

## **“IRRESPONSIBLE FATHERS MUST BE EXPOSED,” PREMIER**

**Ga-MUSHI:** Every year on the 09<sup>th</sup> August, South Africans celebrate National Women’s Day, a public holiday that pays homage to the women of our nation, in honor of the women who fought tirelessly against the tyranny of the apartheid government.

This year, Limpopo Premier Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, MEC’s, Executive Mayors, Mayors and the host Mayor Cllr Andrina Matsemela visited Ga-Mushi Village for Women's Day Celebrations.

Premier Mathabatha indicated that Women’s Day is a public holiday commemorating the 1956 march of over 20,000 women at the Union Buildings in Pretoria, led by Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Albertina Sisulu and Sophia Williams-De Bruyn, Dora Tamana, Mama Charlotte Maxeke, Rahima Moosa, Bertha Gxowa, Florence Matomela and many others.

“Our celebrations this year have been preceded by a number of incidents of abuse and violence against women. It is almost like a terrible fashion trend wherein week in and week out we hear and read about assaults, killings and mutilation of women,” said Mathabatha.

Mathabatha added that the levels of violence against women were terrifying and unacceptable and the saddest thing about violence against women is that it is being perpetrated by the people who are supposed to love and protect them.

He indicated that statistics show that more often than not, a woman will be assaulted, harassed or killed by someone she knows than a total stranger.

“We know that abused women are left with almost permanent scars. It is for this reason that we must strengthen our victim support and empowerment programmes for all the abused women. We still have a long way to go. One of the best defences we can provide for women is to ensure their socio-economic liberation. It is the duty of government to ensure that we break the historic barriers which have denied women opportunities to provide for themselves and their families,” continued Mathabatha.

“Researchers have proven that one of the things that traps women in abusive relationships is the economic muscles of the abuser. Of then, women stay in these relationships not for themselves, but as a means to ensure that their children do not lose their homes and support,” added Mathabatha.

“Our battle is also far from complete for as long as women and girl children continue to become victims of abusive cultural practices. One of these abusive cultural practices is the phenomenon of forced marriages. Part of the problem that continues to confront us as government is the tendency by fathers who are not providing for their children,” said Mathabatha.

“It is unacceptable that a father should be forced by a court order to maintain his wife and children. We have kids who receive child support grants whilst their fathers have decent jobs and are driving around in flashy cars, wearing designer clothes and drinking dated alcohol. This is

not only embarrassing, but criminal at the same time. Such fathers must be exposed and be brought before the law,” emphasised Mathabatha.

“The days of a woman’s place being limited to the kitchen are over. The days of young girls being denied the right to be educated simply because they are female are over. As I have already said, the days of young women being forced into arranged loveless marriages are over. The time has come for all of us to recognise women’s rights as human rights,” said Mathabatha.

Mathabatha indicated that like their male counterparts, women should be allowed to exercise choices such as participating in politics, getting an education, having an income, and living in societies free from violence and discrimination.

“Our government will not rest until all women are able to enjoy a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making,” concluded Mathabatha.