

**SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE MEC, MS. CANDITH MASHEGO-DLAMINI AT THE
LAUNCH OF THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MONTH ON THE 30TH SEPTEMBER
2013 AT GERT SIBANDE**

Programme Director

Honourable Executive Mayor of Gert Sibande District: Mr. Meshack Nhlabathi

Honorable Mayor of Msuka Lekwa Local Municipality: Mr. Sipho Bongwe

Senior Managers of Social Development under the leadership of Ms. N.L Mlangeni

**Gert Sibande District Director for Social Development, Ms. P. Nkosi and District
Team**

Members of the media

Ladies and Gentleman

It is an honour for me to be part of this important occasion, an occasion in which we launch the Social Development Month. A month dedicated to go on full steam in interacting with our communities. As we exit the Heritage month and launch the Social Development Month we remain conscious of the challenges still facing us.

I am told that a man was on a tour in a city called Lenigrad. To make his tour of the city easier, the man approached some government officials and asked for a map of the city. He was given the map but just as he went about enjoying the beauty of the city he noticed that there were facilities that he was physically seeing but were not reflected in the map. He approached the government officials with a complaint that the map they had given him was incomplete.

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He pointed out to them that he saw some beer-halls but they were not reflected in the map. The officials said to him:

“Look stranger, the maps of this city are drawn by
the people of this city. When they do that they usually
reflects only the things (facilities) that fulfill their dreams and
aspirations. What you are seeing out there and is not reflected
in the map does not fulfill the dreams and aspirations of the people
of this city”

Today, as we launch the Social Development Month we are indeed drawing a map, a map that will reflect and fulfill the dreams and aspirations of our people. We are drawing this map which we think that will enable us to reduce the levels of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

Together with our counter-parts, SASSA, the NDA, the Not-for-Profit organizations (NPO's), the Non-government Organizations (NGO's) and Community Based organizations (CBO's) we remain firmly committed to improving the lives of our people

We have in the past few days been involved with a number of activities which included Blitz at Taxi ranks and a number of awareness campaigns

On Wednesday, the 02 October 2013 the department will host the Provincial Golden Games. It is through these games focusing on older persons that the department intend to foster social cohesion, Nation building, cultural tolerance, moral regeneration and improve the overall health profile for the elderly. On the same day we shall be officially opening the Ehlanzeni District offices in Tekwane (Mbombela).

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The Opening of Ehlanzeni District offices in Tekwane (Mbombela) on the 02 October 2013 and the Opening of the Gert Sibande District offices today here reiterates our readiness and commitment to ensuring that our staff work in a convenient environment and provide quality services to all our people.

Today is therefore an important day in the history of the Ermelo community and indeed the people of Gert Sibande. It marks the day in which we celebrate this important achievement that of having offices of our own for our own people. It is an achievement that will go a long way in ensuring that Social Services are accessible to all our people. We are confident that the people of Gert Sibande do appreciate the efforts made by the Department in this regard.

The office that we will be opening today will cover the following DSD offices in the following municipalities: Govan Mbeki, Albert Luthuli, Mkhondo, Msukaligwa, Lekwa, Pixley ka Seme and Dipaleseng.

The Department of Social Development plays the critical role of assessing children in conflict with the law to determine the criminal capacity of the accused child and to assess whether the child is a suitable candidate for diversion.

The department is also responsible to conduct awareness campaigns to empower the youth and the community about the consequences of crime and alternatives to make better choices in life.

The objective of this campaign is to raise awareness about the prevalence of crime in society; The aim is to improve the safety of communities and residents' perceptions of safety in their communities so that children and families become more active and healthy.

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This government is committed to reducing high levels of poverty, inequality and unemployment. An important component o

f that strategy is to improve household food security so that all South Africans have access to nutritious food.

As part of celebrating the Social Development Month we reiterate our call to our young people to desist from engaging in crime. It is against that background that we will also be doing Crime Prevention Awareness Campaign today. It is hoped that this day will produce Social Champions and advocates of Anti-crime amongst our community.

It has always been the mission of our government under the leadership of the African National Congress to tackle injustice and inequality wherever we see it. There can be no greater injustice than children's life chances being limited by being born into poverty. To show our commitment to the people, we have as government undertaken a provincial household profiling project in which we obtain data from households in all municipalities in the Province.

This will assist government in knowing what it is that need be done for the people. Over and above the household profiling, we will as a department start from 28 October 2013 with a project called Mikhondzo a Tsonga name for "FOOTPRINTS", In this initiative we want to assess ourselves in all the CRDP area as a department, leave footprints and improve our service delivery plan. We do this ladies and gentlemen not because we are forced but simply because "we care, we belong and we serve".

That is why the bold and historic commitment that our movement made in 1994 – to dismantle the legacy of apartheid and make poverty eradication the central theme of our work in government. It remains one of the driving purposes of our government and we are committed to taking further measures to make progress towards these goals.

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During this month we will intensify our efforts to ensure that all children who qualify for the Child Support Grant, especially in rural areas receive this benefit without any further delays.

We are doing this in line with the desire to care and improve the lives of our rural communities, with the needs of our children at heart. Our experience has taught us that most challenges facing our communities can be resolved when government and other role-players, support the efforts of our people and their organizations to improve their communities. We need to work with communities and not expect the poor to carry the burden on their own

As we launch this year's Social Development month we are highlighting the activities that will be taking place during this critical month. A plan of all activities covering all districts is available which include but not limited to:

- ✓ Opening of DSD offices- for easier access by the communities in Ermelo-Msukaligwa, Thekwane-Mbombela and Daggakraal in Pixley Ka Isaka KaSeme
- ✓ International Older persons day and the Golden games for the elderly on the 01st October 2013
- ✓ NPO Summit on 03rd-04th October 2013 and
- ✓ International Day of Poverty Eradication on the 17th October 2013

We will also hold a NPO summit in the provinces on 03-04 October 2013, The Summit seeks to achieve the following: mobilize communities to be able to respond to issues on the ground, identify awareness on the expectations of oversight bodies, integrated and well-coordinated service delivery in communities and to enhance services rendered to beneficiaries in communities and lastly to provide a platform for effective partnership

between government and Non-profit sector as mandated by the Non-profit Organizations Act 1997.

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During the Summit, the following key issues will be discussed: Funding and Resource Mobilization; Compliance, priorities for partnership, and Capacity Building for NPOs.

In conclusion, we call upon all South Africans including you the media to support and work in partnership with government in making South Africa a better country. I want to emphasize that the battle lines against poverty are drawn. The Department working together with its counterparts will intensify the struggle against poverty on all fronts. The acid test of our success in this regard must be based on the extent to which we extricate our people and vulnerable communities from abject poverty. This will continue to be our focus during this Social Development Month.

The involvement and participation of communities is significant as it adds value and improves the lives of our people, in particular, those who live under trying circumstances. The Social Development month is imperative for us to listen and guide our people on how to create sustainable livelihoods, because this government is a caring government. Together we can, indeed, do more!

I thank you