

**SPEAKING NOTES OF THE MEC OF HEALTH IN
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE, Ms SASEKANI MANZINI ON
THE OCCASSION OF THE INTER-PROVINCIAL MALARIA
AWARENESS CAMPAIGN BETWEEN MPUMALANGA AND
LIMPOPO PROVINCE AT THE WILLOWS SPORTS
GROUND.**

30 January 2020, Thursday

Program Director,

MEC of Health in Limpopo, Dr Phophi Ramathuba

Kgosigadi Mametja M.J

Executive Mayor of Mopani District Municipality,

Executive Mayor of Maruleng local Municipality,

MMC for Health and All other Councillors,

Pastor Gumede,

HODs, Municipal managers, government officials

Partners and stakeholders,

Distinguished guests,

Members of the media,

People of Mpumalanga and Limpopo.

Sanibonani,

Axuseni,

Thobela,

Dumelang

Program Director, before I deal with the business of the day I wish to extensively elaborate on the call made by President Cyril Ramaphosa, flagged in the January 8th Statement, delivered at the celebration of the birth of the ruling party, the African National Congress, early this month in Kimberly.

The President declared this year “The Year of Action”. He further said **“The fundamental transformation of South African society and the economy requires the efforts, cleverness and energy of all South Africans working together in pursuit of a shared vision”**.

Therefore we must do everything in our power to implement and action all our commitments to our people. We must also listen to our people, spend time on the ground engaging with our people, know what matters in their lives and know their concerns so that we can be able to action everything they want.

Our generation of leaders MEC, must push with zeal for action and implementation to be visible as instructed by the President.

We have gathered here today to launch the first Interprovincial Malaria Awareness Campaign. We have taken this initiative

because we are determined to deal with and eradicate one of the preventable, killer disease in our provinces- that of malaria.

“A Long and Healthy for all South Africans ” is one of the central objectives we must continue to pursue as we strive to improve the quality of the lives of our people and as we aim towards attaining Universal Health Coverage through the implementation of the National Health Insurance.

Today’s event will raise consciousness throughout both our provinces on the importance for us all to join hands to defeat this killer disease, malaria.

Malaria is one of the causes of illness and death in our two Provinces and this is due predominantly to failure in malaria health promotion and prevention awareness campaigns.

We are here today to take control of malaria and make sure that our fight against malaria gains a renewed momentum in both provinces.

During the apartheid government this war against malaria was very difficult and almost impossible because of inadequate access to health promotion (educational programs, advertising materials and not having community based health care workers involvement) in the main because of weak public health services for the previously disadvantaged.

But, today under the democratic elected government of the ANC we have the capacity and ability to fight and win the war against malaria because our government is committed to better the lives of our people and ensure a healthy nation.

Today we can treat everyone suffering from malaria irrespective of their race and gender, the ANC-led government has tools and products for Malaria Control and easy access to healthcare services for everyone including deep rural areas in our provinces - where we haven't built a clinic or Hospital we make sure that we have mobile clinics despatched on a regular basis.

The following are tools and products used in prevention of malaria or mosquito bite:

- * Insecticide treated nets
- * Insecticide for indoor residual spraying
- * Mosquito skin repellents
- * Rapid diagnostic kits and microscopy
- * Anti-malarial drugs for early treatment, prophylaxis, and intermittent therapy.

I must say today here that Malaria is not an issue of Mpumalanga and Limpopo Province alone, it is a global disease that affect the whole world and it is therefore important that, the Global Health Agenda needs to pay even greater attention to the challenge of

malaria than it does currently. Renewed advocacy is therefore required to put malaria control in Southern Africa and Africa back on the global agenda.

I am making emphasis that combatting malaria is without any doubt an issue of truly global urgency and I am encouraged and inspired to see many people here today. This portrays the real determination and commitment of the two provinces to overcome this dreadful but preventable and curable disease.

My accession is further emphasised by the fact that poverty and malaria are interlinked. Poverty increases risk of malaria and mortality from malaria. Communities with low incomes, limited educational information and poor access to health care are unable to engage in malaria control activities.

Prevention of malaria will not be affordable or properly understood if we do not take such awareness closer to our people, particularly in rural and undeveloped areas.

This awareness campaign must further strengthen our provinces' focus on the important fight against malaria. We should not allow that any of our people should die from a disease that can be prevented and cured. This is a war we can and must win.

Last year, SA was declared polio free and now we are striving to join Argentina, Algeria and the other 36 countries to be declared malaria free.

To achieve this goal towards malaria elimination, South Africa is working closely with Mozambique and eSwatini (formerly Swaziland) through the MOSASWA agreement because we are bordering these two countries and many of the malaria cases that are being treated in our health facilities are patients that have come across the border from these countries. To eliminate cross border malaria in Southern Africa, the Global Fund has extended its grant funding of approximately 28 million US dollars for a further 3 years to December 2022, following the successful completion of the original grant.

Program Director, it is important that I raise symptoms of malaria so that our people can know and always be on a look out because these symptoms are similar with those of influenza and the influenza season has already started.

The symptoms include:

- Fever,
- Headache,
- Cold shivers and hot sweats,
- Muscle pain
- Sweating

- Sometimes experiencing nausea and vomiting

If you experience one of these signs and symptoms please go and consult to the local health facility or your doctor. An urgent malaria blood test must be done and the results will be known immediately so that treatment is obtained and initiated immediately if positive.

The treatment for malaria is very effective and is available in all public health facilities, provided a diagnosis is made early. Once complications develop, there will be a number of severely ill patients who may not respond to treatment and who may die as a result.

Program Director, I must say that if not treated immediately Malaria can progress to severe illness which might result in death. Malaria affects all age groups but there are some higher risk groups including, children under five, pregnant women and people with compromised immune systems.

Therefore, if I am to make a plea, in such an august gathering- it would be that a truly integrated approach be taken at provincial level, as well as at scientific, educational and advocacy levels, in the implementation of all the intervention plans to combat malaria. For without such an approach, I fear that we will go fatally compromised into a battle that we cannot afford to lose- that of defeating malaria and give meaning to our theme that **“ZERO MALARIA STARTS WITH ME”**.

Today ladies and gentlemen is a wonderful demonstration of the two provinces, in their commitment of such avowed determination to tackle the pernicious disease of malaria.

Above all, you being here today, also shows your commitment in preventing the much suffering, illness and death of our people from malaria for that we will continue as the ANC-led government to fight side by side with you to stop the onslaught of malaria in our provinces.

I thank you