



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY PREMIER DAVID MAKHURA ON THE OCCASION OF THE GAUTENG SENIOR CITIZENS ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS. ALEXSAN KOPANO, ALEXANDRA TOWNSHIP.**

**17 October 2017**

Deputy Speaker of the Gauteng Legislature, Kgosi Hon. Dikgang Moiloa;  
Programme Director, MEC for Social Development, Nandi Mayathula–Khoza,  
Deputy Chairperson of Committees in the Legislature;  
The Leadership of the Gauteng Older Persons Forum;  
Councillors and Community Leaders;  
Distinguished Older Persons of our province;  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Dumelang. Molweni. Sanibonani. Avuxeni. Ndi matsheloni. Thobela. Happy International Older Persons Day!

Ka jeno ke letsatsi la bonkgono le bontatemoholo lefatsheng kaofela! Ilanga la boGogo naboMkhulu!

Once again, this year, as we do always during the month of October, we are gathered here to celebrate the International Day of Older Persons. We are here to honour our elders. We are here to say thank you for raising us up.

We are here to acknowledge and honour the work of our stalwarts and veterans of the liberation struggle who paved the way for our country to be free. Re a leboga.

Many were freedom fighters, who showed us the way to freedom and democracy. Often without proper recognition, many kept the wheels of the South African economy grinding as ordinary workers in the mines, in the factories, in the

plantations, in the shops, in the banks, in the offices and as domestic workers in the gardens and in the “kitchens” of our erstwhile white suburbs. Today we say thank you. Ha khensa swinene!

We are forever indebted to our elders for the sacrifices they have made for us to be who we are today as individuals. Many are former teachers, principals, school inspectors, kindergarten teachers, social workers, broadcasters, nurses and civil servants with distinguished careers. Ri kho livhuwa nga maanda. Nndaa!

We are here to say to the workers in the mines, factories and construction companies thank you for building the cities, factories and highways of this great province.

We are here to convey our gratitude to the retired pastors, priests, rabbis and moulanas for praying for us and taking care of the spiritual needs of our communities. Siyabulela!

In honouring Older Persons in our province today, we are joining millions across the globe in celebrating the enriching presence of Older Persons in our families, communities and society.

We love you. Siyanithanda abazali bethu. We value and appreciate your contribution to our social, political, economic and cultural life. Many of you remain the moral compass and conscience of the families and communities in which you live.

Today is your special day for Ogogo nabomkhulu bethu!

When we met in Katlehong last year, I said to you any self-respecting nation must honour, respect and look after its Older Persons. A nation that does not respect its elderly does not respect its history and therefore has no future.

Through force of example, you continue to show us the difference between wrong and right. You cultivate in the younger generations the time-tested humanistic values of Ubuntu – I am because you are; without the other, I am incomplete; I am my brothers' and sisters' keeper. Motho ke motho ka batho. Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye abantu.

When times are tough and our mood is low, you light our hearts. When there are many problems in our communities and we drift to hopelessness and despair, you lift our spirits and give us hope. When there are problems, you encourage us to hold on and never give up.

Up to this day, many of the elderly use their hard-earned life savings and their pension money to take care for their extended families.

How do we protect the elderly in our society? How do we take care of you? What is your Government doing for you? What problems are you facing in the families and communities?

On International Day of Older Persons, we must answer all these questions honestly and bring to the attention of the whole society and the world the problems you face.

We know that in the build up to this day, regional workshops were held across Gauteng to give our elderly the platform and opportunity to raise their concerns and problems - abuse, neglect, lack of access to adequate food, health care, transport and recreational facilities, crimes against the elderly.

Out of today's occasion, a delegation carrying the aspirations and recommendations of Gauteng older persons will be mandated to attend the National Older Persons Parliament in Kwa-Zulu Natal. We have no doubt they will represent our province well.

Gauteng has a lot of Older Persons who are participating in sports as part of the active aging programme. We wish all of the best to those who will be representing us in the National Golden Games, also in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Bring us the glory! Allow me also to take this opportunity to congratulate our province's elder persons choir that got first position in the National Choir Festival for the elderly last year!

Ladies and Gentlemen, on this day as the Provincial Government, together with the Provincial Legislature we are here to listen and dialogue with our elderly people, so that together we can continue building a better Gauteng for *Ogogo no Mkhulu bethu*.

