



**SPEECH (NOTES) BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR. BHEKI CELE AT THE
LAUNCH OF A PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILD
ABUSE AT BHOBHOYI SPORTS GROUNDS ON TUESDAY, 8
MARCH 2005.**

ALL PROTOCOL OBSERVED.

- Despite the diversity of opinion amongst researchers and the public about what child abuse is, they all positively agree on the fact that child abuse grossly violates human rights, and thus amounts to the dehumanization of mankind.
- Current research findings provide overwhelming evidence that child abuse embraces a wide spectrum of abusive actions. It has also been discovered that the concept of child abuse differs from one cultural, racial and ethnic group to another.

- There are four most basic forms of child abuse and each of these overlap into each other. These are physical, sexual, neglect and emotional abuse.
- Numerous children are physically, sexually and emotionally abused within their homes. Many are also victims of bullying and of violence at schools.
- ***To fight all forms of child abuse, a concerted approach by all sectors of our society is required urgently.***
- However, the civil right of every child begins within the family. The family is an essential agent for creating awareness and preservation of human rights, and respect for values, cultural identity, heritage, and so on.
- The family has an important role to play in terms of issues pertaining to the right of a child to be registered with a name, nationality, to know as far as possible his or her parentage, and to preserve his or her identity.
- Socialization and acquisition of values are developed within the family for freedom of expression and association, for privacy and discipline, and for the child not to be subjected to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment, including neglect, corporal punishment, and sexual or verbal abuse.
- Gender discrimination also poses distinct problems as girls and boys are both subjected to violence, but could experience different patterns of abuse and vulnerability.

- Girls are sometimes at higher risk of sexual abuse or forms of family violence that include traditional harmful practices. Boys on the other hand, could be discriminated against by legislation or social values that could make them subject to brutal forms of school or family 'discipline' not applied to girls.
- Violence against children within families, including such issues as female genital mutilation, marital rape in connection with early marriages, and violence inflicted by siblings rather than adults must be dealt with.
- Among other key measures is the need for improved training of professionals working with and for children, including health and education professionals, social workers, and legal and law enforcement professionals.
- Recognising children as fully-fledged subjects of rights require that mistreatment of children is considered unacceptable, especially when it takes forms that would be considered intolerable if applied to adults.
- Child abuse and neglect have become problems of epidemic proportion that inflict damage both at the time of abuse and again later. They increase the risk that victims would be victimised again or would themselves become perpetrators.
- Adequate preventative measures can only be provided to children if their rights are fully respected, including their right of access to information and material aimed at the promotion of their social, spiritual and moral well-being, and physical and mental health.

- Children should have the right to preventative health care and family planning education and services, the right to an appropriate standard of living, as well as the right to privacy.

- Protection and adequate care can only be provided in an environment which promotes and protects all rights, especially:
 - The right not to be separated from parents,
 - The right to be protected from violence,
 - The right to special protection and assistance by the State,
 - The rights of children with disabilities,
 - the right to health,
 - the right to social security, including social insurance,
 - The right to be protected from economic exploitation, illicit use of narcotic drugs and from sexual exploitation,
 - The right to be protected from abduction, sale and trafficking as well as torture or other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment, and
 - The right to physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration.

- In closing, I would like to give recognition to the good work that is currently being carried out in this regard by all relevant stakeholders, including the Department of Community Safety and Liaison, Department of Education, Child line, South African Police Services and other social partners, who are making a concerted effort in staging public information sessions to raise public awareness of individual rights.

- In this way we will be making an invaluable contribution towards empowering communities against child abuse and other related social injustices.

I thank you.