

REMARKS BY THE GAUTENG MEC FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS MS. NOMANTU NKOMO-RALEHOKO AT ANNUAL CHURCH EVENT FOR APOSTOLIC CHURCHES HELD AT TSHEPISO, VANDERBIJLPARK ON THE 21ST JANUARY 2024.

Programme Director,
The leadership of;
ST PAUL Apostolic Faith Mission International,
ST JOHNS Apostolic Church of Prophecy and
ST PAUL Apostolic Faith Mission Morning Stars
The beloved congregants,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Sanibonani, Dumelang, Molweni, a good morning to all of you. Ndiyanibulisa ngelihle igama lika Yesu Krestu! I am privileged and honoured this morning to join you in this annual gathering of apostolic churches.

Bazalwane abahle, mine is not to make elaborate remarks but to take this brief moment to share with you what is in my heart with the hope that you will respond with no hesitation to the plea I am about to make.

Indeed, there are a number of concerns that have been troubling me for some time and my heart breaks when I reflect on the social ills that are ravaging our society day by day.

During the festive period when we were celebrating with mothers who gave birth to their bundles of joy on Christmas Day and on New Year's Day, I was troubled by the number of teenagers under 19 years who gave birth at our facilities.

Just this week as part of the back to school campaign I went to support a number of schools in Ekurhuleni, West Rand and Sedibeng. These schools highlighted teenage pregnancy, bullying, suicide and vandalism among the many challenges they are confronted with.

The pandemic of teenage pregnancy in our communities has reached a crisis level and requires clear and bold interventions to tackle this problem.

The cancer of substance abuse, drugs and excessive alcohol consumption, is ravaging communities and no family is spared from the devastating consequences.

The lapse in moral uprightness has amongst others led to increased incidents of vandalism of public property and wanton crime.

Njengomzali, njengomama, intliziyo yam ibuhlungu. All these weigh heavily upon my soul as I stand before you today.

As government we have taken it upon ourselves to mobilise all sectors of society to play an active role in eliminating these social ills and to intensify interventions to address the challenges.

Ndiyanibongoza nonke ukuba sime ngeenyawo sithandazele isizwe sethu, ukuze sisuse ububi obufuna ukusiqwenga kwiindawo esihlala kuzo. Let us intercede for our nation, so that we may rid our communities of the evil that seeks to devour us.

Historically, the church has always played an important role as the voice of conscience to propel society towards upholding moral virtues. The vanguard role of the church means that you cannot afford to take the back seat in this battle. In fact, the church must rediscover its moral courage to speak the uncomfortable truth. When the church stops to be vocal about the ills plaguing society the nation becomes morally numb.

Ekugqibeleni umlawuli wenkqubo, I want to further urge all the believers in this gathering to **embrace civic responsibly** and be change agents in the communities you come from.

Nominations of Clinics Committees

We have made a public call for people to participate in clinic committees. I want to encourage you to nominate capable individuals to serve as Clinic Committee members in more than 370 Gauteng public clinics. Nominations are now open until the end of January 2024. This process affords you an opportunity to improve the quality of service and patient experience of care at your local clinics.

Clinic Committees play a vital role in ensuring effectiveness and efficiency in the governance of public clinics through public participation, assisting in addressing health needs of the communities they serve, and ensuring accountability and effective management of the facilities. They are statutory bodies appointed by the MEC for the Health and Wellness in accordance with Section 42 of the National Health Act, No.61 of 2003.

So, it is in our interest as community members to nominate individuals who will voluntarily conduct oversight in an effort to improve health services and patient experience of care at our clinics. The committee consists of eight members who include five community members, three ex-officio members who may be a local councillor, health representative, and a community development worker. Nomination forms can be found at all our health facilities across the province or can be downloaded

on the Gauteng Provincial Government website www.gauteng.gov.za under the Department of Health's publication menu.

Voter registration

I also want to emphasise the importance of your participation in the upcoming Provincial and National elections. Voting is a fundamental right and a powerful tool for change. Again I plead with each and every one of you to exercise your democratic right to cast your vote in the upcoming elections. Let your voice be heard and make a difference in your community.

The Independent Electoral Commission has ensured that in each local municipality, there are offices that can assist you to register. Furthermore, voting stations will be opened across the province for Voter Registration Weekend on 3 and 4 February 2024. You can also register online. Only those who will be 18 and older before the elections will be eligible to vote. So, I urge you to take up the responsibility and exercise your right to vote.

Thank you once more for the hospitality and for the fellowship.

Enkosi, thank you!!