

**Welcome Address By MEC Belinda Scott On The Occasion of The  
Launch of The National HIV Prevention Campaign On Girls and Women**

**24 June 2016**

**Royal Showgrounds, PMB**

**The Deputy President: Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa**

**Honourable Minister of Health: Dr Aaron Motsoaledi**

**Honourable Deputy Minister: Buti Manamela**

**Honourable Premier: Mr. Willies Mchunu**

**Honourable, Ambassadors: Mr. Patrick Gaspard (USA), Mr. Walter  
Lindner (Germany),**

**Global Fund Representative: Dr Carol Presern**

**Deputy Chair of SANAC: Ms Steve Letsike**

**District Mayor, His Worship: Cllr Yusuf Bhamjee**

**All Mayors, Councillors, Amakhosi, Religious Sectors present**

**Distinguished guests**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

On behalf of the Government of KwaZulu-Natal and the people of this province, it is my great pleasure to welcome the Deputy President, Cabinet Ministers and all the dignitaries present.

We are humbled and grateful Deputy President by your decision to launch the ***“National Campaign On Girls and Young Women”*** in our city - Pietermaritzburg. We, the people of KwaZulu-Natal, feel privileged and honoured to be afforded the opportunity to host this prestigious occasion that will change the future of many girls and young women across South Africa.

As our late former President, Nelson Mandela once said: ***“The campaign against AIDS is the task of all of us – young and old, government and community organisations, religious and traditional institutions, cultural and sporting bodies. AIDS knows no custom. It knows no colour. It knows no boundaries. We have to work together to preserve our nation, our continent and humanity as a whole.”***

I am delighted that this campaign follows the same approach that Nelson Mandela envisaged in 2005 when he made the address at the 46664 South Africa (AIDS) concert, in George.

Ladies and gentlemen, this three-year campaign seeks to achieve a long and healthy life for all young women and girls in our country. This requires a commitment, coordination and collaboration of all government departments, multilateral organisations and development partners, private sector, civil society, research organisations, donor and funding agencies.

Through a multi-sectoral approach we will be able to:

1. Decrease new HIV infections in girls and young women.
2. Decrease teenage pregnancies, in particular to decrease under 18 deliveries.
3. Keep girls in school until matric, and increase the retention of young women and girls in school.
4. Decrease sexual and gender based violence amongst young women and girls.
5. Increase economic opportunities for young people, particularly for young women.

This event comes as the province is preparing for the upcoming **International AIDS Conference 2016** in eThekweni. Deputy President, for the past few months, in preparation for this conference, the Provincial Executive has been conducting build up events in various municipalities in the districts we champion. UMgungundlovu is the District I champion.

In my engagement with communities in municipalities in this District, I have discovered that HIV infections and teenage pregnancies are problems that remain acute. There is a sharp increase in the number of young girls who fall pregnant and are infected with HIV.

According to the District Health Information System, this district had a total of 17 308 females that visited facilities for antenatal first visit services in the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 (2015/16 financial year), and of those 1 480 were females under 18 years.

There was a total of 17 707 deliveries at facilities in the district and of those, 1 446 females were under 18 years old, which equates to approximately 8%.

There were 186 949 HIV tests conducted on females in the same period. Of these, 22 266 tested positive, which equates to a positivity rate of approximately 11.9%. These are merely the known clients who visit government facilities in this district.

There are several preventative programmes that have been implemented. To name a few:

- ***First Things First campaign** – at university level. The aim of this campaign is to encourage young people to take care of themselves by using condoms. Those who are already infected are encouraged to take their medication. Durban University of Technology (DUT), UKZN and TVETS are participants of this campaign.*
- *Distribution of colour and scented condoms, and provision of HCT.*
- *Provision of comprehensive health care services at universities, which will soon be rolled out to all TVETS in the Province.*

I believe that a downward shift can be achieved to reduce the high statistics I have mentioned, especially teenage pregnancy and HIV positivity rates. Health in this province remains a key priority, with the second biggest budget after Education. We will continue to strengthen our endeavours to reduce the number of new HIV infections and pregnancies.

As government, we want to see the development of strong, wise and independent women, who will contribute to the economy. It is without doubt

that over the three years, the activities that will be implemented through this programme will strengthen young women and girls sense of responsibility, to make informed decisions about their health, future and well-being.

With these words, you are warmly welcomed to the UMgungundlovu District.