

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF
WATERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY HIS WORSHIP CLLR
TLOTLANANG MOGOTLANE DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE
DISTRICT OLDER PERSONS` FORUM HELD ON THE 9TH
NOVEMBER 2012 AT GA-PILA VIILGE AT 11:00 IN
MOGALAKWENA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.**

Programme Director,

Mayor of Mogalakwena Local Municipality Cllr Tlhalifi Mashamaite,

Mayors from our locals in the District present,

**Speakers in the District led by the District Speaker Cllr Dina
Monama,**

**Chief Whips in the District led by the District Chief Whip Cllr
Morumudi,**

Members of the Mayoral Committees in the District,

Councillors present here today,

The Leadership of Older Persons Forum,

Our special guests-our Senior Citizens,

Officials from Sector Departments and municipalities,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and gentlemen.

Dumelang, Avhuxeni, Slochile, Thobela.

It is a blessing and a privilege to share this special day with so many senior citizens of our District who have travelled from all corners of Waterberg to be part of this important launch and celebration.

Programme Director, every year throughout the world, Governments celebrate the 1st October with their Elderly Citizens to thank them for the constructive role they play in their communities and to say how much they love them. And today we are gathered here to show our love to you. We are celebrating here today to mark the International Day of Older Persons in the district.

By hosting this event today, we also wish to recognise, affirm and encourage senior citizens as important source of wisdom in dealing with some of the issues confronting our district and South Africa as a whole.

Ladies and gentlemen, this day provides an opportunity to celebrate the contribution of senior citizens to society and to highlight issues that are of concern to you. The 2012 International Day of Older Persons is made more special by the fact that it is the year in which the ruling party and the oldest liberation movement in Africa, the African National Congress has turned 100 years old.

We are therefore celebrating the contribution of all veterans of the struggle for liberation, who sacrificed their youth so that we could be free.

Programme Director, this occasion highlights the role of senior citizens in our collective effort to build a vibrant district, a better South Africa and a better world for our older people.

Some of our elderly may be way past their productive age, with limited physical capabilities and income-earning capabilities, yet are still eager to contribute positively to society.

We also have a generation of older citizens who have worked to build this nation and who have now retired and are enjoying life.

They are our daily sources of inspiration and the cornerstones and pillars of our country.

Ageing is a true milestone of human development and achievement. In our fast ageing world older people will increasingly play a role- through volunteer work, transmit experience and knowledge, helping their families with caring responsibilities and increasing their participation in the paid labour force.

Ladies and gentlemen, more and more, older persons are remaining active after retirement by engaging in activities such as through lifelong learning, working longer, and exercising which sustains health and capacity. Already now, older persons make huge contribution to society.

For instance, throughout Africa- and elsewhere- millions of adult HIV/AIDS parents are cared for at home by their parents. On their death, orphaned children left behind are mainly looked after by their grandparents.

The principles of caring and supporting our elderly are founded on the need to build an inclusive society that emphasise participation, self-fulfilment, independence, care and dignity for all.

Programme Director, as government, we have campaigned for and implemented policies that will enable older persons to live in an environment that enhances their capabilities, foster their independence and provide them with adequate support and care as they age. Government has also extended the reach of old age pension, through enabling older men to obtain the grant at the age of 60 instead of 65.

We trust that this has contributed to a great extent in alleviating need and poverty amongst older men. It also affirms equality between men and women as provided for in the Constitution.

In addition to social grant, older persons also qualify for free access to essential service such as water, health, housing and electricity. We trust that most of you know about these services and access them.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have also witnessed certain incidence where the elderly are subjected to abuse and beating ups by their children and grand children. In some instances their pension grants are stolen and taken away from them. We must put an end to age discrimination, abuse, neglect and violence against older persons.

We say as government, we will not fail to protect, care and love our elderly. We will always love you and appreciate the wonderful role that you play in society. May God continue to bless our nation and in a very special way, our Older Persons.

By launching the District Older Persons Forum, we are making a commitment to support you through this organised structure. We also want to take this opportunity to call upon our local municipalities to drive this initiative within their jurisdiction so that our elderly in the district can be taken care of.

Programme Director, on this special occasion, we also wish to acknowledge all non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community based organisations and many caregivers in communities for their commitment and contribution, often on voluntary basis. They complement the work of government immensely in caring for older persons.

As we celebrate this day, we recommit ourselves to work towards the provision of services that enable our senior citizens to lead better and dignified lives.

It is in this spirit that we commit to work with and support civil society organisations to implement the Older Persons Act and the Charter on the Rights of Older Persons, with specific focus on improving the lives of older persons in rural areas.

Once again, we thank you for the contribution you continue to make in your families and to society as a whole. Let me take this opportunity to wish you a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year. Working together we can do more to provide sustainable services to our older persons.

I THANK YOU.