

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MAYOR OF MANTSOPA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY CLLR SELLO DENNIS NTSEPE
AT THE LAUNCH OF THE ANTI-GANGSTERISM CAMPAIGN HELD ON JUNE 26, 2015, AT LE RENG HIGH
SCHOOL IN LADYBRAND**

Programme Director,

Councillor Thaisi,

Cluster Commander and South African Police Services leadership in general,

All representatives of various government departments,

Leaders of the National Youth Development Agency,

Invited guests, dignitaries and all members of the public,

The current month on our calendar marks the 39th Anniversary of June 16 1976. And for us as a country it is an important commemoration that highlights the spirit of determination of our young people – the Youth Month. We remember the courage, the resilience, the bravado and the outstanding fearlessness of the young people who stood unshaken against the horrible system of apartheid and proclaimed, “Enough is enough!”

It is therefore important to urge today’s generation to take upon their shoulders a different mission towards moving South Africa forward. They should make it their personal mission to successfully dismantle these complex and dynamic challenges of unemployment, high levels of crime, HIV/AIDS and poverty in their communities.

Programme Director, as Mantsopa Local Municipality, we welcome this proactive initiative by the Department of Police, Roads and Transport in launching the Anti-Gangsterism Campaign in Ladybrand. We shall therefore provide all the necessary support to ensure the incredible success of this noble initiative.

We will partner with the department and South African Police Services in the fight against gangsterism and crime which are slowly consuming our youth into the pit of endless darkness.

In the past years we have witnessed the emergence of gangsters in our area – some from a tender age of 14 to 20. These are young people who are supposed to be completing their school grades or taking part in community development programmes. They are supposed to be participating in the economy of our town and of our country.

As visualized in the National Youth Policy 2020, young people must prioritise their education as an exclusive weapon to seize opportunities created by our democratic privileges. It is only through education that we will be able to overcome the compound and forceful challenges of the 21st Century.

It is in the wise words of the late Nelson Mandela that we find a blueprint of how to build a better future – says, and I quote, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

To attain economic freedom, young people must seek innovative and creative approaches in order to tap into the opportunities created by the current government in the various fields of entrepreneurship, skills development and other progressive initiatives.

Programme Director, in our municipality there is a Youth Development Unit. We invite young people with innovative and creative ideas to utilize this unit in order to have access to these opportunities. We also have the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) office at our Technical Services building opposite the BP garage in town – this office is open only on Wednesdays. We are currently in discussions with the Provincial Management to have that office open during all working day – Monday to Friday.

In support of youth development, Mantsopa Local Municipality under the current administration have appointed 10 young people as part of Work Integrated Learners – 90% of those appointed are young women. This initiative will last for a period of 18 months. We have also appointed about five Financial Interns for a period of two years. These are young people with the zeal and passion to take on the world and make it a better place.

Programme Director, during the current financial year which is ending on the 30th of this month – we have created 500 work opportunities under the Community Works Programme (CWP). Also, 60 people benefited as employees in the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). About 600 people were employed on a number of environmental projects that are taking place in our municipality. I am confident that this trend will continue and we will see even better number in the 2015/16 financial year. This comes to show that Mantsopa Local Municipality has a good story to tell.

Young people are the future of this country. They must never be spectators. They must be profuse activists in getting education, participating in community organizations – churches and in every progressive platform as future leaders.

Batjha! As future leaders, you must take a firm stance against crime, the abuse of drugs, the vandalism of property and against all forms of criminal activities. You must make education fashionable – education is the only *mswenko* that will move South Africa forward!

I thank you.

[END]