

Statement by KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of the launch of the Men's Forum for Amajuba District

23 July 2013

Ndabezitha – Inkosi Khumalo

Izinduna

Hon Mayor of Amajuba District Municipality – Cllr Jabu Khumalo

Hon Mayor of Newcastle Local Municipality – Cllr Afzul Rehman

Hon Mayor of Dannhauser Local Municipality – Cllr Jabu Phakathi

Hon Mayor of Emadlangeni Local Municipality – Cllr Joe Zikhali

Amakhansela

Representatives of the Faith-based organizations

Representatives of the Community Based Organizations

Youth structures

Traditional Healers

Amadoda anakekelayo

On behalf of our Premier, Dr Zweli Mkhize and behalf of all the citizens of this beautiful Province, we want to thank all the loving; caring and strong men of Amajuba District for coming forward to say they will lead by example under the auspices of the Men's Forum.

Just like we did last year, again we would like to thank UKHOZI FM for being a partner as well as willing to provide a long platform for men to

give each other advice on behaviour and also for those who suffer from abuse to discuss their tribulations.

We are thankful that July month has now been officially designated as a Men's month by the KZN government and call on all men to be part of forums where issues pertaining to men's behaviour are highlighted and addressed.

Today we need to resolve that our association is not just about discussions but that we need to be out there whenever an out of line, unmanly occurrence happens. It is indeed very disturbing to see women going to court leading marches against rapists whilst knowing very well that the perpetrator is a man. We now need to be in the forefront and make it known that such malpractices cannot be happening in our name.

Early this month 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 says that 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.

Today we are saying to all men here at Amajuba District that strong and honest men are those males that are able to control their temper; those that can suppress the urge to steal; rape and cause harm to other people.

We are also warning against the Sugar Daddy ethos by saying men who abuse and deflower young girls should always be mindful that they

would not tolerate it if it were done to their own daughters. We caution that most of those girls who fall pregnant as a result of these unholy associations come out of this painful and frustrating episode, HIV positive as well. They go through trauma that involves:

- 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 these girls cannot handle babies properly
- Worse of all teenage pregnancy means goodbye to school and hello to perpetual misery, dependency and helplessness.

Strong and caring men should discuss informed studies such as the one conducted by CAPRISA that informs us the teenage girls are not impregnated by boys their age. By illustration, it tells us that if they were, they would be indeed pregnant but not HIV positive.

CAPRISA informs 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!

We are also calling on all men to heed the call by His Majesty the King to be circumcised and ensure that they listen to the elders and Amakhosi on how to behave and how well to treat their girlfriends, mothers and women in general.

Let it be the responsibility of us as men to drastically reduce to sexual transmission of HIV.

Let us agree that no one else except men can put an end to the AIDS-related maternal deaths

We all know 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.

Real men must take responsibility in ending gender inequality and violence against women.

Let us do everything in our 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.”** The onus is on men for the attainment of this atmosphere in our land.

I thank you