

ADDRESS BY PREMIER DAVID MAKHURA AT THE LAUNCH OF 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM OF NO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN. HUNTER'S FIELD SPORTS STADIUM.

24 NOVEMBER 2017

Programme Director; MEC Sizakele Nkosi Malobane
Members of the Executive Council
Religious Leaders
Representatives of civil society
Ambassadors of this Campaign
Councillors
Boys and Girls
Leadership of the SAPS and other law enforcement agencies
Fellow South Africans:

We meet here today to kick-start this year's 16 Days of Activism of No Violence Against Women and Children Campaign. To us every day is a day of no violence against women and children. Every day we say no to the abuse of women and children. Not under our watch! Not in our name.

As men, we must all be ashamed when we look at the number of women and children in our country who are brutalised, raped, harassed and killed. There can be no excuse about crimes against women and children. Not poverty. Not unemployment.

We must fight against the crimes against women and children every day, everywhere - in the family, in the community, in the educational institutions, in the workplace, in the church and society in general.

Violence and crimes against girl children require a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach because this is part of the scourge of gender-based violence which is based on patriarchy.

The United Nations Women, the body that oversees the work of nations on all matters affecting women and girl children, has the following to say about gender-based violence and how to tackle it:

“Violence against women and girls is rooted in the gender-based discrimination and social norms and gender stereotypes that perpetuate such violence...However, the best to end violence against women and girls is to prevent it from happening in the first place by addressing its root and structural causes. Prevention should start early in life, by educating and working with young boys and girls promoting respectful

relationships and gender equality. Working with youth is the “best bet” for faster, sustained progress in preventing and eradicating gender-based violence...Prevention entails supporting the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women that placed a strong focus on promotion of gender equality, women’s empowerment and their enjoyments of human rights, making homes and public spaces safer for women and girls, ensuring women’s autonomy and security, and increasing women’s participation and decision-making powers in the home and relationships, as well as in public life and in politics...Awareness-raising and community mobilization, including through media and social media, is another important component”.

Today’s launch of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign, falls squarely within our ongoing efforts as the provincial government, working with the rest of society, to continuously shine the spotlight and respond in a comprehensive way to the plight of girl children and young women in our province.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in August this year as part of commemorating Women’s Month, we rolled out a massive, sustained campaign through which we focused the eyes of our nation and province on the plight of girl children and young women in our province. We called this campaign "Invest in the Girl Child, Empower the Young Woman".

We sought to use this campaign to highlight and galvanise a multi-disciplinary response to the multiple challenges facing girl children and young women; including increased levels of violence, femicide, increasing rate of new HIV infections, high pregnancy and school drop-out rates; increased vulnerability and dependency as a result of lack of economic opportunities.

As we rolled out this campaign we made it clear that we will not turn a blind eye on the equally important task of addressing the plight of the boy child and young boys in general. Boys too need our care, our guidance and support as part of molding them into being better citizens, capable also of protecting the girl children, and always treating them as their equals, as their beloved sisters.

I further emphasised that crime against women and children has been identified as a priority crime. This crime need to be tackled through multi-agency, multi-stakeholder and community-wide interventions that ensure

that perpetrators are brought to book and victims and survivors are empowered, while at the same time working to empower women and girl children, change social behavior among men and boys as well as having aggressive campaigns raise gender awareness in schools, communities, workplaces, places of worship, in the professions and in business.

On the 19th of October, I publicly announced the appointment of a Special Committee of the Executive Council comprising of MEC Nandi Mayathula-Khoza (Convenor), Mr Panyaza Lesufi and MEC Sizakele Nkosi-Malobane. The Special Committee works with a multi-disciplinary and inter-departmental team composed of the Special Police Unit focusing on Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS), Forensic Social Workers, NGOs dealing child welfare as well as the HODs and senior officials from the Departments of Social Development, Education and Community Safety.

