

MESSAGE OF SUPPORT BY THE MEC FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM, MRS YN PHOSA, MPL, DURING THE OCASSION OF WOMEN'S MONTH CELEBRATION AT THE NELSPRUIT CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Thursday, 15 August 2013

Programme Director;

MEC Sibongile Manana – MEC for Sports, Arts and Culture

Commissioner for Correctional Services in the Mpumalanga and Limpopo Region, Mr Andries Tsetsane;

Acting Regional Commiissioner: Ms SJ Kunene

Acting Area Commissioner Baberton Management Area: Ms Z Mthethwa

Acting Area Commissioner: Mr D Nzimande

Brigadier Xaba & SAPS delegation

Government officials present;

Members of the media house;

Pastors in our midst

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

**Good Morning!**

I am indeed humbled and honoured, to have been given this opportunity to join you as we pay homage to *bo-Make* – the heroic women of our country and of our province. As we always say - *Wa thinta abafazi, wathint'imbokodo!* We meet here just over a month after we celebrated our world iconic leader, the stalwart of our liberation struggle, former President *tat'u*Nelson Mandela. Although he remains in hospital, we must continue to pray for his good health, and continue to celebrate and honour him for his selfless contribution towards freedom. He remains deep in our hearts, and as women of note, we must continue to lead in prayers for his speedy recovery.

Madiba has fought for the rights of everyone, including women, has continued to stress that democracy will not be complete without participation of women. As we are on our transformational journey he set the tone for the change in the lives of women emancipation – freedom.

**Nelson Mandela – Madiba – iSithwalwandwe – Seaparankwe – Ha a yo ya tshwanang le wena!**

Acting Commissioner; Ladies and Gentlemen;

As we celebrate *a Centenary of Working together towards Sustainable Women Empowerment and Gender equality*, we must do so by continuing to recognise the role played by the women of 1956 towards our emancipation and freedom. We must do so by continuing to recognise the role women continue to play in building our nation and in strengthening social cohesion. Women are foundations of peace and social progress within our homes and communities.

Women continue to participate actively in ensuring peace, security and social progress throughout the world. As women of South Africa and the world over, we believe that until we secure the full rights and full potential of women, lasting solutions to the world's most serious social, economic and political problems are unlikely to be found.

However despite all the achievements we have attained as a democratic nation, indicators show that women continue to experience social challenges and gender inequality. Some of these challenges are that:

- Women (the world over) still do not have equal rights as men;
- The majority of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor people are women
- Women, on average, receive between 30 and 40 per cent less pay than men earn for the same work;
- Women continue to be victims of violence, with rape and domestic violence listed as significant causes of disability and death among women of reproductive age worldwide. As women of South Africa, we reject any form of violence against women and girl children, and call on men to stop this barbaric and inhumane act.

During this *Centenary of Working together towards Sustainable Women Empowerment and Gender equality* and the *African Women's Decade (2010-2020)* as declared by the United Nations, and celebrated under the theme: *"Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment,"* we must continue to focus on:

- Starting programmes aimed at sustainable empowerment of women;

- Ensuring gender equality in all respects. Our country's progressive democratic Constitution enforces equality for all irrespective of gender;
- Form street committees ensuring the safety of our women and children. Let us continue to work together to ensure the total end of violence against women and children. We must stand together and speak in one voice.
- **It is time for action to end abuse and violence against women.**

Acting Commissioner Kunene; Ladies and Gentlemen;

I believe that all women who have been incarcerated in this correction facility, are not lesser important than all of us who are in the outside. We strongly believe that after violating the law, they have been given an opportunity to learn from their mistakes, and presently are being prepared for integration back into society. As women who understand women issues, let us not add salt to the wound by rejecting them. We need to support them to settle when they are released from this prison. As we celebrate the Centenary of Working together towards Sustainable Women Empowerment and gender Equality, let us open our arms and hearts and prepare to accept them back into our communities when they are released. I always believe that the first step towards correcting one's mistakes is by accepting and acknowledging those mistakes.

I would like to make a call, to all women prayer groups (Thursday prayer groups, 29/08/2013) to adopt the 29/08/2013 prayer day to pray for our men's repentance from women abuse and violence against women and children. The bible says 'if my people could turn away from their wicked ways, repent sins and seek my kingdom, I the Lord, will hear their prayers'. (Go back).

On behalf of the Premier and the people of Mpumalanga, I congratulate Commissioner Tsetsane and the Department for organising this event, to pay homage to women of yesterday, and the women of tomorrow who are currently within the confines of this correctional facility.

**Working together we can do more** to realise sustainable women empowerment and gender equality.

I wish you a fruitful celebration, filled with love and joy.

May the Almighty God bless this event and bless everyone gathered here this morning.

**I thank You!**