

MEDIA STATEMENT

ISSUED BY DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
ATTENTION: JOURNALISTS AND NEWS EDITORS
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LETSIKE DEMANDS ACCOUNTABILITY FROM AN ADULT MALE ARTIST FOR HIS ROLE IN UNDERAGE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION INCIDENTS IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE.

The Deputy Minister in the Presidency responsible for Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities expressed concern and called for accountability after witnessing young girls from Limpopo engaging in illegal alcohol consumption in a video circulating on social media sites in the presence of “Tsaka RSA”, a known male artist from Limpopo. Deputy Minister Letsike condemn this uncharacteristic behaviour from the adult male artists who are committed to exploiting vulnerable young girls.

The Deputy Minister, Letsike, has since formally engaged the South African Police Service to help in calling the well-known artist to question and investigate the case of underage drinking. ***“Underage drinking not only breaks the law, but it also poses serious risks to the health, safety, and future of our youth”. said Deputy Minister Letsike.***

Limpopo province is largely rural, and alcohol (***all types, including traditionally brewed alcohol***) is used mostly in traditional and cultural practices and rituals. This sometimes exposes adolescents to alcohol use at a young age. **Early initiation to alcohol use among adolescents is a cause for concern. Often co-existing with this alcohol use is teenagers engaging in risky sexual behaviours whilst intoxicated.** Alcohol use during adolescence has been linked to impaired brain development, poor academic performance, risky behaviour, accidents, and long-term dependency. It also places young people at greater risk of violence, gender-based violence, and road fatalities.

Parents, guardians, schools, communities, and the alcohol industry have a critical role to play in addressing this challenge.

Preventing underage drinking requires:

- *Parental guidance and supervision to set clear rules and model responsible behaviour.*
- *Stricter enforcement of alcohol laws, particularly around sales to minors.*
- *Awareness and education programmes in schools and communities to highlight the dangers of alcohol misuse.*
- *Youth-focused alternatives and opportunities that promote positive lifestyles and healthy choices.*

Although the legal drinking age of alcohol in South Africa is 18 Years, statistics show an alarming increase in alcohol use, with binge drinking being more prevalent among youth younger than 18 years.

The prevalence of alcohol consumption among teenagers or high school learners in rural provinces such as Limpopo is a cause for concern.

The World Health Organisation highlights that South Africans consume about 10 litres of pure alcohol in a year, which is much higher than the worldwide consumption. The increasing incidents of underage alcohol consumption among young people below the legal drinking age.

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Issued by: Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.

For Media Enquiries: Mr Cassius Selala: 060 534 0672: Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities Head of Communication.