation to Glencore for partnering with us in this fight. This is what responsible and patriotic corporate citizenship is about.

Through this Thuthuzela Care Centre you have helped to provide a one-stop care facility for the victims of rape and abuse. In this way, you are contributing to the efforts against secondary victimisation of victims of rape and abuse.

The government would not have sought a more reliable partner in this fight than Glencore. We appreciate what you have done to the people of this area, and many other areas where you have provided similar infrastructure.

The fight against Gender Based Violence is winnable.

As we take care of the victims of this senseless crime, we are at the same time doing everything necessary to deal with the perpetrators.

The police and our courts are working smart to ensure that perpetrators no longer walk free.

We continue to reiterate our call for harsher sentences for all perpetrators of Gender Based Violence.

Gender Based Violence is not some victimless crime. This is a serious crime that leaves visible and permanent scars.

Those who are responsible for these permanent scars should find a permanent home behind the bars.

With those few words, I warmly rest my appreciations to Glencore Alloys Mine and all of you.

I thank you!