

**World No Tobacco Day 31 May 2005 – Lebowakgomo
Hospital Welcome Speech by the Mayor of Lepelle
Nkumpi Municipality**

Master of ceremony we are gathered here today as people who are involved in social services in one way or the other. Some of us are doing it as part of our employment while some of us are doing it on a voluntary basis while still others are doing it because the community has elected us to do so. The aim of social services no matter in what form or for what reason it is being performed is to see people living in prosperity. It is aimed at seeing people prosper in all respects in their lives and not just materially or financially but also health wise, in their families and also spiritually. When we read in the Bible we are told in 3John 2 that God's desire for us is to prosper and be in good health even as we prosper spiritually. This is the desire of God for us his people that we should be in good health.

When we look at our freedom charter and all the aspects that it addresses we realise that it is aimed at ensuring that all our people are given equal opportunities to enjoy good health and prosperity. In order to realise these ideals of good health and prosperity we have in our communities teachers, social workers, health professionals, politicians and many other civic bodies. The aim of all these people is to ensure that they work together to foster the prosperity of the community.

Those of us who are involved in social services or community work will however agree that there are very few people if any who have become millionaires from their services to the community. It therefore means that there must be something that drives people to spend endless hours and sacrifice so much but still get so little monetary reward in return. This thing that drives them is a calling. When a person has been called his aim is primarily to fulfil the mandate that has been given to him and this becomes his main reward. We therefore meet today as people who have a calling on our lives to serve the community. Our aim therefore will be to look at ways in which we can better meet the requirements of our calling. In particular the aim today is to see how we can better support the health professionals in living up to their calling.

The World Health Organisation has declared that the focus of the 2005 "World No Tobacco Day" be on health professionals. Today therefore, while we acknowledge that social health is a responsibility of all of us, we are here to focus on the special contribution that health professionals can make in this quest to make the world a no tobacco one. As the WHO has aptly stated, the health professionals are better placed to be able to communicate the dangers that smoking brings about. It is also more significant when we consider the fact that just days ago the Lebowakgomo Hospital was having an open-day where it was inter-acting with the community. I therefore believe that the vehicle has been created through which the health professionals can better communicate with the community. As we start with today's program we are aware that through the programs that the hospital has had over the past few days it has demonstrated its commitment to working towards a healthy society. I hope that from today's proceedings we will all come away with a commitment to assist the hospital in realising its goals because when they succeed we all succeed.

Today we however focus on this one threat that faces the health of our communities. That threat is the habit of smoking. There is no way that we can address the well-being of our communities without addressing this menace that is facing both the young and the old. We can not sit idly by when almost 5 million are dying every year just from this one habit. As we get into today's program let us see our involvement as part of saving lives.

With these words I would like to say that you are all welcomed to Lepelle Nkumpi Municipality. Please be at home and enjoy our hospitality.