

**Welcome address by the Mayor of Collins Chabane Local Municipality during the event of Provincial World Leprosy Awareness Campaign which was organised by the MEC for Health to take place on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2018 at Xigalo Village (Full Gospel Church 'TWC').**

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Acknowledgements:

- **Programme Director;**
- **The MEC for the Department of Health, Dr Phophi Ramathuba;**
- **The Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality, Her Worship, Cllr Radzilani Florence;**
- **Executive Committee Members from Collins Chabane Local Municipality;**
- **Fellow Councillors;**
- **House of Traditional Leaders;**
- **Representatives from Sector Departments;**
- **Community based structures;**
- **Collins Chabane Chamber of Businesses;**
- **Pastors Forum;**
- **Distinguished Guests;**
- **Members of the community;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**Good morning!!!**

It is an honour and privilege for me to be accorded this opportunity to welcome you to this Provincial World Leprosy Awareness Campaign.

This event takes place in the year which was declared as the Year of Nelson Mandela by the President of the ruling party, the African National Congress, during his first January 8 Statement in East London. Mandela, a well-renowned father of the nation and an icon of our struggle would have been 100 years old if he was still alive.

As he affirmed this year as the Centenary Year of Tata Mandela, Cde Cyril Ramaphosa said and I quote:

***“Inspired by the life of Comrade Mandela and his generation, we mark this 106<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the ANC, cognizant that ours is to emulate Madiba’s legacy of selflessness, sacrifice and commitment to the unity of the organisation, the mass democratic movement and the people of South Africa.”*** (close quote)

**Programme Director,**

This campaign is very special and important to us as government, because it pays homage to the leprosy affected people by giving them a place in families and society. It requires of all of us to embody selflessness and care for the people affected by this infectious disease. It also demands everyone to understand the real need to fight against this disease.

This day is observed internationally on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January to increase the public awareness of Leprosy. The day was chosen in commemoration of the death of Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of India who fought committedly with leprosy until the day of his death.

It is therefore important **Programme Director,** to indicate that anyone can be affected with this disease, and that it can be completely cured, but if not diagnosed and treated quickly, it can result in incapacitating disabilities.

As Collins Chabane Local Municipality, we commend the MEC for her dedication and commitment to the course of eliminating leprosy in line with the objective of the World Health Organization, which is to reduce this disease across the global community.

As I welcome you **Ladies and Gentlemen**, allow me to indicate that the objectives of this campaign is:

- To raise the leprosy awareness among people;
- To offer help to those affected by disease through regular treatment;
- To ensure that all affected people are psychologically strong and get the necessary help to cope with physical impairments of skin sores and nerve damage;
- To ascertain that all affected persons are getting the necessary treatment, rehabilitation and care.

On behalf of the people of Collins Chabane Municipality, please feel warmly welcomed. This is a municipality where citizen's health is high in our priorities... and a municipality where the sun shines.

**I thank you!!**