

OPENING ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF MATJHABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, ME. MATHABO MOKAPO ON THE OCCASION OF THE IMBIZO ON 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILD ABUSE ON 27 NOVEMBER, BRONVILLE

Programme Director

MEC for Security, Safety and Liaison - Mr. Playfair Morule

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I feel privileged to have been granted the opportunity to deliver an opening address, on this important occasion. This event is occasioned by the important campaign that is currently underway throughout all corners of our country and the world at large. I am referring here to the 16 days of Activism against Woman and Child Abuse campaign.

The abuse of women and children in our society continues to be a cancer in our midst that we should fight it at all costs. It is a scourge that has caused tremendous humiliation and denigration to our communities. And because it cuts across racial, class and cultural lines, it needs a concerted effort of every member of the society.

Our government, since the advent of democracy, has created legislative and institutional arrangements that aim to address the abuse of women and children prevalent in our communities. However, a lot of work and effort still remains to be done in changing the mindsets of our people. Colonialism and apartheid left a bad legacy that polluted the mindsets of our people, and as the new government we must work tirelessly to ensure that the scourge of abuse is eradicated within our communities.

During this imbizo, I hope the plight of women and children who are in abusive relationships will be highlighted. And as we do that we must ensure that we leave no stone unturned in sensitizing every member of our community about the immoral nature of abuse.

We must ensure that the level of awareness amongst our people is increased, about the dangers and negative effects of abuse. In the same vein we must challenge perpetrators to change their behavior.

As we fight abuse that has afflicted our communities and families, let us ensure that we encourage partnerships and sectoral participation, by working with organized labor, business, networks which focus on women and children' issues, faith-based organizations, traditional leaders and other outreach programmes.

The road that we shall traverse as communities, in finally creating a truce on violence against women and children, is an arduous one, but we must be confident that the obstacles that lie ahead are not insurmountable. Only if we optimize collaboration and co-operation amongst role players, shall we be able to finally eradicate this scourge.

I wish to encourage members of the community who are gathered here today, to appreciate and embrace the messages that will be delivered in this event.

On this note I wish to welcome everyone present here today within the borders of Matjhabeng Local Municipality and hope that the occasion will achieve its intended objectives.

Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR MATHABO MOKAPO
EXECUTIVE MAYOR**