

**Honourable MEC Mxolisi Sokatsha's address at  
the official opening of the Sub Office of Askham –  
ZF Mgcawu District – Northern Cape 17 March  
2015**

**Programme Director**

**Goeie More!!!**

It is indeed a great honour for me to be part of this gathering to officiate on this important milestone in the history of the community of Askham and surrounding areas.

As we are celebrating human rights month, allow me to reflect on some key historic moments that took place during this month:

- **16 March 1892:** Dr James Sebe Moroka, a medical doctor, who was elected president general of the African National Congress from 1949 to 1952, was born in Thaba Nchu.
- **21 March 1960:** a day which was for many years known as Sharpville Day, and later declared

Human Right's Day by the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination by the United Nations.

On this Day (**21 March**) in 1960, a crowd of between 5000-7000 people went to the Transvaal police station to protest against pass laws. The South African Police opened fire on them and killed 69 people.

Ladies and Gentlemen; The year 2015 marks the 60 years of a historic moment in our history, when South Africans from all walks of life adopted the freedom charter in 1955, in Kliptown, Soweto.

They declared amongst other things **“that the aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state”**.

This, Ladies and Gentlemen, was a powerful and visionary statement which in essence is finding expression here today.

Program Director, Chapter two of the Constitution containing the Bill of Rights; that clearly states that:

**“Everyone has the right to have access social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance”.**

In addition, the issues raised by communities in the build-up to 2009 and 2014 elections provided the basis for social security being high on the ANC-Led Government’s agenda.

This government has in the last budget speech again proved to be developmental and taking seriously its social responsibility by announcing major budgetary increases in social security reforms.

Programme Director, this facility must ensure that Askham and surrounding communities receive regular visits from dedicated professionals.

But, there have been challenges to this extent and we are here to begin to address this ideal. We are alive to the fact that there are challenges or barriers to social development integration and provision as mentioned due to several operational related challenges.

However, the successful implementation of social security programs depends on effective partnerships with the institutions of civil society and government in improving the delivery of quality social protection services.

Ladies and gentlemen, the following was amongst found-out of the 1.070 households were profiled through the Balelapa program with an average household size of 3-4 persons in this municipality:

- Almost half of the population was unemployed
- Given the high rate of unemployment, less than 10% of the population had access to land and resources. Which means that there was no food security as they could not grow food and raise stock.

Unemployment is in many instances responsible for social ills like crime, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy etc.

It is therefore of paramount importance that this facility also plays the important role of being an information centre, because most of the time our

young people fall prey to social ills due to the lack of information.

Therefore, this facility is highly informed by our government service delivery mechanisms to needy and deserving communities, such as Askham.

They include the intensified implementation of the substance abuse and Foetal Alcohol Disorder plan.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us ensure that these priorities are successfully implemented, as it is imperative that, as government, we continue to enhance effective partnerships with the institutions of civil society in improving the quality of service delivery in areas under the jurisdiction local and provincial government.

Program Director; we in certain instances across the province and country experience community protests which we understand is one of the ways in which communities raise their issues. However, the sad reality about some of these protests is the fact that service delivery centres are vandalised and closed.

I therefore want to make a call to this community that we must own facilities like this one as they are our own. We must treasure them as their existence is for the improvement of our lives.

This opening offers us an opportunity to strengthen the existing social development system and deliver a package of essential integrated developmental evidence based social services interventions to communities such as this one.

Programme Director, I want to conclude by saying that our collective resolve to respond to the plight of the poor and needy communities should serve as rallying point for our partnership to make a difference, and change the lives of the people of Northern Cape for the better.

In addition, I wish to encourage this community to make use of this facility for improvement of our outcomes.

Lastly, I wish to note that gradually step by step we are moving away from our painful past towards improving the quality of development services and

ensure evidence based service excellence for all in our districts, province and country.

Whatever difficulties and challenges we face, we dare not to lose focus on the responsibility to the plight of our poor masses. If we fail, history will judge us very harshly.

In conclusion, I want to say that this facility belongs to all masses of our people in Askham. It is therefore your responsibility as community members and stakeholders to take care of it and protect it from vandalism.

On behalf of the ANC led government, allow me to officially open this new Community Centre in honour of those who fought the struggle for a better life for all.

I trust and hope that services to be rendered here will meet your needs and expectations.

**Together we can do more!!!!!!**

**Baie Dankie !!!**

