

**Speech by MEC Neliswa Nkonyeni on the occasion of the
launch of Khanyiselani drop in center in Kokstad
09 Oct 06.**

Our warm greetings and gratitude to all the caring
Departments involved; the sponsors; our partners; our
workers; volunteers; the infected and affected children and
all families present.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have grown so much
accustomed to using terms that inevitably loose their true
meaning down the line. In particular I am referring to the
term *UBUNTU*. Today all those that have made this event
a success and all those that have been involved with this
project, assisting the children in their hour of need are
indeed practicing *ubuntu* .

For all those who may not be on the know; the National
Integrated Project [NIP] sites were established by the
government of the people in the year 2000. The stated
objective here is to **alleviate the suffering of children**

orphaned as a result of HIV and AIDS. This, fellow compatriots, entail establishing a safe environment through the provision of day care centers for children of non school going ages as well as for the provision of a meal a day for those of school going age on their way back from classes. This is also where these kids get assistance and support with their homework before they they return home where they stay with their relatives. I KNOW OF NO OTHER NOBLER CAUSE.

Today we are here because of our Hon Minister of Public Enterprise; Alec Erwin is also making his own spectacular contribution, reassuring these children that they will never be forsaken. Through you, Mr Minister, I am again thanking all those that have been making contributions to keep this facility alive. Here I refer to the Department of Social Welfare, Department of Education and other government departments that come on board on consultation.

I also wish to acknowledge the contribution of East Coast Radio listeners for the blankets and clothes they donate. Business organizations like the Standard Bank and DBSA have not shied away from their social responsibilities and to them we say thank. We wish and pray that other

conglomerates can follow suit. Truth of the matter is that, as at present we cannot support the growing demand for these sites. The problem of HIV and AIDS is bigger for us to shoulder on our own.

Be that as it may, our Department of Health wants to assure everyone here that it is committed to its own obligations which entail paying for the **Project Manager**; supplying and paying for **Caregivers** as well availing **Multi-skilled Personnel** and taking care of their salaries too. For this we are currently paying **R319 000 per annum**, which includes cost for the telephone and fax; lights and water; stationery; groceries as well as audit fees.

Whilst we continue with our responsibilities for those in need, we also want to inculcate and build a sense of personal empowerment and responsibility for all our people. We are saying most of the health problems that we have in this country are as a result of a lifestyle hence we call on our people to:

- Reinforce healthy, protective sexual practices
- To get into their heads that they, too, are at risk
- Encourage mutual responsibility in relationships

- Address the special vulnerability of young women
- Promote gender equality in relationships
- Strive for STI prevention and treatment

Remember we are in a country whose health system faces the most intricate human resource demands. We acknowledge that the production of health professionals does not keep up with the demand for supplying personnel geared to deal with the increasing burden of disease. We are thus compelled to utilize this platform to give you top **10 Health Checks** that can alert us early on any ailment encroaching:

- Do the Breast check
- The body mass check
- The oral health check, once every 6 months
- The blood pressure check, once a year
- The cholesterol check
- The eye check
- The pap smear, once every 3 years
- The HIV and AIDS test
- The chlamydia test, through your gynaecologist
- The pregnancy test

The early detection and treatment of diseases will always prolong our limbs and lives. To illustrate a point, in this

province we now have more than 60 people dying as a result of XDR TB [extreme drug resistant strain of Tuberculosis]. This is so because some of these people waited too long to come to our facilities for the diagnosis and treatment of TB and in most cases because they defaulted in their taking of prescribed treatment.

Yes for this state of affairs each of us shoulders blame because we still discriminate against people suffering from both TB and HIV and AIDS.

Let us again show love and compassion. Let us recognise that as South Africans, caring together and acting together, we have the power to reverse the course of HIV and to manage AIDS effectively. Let us rediscover the force of unity – caring together for life!

I thank you.