

Remarks by KZN Health MEC, Neliswa Nkonyeni as she introduces National Health Minister, Hon Dr Manto Tshabalala Msimang on the occasion of the National Youth Indaba in Durban

23 June 2008

Greetings, to all of you as you have traveled from all the corners of our land to come and deliberate on issues pertaining to our youth and their future.

According to Census 2001 results, of the 44, 5 million people in South Africa then, 18 million were the youth between the ages 14 and 35, which meant that they constituted 40.5 % of the population. Today it is 2008 and as the youth, you may be nearing the 50% mark.

I think it is proper that we start by affirming your rights that as young men and women irrespective of your socio-economic status, gender, disability and / or other defining factors, that you have the right to:

- enjoy your youthfulness;
- participate in policy formulation, decision making and leadership in youth development and youth development issues; and
- build a secure future.

What is also reassuring and comforting is the fact that for you as normal citizens of South Africa these rights are firmly entrenched in the Bill of Rights and in the Constitution.

Concomitantly, as young people you have to understand that rights come with responsibilities. In this regard, you have the responsibility to promote and advance these rights as they relate to other young people through espousing peace, security and development; promoting human dignity and respect for adults and fellow young people, ensuring a society free from racism, violence, coercion, crime, degradation, exploitation and intimidation; as well as promoting positive lifestyles and behaviour.

I am not going to dwell on the past recent shameful and violent tendencies that we as a nation have displayed to other fellow human beings who have sought refuge in our country; save to say that there is a **Shona proverb** that says:

"Eyes which have met have started a relationship"

We need to rise and say: **Xenophobia, not in my name!
Not in my country! Not in my time!**

Siyintsha, masikhule sazi ukuthi umhlaba awupheleli lapha eMzantsi.

Recognising that you are the most revolutionary component in our society, I am so glad that you have put aside time to tackle issues that pertain to Youth development as surely this is a process that will prepare you as young people to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent.

My appeal to you would be that please utilize this time and resources to positively influence each other by looking at ways to decrease negative behavior such as alcohol, drug and tobacco abuse. Please accept it as a fact that all the dignified and respectable people who are here have come because they care. Make use of their knowledge, experiences, skills and talents to widen your horizons and better yourselves.

Know that the most crucial thing is accepting and embracing a notion of a healthy lifestyle. You first have to know that Healthy living is more than a temporary solution to an immediate problem, that it is based on a series of highly personalised lifestyle choices.

Reality of the situation is that as today's youth you are faced with various challenges that include amongst others poverty, unemployment, teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections including, HIV and AIDS.

Utilize this Youth Indaba as a means to identify mechanisms aimed at addressing these challenges, and strengthening youth participation in youth development programmes.

Always take cognizance of **Franklin Roosevelt** observations when he said:

"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future".

Phansi nobusoka!

Phansi nokudlwengula!

Phansi nokungahloniphi abantu abadala!

Phansi noMgwinyo!

Ladies and gentlemen I am here to introduce a child of this soil, born and bred at Imfume, south of Durban. Umkhaya lo.

She matriculated at Inanda seminary a world reknown girls school. After qualifying with an Arts degree in 1961, she left the country.

In 1969 she completed her MD at the Leningrad Medical institution in the former USSR.

For the 28 years in exile she served in many positions within the African National Congress.

Her passion for health care became evident when she involved herself tirelessly with the National Progressive Healthcare Network

She is closely involved with women empowerment issues as well as the protection and promotion of children's rights.

She was appointed Chairperson of the Gender Committee of the National Executive Committee of the ANC in 1998

She also served the country as Deputy Minister of Justice where again she fought for the improvement of the rights of women and children in the criminal justice system.

She served as the Chairperson of the Africa region at the World Health Assembly in 2004

Minister Manto Tshabalala Msimang is also a Member of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress.

Dr Mantombazane Tshabalala Msimang, a mother to two daughters and a granny to a young boy was elected to her current post on June,17,1999.

Impilo iyasetshenzelwa!!!