

ADDRESS BY THE MAYOR OF LEPHALALE , CLLR MJ MAEKO, TO STAKEHOLDERS FOR AIDS COUNCIL AND AIDS TECHNICAL TEAM.

- Protocol observed

Good morning and welcome to this extremely important gathering. I regard this gathering as extremely important as it deals with matters of life and death; a matter of health and healthy life styles.

Let start by reminding this house that this year is the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the democratic constitution of our country. Twenty years ago, in 1996, the first president of the democratic South Africa, Dr Nelson Mandela, signed the first democratic constitution of our country. This event takes place at the beginning of March; the month in which we celebrate National Human Rights day on 21st in South Africa. Today we are going to concentrate on the human right to life. We use to talk about people denying others the right to life by killing them, but we forget to mention that we sometimes deny ourselves the right to life by living unhealthy lifestyles that can lead us to die unnatural deaths.

The constitution of our country contains the Bill of Rights which is the cornerstone of our democracy. This Bill of Rights places an obligation on the state to protect, promote and fulfill human rights. As I mentioned in the beginning that this event has been arranged to deal with matters of life and death, we shall concentrate on the right to life. The ANC-led government fully agrees that everyone has the right to life and no one should die any kind of death except the natural death. Each one of us has the responsibility to make sure that none of us the kind of death that we could have prevented. We must avoid increasing the number of orphans and widows caused by incurable diseases like HIV/AIDS. We all know that HIV is incurable but to prevent it is as easy as **ABC – Abstain, Be faithful or Condomise.**

Government has put HIV/AIDS, Sexually transmitted Diseases (SITs) and TB as priority health issue. That is why the president. During his State of the Nation Address on 11 February this year announced the establishment of state-owned pharmaceutical company called

KETLAPHELA which will supply ARVs to Department of Health from 2016/2017 Financial Year.

Premier Mathabatha, during his State of the Province Address on 26 February this year praised Limpopo for showing slight, yet very important decline in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the province for the past five years. Our province has decreased from 22,3 percent in 2012 to 20,3 percent in 2013. Unfortunately, we cannot say the same about HIV/AIDS prevalence in Lephale. We must be brutally honest with ourselves and admit that the percentage of those who are infected with HIV in Lephale is too high.

But we proud that we have men and women like you who are prepared to fight this monster called HIV/AIDS. As government we can assure you that you have our support Government has put in place a number of programmes, campaigns and plans to address the HIV/AIDS challenge:

Among those programmes and plans are :

- **National Strategic Plan on HIV, Sexually transmitted diseases (SIT) and TB (2012 to 2016)** which has four clear goals : namely :
 1. To address social and structural barriers to HIV, SIT and TB prevention, care and impact.
 2. Prevent new HIV, SIT and TB infections.
 3. Sustain health and wellness
 4. Increase the protection of human rights and improve access to health facilities.

National Development Plan 2030 on Sports and healthy living. The plan refers to sports as a cross-cutting agent for education and healthy living. This NDP 2030 encourages South Africans to engage in physical activities and sports.

As government we also subscribe to **The global three zeros that were announced on 9 September 2011** which are :

1. Zero new HIV and TB infections
2. Zero stigma and discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS and TB
3. Zero HIV and TB related deaths

I mention these things so that you can familiarise yourself with them and arm yourself for the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Let me conclude by reminding you that this week-end is the voter registration week-end. Lets us all do our civic duty by conducting free voter education and encourage our constituencies, especially the first time voters, to register to vote.

I THANK YOU