

## MEDIA STATEMENT

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Issued by the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities  
Attention: Journalists and News Editors  
Pretoria, 6 April 2024

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### DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IS WORRIED ABOUT THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN SOUTH AFRICA

**PRETORIA:** The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities has noted with concern trends pointing to a significant number of teenage pregnancies in South Africa. The country continues to show the highest rates of teenage pregnancy globally, with nearly one in four girls falling pregnant before the age of 20 years.

South Africa has recorded an estimated 150,000 girls between the age group of 10 and 19 years old falling pregnant in the 2022/2023 financial year, what's particularly disheartening is that individuals who became parents during this period were hardly teenagers, with some cases reported constituting to statutory rape.

The phenomenon of teenage pregnancy has devastating social and economic costs. "Early pregnancy in South Africa forces many girls to drop out of school and trap others in a cycle of poverty and leaves most stigmatized by society for being teenage mothers or forced into early marriages". said Minister Dlamini Zuma.

Working together with both public and private sector stakeholders to act against those who continue with the act of impregnating teenage girls by reporting them to law enforcement authorities, is the first step towards ending teenage pregnancy while providing psycho-social support is particularly important. Prevention of teenage pregnancies would, among others, contribute to the promotion and protection of the rights of the girl child. There is a need for coordination and redirecting of efforts to the hardest hit areas. With a specific focus

towards prevention, early intervention and impactful evidence-based programmatic interventions. Government has developed a Program of Action (POA) aimed at tackling the issue of teenage pregnancy by implementing a Comprehensive National Gender-Based Violence Prevention Strategy (CNPS).

Through consistent outreach programmes focusing on young mothers, Government working with stakeholders has put together tailor-made stakeholder programs that are focused on the prevention of teenage pregnancy, such as *Ezabasha Dialogues and Risiha-Community Based Prevention and social behavioural change programs which include amongst others ChommY (10-14 years), YOLO, You Only Live Once (15-24 years)*. “Government calls on families, communities, religious and traditional leaders to support the Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) of teenagers to prevent unintended/unwanted pregnancies.” Conclude Minister Dlamini Zuma

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