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CONTACT DETAILS OF THE GCIS PROVINCIAL OFFICES

For more information about similar programmes that are run across the country, contact one of the following provincial offices:

EASTERN CAPE

Ndlelantle Pinyana
043 722 2602 or 076 142 8606
ndlelantle@gcis.gov.za

FREE STATE

Mamogolo Dirane
051 448 4504 or 072 928 6068
mamogolo@gcis.gov.za

GAUTENG

Peter Gumede
011 331 0164 or 083 570 8080
peterg@gcis.gov.za

KWAZULU-NATAL

Ndala Mngadi
031 301 6787 or 082 877 9420
ndala@gcis.gov.za

PRIORITY 5: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFE COMMUNITIES.

Disability rights awareness campaign

By Lehlohonolo Manoto: GCIS, Free State



MEC Motlagomang Qabathe leading a march to raise awareness on disability rights.

Free State MEC for Social Development, Motlagomang Qabathe led a successful march and dialogue with people with disability in Bloemfontein on 21 November 2019. The events were aimed at raising awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities and were conducted under the theme: "Together Building South Africa Inclusive of Disability Rights".

The march commenced at Hoffman Square in the City Centre of Bloemfontein at 10:00 in the morning and proceeded to the Civic Theatre where the dialogue was held. Different organisations of people with disabilities formed part of the discussions and the audience, where they were given the chance to raise concerns.

The programme formed part of the series of activities conducted by MEC Qabathe since the launch of 2019 Disability Rights Awareness Month. The MEC stated that a report would be produced, presented and handed to the Minister of Social Development, the Premier, the Legislature and the National Council of Provinces as these offices must assist by lobbying funds to attend to some of the challenges raised.



government
communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



LIMPOPO

Thanyani Ravhura
015 291 4689 or 082 421 3461
thanyani@gcis.gov.za

MPUMALANGA

Jerry Nkosi
013 753 2397 or 082 316 5295
jerry@gcis.gov.za

NORTH WEST

Boitumelo Mosadi
018 381 7071 or 073 245 0906
boitumelom@gcis.gov.za

NORTHERN CAPE

Marius Nagel
053 832 1378/9 or 083 778 9179
mariusn@gcis.gov.za

WESTERN CAPE

Geraldine Thopps
021 418 0533/2307 or 081 281 2200
geraldine@gcis.gov.za

She also indicated that a hotline would be established in her office and that organisational structures would respond to issues raised. She urged the audience to use departmental Facebook as a tool of communication and also promised to respond to challenges of discrimination directed to people with disabilities when it comes to employment. She also encouraged those who are not part of any organisation to start doing so as the organisations contribute towards making the voices of people with disabilities heard.

The MEC concluded by assuring the audience that government would work together with all formations and those who are not affiliated to any organisation to communicate one message in different voices. She closed by classifying all issues raised as short, medium and long term; and some issues need the intervention of other departments and even municipalities.



People who attended the community dialogue.



MEC Motlagomang Qabathe said:

"It is not that government is commemorating disability in the month November only but is to emphasise matters of disability during this period. Our department has set a target of 5% to employ people with disabilities that must be reached before the current financial year."



Malethola Tikiso said:

"My contract has expired and I have been volunteering since then because I do not want people to say I am lazy."



Kagiso Phosa said:

"We thank the office of the MEC for this initiative of bringing people with disabilities under one roof. Blind people who are employed are experiencing many challenges including perceptual issues. Access to internships, learnerships and health care is also a challenge."



William Mofokeng said:

"I am a young person with innovative ideas to start a business, however, funding has been an obstacle. I hope the simplicity of application for funding and bringing services to us will assist entrepreneurs like me."



Michael Grootboom said:

"Access to funding is very important for our success as SMMEs, however, mentorship and ongoing development to capacitate us is equally important for our success. Those providing such services must be trained and empowered to provide quality service to SMMEs."

PRIORITY 1: ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND JOB CREATION.

Measures to be taken for small business development

By Jacob Molete: GCIS, Gauteng



Small business owners who were in attendance.



Minister Khumbudzo Ntshaveni addressing small business owners.

Small Business Development Minister Khumbudzo Ntshaveni addressed owners of small, medium and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs) from Katlehong, Thokoza and Vosloorus (Kathorus) on government's plans to support and develop small businesses during the launch of the Economic Opportunities Project on SMME Finance Development on 14 November 2019 at the Ekurhuleni West College in Katlehong.

