



Address by the Sedibeng District Municipality Executive Mayor, Cllr. Mahole Simon Mofokeng on the occasion of the Provincial Launch of Campaign Against the abuse of Alcohol by MEC for Economic Development held on Tuesday, 08th December 2009, Saul Tsoetsi Sports Complex in Sebokeng, Sedibeng

Programme Director;

MEC for Economic Development: Mr. Firoz Cachalia;

Members of Executive Council present;

Executive Mayors and Speakers;

Members of the Mayoral Committee and fellow Councillors;

Senior officials from government departments,

Officials from local municipalities,

Most importantly the people of Sedibeng;

Our road safety ambassadors;

Members of media;

Ladies and gentlemen

I am pleased to be with you at this important event that marks one of the important campaigns of our government. It pleases me more to have an

opportunity to share with you today, the experiences that come with the abuse of alcohol in our society. Our gathering here today comes at the right period, the period when all of us are preparing to take a rest from our hectic work life. The period which is most relevant for our deliberations today and beyond our lives

On the 16 Days of Activism Campaign Against Women and Children Abuse: You will recall that our country and the world at large are currently observing the 16 Days of Activism Campaign Against Women and Children Abuse, under the theme: *Do Not Look Away, Act against Abuse*. This is one of the critical and crucial developments unfolding in our country that needs our attention and support. I hope and trust that we are so far helping in ensuring the achievements of the objectives of this important campaign

Program Director; this gathering further comes few days after we have all observed the World Aids Day – which has again afforded our people, both infected and affected in Sedibeng and the world over, with a much needed platform to come together and look at progress made and the plans going forward in our day-to-day struggles against HIV and AIDS.

Although a decade away from starting to save lives, the news on the breakthrough in the discovery of a new vaccine – proudly South African, coupled with changes in our policies as outlined by the State President, Cde. Jacob Zuma, is indeed an indication that victory is certain.

The Sedibeng District Council recommitted itself together with its Local Municipalities and our stakeholders - in the fight against HIV/ and AIDS, and to lead in the campaigns to continue to assist members of our broader communities by going into people's homes to offer assistance to families struggling with the triple burden of poverty, disease and the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS.

We are once more gathered here today to deliberate on one of the critical social concerns and values that need us to come together and organise ourselves to defeat it for us to achieve our goals for a prosperous South Africa.

Colleagues, I am here referring to the ever increasing alcohol abuse in our society. We are saddened by the level of alcohol abuse among our communities and especially the youth and young people which has reached an alarming proportion. Statistics have shown that some of the people who drink are engaged in acts of violence and sexual abuse. It is therefore our commitment to continue to campaign to deliver a better life to our people and educate them on the ills of alcohol abuse.

Alcohol abuse is identified as one of the most prevalent drivers of moral degeneration and has a particular weakening effect on our people and in particular the youth. We must work together to shape the type of future we want as a nation. We must work together to hold back the scourge of

alcohol abuse. The launch today is therefore important during this period of the year when we all know that the alcohol consumption and abuse increase during festive season.

We have come to realise that prevalence of alcohol abuse among our people manifests itself in many ways, ranging from drunken driving to binge drinking. The alcohol abuse erodes discipline and respect among our people. This is a critical and negative effect that comes with alcohol abuse. Too often we read reports about people who assault their parents and elders and embark in shameful shenanigans after taking too much alcohol.

To my fellow drivers, alcohol reduces a driver's ability to act and think clearly. Please do not drink and drive!

Some of you here will recall that there are media reports doing rounds within our Region about a girl who engaged in an unprotected sex with a number of young boys whom she did not even know. This happened after they had indulged in too much alcohol and today, this girl cannot walk on the streets because of this humiliating and shameful act. This is all because of alcohol abuse. I am happy to report that this girl will now be receiving counselling from the Gauteng Department of Education in an attempt to get her gain her status and standing in her community

I call on all Non-governmental organizations, youth organisations, Community-Based organizations, Trade Unions and religious formations to

vigorously join the campaign against drugs, alcohol and substance abuse among our communities

I trust that you will agree with me when I say, the abuse of these intoxicating substances and alcohol in particular does not only negatively impact on the well-being of the individuals consuming them, but distorts society and leads to other grave social ills such as crime, rapid spread of HIV/AIDS, poor health, low success rates in education, sports, work, etc, as I earlier briefly mentioned.

