



women

Department:
Women
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Eastern Cape Provincial Launch of Sanitary Dignity Programme

SPEAKING NOTES

Date: 13 APRIL 2019

MAKANA INDOOR SPORTS CENTRE,

EASTERN CAPE

**PRESENTED BY MINISTER BATHABILE DLAMINI,
MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR
WOMEN**

Programme Director

Premier Mr Phumulo Godfrey Masualle

MEC for Education Hon MJ Myoko

Members of the Executive Council

Executive Mayor Cllr

District Mayor Cllr

The Principals and all the teachers

Members of Traditional Leadership

Development partners from the UN organisations

Young Women Leaders of tomorrow

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to be part of this important day, the Provincial Launch of the Sanitary Dignity Programme, here in Makana, Eastern Cape. I thank the Provincial government for agreeing to be part of this important partnership. It is a great pleasure to be here, at the Makana Local Municipality.

The theme for the national launch was **Restoring the Dignity of Young Women**. There is nothing this ANC led-government treasures more than the dignity of women and girls. As we launch this programme in this province is because we want to restore the dignity of each and every girl in this province of legends.

For us this is non-negotiable. The South African Government, as the government of the people, through

The Department of Women has seen it appropriate to ensure that the dignity of the girl child, especially those that are in schools are protected by rolling out free sanitary pads to learners that attend quintiles 1, 2 & 3 schools, which are no fee paying schools.

We are well aware that many of young girls around here face challenges of managing their monthly periods without convenient, clean and comfortable sanitary products. Hence many of you resort to unhygienic measures like strips of cloth, newspaper or grass which commonly done by many here.

These difficult measures are more likely to bring bacteria and infections. The inadequate water and sanitation school infrastructure is a serious problem because it has

the potential to bring indignity to young girls in schools, which results in thousands of girls missing school due to menstruation.

As the Department of Women we want to ensure that these learners attend school without the constraints or hindrance due to a biological phenomenon which is a natural part of life.

Very few countries in the world supply free sanitary pads to women and girls that cannot afford to access these products. South Africa is one of the leaders in this quest to ensure that women empowerment and gender equality is realised.

We are doing this because we are a government that cares for people, especially young women and girls.

If sanitary pads are not made available to women and girls, that would have an impact in the teaching and learning progress of girl learners in particular at schools.

Programme Director, the Department of Women has developed a national implementation framework that shall guide provinces in implementation because the framework sets out the values, norms and methodologies so that programme implementation is standardised and no province conducts itself differently from the other and most importantly, to ensure that the learner is able to receive the product on time and that there is a consistent distribution process.

This process is only possible through partnership. There is a lot of collaboration that will be required between Department of Women and some critical departments at National, Provincial and Local level because this programme is not just about giving access to these products but also to ensure that the infrastructure at schools is compatible with the aspect of dignity that has been raised already.

A typical example is that there needs to be collaboration with the Department of Education to address school sanitation because there must be facilities that allow girls to change in an environment of privacy, that is, She-bins being available to throw away used products, as well as liquid soaps for washing, for hygienic purposes.

Menstrual Hygiene Management is also critical so that awareness can be instilled to learners in order for them to be keenly aware of their bodies and the changes therein, from puberty to mature age. Young girls are ridiculed and stigmatised when they go through their menstrual cycle. Cultural beliefs have created ideas of young girls being 'dirty' or engaging in sexual activity if they begin to menstruate.

Girls are beginning to menstruate at a younger age and are being judged negatively for this natural phase in the development of their body. This psychological trauma stays with them throughout their teenage years and can affect a young woman for the rest of her life.

I must emphasise that life skills training regarding this matter must be factored into the curriculum and that the Educators are well knowledgeable with the subject matter.

Further, collaboration with the Department of Water and Sanitation and the Water Research Commission is very important and it would greatly assist in efforts to ensure that there is water and sanitation at schools, especially rural and township schools.

Also, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Municipalities must assist in matters related to waste management. This is an example to demonstrate that Department of Women and Provinces cannot do this

alone; it should be an integrated governmental effort across the three spheres.

There is a very important matter of the economic value chain of this sanitary dignity programme, that is, the local economic development aspect where women owned and run manufacturing enterprises can benefit, as well as women owned cooperatives can occupy the space make profits.

There are economic opportunities in manufacturing, storage, distribution and waste management. Especially for Women-led and Women-owned co-operatives in becoming part of the value chain in supplying these products to government.

It must be mentioned that as the Department of Women we have intentions of rolling out free sanitary products to quintiles 1, 2, and 3 schools and extend the programme to the following categories of indigents:

- i) Women in Public Tertiary Institutions;
- ii) Women in Correctional Service Centres;
- iii) Women in Places of Safety; and
- iv) Women in Communities that would be identified through indigent lists and other means.

These are efforts to ensure that women's menstrual hygiene matters are taken seriously and that their sexual reproductive and health right issues are at the top of the national agenda.

National Treasury would have to be made aware that sanitary dignity is an essential and necessary part of a progressive ethos of creating a gender responsive and planning budgeting process whose resultant objective is achieving women's empowerment and gender equality.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage learners present here to work hard in their studies in order to achieve in life and get out of the generational poverty trap, to achieve and be part of building a society where women leadership is a norm, rather than an exception and that they will contribute in the building of human capital in this country.

Stay away from unhelpful distractions like teenage pregnancy, drugs, alcohol and the dangerously creeping

sugar daddy and blessers. Refuse to allow poverty or difficult circumstances in your lives to cloud your positive judgement, for your sake and the sake of the country.

We unconditionally care about you and will ensure that you achieve your goals in life. Look forward to a post-matric academic life wherein you shall receive free education once you reach tertiary level. Use the opportunities open for you which were non-existent in the recent past.

For those of you who can vote, please ensure you cast your vote. Your participation in this democratic process as youth is essential to ensuring a brighter tomorrow for this country.

I thank you.