



Lephalale Municipality

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PRESS RELEASE

Deputy president, Cyril Ramaphosa who is also chairperson of the South African National Aids Council (SANAC), accompanied by a high profile delegation including government officials; TB ambassadors of the African Union and World Health Organisation, Health Minister, Aaron Motsoaledi; Limpopo Premier, Stan Mathabatha; Executive Mayors; Local Mayors and thousands of community members commemorated World TB Day at Marapong in Lephalale on the 22nd of March.¹

The commemoration was part of a wider effort aimed at achieving goals and objectives set by the National TB programme (NTP) to mobilise communities and encourage them to adopt practices that minimise the risk of TB infection. According to Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa the commemoration was done jointly with the African Union, demonstrating a shared responsibility to work together to end TB.

Ramaphosa said while there is significant decline in TB infection across the country in all provinces, infections in Lephalale are increasing, especially in emerging informal settlements such as Marapong. Statistics indicates that in Lephalale TB/HIV co-infection stands at about 65%, compared to the national average of 55%. "We are here with our local and global partners because we are keen to prevent these public health challenges from worsening and to reverse them as rapidly as possible" he said. In addition the Deputy President also launched South Africa's first National TB Prevalence Survey which will be undertaken by the Department of Health supported by the South African Medical Research Council and the Human sciences Research Council. The research will be concluded within two years and will provide a true indication of the country's TB burden.

The Deputy President was also given the honour of receiving the Marapong Community Health Centre on behalf of the community of Marapong. The eleven million rand centre was acquired through the partnership between the Local Municipality, Mining Company, Exxaro and Eskom. The new clinic which is much larger than the old one will provide a full package of primary health services to the community of Marapong. The clinic should be in operation by August 2016 and will operate as a 24/7 health facility.



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In addition, Limpopo Premier, Stan Mathabatha welcomed the support from organisations such as the South African National Aids Council, USAID, World Health Organisation and the AU. According to Mathabatha more focus will be on young for them to take a lead in the fight against both TB and HIV/AIDS and also tapping in to their energies and vibrancy to make them “change agent”. We need young people as change agents so that they can play an important role of informing, educating and mobilising other young people, adults, families and communities to do what is necessary to assist in ending the epidemics.

Lephalale Mayor, Jack Maeko, expressed appreciation for efforts by the Deputy president, Cyril Ramaphosa, National Health Minister, Aaron Motsoaledi and all other stakeholders involved in the fight against TB and HIV/AIDS. Maeko said the role played by strategic partners such Exxaro and Eskom cannot go unnoticed. Through the two companies the 24 hour health facility which was opened by the deputy president will go a long way in addressing socio-economic challenges of communities.

Queries:

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