

**ADDRESS BY HIS WORSHIP DURING THE DISTRICT
DISABILITY IMBIZO**

09 FEBRUARY 2022

**GA-SELEKA COMMUNITY HALL
LEPHALALE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

Programme Director, MMC Taueatsoala

**Mayor of Lephalale Local Municipality Cllr Thulare,
Representatives of the Disability Sector,**

Speakers and Chief Whips

Magoshi a rena,

Ba ka Difokeng,

Councillors

Representatives from the Office of the Premier,

**Officials from Sector Departments and
Municipalities,**

Members of the Media,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and gentlemen.

DUMELANG!! THOBELA!!

Let me start by passing to you the fraternal greetings on behalf of the citizens of Waterberg during this important gathering.

South Africa celebrates National Disability Rights Awareness Month annually between 3 November and 3 December, which is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. We are gathered here today to do just that in our District.

By joining the family of nations, South Africa is observing and celebrating the 3rd December as the National Day of Persons with Disabilities and also as the National Disability Rights Awareness Day.

The Disability Rights Awareness Month for 2021 aims to:

- Report back to communities on progress made in the implementation of policies, programmes and legislation that seek to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities;
- Engage on public platforms to explore and showcase innovative ways and means by which barriers to the inclusion of persons with disabilities and their families can be removed; and
- Provide an opportunity to reflect on the first 27 years of democracy and its impact on the lives of South Africans with disabilities.

We should be reminded that every South African carries the responsibility to remove ALL the barriers that exclude persons with disabilities from everyday society. South Africans can only be free if ALL South Africans are free.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to work together to eliminate these kind of attitude and barriers so that all Persons with Disabilities enjoy the same treatment and rights that is enshrined in Chapter two of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

In the past years the municipality embarked on a number of programmes for the people with disabilities. These programmes were aimed at capacity building in various business management and other skills.

Although we operate on a limited budget, we are committed to make sure that this sector is able to perform its functions.

However, I have noted with serious concern from your submissions the challenges that Persons with Disabilities are still confronted with, especially in our local municipalities.

Issues like,

- lack of support and coordination,
- provision of transport for meetings and other forums,
- no invites for strategic meetings like the IDP Rep Forums,
- Economic empowerment,
- Lack of houses
- Access to government buildings
- Skills development for people with disabilities so that they can be employed in our municipalities, should have been addressed by now.

Programme Director, in all the intergovernmental Relations Forums and IDP Rep Forums, I raise this issues because of the passion I have for the plight of people living with disabilities.

As I said before, South African can only be free if ALL South Africans are free.

We cannot afford to tarnish the achievements we have made as we celebrate the 27 years of democracy. Our democratic government, led by the African National Congress has done more to create a better life for all without discrimination. South Africa has come a long way in addressing injustice, inequality and poverty.

Programme Director, our society has been transformed in every sphere since 1994. The Census results indicate that income levels have increased, education levels are up and millions of people have access to water, electricity, sanitation and housing.

We still have a long way to go in improving the lives of all South Africans and Waterberg in particular. Undoing the damage of the evil apartheid system in a short space of time was never going to be easy and we know that more must be done.

Although there are still challenges, our government has also adopted the National Development Plan 2030 to make sure that going forward, the triple challenges of inequality, poverty and unemployment are eradicated.

I should however, emphasise that we heard, your concerns, we are taking them very serious and willing to work together with you to address them

My plea to members is to get ourselves organised by establishing structures which will be our platforms of communications. My office is available to ensure that such are established and operational.

I will also personally engage other departments including local Mayors who are role players in issues of the disability sector, to come on board and assist in ensuring that this sector is taken serious.

In conclusion, let me take this opportunity to thank all those who made this event a success especially our people living with disabilities.

Let us go and vaccinate and those who already vaccinated, let`s please go for the Booster and remain safe. Covid19 is still living with us.

Let`s continue to wash our hands regularly, keep social distance and always wear our masks.

Let us make this day special for ourselves and ALL Persons with Disabilities.

Working together we can do more to break barriers and open doors to realise an inclusive society through partnerships.

I THANK YOU !!