

MEDIA STATEMENT

Issued by the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
Attention: Journalists and News Editors
Monday 11 September 2023.

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DWYPD: CALLS AN END TO STIGMATISATION AND DISCRIMINATION OF PEOPLE WITH ALBINISM.

Pretoria: September is South Africa's National Albinism Awareness Month. This month is dedicated to Persons with albinism, to highlight their pride, challenges and finding solutions. During this month all endeavors should be channeled towards the provision of information on albinism to create awareness and education of the disability.

Albinism is a rare genetic condition that reduces the amount of melanin pigment formed in the skin, hair or eyes and occurs in all racial and ethnic groups throughout the world. People with albinism continue to face an uphill struggle to attain a life with dignity and equality and to fight against injustice and discrimination. The declaration of 13 June by the General Assembly in 2015 as International Albinism Awareness Day (IAAD) highlights the critical need for the world to recognise the plight of persons with albinism.

We have the opportunity to pause, reflect and remember that not all persons are treated equally, and that many persons with albinism continue to suffer human rights abuses and violations, often invisibly and in silence. People with albinism continue to face multiple forms of discrimination because it's still profoundly misunderstood, socially and medically.

The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities in collaboration with the National Albinism Task Force will host an Albinism Community Outreach programme and webinar for youth with Albinism to engage on pressing issues faced by youth and persons with albinism in the country

and persons with albinism broadly. This month will be celebrated under the theme "Inclusion is Strength," which builds from last year's theme of "United in making our voice heard."

It aims to ensure the inclusion of the voices of persons with albinism in all sectors of life. It emphasises the importance of inclusion of a diversity of groups from both within and outside the albinism community.

The 2023 albinism month theme will also highlight the importance and benefits of:

- Including a broad spectrum of persons with albinism in albinism-related discussions, including youth, women, children, older persons, LGBTQ+ and persons with albinism of all races and ethnic backgrounds;
- Collaborating and embracing albinism within the disability movement, and in other sectors where decisions affect persons with albinism; and
- Seeking synergies with human rights groups and other groups from outside the albinism movement

This will help people to understand Persons with albinism and the challenges they face. People must understand that Albinism is a rare, non-contagious, genetically inherited condition which occurs worldwide regardless of ethnicity or gender.

People with albinism are entitled to civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights recognized in the Bill of Rights and our Constitution in South Africa. The DWYPD calls upon people in communities and workplaces both in the public and private sectors to organise Albinism Awareness Month activities these include, organised talks about albinism, fun days, picnics, charity walks and fun runs.

South Africa has a White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which is a call to action for the government, civil society and the private sector to work together to ensure the social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities is achieved. this includes Persons with albinism.

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are particularly relevant; both guarantee protection against discrimination. Equality and non-discrimination are essential human rights principles for people with albinism, owing to their vision impairment and their needs regarding preventive measures to address their vulnerability to skin cancer.

A clarion call was made to all South Africans to treat persons with albinism with care, love, respect and dignity, and try and assist and support them wherever possible.

END

Issued by:

Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.

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