

Speech by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of the launch of Azibuye Emasisweni Male Circumcision Campaign in Kokstad at Sisonke District

3 September 2013

Amakhosi

Izinduna

Mayors and Councilors

SAPS Commissioners

Indlondlo

Initiates

Members of the Community Based Organisations; Non-Governmental Organisations as well as Faith Based Organisation

Amalunga omphakathi ahloniphekile

Programme Director, the reality of the situation is that the Province is experiencing an increase in social ills in the form of Teenage pregnancies; Sexual assaults and Gender based violence.

Our coming here for the Azibuye Emasisweni Campaign is a testimony that KwaZulu Natal is determined to fight all the mentioned plagues and achieve cohesive communities.

Programme Director, our point of departure is that Men are the key to tackling all the Social Ills visited upon in our communities.

Allow me to report that two months ago at OSizweni, the Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders, uNdabezitha Inkosi Chiliza said communities must have a social compact, a covenant that binds. He said that the covenant must say certain behaviours are not acceptable in our areas and should a person transgress, then he should know that he no longer belongs. Inkosi Chiliza says we can no longer keep quiet and tolerate misdemeanour directed to children, women and grannies.

I fully agree with uNdabezitha as it is indeed very disturbing to see women going to court leading marches against rapists whilst knowing very well that in all cases the perpetrators are men.

If ever we have to rid the Province of all the Social Ills, men need to be in the forefront and make it known that malpractices taking place cannot be happening in their name.

Today here at Sisonke District we want to explicitly say; strong and honest men are those males that love and protect women and children; those that are able to control their temper; suppress the urge to steal; rape and cause harm to other people. Our understanding, embrace and support for His Majesty the King's clarion call that all men be circumcised is exactly about creating good men in our society.

We also embrace the thinking of the President of Congress of the Traditional Leaders in South Africa, Inkosi Phathekile Holomisa when he says:

'I SUPPORT male circumcision because it is an important part of a custom intended to build leaders in our community. The entire initiation ceremony, including circumcision is intended to create men capable of

carrying out their responsibilities, protecting the weak in society and providing for their families. Circumcision is part of the process of making men out of boys."

As we promote MCC today, we want it known that HIV epidemic is associated with a number of behaviours that put women at risk of acquiring HIV. These include the inconsistent condom use and unprotected sex; sexual violence; transactional sex; migration; remaining unmarried while sexually active; multiple sexual partnerships as well as the high level of alcohol consumption leading to reckless sexual engagements.

We fully support all the effort of INDLONDLO, uTata Khowa for the good guidance he provides to the initiates of this area.

It is my wish today that all strong and caring men should comprehend and discuss informed studies such as the one conducted by CAPRISA that researched the teenage girls are not impregnated by boys their age. By illustration, the study says if teenagers engage in sexual activity girls would be indeed pregnant but not HIV positive. Findings by CAPRISA inform us that:

- at ages 10 ---14 both boys and girls are all HIV negative
- at 15 ---19 boys are still safe but 6 out of 100 girls test HIV positive
- at 20 ---24, 8 out of 100 girls now test positive with boys following at 3 per 100
- at 25 ---29 boys overtake the girls at 9 per 100 whilst girls are starting a decline

What this means is that at an early age elder males sleep with young girls but then at 20 to 24 girls start realizing their folly and revert to boys their age not knowing that they have already been infected. The vicious circle then begins!

In our communities we need to name and shame all the Sugar Daddies who when going around abusing and deflowering young girls are at the same time very protective of their own daughters. It is a common fact that most of these girls who fall pregnant as a result of this bad association do not just get to be HIV positive but go through other traumas that entail:

- Hiding pregnancy and not seeking any advice from their mothers;
- Booking late or not at all for Antenatal care, thus missing every opportunity of clinical intervention for illnesses that encroach on her or the baby
- Presenting themselves for delivery with multiple Pregnancy complications
- Disasters at post-delivery stage due to the fact that they cannot handle babies properly
- Kissing goodbye to school and beginning the life of perpetual misery, dependency and helplessness.

The above mentioned scenario is taking the whole Province backwards and impacts negatively on Millennium Developmental Goals 4 and 5 that pertain to Child Mortality as well as Maternal Mortality. It contradicts what we seek to achieve in our **Phila Mntwana** project that strives to:

- Provide comprehensive prevention and health promotion package for children at community level.

- Provide the community leadership and war room members with a simple diagnosis of the status of the children in the community, so that corrective measures may be taken when necessary.
- Monitor the Nutritional and Health Status of all Children less than 5 years at community level on a monthly basis.
- Ensure early identification of children with malnutrition, diarrhea, TB and other health conditions as early as possible and to refer for health care.
- Identify children who require referral for government
- Improve access to preventative health services: **G**rowth Monitoring; **O**ral rehydration, **B**reastfeeding and **I**mmunization.

It also defeats of objectives of directed at the proper management of HIV, AIDS, STI, TB and PMTCT as in hidden teenage pregnancy we cannot ensure that every pregnant woman attends the Antenatal care. How then are we going to attain our objective of ***reducing the risk of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV to less than 1.4% by 2016***, building on progress made when we reduced transmission from 22% in 2005 and to 2.8% in 2011?

Men can really make a difference.

Men should do everything in their power to create safer neighbourhoods following and implementing a strategy on National Health Sector Strategic Plan for Injury and Violence Prevention under the vision of **“A safe and peaceful South Africa that is conducive to physical, mental and social well-being for all citizens.”**

Men should be instrumental in the realisation of the ***Strategy for HIV and AIDS, STIs and TB for The Province of KwaZulu-Natal 2012-2016*** which aims at:

'A KwaZulu-Natal that is free of new HIV, STI and TB infections and where all infected and affected enjoy a high quality of life.'

I thank you