The re-introduction of the FCS as the specialised police unit and increasing resource allocation to fight crimes against women and children is yielding positive results. The FCS is one of the major success stories because of the high rate of arrests and successful prosecution of perpetrators. I have already publicly commended the FCS Special Police Unit for their enormous success in making sure that those committing crimes against women and children are arrested, prosecuted and sent to jail for many years.

As we seek to address the plight of the girl child and young woman in Gauteng, we do so fully cognizant of the reality that out of a population of more than 14.3 million people living in Gauteng, more than 6.5 million are women and more than 2.1 million are girls below the age of 19. The population of girl children and young women below the age of 34 in Gauteng is just under 4 million.

Equally more than 1.7 million households (which constitute a total of 35.9% of total households in Gauteng) are headed by women and the total number of female child headed households now stands at more than 106 000.

We have also noted that in 2015, at a national level female youth unemployment stood at 42.6 %, higher than the national average youth unemployment of 40.7%. Equally, according to the 2016 Gauteng City Region Observatory's Quality of Life Survey, 7% of female respondents owned businesses compared to 9% of male respondents. The Survey

also shows that 68% of female businesses tended to be informal and smaller compared to those owned by men.

Accordingly, we have always maintained that women, including the girl child and young women must and will remain at the center of our on-going efforts to transform, modernise and reindustrialise Gauteng City Region. They must be among the drives of this program. Significantly, they must also be among the major beneficiaries of the program.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is unfortunate that we live in a society that compels us to have such campaigns; to constantly remind ourselves that the lives of women and children are as important as those of men, and that they must as such be protected and nurtured.

In the words of the revolutionary leader Comrade Thomas Sankara reflecting on women's liberation and the freedom struggle; *"...there is no true social revolution without the liberation of women. May my eyes never see, my feet never take me to a society where half the people are held in silence. I hear the roar of women's silence. I sense the rumble of their storm and feel the fury of their revolt."*

The words of this revolutionary leader continue to echo and remain relevant in the society that we live in today. Truly, in order for us to attain a Transformed, Modernised and Re-industrialised Gauteng City Region, it is of utmost importance that we pay even more attention to those voices that are silenced amongst us, the voices of boys and girls, women, the poor, the working class and marginalised in our society.

The people of Gauteng; we cannot keep quiet while in the world we live in it is estimated that 150 million girls and 73 million boys have experienced sexual violence. Nearly half of all sexual assaults are committed against girls younger than 16 years of age. In our country one in five women are reported to have experienced an incident of Gender Based Violence a year!

Gender Based Violence also occurs at a cost to the economy - a staggering R 28,4 billion to R 42,2 billion a year - between 0,9% to 1,3% of the country's GDP - is lost because of gender based violence.

We must refuse to keep quiet when faced with the reality that the rate of sexual violence in South Africa is among the highest in the world! Most recent data from the South Africa Police Service shows that between April 2016 and December 2016 there were 30 069 reported cases of

rape, this equates to someone being raped every 13 minutes. These are only the reported cases. And the question we must answer is how many of our women and children suffer in silence!

Clearly this is not acceptable! We must act with urgency to turn the tide on gender based violence! It must stop and it must stop now! This launch today and many other interventions we have and continue to make in addressing the scourge of gender based violence, reflect our state of being sick and tired of the status quo! It speaks of our steely determination to playing our role in eradicating this problem - one household, one community and one region at a time!

This year, in particular the recent past, has undoubtedly been one of the toughest in terms of Gender Based Violence in our country and our province. From the gruesome murder of Karabo Mokoena, a young woman bursting at the seams with potential, to the daily reports of missing women and children in our country and our province.

In addition to condemning these barbaric acts, as society we need to reflect deeply and seek answers to the questions; *“What could possibly be at the core of these issues? What has our society turned into? Why so much anger and victimisation of the most vulnerable among us? Have we as society abandoned those humanist values of Ubuntu that for generations have guided our daily lives?”*

While we note that ours is historically a nation built on pain, suffering and violence - from the days of the early wars of resistance and land dispossession to the days of the struggle against institutionalised oppression – we cannot and must never use this as an excuse. As a free people, we have an opportunity to change this unfortunate state of affairs, through paying even closer attention to our women and children, making the necessary investments and empowering them for a better future.