The Department of Small Business Development together with Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) and Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) announced measures for seamless financial and non-financial support to SMMEs. The Minister said her department will ensure that SEFA and SEDA services are brought closer to SMMEs through partnership with incubation centres and local economic development offices in district and metropolitan municipalities.

"We are committed that SMMEs must have the access to strategic resources such skills, knowledge networks, finance, and access to facilities or platforms amongst others that will enable them to nurture their innovative ideas," said Minister Ntshaveni. She further stated that there would be seamless funding application, and that turnaround time in the approval of funding would be improved.

SEFA is a government development finance institution that seeks to ensure access to finance, development and sustainability of SMMEs and cooperatives to contribute to the economy by creating the much-needed job opportunities. SEDA provides non-financial support and enterprise development through its national network. The support includes the provision of business information, advice, coaching and the training of SMMEs. More information on small business development can be accessed on www.sefa.org.za and www.seda.org.za.



Khayaletu Thomas said:

"I am interested in television and digital media. The Deputy Minister presentation addressed our interest in the media space. I hope that all the things that she promised will be implemented."



Mandla Skhosana said:

"I am interested in print media. Today's programme opened my mind. I learnt more about the media more especially the support given to people who want to establish community radio stations. The only thing that we need is to see these promises be fulfilled."

PRIORITY 6: A CAPABLE, ETHICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATE.

Community engagement on community media

By Thenjiwe Khonongo: GCIS, Northern Cape



Deputy Minister Thembi Siweya and other government leaders at the event.



Community members of Colesberg at the event.

The Deputy Minister in The Presidency, Thembi Siweya, engaged with the Colesberg Community on 12 November 2019 in the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality, Northern Cape. The purpose of the dialogue was to create awareness around the importance of access to community media by historically disadvantaged communities.

The engagement was part of the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) to raise awareness around the need for media development and diversity, and focused on both the value of community media and the services of the MDDA and other stakeholders in supporting the growth and sustainability of community media projects.

About 300 people were in attendance. The Deputy Minister encouraged them to be part of government plan to improve the lives of the people through community media, which uses their local language, capacitate them on local developmental content.

She promised to visit the community in a year's time to open the community radio station. This came after a strong interest in the establishment of community media such as radio station, community television, community newspaper and digital broadcasting in the community.

The South African Revenue Service outlined the compliance issues that normally cause community media to fail, and promised to have a direct engagement with the board and those involved once the idea of the establishment of the community media is at an advanced stage.

The MDDA spoke of their constitutional mandate in the establishment and sustainability of community media, such as radio, television and print. They promised to start the journey with community members to ensure that their dream to have a community media is achieved.



Katlego Diphuka said:

"I am thankful for this dialogue. This is something that must be done continuously. It teaches us to welcome and live in harmony with ex-offenders."



Mothusi Mosala said:

"This is a wonderful event. The problem is that some of the offenders come back to the community to recruit and teach youngsters some bad behaviour that they have learnt in prison."

PRIORITY 5: SOCIAL COHESION AND SAFE COMMUNITIES.

Offenders and victims of crime engagement

By Kaone Lekgetho: GCIS, North West



A Correctional Services official addressing the audience.



Community members at the event.

On 22 November 2019, the Department of Correctional Services (DSC) organised a Victim-Offender Dialogue at Madibogo Village in North West. At this dialogue, a victim of a crime or the surviving family members, meet face-to face with the person who committed a certain offence in a safe and secure setting. The aim is for victims and secondary victims to find healing, and for parolees to show remorse and be accepted back into their respective communities.

The event was held at Lehathheng Community Hall where about 1 000 community members attended. Reaching the peak of the event, victims and offenders bared their testimonies. The last engagement session was between Madibogo community members and the DCS. One of the community members, who is an ex-offender, stated that he has a social work qualification that he obtained under the DCS, but struggles to get employment. Other issues raised included the release of offenders without informing the victims.

Officials from the DCS and leaders who included Kgosi Kgolo Khoi, Kgosi Gontse, Kgosi Mokoto, Deputy Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, iNkosi Phathekile Holomisa, and other high-profiled government officials responded and engaged with the audience.