

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MEC RESPONSIBLE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, Ms
NANDI NDALANE ON THE OCCASION OF NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY HELD AT
SEOKODING COMMUNITY HALL ON 4 DECEMBER 2023

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, CLLR
MALEKE MOKGANYETJI

THE MAYOR OF FETAKGOMO-TUBATSE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, CLLR EDDIE MAILA

CHILD PRESIDENT, MR DIKGANG MORUDU

OUR DISTINGUISHED DONOR OLD MUTUAL REPRESENTED BY Mr MMATSHIPI
MOABELO

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

OUR LOVELY CHILDREN

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

THOBELA

It is so heartwarming this morning to be afforded an opportunity to spend the very critical National Children's Day with the beautiful and lovely children of our province. With us here this morning we have the future generation of this great country and province.

We can all agree that our children are indeed our treasure and priceless gifts who need our love, attention, comfort and security. On this National Children's Day, we have gathered here in the spirit of advocacy and commitment towards ensuring the well-being of our future being our children.

Programme Director

I am encouraged by the approach we have taken in this important occasion of putting in the agenda the issues affecting our children. I would like to contribute to the agenda as I believe the issues under discussion are critically important to the well-being of our children. I would like all of us to foremost acknowledge that every child has the right to a safe and nurturing environment, one that allows them to grow and develop to their fullest potential. Unfortunately, the high rates of teenage pregnancies in our society are obstructing this progress. Teenage pregnancy not

only poses physical and emotional health risks to young mothers, but it also disrupts their educational opportunities and future prospects. Additionally, the children born to teenage parents often face challenges that hinder their own well-being, maintaining a cycle of poverty and inequality.

Programme Director

To address this issue, it is our collective responsibility to provide comprehensive sexual education that emphasizes informed decision-making and promotes responsible behavior amongst our youth. We must foster an environment in which open conversations about relationships, consent, and contraception are encouraged and esteemed. By equipping our teenagers with the necessary knowledge and support, we can empower them to make responsible choices, ensuring their rights to health, education, and a bright future. We all come from communities where we know at least one or two young girls who fell pregnant at their early teens disrupting their future prospects. Instead of stigmatizing them, as a society we need to support them while ensuring that we empower the rest in order to protect them against this scourge.

Programme Director

In the same vein substance abuse remains a major concern among our nation's youth. Substance abuse not only puts their physical and mental health at risk but also robs them of the opportunity to reach their full potential. It has devastating consequences on their academic performance, familial relationships, and overall well-being. On this National Children's Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to protecting and promoting children's rights by combating the scourge of substance abuse. To achieve this, we need to adopt a multi-faceted approach.

Increased awareness campaigns, access to early intervention programs, and support networks are essential. Furthermore, we must address the root causes that push our children towards substance abuse, such as poverty, peer pressure, and lack of opportunities. By providing alternative outlets for expression, such as extracurricular activities, sports, and arts, we can guide them towards a healthier and more productive path.

Programme Director

Limpopo government boasts a well-resourced drug rehabilitation centre called Seshego Treatment centre. This facility, which is situated adjacent to Seshego hospital was established to provide rehabilitation to people struggling with substance abuse. Recently we made a call to those whose children are struggling with substance abuse to consider placing them at this facility in order to fight the rife substance abuse in the province. We have observed that over the years mostly males are admitted at this facility with very few females admitted. We therefore are making a call that those whose children are struggling with substance abuse need to consider using this facility considering that rehabilitation is provided free of charge. This government asset is for the people of Limpopo. While ideally, we aspire for a drugfree society, however, those who unfortunately find themselves addicted need to know that help is available at Seshego Treatment centre. Substance abuse can be beaten.

Programme Director

Look around you, in this very room. Each person here, be it a family member, teacher, or community leader, is here because they believe in you and wish to support your dreams. They see the unique gifts and talents that each one of you possesses, waiting to be unleashed into this world. They understand that your potential goes beyond numbers in a report card or the challenges you face each day. As young individuals, you have the power to shape the future, not just for yourselves, but for generations to come. Your fresh perspectives, boundless curiosity, and unwavering determination offer a beacon of hope amidst uncertainty. In your dreams, aspirations, and actions lie the seeds of a better tomorrow.

Programme Director

As we celebrate National Children's Day, let us remember that the children are the future custodians of our beloved country. It is imperative that we uphold and protect their rights, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Every child deserves a safe and loving environment, education, healthcare, and the freedom to pursue their dreams. We envision a country where teenage pregnancy is a thing of the past, where substance abuse is no longer a hindrance to our children's potential. Together, we can create an inclusive society that allows our children to thrive and contribute positively to our nation's growth.

Programme Director

Let us work hand in hand to shape a better tomorrow for our children, ensuring that their rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled. Happy National Children's Day and let us continue our journey towards a South Africa we can be proud to call home.

Kea Leboga.