

REMARKS BY THE MEC FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, MS KHETHIWE MOEKETSI DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 2024 ACTIVE AGEING PROGRAMME, MANZANA BADPLASS, CHIEF ALEBRT LUTHULI LOCAL MUNICIPLAITY.

07 November 2024

Programme Directors

Executive Mayor Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality

Executive Mayor of Gert Sibande District Municipality

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee Responsible for Social Development

Members of Mayoral Committee Responsible for Social Development in all the Municipalities in our mist today

Speaker, Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality

Chief Whip, Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality

Head of Department of Social Development

Municipal Manager, Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality

Traditional Authority/Ubukhosi

Chairperson of Older Person Forum

Members of the Mpumalanga Older Person Forum

Our beloved Senior Citizens, Our important Guest, Izimphunga Zahulumende, Bogogo Nabomkhulu from various municipalities in the province.

Our Eyes and Ears of the Public, Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentleman.

Sanibonani

Lotjani

Dumelang

Molweni

Programme Directors

1. It gives me great pleasure to join you today on this joyous occasion of the official opening ceremony of this year's Active Ageing Programme.
2. It is befitting that we gather here to celebrate and recognize the lives of our elderly citizens in an area with so much history, eManzana, the place of the healing waters.

3. This place is rich in the history books against the oppression of our people because in 1984, Chief Johannes Mkolishi Dlamini protested against the forced removals of villagers from Badplaas to Nhlazatshe by the Apartheid government regime. The Chief threatened to take legal action against the government, and after a public outcry, the government backed down.
4. That why I wish to take this moment and salute uBukhosi Baka Dlamini for their contribution in the struggle against Apartheid.

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5. We meet here shortly after the Mpumalanga Premier Mr Mandla Ndlovu delivered the 100-day service delivery report for the seventh administration.
6. The Premier reminded us, as leaders in various government departments, of our duty to improve service delivery to our people. Indeed, our engagement with our elderly citizens is one of the most important events in our calendar.
7. The Premier gave us clear marching orders on what is expected of us in the seventh administration and outlined the province's Medium-Term Development Plan, which is a concrete expression of the people's hopes and aspirations.

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8. It is important to take care of our senior citizens, because;
 - Elders have contributed greatly to society and deserve respect for their wisdom and experiences.
 - Seniors should live their later years with dignity, respect, and proper care.
 - Older adults need proper medical care to manage health issues that come with aging.
 - Social connections are crucial to prevent loneliness and depression among the elderly.
 - Mental health care is important to reduce stress, anxiety, and cognitive decline among senior citizens.
 - Caring for elders helps build stronger family relationships and enriches intergenerational ties.
 - Ensuring seniors have financial support, such as pensions, grants and social services, is essential for their well-being.
 - Involving seniors in community activities promotes social inclusion and a more compassionate society.
 - Encouraging physical and mental activity helps senior citizens maintain independence and a healthy lifestyle.
 - Caring for the elderly reflects our shared values of kindness, empathy, and responsibility towards others.

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9. It is truly a pleasure to note that the Active Ageing Programme is growing in stature, with an increase in both provincial participation and the number of individuals taking part in the Active Ageing events this year.
10. It would be a big mistake not to mention the resilience and character demonstrated by our elders during the most difficult years in our country's history—the struggle against Apartheid. You remain key pillars for justice and democracy in South Africa. We remain eternally indebted to the sacrifices made by our elderly citizens.

Programme Directors

11. The Department and its stakeholders are aware that our senior citizens today are fighting a different struggle—the struggle of economic challenges, inequality, and various forms of abuse.
12. It is for this reason that we denounce, with the greatest contempt, the physical, sexual, and any other form of abuse levelled against older persons in our communities by cowards who target vulnerable groups in society.

Programme Directors

13. The Department of Social Development is the custodian of the Older Persons Act, 13 of 2006, which mandates all organs of state to work with stakeholders, including Non-Profit Organizations, Faith-Based Organizations, and the Private Sector, in prioritizing older persons in various communities.
14. Despite the relatively high costs, there remains a significant need for residential care facilities for frail older individuals. To address gaps in our communities where such services are unavailable, alternative care and support models will be implemented.
15. In the last financial year, the department was able to reach a total of 1,218 older persons who accessed services in residential facilities, and a total of 5,309 older persons who benefited from community-based care and support services.
16. It is expected that 932 older persons will access residential facilities, and 4971 older persons will access community-based care and support services this year.

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17. In closing, on behalf of the people of Mpumalanga, I wish to thank the older persons for caring for orphaned and vulnerable groups, including children, people living with disabilities, and neglected individuals in the province.
18. I would also like to wish all the participants in different sporting codes an incident-free and enjoyable competition.
19. The province will follow your activities with great interest and provide the necessary support, especially for those who will be selected to represent the province in this year's Active Ageing Programme, which will be hosted in North West.
20. To all our centenarians who wanted to be with us but could not, we know that you are with us in spirit.
21. We are confident that the team of elders selected today will make the province proud and emerge victorious. I now declare the 2024 Provincial Active Ageing Programme officially open.

I Thank You

Baie dankie!

Ke a leboga!

Ngiyathokoza!

Ngiyabonga!