



ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF MOGALE CITY LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, CLLR DANNY THUPANE AT THE LAUNCH OF CHILD PROTECTION WEEK HELD ON THE 29th MAY 2023 AT PANGOVILLE, MUNSIEVILLE, MOGALE CITY

Thank you Programme Director,
Honourable councillors,
Leaders of government and civil society organisations here present,

The Government of Local Unity in Mogale City is honoured to be part of this occasion to highlight the plight of our children in a society that is growing more depraved by the day.

Not too long ago, the Afro-jazz group whose music we grew up to, STIMELA, sang a song that urged all of humanity to '*see the world through the eyes of a child.*'

A child leads the simplest of lives. They are innocent, hold no grudges and have no agendas. They live to eat, to play, to laugh and to ask questions. They are good hosts and invite everyone to their fantasy world because in there, there is room for everybody!

It is these innocent souls that men and women choose to unleash the worst of their human instincts upon. They are tied to beds, hidden, and beaten up when they are born with disabilities.

They are sexually violated as babies and toddlers by men who in 2023 still believe that sleeping with a baby cures all manner of diseases.

Children get attacked at school. They are collected by their parents from schools, get killed and the perpetrators commit suicide as a lasting symbol of loss – just because a partner has decided to end a romantic relationship with another. Somehow killing yourself and your child demonstrates that you loved another person so much that you could sacrifice an innocent life. It is one way of making them regret ending things with you!

Children bear the brunt of the greedy. They are kidnapped because people believe that they can use them to extort money from their parents. Some people would rather not work and demand a ransom from hardworking mothers and fathers, and when things do not go well – they kill the poor children to make their point.

Greed does not end there. All fake substances, counterfeit goods are sold to these unsuspecting souls in order to make a quick buck. Children get to be hospitalised for eating or drinking expired and fake products. Some die from it, yet those who sell these things spend not even a second in custody for targeting our children. They have become a law unto themselves. This means that children are not protected by government either. The justice system fails them every day.



Children are just not safe anywhere. They fall into pit toilets at schools and homes and die. They fall into uncovered manholes and die. They run into speeding cars in their neighbourhoods and get bumped to death. They pick up used medical syringes in illegal dumping sites; play doctor, get sick and be hospitalised or die on the spot from complications. Therefore, if it is not their parents, children are attacked by relatives and friends then randomly by strangers.

The country has become so accustomed to Missing Children posters. The country has become so used to the news that a child missing for days has been found mutilated and dead. We type R.I.P. on social media platforms. Our anger is expressed through social media posts where we say: **LET THE PERPETRATORS BE FOUND, JAILED AND LET US THROW AWAY THE KEY!**

We then light candles and pray. When we learn that a perpetrator is someone close to us, we turn around and want to rationalize and almost justify their actions! We forget about the victim, and unconsciously rally behind the perpetrator. We forget that as soon as you extend a little sympathy towards the perpetrator, you are losing empathy for the victim and their parents.

By so saying, we do not advocate for an eye for an eye. We are simply saying that anyone who is cruel to children does not deserve to be living within society but should be locked up in jail for a very long time – even if it means for the rest of their lives!

Programme Director, Child Protection Week means this to us. Let us see the world through the eyes of a child. Let us spread love innocently, not expect rewards! Let us treat each other with respect and kindness like children do. Let us protect our children because to do so is to protect the future.

I thank you.