

**ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER OF LIMPOPO, MR. CHUPU  
MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD AIDS  
DAY COMMEMORATION.**

**1 DECEMBER 2022**

Programme Director

Members of the Provincial Executive Council, our MECs;

Members of the Provincial AIDS Council;

Our Traditional Leadership;

Organizations of people living with HIV and AIDS;

Members of the Media;

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen:

Thank you for responding so positively to our invitation for the commemoration of the World AIDS Day. The World AIDS day is an important day observed in our country and across the globe.

We use this day to remember and honor the lives lost to this pandemic.

We use this day to celebrate our collective strides made in the fight against this pandemic.

On this day we reflect on the lingering challenges that continue to haunt our fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

We also use this day to pay tribute to the thousands of health workers, NGOs and activists who have been in the frontline in the fight against this pandemic.

Our Community Healthcare Workers have been fighting a real battle to support those who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Our Community Healthcare Workers have been doing this job purely out of the love for humanity and not because of any material rewards. These are our real heroes in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

There is indeed no greater service to humanity than to serve those who are in real need.

We agree with the United Nation AIDS Program that the inequalities which perpetuate the AIDS pandemic are not inevitable. We can tackle these inequalities.

This day is therefore about urging each other to address the inequalities which are holding back progress against defeating AIDS.

We commemorate this year's World AIDS Day under the theme that says, "Equalize and integrate to end AIDS".

This slogan is our call to action. The theme instructs us to strive for equity and equality. It is about ending discrimination based on one's AIDS status.

It is about ensuring EQUAL opportunities for everyone, including the people living with HIV and AIDS.

The theme invites all of us towards practical action to address inequalities and help in the fight to end AIDS. These practical steps should include:

- Increasing availability, quality and suitability of services for HIV treatment, testing and prevention, so that everyone is well-served.
- Reforming laws, policies and practices to tackle the stigma and exclusion faced by people living with HIV and by key and marginalized populations,

so that everyone is shown respect and is welcomed,  
and

- Ensuring the sharing of technology to enable equal access to the best HIV science.

### **Programme Director**

Part of what we need to do in this fight, is to encourage healthy living amongst our youth. Young people, particularly those in colleges and universities are the most vulnerable to infection.

There are many reasons for this.

The most obvious and disturbing reason is the so-called sugar-daddy syndrome. We have shameless old men preying on young women in exchange of material benefits such as expensive gadgets and cash.

These old men take advantage of the vulnerability and desperation of young women by insisting on sexual activities without the protection of a condom.

The result of this is high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate among young people, particularly young women.

We must also wage a campaign to improve condom usage amongst young people.

It is worrying that the popularity of condoms is declining. We cannot afford a situation where condoms are regarded as being out of fashion.

Government has done its part. We continue to distribute millions of condoms every year to ensure that demand is matched by supply. We do not have a shortage of condoms in this country.

If anything, we have more supply and demand. We have went as far as introducing colorful and flavored condoms to make them attractive to the younger generation.

The challenge for our young people is to embrace the opportunity and actively join the fight against HIV/AIDS.

This is a fight we cannot afford to lose. That is why this year, we have carefully choose to be here due to alarming statistics of HIV/AIDS prevalence in and around our mining areas of the Dilokong Platinum Corridor.

Our message has always been 'Prevention is Better than Treatment'.

If that fails, this government is on standby to activate thousands of our sites that provides Treatment'.

Please make use of our province-wide health care facilities, so that we may avoid unnecessary loss of precious souls.

We are saying one life lost is one too many. With those few words:

I thank you!

Kea Leboga!

Inkomu!

Nda!

Baie Dankie!