Part of our response to the monumental shame that is gender based violence as well as violence against girl children and young women, is the need for us to undergo a process of unlearning what we have historically become accustomed to. Among others this requires that we constantly question what violence is, and how we are not just perpetrators, but also enablers through our silence as leaders in government, in churches, civil society and even as ordinary members of our communities and in our own families.

It is indeed most disheartening that Gender Based Violence is most often than not happening at the hands of the people these women and children trust. It has been recorded by the SA Medical Research Council that every eight hours a woman is killed by an intimate partner.

On this occasion, we bow our heads in sorrow and shame as we remember, in addition to Karabo Mokoena; Lerato Moloji age 21, who was found murdered in Naledi, Soweto; Popi Qwabe age 24, found shot in the same neighborhood; Bongeka Phungula age 28, found shot and dead in Tladi Soweto; Courtney Pieters aged 3, found in a shallow grave beside unused railroad tracks in Epping. There are many more other nameless and faceless victims of such intimate crimes. Ours as society is to stand against the perpetuation of this phenomenon. It is for us to boldly come out and say not in our names; not under our watch!

It is also important, on this occasion, to reflect on the unfortunate reality that the LGBTI community is also under severe attack. One of the saddest realities to be faced is that even here in Gauteng, a society which can be considered to be holding progressive views, the lives of people in the LGBTI community are under threat.

A survey conducted by the Gauteng City Region Observatory found that 14% of the people living in this province say it is acceptable to be violent towards the LGBTI community. Homophobic inspired violence is unacceptable! These attacks on this community cannot continue under our watch, and not in our names! Our unflinching commitment to non-sexism compels us to protect the rights of all irrespective of one's gender orientation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as the Gauteng Provincial Government, we believe that #16DaysOfActivism is not enough. Accordingly, we are committing ourselves to an ongoing process of dealing with the problem of gender based violence. We have, therefore, taken it upon ourselves to actively and intentionally celebrate Orange Unite Day between now until our last day in office as this administration.

Henceforth, the 25th of every month shall be a day dedicated to this programme, not only in words but also in action. This is a commitment we make, both to you and ourselves in pursuit of a Gauteng City Region of our dreams; where women and children can walk tall assured in the knowledge that they are safe and that they too are equal and valuable members of the communities they live in.

Ladies and gentlemen; in our ongoing endeavor to win the war on gender based violence, let us also be mindful of the relationship between Gender Based Violence and the economic dependency of women on men. The empowerment of women and children must take center stage in the fight against gender based violence.

In this regard, for the 2016/17 financial year as part of advancing our agenda of the economic inclusion of women we spent 17.4% of our more than R 28 billion procurement budget on women owned enterprises. We are determined to increase this number substantially.

In addition, and as part of our on-going commitment to ensuring that no girl child misses school because of being unable to afford sanitary towels, last year alone we distributed more than 239 000 dignity packs to girl learners across Gauteng – our target is to reach more than 1 million by 2019.

By 2016 more than 108 000 female students had benefitted from the Provincial Government's Bursary Scheme to further their studies at institutions of higher learning. Our target is to ensure that 50% of the bursaries we issue go to girl learners.

To-date more than 10 000 mainly young women, have benefitted from our Welfare to Work Programme – they have now been moved away from relying on social grants and have been placed in productive, sustainable economic activities.

We are also finalising set asides on procurement as well as employment, entrepreneurship and skills development opportunities for the benefit of young women.

In conclusion, I wish to make a call to all the people of our province. Let us build a society where there is zero tolerance of violence against women and children. The plight and wellbeing of the girl children and young women is everybody's business. Women emancipation and empowerment is a non-negotiable. Patriarchy must fall. Gender equality must rise.

I thank you.

