

Speech by the Honourable MEC for Social Development, Mr Mxolisi Sokatsha, on the occasion of the Graduation Ceremony of the Auxilliary Social Workers Learnership. Eldorado Hotel- Kuruman. JTG – Northern Cape, 26 February 2015: 18h00

Programme Director:

Your Excellency: Kgosi K.E Jantjie

**Executive Mayor of the JTG District Municipality:
Cllr Sophia Mosikatsi**

**Mayor of the Joe Morolong Municipality:
Cllr Dorcas Moremi**

**Speaker of the JTG District Municipality:
Cllr Seweditse Gaobosewe**

**Speaker of the Joe Morolong Municipality:
Cllr Masara Pitso**

**Speaker of the Gasegonyane Local Municipality:
Cllr Tuelo Meyers**

Management and Staff of the Department of Social Development

Social Auxiliary Workers

All Media Houses Present

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good evening to all. It is indeed a great honour and privilege to be part of and be invited to say a few words at this auspicious occasion – the graduation of the class of our Social Auxiliary workers. To all the graduates, I would like to convey my warmest congratulations on behalf of the Honourable Premier and the Northern Cape Provincial Government on what is indeed a splendid personal achievement.

I want to share the following quote with you by Orrin Hatch: ***“Graduation is not the end; it's the beginning.”*** Indeed, graduates, a new chapter in your life has begun filled with uncertainty, hope, dreams and anticipation. Enjoy the journey!

Ladies and gentlemen, social workers and auxiliary workers are the backbone of social work delivery in the whole world. Without them, we can't begin to talk of any social development system. For a country and a government, it is always pleasing to witness the injection of yet

another group of young social auxiliary workers into the sector and an improvement in national and provincial statistics. This in turn will translate into improved quality of service as well as more accessibility, especially in the rural and underserved areas of the Northern Cape Province.

I also wish to thank the leadership of the department, the Health and welfare SETA, friends and relatives for their support and being able to share this joyous occasion with them. New friendships were formed that would last well into your futures. Memories were made, hard times were endured and relaxing times were enjoyed. These are the things that kept you as going throughout the past period.

It indeed is a day for Jubilee for us as a department and our partners precisely because the social landscape has changed considerably since the dawn of our young democracy.

Program Director, the young people we are honouring here today were initially appointed as Volunteers to assist the Department with the Balelapa Household Profiling in the John Taolo Gaetsewe District. During their tenure as volunteers, they were enrolled in a Social Auxiliary Work Learnership Programme funded by the Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) upon which they have successfully completed the programme. Subsequently, the learners

were appointed on an Internship programme within the Department, which has been extended until the end of March 2015.

Changes seen by the sector include, but not limited to, a shift from residual to development welfare services; from selective means tested and racially based on universal, non- racial and targeted groups- based access to social welfare services; from social work dominated social welfare practice to an introduction of emerging services professions (Social Auxiliary Workers, Child and Youth Care Workers, Community Developmental Workers etc.), from generic welfare services offering to an emphasis on social grants; from social services that are led and managed by social workers to the proliferation of other disciplines in leadership and management of social welfare services.

These changes, Ladies and Gentlemen are coupled with an increase in a variety of social challenges such as HIV/AIDS, Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Teenage Pregnancy, Poverty and Unemployment, Abuse and Trafficking of Women and Children.

In light of these changes and increase in social problems, a lot of work has been done by amongst other social services professional, their voices have been loud on these issues as they continuously beg for their comment.

This gathering here must be a platform to reflect on these issues as a collective. We must join the leadership of educators through the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions, to rightfully so, focus our energies on education and advocacy matters as well as integrated practice issues as far as possible.

Program Director, Having said that, Our country and our province needs more supply of skills to sustain and enhance our development. We believe, as the ANC led government, that the training particularly of our young people is critical if we are to achieve our goal of a better life for all.

Social Auxiliary Education and Training forms an integral part of the Social Work Strategy where a call for the increase of Social Work professionals amongst others is made. Recruitment and retention of social work educators for career pathing and succession planning is of vital importance. A total of 53 graduates are now available to venture into the field of practice and all have already commenced with what can be seen as community service through the EPWP and Internship program in the Northern Cape district. The graduation today is the beginning of another chapter in your lives. You are now responsible for your acts and omissions as dictated by your scope of practice.

I would like to thank and further applaud the department for the implementation of the Balelapa as launched in May 2010 to profile households for proper planning- which was a mandate of EXCO.

The Balelapa programme is an extension of the War on Poverty Programme program.

This program has and must continue to be the fulfilment of the hopes and aspirations of our people.

Everyone, I want to leave you with the following quote from Mahatma Ghandi: ***"the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others"***

I wish you all the best in your careers.

Thank you.

Kealeboga

Enkosi