The absolute imperative of building a better, caring and more humane society for our elder persons is underscored by the fact that currently there are 700 million people worldwide aged 60 and older. In addition, it is estimated that by 2050, 2 billion people, which is over 20% of the world population, will be aged 60 and older.

Our country, South Africa is one of the few developing countries experiencing an increase in the population of those ages 60 and older. The latest Stats SA population estimates indicate that ours is an ageing population with the number of people aged 60 and older having increased from 6.6% of the total population in 2002 to 8.01% in 2016.

We also know that of all those in our country who are aged 60 and older, the highest percentage – 26,1% which amounts to 1.17 million people, reside in Gauteng.

Equally, in Gauteng the percentage of those aged 65 and older increased from 4.3% of the total population of Gauteng in 2011 to 5.6% in 2016. This coupled with the declining annual rate of population growth and higher life expectancy suggests that Gauteng has an ageing population.

I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate what I said when I delivered the State of the Province Address, last year, that Gauteng province is the home of our elderly people.

Accordingly, we will do everything in our power to support and protect the rights of our elders. In line with this commitment, provincial departments are hard at work intervening in various ways with a view to protecting and advancing the rights of Gauteng's elder persons.

## **What are we doing for the elderly in our beautiful province?**

### **On Social Development:**

The Department of Social Development continues to provide integrated developmental social welfare services for the care, support and protection of older persons in Gauteng.

In particular last year:

- 73 residential homes for older persons were funded offering care and protection to 6 396 older persons,
- 85 Home based organisations were funded reaching 6 271 older persons who are frail but still in their homes
- 13 274 older persons were reached through active aging programmes in the five Municipalities
- 168 service centres and luncheon clubs for older persons were funded that rendered services to 16 482 older persons
- 26 facilities in the poorest wards and other prioritised areas were provided with gym facilities
- 24 000 older persons were reached through the elder abuse prevention programmes
- All the regions in Gauteng participated in the Provincial Choir Festival, which was held on the 28 September 2016 in Tshwane.

### **On Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation:**

The provincial government continues to implement the Active Ageing programme and Games in order to achieve the following:

- Enhance the quality of life and improve the health of older persons.
- Encourage our elder persons to embrace active ageing.
- Create awareness of the abilities and capabilities of older persons in sport and recreational activities.
- Inculcate a culture of healthy living amongst older persons.
- Reduce the burden of disease amongst older people in the Health Care System

### **On promoting economic inclusion for the elderly**

Workshops to educate older persons about their Consumer Rights, Responsibilities and to also teach them to be smart and responsible consumers were held across the province.

### **On Health care**

The Department of Health provides services to Older Persons in the community and Older Persons Residential Facilities:

- Visiting doctors spending a total of 80 hours per month are provided to all 73 Residential Facilities for older persons to consult and prescribe medication where necessary for all state subsidized older persons;
- The Community Health Centres have designated queues for the Older Persons, making it possible for them not to spend long hours in queues before being attended to. If a particular health facility does not allow for a special queue for the elderly, then the first preference and consultation is given to the Older Persons;

- Our facilities have 40 active support groups for the Older Persons;
- The Department of Health implements outreach programmes to Old Age Homes and Service Centres by Optometrists to provide screening of eyes and offer free reading glasses – last year 320 older persons were screened and 200 glasses were issued;
- Free screening for hypertension, diabetes and cholesterol for our elders is also provided;

With regards to agriculture and the promotion of food security we have committed ourselves to assisting our elderly citizens to set up household and community gardens.

Specifically, we are providing them with seedlings and training to allow them to better manage their food gardens and contribute towards the food security of their households and communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, following the tragic events of the loss of life of mental health patients in the care of our government, we made a commitment that through our Ntirhisano programme as well as engagements such as the one we are having today, we will be more rigorous in monitoring the state of all our facilities that care for the most vulnerable in our society – the elderly, children and mental health patients.

We wish to assure our elder persons that we still stand by this commitment. No elder person in Gauteng shall be subjected to neglect, abuse and ill-treatment while in the care of our government. Never in our name! Not under our watch! We will make sure of this. One death, one casualty, one victim from our care facilities is one too much.

Programme Director, *Bagolo barona*, these are some of the interventions we are making to restore the dignity of our older persons many of who have given so much of themselves to build our nation.

I wish all our senior citizens a happy International Day for Older Persons and hope this dialogue will be fruitful. We love all of you. We value all of you. May you continue to live happy lives.

Thank you.

**Issued by the Gauteng Provincial Government**

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