

**Speech by KZN Health MEC on the occasion of the launch of Billboards promoting Dual Protection at Mangosuthu University of Technology**

4 August 2015

Programme Director – Mr Mfowethu Zungu [DDG]

US Consul General - Ms F Chisholm

Mayor of eThekweni Municipality - Cllr J Nxumalo,

Mangosuthu University of Technology Vice-Chancellor - Prof M R Kgapola

Head of the KZN Department of Health - Dr S Mtshali

Pastor R Qulie – thank you for the uplifting prayer

Mangosuthu University of Technology management

Dean of Students - Mr. T Mchunu

Student Representative Council - Mr. P Hlatshwayo

Representatives from Dram-Aide

Dear students

Programme Director; allow me to start by thanking the Management of Mangosuthu University of Technology for embracing and giving support to this initiative aimed at securing the future of our young people.

To our students here, I also need to say, it is always a pleasure to meet with young people who have committed themselves to uplift their lot and that of their communities through education.

My visit here today is to ensure that our students graduate alive and remain in good health for as long as they live.

I decided not to come alone but also invite all the leadership that is present here today to demonstrate to you that all of us are saying we can no longer afford to see our young bright students and graduates dying as a result of HIV and AIDS.

This stance is not just our position but a global one, as was pronounced at the 20th International AIDS Conference in Melbourne, Australia, last year by **Michel Sidibé**, Executive Director of UNAIDS when he said:

*'We have been climbing this epidemic one hill at a time. Now we must finish our journey with a final climb, and we cannot lose anyone along the way.'*

Our proposed solution to ending AIDS starts right here with the launch of DUAL PROTECTION effort.

Programme Director; before I go further allow me to share with you horrific statistics given in Parliament by the Basic Education Minister, Hon Angie Motshekga declaring:

*20 000 South African schoolgirls had fallen pregnant last year – 3 000 of whom lived in KwaZulu Natal.*

Here it is also said that a *study co-authored by a University of Cape Town professor found that of a sample of 673 girls aged 15 to 18 who were childless in 2008, the teens who later become mothers had twice the odds of dropping out of school by 2010, and nearly five times the odds of failing to matriculate.*'

The above even though refers to those still at high school, does not preclude the picture of what we witness at institutions of Higher Learning. On that score we are told that *the graduation rate among undergraduate students in South Africa's 23 public universities is 15 percent.*

The above scenario is described as education wastage by the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation** (UNESCO) saying:

*"It is missed opportunities for individuals, communities, entire nations and regions of the world".*

What you need to know is that in this country, one million babies are born each year, 8% of these, which is 80 000 in numbers, are delivered by teen moms, most being unwanted and unplanned.

These young people, it's guaranteed, lose a sense of direction in life in terms of finishing school and also have a much higher chance of dying from pregnancy-related diseases.

Being realistic and concerned about the future of our your generation, we thus thought it appropriate to come and offer you **DUAL PROTECTION** that will ensure that you all graduate alive and live

longer and healthier. Our chosen theme for this important engagement is:

*“Dual protection, twice as safe”*

### **Why are we targeting the youth in KZN?**

- We happen to be the second most populous Province in South Africa accounting for 21.4% of the country's population;
- Over 50% of the population in KwaZulu-Natal is made of young people between the ages of 15 – 35 years;
- South Africa has 6.4 million people living with AIDS, according to the 2014 Human Science Research Council, which also says 17% of those infected are in KwaZulu-Natal

Our efforts here entail:

- ❖ 11 Dual Protection Campaigns across all districts in KwaZulu Natal;
- ❖ 72 Billboards across the 11 Health Districts of this Province, strategically displayed along busy roads or intersections next to towns and townships as well as along taxi ranks or bus stations.
- ❖ Awareness on the importance of consistent and correct use of condoms in conjunction with contraceptive for young women;
- ❖ Provision of messages about HIV transmission; prevention as well as its management;
- ❖ Important messages on unwanted pregnancies and dangers of back street abortions.

We are taking this initiative very serious because we know and **it is a fact that:**

- Young people do engage in sex
- „ „ do engage in unprotected sex
- „ „ as a result of unprotected sex, do fall pregnant
- Young people because of unprotected sex, do get HIV, and,
- Young girls do fall prey of Sugar daddies

You really cannot blame it on a mistake to lose your virginity and falling pregnant as **it is an effort to have sex:**

- You first have to find a private place for the act
- Then you undress – you cannot call this effort **IPHUTHA**

Allow me to appraise you on the results of the **CAPRISA** study that shows that girl children appear to contract HIV much earlier than their male counterparts.

- We have discovered that almost all children who are entering school and finishing at grade 7 are HIV negative, both boys and girls... unless there one or two cases of failed Prevention of Mother To Child (PMTCT) HIV transmission.
- The following year, as they go to high school, the status quo prevails and they are all HIV negative. But when they complete grade 12, about 7-10 % of girls are HIV positive, yet the boys have remained HIV negative.
- So, when they enter university, 10% of the girls are HIV positive. But by the time they finish their degrees, there is 25% HIV

positivity among both young men and women, which means they have infected each other.

One important lesson here is that young girls are infected by SUGGAR DADDIES. We thus strongly support the campaign of abstinence from sex that is enhanced by **Isilo Samabandla** on **Umkhosi Womhlanga**.

Programme Director, our coming here has thus to be seen as an effort to implement President, Hon Jacob Zuma's directive of ensuring the vigorous implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for Management, Care and Treatment of HIV and AIDS in its totality.

This Comprehensive Plan, besides being aimed at preventing the spread of HIV infections, also comes up with a series of interventions aimed at improving the lives of those already infected.

For our young people, the Government is offering:

- FREE contraceptives,
- FREE Flavoured condoms, and
- FREE Medical Male Circumcision

Medical Male Circumcision does lessen the chances of HIV and Sexual Transmitted infections (STI's) by 60 percent. BUT you can still get HIV or Sexually Transmitted Infections if you do not use protection.

It also fits in well with the **First Things First Campaign** which ensures that you as young and bright students are assisted to adapt to university environment and are equipped to respond appropriately when

confronted with varying life challenges away from the support and guidance of your loving and caring parents.

**Our responsibilities:**

In this campaign today we are talking of one's **responsibilities** that entail:

- Knowing your HIV status by testing once or twice a year
- Abstaining and delaying sexual debut
- Being mutually faithful to **one** sexual partner
- Using condoms consistently every time you decide to have sex
- Knowing signs and symptoms of STIs and seeking medical help
- Informing your partner when infected with STIs so that both of you can receive early treatment
- Going for TB screening if TB suspect.

We sincerely pray to the Almighty Lord to continue serving as a guide in order for all of you to finish your chosen courses; graduate alive and go back to your communities to make a positive difference.

I thank you