



**ADDRESS BY MAYOR OF ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY
CLLR ZANDILE GUMEDE ON THE OCCASION OF PWMSA**

#HearMeToo

03 DECEMBER 2018

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- Programme Director;
 - Convener of PWMSA – Prof Hlengiwe Mkhize,
 - All councillors
 - Traditional Leaders present
 - Religious leaders
 - Women’s Forums
 - Non-Governmental Organisations
 - Members of the media

Good Evening,

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to another leg of the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children. Last week we held our launch at Sankontsha, West of eThekwini region.

Many women imagined that the battle for social justice was won when the constitution with its expansive Bill of Rights became supreme law of the land' because it is intended to be

'transformative' in nature' with the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women being a central part of its quest for a society based on equal enjoyment of human rights, freedoms and life opportunities, including the right to life.

It is unfortunate that we assemble together here under the dark cloud of an unprecedented increase in reports of the abuse – both physical and sexual – and increase in violence perpetrated against the most vulnerable members of our society –women and children.

Gender-based violence is a global phenomenon.

The World Health Organisation tell us that 35% of women worldwide experienced either physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in 2013.

This is an alarming figure that underscores the need for global cooperation in overcoming gender-based violence. In South Africa, we know that the problem is even more severe.

We are a country with relatively high levels of violence and criminality.

Slightly more than 20,000 people were killed in the past year, the majority of the perpetrators and victims were men.

The most recent data from the World Health Organisation shows that South Africa's femicide rate was 12.1 per 100,000 in 2016.

This was almost five times higher than the global average of 2.6 per 100,000.

According to the SAPS Crime Statistics report of 2018, femicide increased by 11% over the last two years. Stats SA reports that

138 per 100,000 women were raped last year, the highest rate in the world.

We cannot, and we should not, rest until we have brought those figures down to zero.

We want to reach a point where no woman, child or man has to experience the violence, violation and trauma of rape. There is no acceptable level of gender-based violence.

Statistics for 2016/2017 as supplied by the Department of Health indicate that nationally, about 55 000 cases of sexual assault were reported with about 11 466 being from KwaZulu-Natal.

The most devastating thing is that about 4 417 or 39% of cases involves rape survivors under the age of 12. As a right-thinking person you can't stop asking the question: what type of person can stoop to the level of sexually assaulting a 12-year old teenager?

What kind of man sets out to rape our most precious assets, the budding lives with a brighter future ahead of them?

Programme Director, one of the sub-themes of the 16 Days of Activism is ***"Don't look away, act against abuse."***

Therefore, as citizens of this municipality we must not stand by and watch this terrible scourge tear apart the fabric of our communities and society.

It is time that each and every one of us gathered here today began personalizing this very important challenge. We need to all of us ask ourselves as parents, uncles, aunts, grandparents,

brothers, sisters, this one vital question: What if this abuse happened to a person that I am close to, a person that I love? What would be my reaction then?

Programme Director, as the municipality we have placed our law enforcement agencies on high alert to act decisively in dealing with the perpetrators violence of women and children, especially rape. We also encourage the judiciary to mete out the harshest punishment to the perpetrators.

We are happy to know that there are 20 Court Preparation Officers based at thirteen (13) courts in the Province to prepare children and other witnesses to testify in court, whether in open court or through the assistance of a CCTV room with an intermediary.

Critically, we also invite members of the communities to break the culture of silence in the face of this scourge and open up and report the perpetrators.

Rape and its inherent violence are indeed one of the most despicable breaches of the human rights and dignity of their victims. Today we call on communities to stand up and unite in a public display of disapproval of any form of abuse of women and children.

Our message is that let each victim or survivor of domestic violence find support and comfort in our community and each perpetrator must find rejection and feel the pain of their disgraceful conduct.

Families and communities must expose abusive fathers including uncles, brothers and boyfriends. Witnesses must cooperate with

police in supplying information that assists the police to carry investigations.

Programme Director,

We are glad to be invited to this event and we believe that by working together, we will stop this scourge of violence and killing.

Gender-based violence does not only have a devastating private and social effects, but it also has a sizeable economic impact. The negative impact on women's participation in education, employment and civic life undermines poverty reduction. It results in lost employment and productivity, and it drains resources from social services, the justice system, healthcare agencies and employers.

As such, violence against women is a clear barrier to sustainable development. This has been acknowledged in the recently adopted Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Programme Director,

I am glad that in this gathering we will ask other questions such as:

- Are women aware of the economic abuse effecting them or the girl child?
- To what extend can economic dependency used as a tool to end violence against women and girls?
- To what extend to women contribute into the agricultural sector?
- What support is available for women in agriculture?
- which organizations are there to support women in agriculture?

It is for these reasons that as the eThekweni Municipality we are committed to implement the Radical Agrarian Socio-Economic

Transformation Programme.

This programme is concentrating on getting women owned co-operatives and SMMEs to produce and supply their products to the government nutritional market in the form of among others, the school feeding scheme; food parcels and generally, catering at key government establishments including hospitals and correctional facilities.

We also want to create a wider market for these co-operatives to supply their agricultural products to retail-food chains including Hotels. This is one of the vehicles we want to use to ensure the meaningful participation of women in the mainstream economy.

Sengiphetha, angithathe lelithuba ngikhumbuze wonke amakhansela ukuthi sakhethwa ngenyaka ka August. Bonke ubuholi obukhona fanele bazi ukuthi umphakathi ulindile amagalelo ethu ukuphucula izimpilo zodadewethu, osisi, omamezala, omama kanye noGogo bethu.

Fanele sizibophezele ukuthi bonke abantu besifazane abahlala ngaphansi kukaMasipala iTheku baba nekusasa eliqhakazile.

Fanele sigxile kakhulu ekuthuthukiseni amakhono abantu besifazane ukuze bakwazi ukondla imindeni yabo futhi bazimele. Okubaluleke kakhulu ukuthi fanele sonke sibeke eceleni ukuthi simele ziphi izinhlangano zepolitiki kodwa sisebenzisane ukuphucula izimpilo zabantu basefazane.

Asinisekise ukuthi abantu besifazane baba nokuzethemba ukuthi bangabamba iqhaza ukufukula umnotho walelizwe.

Let us work together to build our nation.

Let us work together to build unity, fight poverty and a better country for ourselves and generations to come.

Let us work together to protect women and children from any form of abuse.

I thank you