

## **WELCOME ADDRESS THE MAYOR OF LEPHALALE MUNICIPALITY,DURING 2015 WOMEN HEALTH WALK HELD AT THABO MBEKI STADIUM ON 25 AUGUST 2015**

- Programme Directors, Mme MmaBoloka and Mme MmaMadela
- The First Lady of Limpopo Province Mme MmaMathabatha.
- MEC for Sports, Arts and Culture Mme Nandi Ndalane.
- Executive Mayor of Waterberg District Municipality, Mme MmaMogotlane.
- Magoshi a rena.
- Councillors.
- Officials from Department of Sports, Arts and Culture led by HOD Mr Mabakane Mangena.
- Officials from Lephalale municipality led by Municipal Manager Mme MmaTukakgoma.
- Sector Departments.
- Members of South African Defence Services.
- Red Cross and Strix Health
- Women who participated in today's Walk.
- Men who come here to support women.
- Journalists from different media houses.

Good morning.

We have assembled here on a very important month in the history of liberation of our country. This is the month we pay tribute to more than twenty thousand ( 20 000) women, led by Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, Sophie Williams and Lillian Ngoyi, marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 to protest against the extension of the pass laws to Black women.

That is the day in which the women of South Africa showed the world what unity mean. They showed the world that nothing is impossible for united women. On that day South African women showed the world that women are rocks and can be more brave than men. South African men have been carrying passes for many years, but when government decided to extend pass laws to women, they met the rock.

On that day women composed slogan “ *Wa thint’ abafazi Wa thint’ imbokodo*” This was a clear message to Prime Minister JG Strijdom that if you strike the woman you strike the rock. This slogan is in line with our Sepedi idiom which honours the bravery of women; it says : Mmangwana o tshwara thipa ka bogaleng.

This year marks the 59<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that historic march. Events of this year are the build-ups towards the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to be held next year. We must also note that this year marks the twentieth (20) year since our country declared 9<sup>th</sup> August a women’s day. As we celebrate we must also remember that President Zuma has declared 2015 as the year of the Freedom Charter and Unity in Action to Advance Socio-Economic freedom. This month the president also announced the release of the paper on the Status of Women in South African economy. This paper is in honour of the 1956 heroines.

It is also important to note that the events of 1956 were organized in 1955; so we must start organizing next year’s 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

The announcement to extend pass laws to women was made in September 1955 and it was meant to be implemented in January 1956. Women protested and marched to Pretoria in October 1955, but the Prime minister refused to meet them or send a delegate.

The Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) then went back to the drawing board and wrote to Prime Minister JG Strijdom requesting to meet him; but he refused. The ANC then sent Helen Joseph Helen Joseph and Bertha Mashaba to a tour of the main urban areas, accompanied by Norman Levy of the Congress of Democrats and journalist Robert Resha; to start coordinating the national march.

The march was very much successful as more than twenty thousand women from all races joined the march. Our health walk today is to pay tribute to those 1956 women. This walk also assist in keeping the bodies of our women healthy; as they say “ Healthy body – Healthy mind.”

I THANK YOU