

**Welcome Address by Mayor of Lepelle –Nkumpi
Municipality Event : World Mental Illness Awareness
Day**

**Date : 28th July 2006
Venue : Lebowakgomo Stadium
Time : 10h00**

Program Director , Honorable M.E.C. for Health and Social Development Seaparo Sekoati , Executive Mayor of Capricorn District Municipality Cllr Motalane Monakedi , Traditional Leaders, Chief Executive Officers of both Lebowakgomo and Thabamopo Hospitals, Chief Community Liaison officer, Senior Managers in the Department of Health, Chairperson of Portfolio Committee on Health and Social Development in Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality, Councillors of Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality, Health Sector Forum members and All stakeholders.

Allow me, to welcome all of you into this important gathering. Today as we are gathered here we should bear in mind that we have joined other parts of the World in ensuing that we create awareness for our people about this illness. Program Director this illness remains a challenge to all of us and the world at large. Many of our people in our communities are ashamed to inform their neighbors and community members about the mental condition of either their children or relatives.

This gathering is intended to change the attitude of people towards those that are suffering from mental illness. We are appealing to all of you not to be ashamed of this illness but rather you should accept it and treat it like any other disease. Let us treat those that are affected by this illness with respect and human dignity. It is of no use to mistreat them, they are also human and any human being can have a particular condition.

Honorable M.E.C. the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality feels privileged to have been afforded an opportunity to host this event .This is a clear demonstration of your confidence in our municipality. This event as it is hosted here today, it is also been hosted in other parts of the World. It is also an honour for us to participate in this World program. We are confident that when we disperse here today our people will be aware about the existence of this illness and they will also embrace those that are affected.

Honorable M.E.C. let me assure you that in Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality we will treat those that are affected with respect and dignity. Further it is important to inform you that the department of safety and security in Lebowakgomo always assist to transport people that are suffering from this condition to institutions that are better capacitated to deal with their condition .This shows the level of collectivism that exists in this municipality.

When leaders of the World agreed to have this kind of awareness they counted on all of us and indeed we are able to respond positively .Honorable M.E.C. this gathering will always remain important as it seeks to change the attitude of our people towards those that are affected. It remains a challenge to for all of us to ensure that from this gathering we are going to change our attitude and be proud about the condition of our brothers, sisters and relatives which are suffering from a mental illness.

We will not be ashamed to take them outside our houses so that they can be seen, we will release them from the shackles and chains that we were using against their will as long as they remain our children, brothers, sisters and parents we will free them.

Thank You.