

2007-11-28: City's participation in the 16 Days of Activism

28 November 2007

**STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF JOHANNESBURG, CLR AMOS MASONDO, AT THE MEDIA BRIEFING ON THE CITY'S PARTICIPATION IN THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM FOR NO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN, METROPOLITAN CENTRE, MAYORAL PARLOUR, BRAAMFONTEIN – JOHANNESBURG**

MMC for Community Development: Clr Nandi Mayathula-Khoza  
Members of the Mayoral Committee  
Fellow Councillors  
City Manager: Mavela Dlamini  
The Media

The City of Johannesburg is once again throwing its full weight behind the national and local campaigns of activism for no violence against women and children.

This is the 10th year that South Africans are joining the global community in solidarity to fight against the abuse of women and children in society. This year Johannesburg will also be in the international spotlight through our hosting of the 46664 concert on Saturday.

The global theme for this year's 16 Days campaign, as endorsed by the United Nations, is "Speak Out, Stand Out and Commit to prevent violence against women and children." In the South African campaign we have added the phrase "I Commit. What about you"? In Johannesburg we have taken it further to say "Joburg Men Take Charge and Make a Stand Against Gender Violence".

This theme is a call to action for men and boys to go beyond mere slogans and symbolic gatherings and to commit themselves to positive action and to spread the messages of respect, non-violence and positive behaviour towards women and children across a wider spectrum of audiences.

The City of Johannesburg's approach is that action to prevent abuse and violence against women and children is a 365 days, round-the clock campaign. These 16 days that started on the 25th of November and run till the 10th of December is thus a period during which we highlight the issue and strengthen the messages of care, maturity in relationships and respect.

The intention of the campaign is to ensure that women and children are free from violent crimes committed against them. These include rape, domestic or gender based violence and violence associated with commercial sex work. This campaign takes place during key commemorative dates in which the City will be actively joining the global community on these platforms to highlight the plight of women and children:

- 25 November - International Day for No Violence against Women
- 1 December - World AIDS Day
- 3 December - International Day for People Living with Disability
- 10 December - International Human Rights Day

Both the national and local campaigns this year focus strongly on the role of men to take responsibility for their actions and to become involved in the campaign against women and child abuse. We also want to bring the messages home to men and boys at grassroots level. We want to challenge men - especially those in high-profile positions in sports, entertainment, business, the media and public life to give their full and vocal support to this campaign.

The City of Johannesburg has in place a Human Development Strategy, which, among other key objectives, addresses gender and intergenerational inequalities. It also includes a Women's Safety Implementation Plan that aims at improving the physical and social environment for women's safety.

For this year's 16 Days Campaign we identified a number of key highlights that are also co-ordinated with our annual activities to commemorate World Aids Day on the 1st of December and the International Day for People Living with Disability on the 3rd of December.

Some of the key activities organised by the City are:

- A Workshop on Disability that was held at MuseumAfrica on 23rd November.
- Participation in the Million Men March in Duduza on 25th November.
- A special assembly of male representatives from various City departments to pledge support for the campaign and mobilise men working for the City to become agents of change within their environments. This took place on the 26th of November under the banner of "Joburg Men Take and Make a Stand Against Gender Violence."
- On the same day, 26th November, we launched our door-to-door campaign for the World Aids Day in Diepkloof Extension.
- Our Councillors participated in talk shows on community radio stations on the theme "Leading from the Front" to mobilise and encourage men to take personal responsibility in their relationships with women and children.
- Starting from yesterday (27th November) until 2nd December we conduct one-day workshops with men to sensitise them on issues of violence against women and children and to also offer practical advice on how they can be involved in the campaigns.
- Today saw the lighting of the World Aids Day Candle Light Memorial here at the Metropolitan Centre.
- On 30th November there is a children's birthday party in Little Falls in Roodepoort in support of World Aids Day.
- On 30th November will be hosting the 46664 Nelson Mandela Foundation HIV and AIDS Charity Luncheon with 46664 Nelson Mandela Foundation.
- The 46664 concert on 1st December at Ellis Park is obviously a highlight, not only of this campaign, but is on the City's annual calendar. We trust that this event that will be broadcast live into millions of households across the world will not only raise awareness about HIV/Aids but also about the unacceptable high levels of violence perpetrated against women and children.
- On the 10th of December we will host the "Joburg Men Indaba" where we seek to bring together more than 1 500 men and boys from across the City. The intention is to produce a Joburg Pledge and a firm programme of action for the City, which is

aimed at educating men and boys about violence, changing behaviour and supporting structures that assist victims of violence.

The 16 Days campaign provides all of us with an opportunity to recommit ourselves to fight against the abuse of women and children in society. I trust that the City's activities during this period will raise awareness of our actions to address the issue and that it will generate city-wide support for our 365 days commitment to eradicate violence and abuse against women and children. Thank you