Programme Director, the time has come for us to advocate and urge our people to step back and consider the impact of alcohol abuse on our society and the nation.

Honourable MEC, economically, there are reports that estimate that alcohol related costs to the South African economy may be over billions of rands annually due to low productivity, conflicts, injuries, and damage to property including heavy machinery. And remember, many of the people killed on the roads are those who are active in our economy and who support their families.

In his address during funeral of road accident victims in Queenstown on the 03rd October 2009, the Minister of Transport, Mr Sibusiso Ndebele added shocking statistics to this and reported that in South Africa, more than 16 000 people are killed yearly in road crashes and this costs the country more

than R14bn annually. As you can see, this does not include other alcohol related fatalities, some of which are domestic violence and so on. This is shocking news indeed and calls for all of us to fold our sleeves and get to work.

I am once again happy to report that while I agree that there is still much that needs to be done, we have managed to conduct the activities through our Community Safety Forum as part of awareness campaign on this and other challenges:

- **02 July 2009** - Evaton CPF workshop on Liquor and Substance abuse, at the Evaton Council Chamber (45 people attended);
- **18 July 2009** – Metsing - Liquor and Substance Abuse Awareness Programme, in partnership with Vereeniging SAPS, Emfuleni and Midvaal (475 Youth attended);
- **21 July 2009** - Schools Safety Program on Liquor and Substance abuse conducted at Dinokaneng & Sizanani Secondary Schools. (320 learners with Youth Desk- SAPS);
- **23 July 2009** - Public Education on Liquor and Substance abuse at the Three Rivers - (420 Youth attended);
- **03 August 2009** - Schools Safety Program on Liquor and Substance abuse at Tshirela High School - Approx. 320 learners participated;

- **04 August 2009** - Schools Safety Program on Liquor, Firearms and dangerous weapons at schools at Mopholosi Secondary School. (Approx. 300 learners). Youth Desks-SAPS;
- **31 August 2009** - Liquor workshop for all Shebeen owners in Sharpeville;
- **01 October 2009** - Hlayiseka School safety on Liquor and substance abuse –Thandukwazi;
- **05 October 2009** - Hlayiseka School safety on Liquor and Teenage pregnancies/drugs. –Ratanda Secondary;
- **19 October 2009** - Ruster-Vaal High school- Liquor, Drugs and gangsterism with Youth Desk;
- **22 October 2009** - Mahareng Secondary school -Liquor,-Drugs and Initiation schools in Boipatong;

I am advised that there are programmes planned to unfold during this month and December 2009

Colleagues, linked to our 2010 Strategy, are the development of the sporting Facilities within our District. This will assist us to further encourage healthy lifestyle through sports and responsible recreation to battle alcohol abuse among our people, more especially the youth.

As part of our preparatory plans, we invited our community members to the public viewing of the historic FIFA World Cup draw on Friday the 04th

December 2009 which was held at the Mphatlalatsane Hall. This was among other, to showcase our readiness with regard to the 2010 preparation

We will intensify our partnership and work with the Crime Prevention Youth Desks across the District to ensure district wide awareness on alcohol abuse

We must continue to spread the message of responsibility and care. It is men, women and all members of society who bear the responsibility of building a united, democratic non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous society! A caring society that prepares its brighter future today

We must work together with our law enforcement agencies in ensuring the achievement of this campaign. Our law enforcement agencies must enforce laws governing alcohol consumption. This includes the limit number of years for people who are permitted to buy alcohol. South Africa's democracy and rule of law will gradually lose legitimacy if the laws and legislations the country passes are violated without any repercussions.

The end-of-year is a time to have fun and celebrate after a year of hard work. But it is also a time when there are more accidents, injuries and even deaths. This is often due to alcohol abuse leading to irresponsible behaviour as I earlier mentioned.

It is natural for people to have fun during end-of-year celebrations. But it is very important to celebrate the holiday season responsibly. Everyone

should make an effort not to drink and drive, to respect other people's property, practice safe sex and say "no" to violence.

It is our collective responsibility to ensure a responsible drinking community. I wish you a merry Christmas and prosperous 2010.

You are all welcomed to Sedibeng....

Please ensure that you arrive alive!

I thank you.