

**Speaker Notes for MEC for Finance, Mrs Belinda Scott, during the
Launch of 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and
Children in Bruntville (Mooi Mpopana Municipality) on 25 November
2014.**

Programme Director;

Mayor of uMgungundlovu District Municipality, Councillor Bhamjee

Mayor of Msunduzi, Councillor Ndlela

Mayor of Mkhambathini, Councillor Maphumulo

Mayor of Richmond, Councillor Ragavaloo

Mayor of uMshwathi, Gwala

Mayor of Impendle, Ndlela

All Councillors,

Leaders of Faith-Based organisations,

Leaders from all sectors,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sanibonani!

It is nice to be back here in Mooi River to engage with the people of this municipality so that government will bring about change and improve the lives of our people in Mpopana Municipality.

We were here over the weekend and we are here again today to ensure that our people do not feel stranded when while we are working on the election of a new council.

We come here knowing very well that the Mooi Mpofana Municipal Council was dissolved in terms of section 139(1)(c) of the Constitution, and the Administrator was appointed to ensure that the municipality continues to function until a newly elected council has been elected.

As Government, we understand the challenges that you are faced with in Mooi Mpofana and we are working tirelessly to address these challenges. Tomorrow, there will be an election in this place. We wish you well.

Today, we are here to launch the 16 Days of Activism Against for No Violence Against Women and Children. We launch this campaign against the backdrop of a high rate of abuse against women and children in uMgungundlovu District.

This campaign is an annual event endorsed by the United Nations to raise awareness against abuse directed on women and children. It will run until the 10th December 2014.

This morning, I was in Msunduzi Municipality where we had a similar event. The residents of that area said enough is enough. They are tired of cases of women and children abuse.

They said as we celebrate 20 Years of Democracy, we - as a country - have a lot to be proud of. Not only do we have what is universally regarded as the most progressive constitution in the world and the Bill of Rights, but we also have a fully functional and independent judiciary. Our whole legal system is in place and our people have become highly aware of the rights of the individual. And, even though there are some detractors, we have a whole social system that is centred on the improvement of the living conditions of all members of communities that were previously systematically deprived of their basic human rights and dignity.

Indeed, as a new democracy, we have done exceptionally well. The democratic government has taken tremendous strides in the improvement of the living conditions of its citizens in the provision of basic needs such as water, electric and sanitation. Education today is a basic right for every child, and corporal punishment has been banished from our school. The right of chastisement today explicitly prohibits the beating of children.

Strides have been successfully taken in the provision of adult education and many adults, especially women, have grasped this opportunity to improve their reading skills. Today we boast that we have women occupying influential positions in our society both in government and business fraternity. Their contribution is phenomenal. While all these measures have been put in place and successfully implemented, the sad truth remains that as families, communities and a country we still have a long way to go in terms of the upholding of the rights and dignity of the weakest of our citizens: our children, women and the disabled.

For a country with our proud history and record of struggle against oppression, tyranny and exploitation, it remains a great source of shame that our record on the abuse of our most vulnerable remains one of the highest in the civilised world. This one aspect, of our otherwise highly esteemed democracy, remains a blight that stains all the strides that we have taken in terms of human rights.

Allow me, Programme Director, to say that this government has made significant strides to strike a balance in our society and uplift and protect our women and children. These include:

- o Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act which ensures that women have equal enjoyment of rights and freedoms, in addressing the wrongs of the past;

- The Employment Equity Act which ensures that discrimination in employment, occupation and income within the labour market that resulted from apartheid laws are curtailed;

- The Maintenance Act which guarantees the rights of a child to a living standard which is adequate for physical, mental, spiritual and social development;

- The Domestic Violence Act which affords survivors of violence maximum protection from domestic abuse; and

- The Children's Act was enacted to amongst others, protect a child from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation.

This is not the end. Government will continue to devise and implement interventions that protect the human dignity of women and children when

a need arises. After all, this is was elected into office by the majority of our people, including women.

It gives me hope when I see so many of you present here as we launch the campaign. The presence of youth, middle aged adults and grandparents gives me hope that we are able to speak to all sections of our population. The message we want to share with you is that abuse in general is wrong and cannot be tolerated. Let alone when it is inflicted against women, children, people living with disabilities and vulnerable people in society.

We are particularly happy that we also partnering with The Provincial Men's Forum in the province who have taken a position against any form of abuse against women and children. We appreciate your unequivocal resolve and it shows that our youth, particularly males, already have a good example to learn from. Let us continue to protect women, children, people living with disabilities and the vulnerable.

Just as I conclude, I want to remind you that this government has been working very hard in the last 20 years to deliver services to the people. In the last 5 years:

- More than R1 trillion has been invested in national infrastructure projects;
- R 2. 7 billion has been set aside for youth entrepreneurship loans and support;

- The Public Works and Community programmes have created 6 million work opportunities for unemployed people, 40 % of whom were young people;

In the last 20 years:

- Over 3.3 million free houses have been built;
- Over 7 million learners are in no fee schools;
- About 12 million households have access to electricity;
- In KZN, government continues to put more money in Education, Health, Transport, Human Settlements;
- I am also please to inform you that, despite the gloomy global economy, KZN has maintained a strong financial position since 2010.

We shall continue to do more and improve the lives of our people in Mooi Mpofana and beyond.

Amandla!