

ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING, MR BUTI MANAMELA,  
TO THE AFRIMAN RISING DIALOGUE

TUT – GA-RANKUWA CAMPUS, GAUTENG

25 JULY 2018

Programme Director

CEO of the Sello Maake kaNcube Foundation – Mr Sello  
Maake kaNcube

Mr Eusebius McKaiser

Panelists for today -Mr Bongumusa Makhathini;

Prof Thuli Madonsela;

Ms Phumeza Mafeni;

Ms Nthuzelo Fuze;

Mr Neo Matsunyane

Mr Kgomotso Matseke

Cast of Komeng

Invited guests and students

It was a year ago when I was invited by the Sello Maake kaNcube Foundation to address the launch of the Afriman Rising Dialogue at this very TUT Ga-Rankuwa campus.

I am honoured that you invited me back.

At the Afriman dialogue last year, together with the nation, we were enraged by the gruesome murder of the UJ student, Karabo Mokoena.

The grim details of her murder shocked our consciences. We were once again shaken by the murder of Zolile Khumalo, a student at the Mangosuthu University of Technology. Her murder accused, Thabani Mzolo, must be convicted and face the full might of the law.

Justice must prevail.

These are not isolated cases. There are too many cases of violence against women, both reported and the vast majority unreported.

It makes me angry that young women in our society are no longer safe.

They have to look behind their shoulder at all times for fear of rape, robbery or death; and sometimes from familiar faces masquerading as brothers, uncles or fathers.

Upon my appointment as Deputy Minister of Higher Education, I was briefed on the research conducted by the Higher Education AIDS Programme.

The research tells us that there are about 7 million people living with HIV with 15-24 year olds rated at most risk for new infections.

Although there has been a decline in new infections, the base number of 290,000 new infections a year is still too high.

We are still seeing about 1.1 million new symptomatic STI's per year.

About 32% of students had been pregnant or had made someone pregnant with 75% of these pregnancies being unplanned.

We have about 14% of our university students who engage in transactional sex.

The figure will be higher if we include TVET college students. Students are also at risk of alcohol and drug abuse with 68% of TVET college students abusing alcohol on a regular basis.

The research also indicates that 10% of the total reported cases of rape across the country were from university students.

This figure will likely increase if you take into account TVET colleges. A further 62% of students surveyed felt that female students would be sexually harassed on campus.

About 28% of males and 27% of females (aged 15-19) believed that a girl did not have the right to refuse sex with her boyfriend. An alarming 55% of male students think that sexual violence does not include forcing sex with someone you know.

These numbers are frightening, and even numbing to your conscience if you consider that these are young people in our higher education institutions who are supposedly more enlightened.

I am not revealing these statistics to shock you. But we have to confront this reality, and denying that, take action. The reality is that girls and women are dying at the hands of men and men are silent.

The DHET, through the HEAIDS programme, will soon be adopting as policy the first ever framework for addressing gender-based violence at universities and colleges.

The framework provides a set of standards and guidelines for universities and colleges in the public sector to take civil action against perpetrators of gender based violence on campus, whether the perpetrators be students, lecturers or staff.

Not only will we aim to deter gender based violence, but also ensure that victims are supported and linked to care and support. We know that the vulnerability and susceptibility to HIV is also heightened for victims of violence and thus post care and support, including access to post exposure prophylaxis amongst other services is critical.

We have decided to make action against gender based violence a central issue in our student support work in all campuses. Young female students face a myriad of harassment and discrimination issues.

Sex for marks. Accommodation allocation in exchange for sex. Sex as a financial transaction by blessers and sugar daddies. These things are a reality and are happening on our campuses. There is a growing toxic masculinity that is becoming institutionalised and we must stop this.

It feeds the consumerism that pressures young women to comply with certain prescripts of beauty and societal acceptability, thereby making them symbols of conspicuous consumption.

Women have agency. We must never forget that young women have the capacity to act and to make their own choices. When we mobilise men we do not mobilise them to be “protectors of women”. That would be the antithesis of what we want to achieve. We mobilise men to be partners with women in acting against gender based violence. We mobilise men to support the agency of women in this difficult contextual environment.

Social media has become a powerful instrument to expose those who beat women and sexually abuse them. Social media has been used for exposing those who demand sexual favours in exchange for services women should in any way receive. The social media platforms have exposed police who mock victims of sexual abuse and police who refuse to take these cases seriously.

Unlike in the past we are seeing more of these cases being reported in the media. This is a good thing. We applaud it, we need to see more of it. However, we must also see the criminal prosecution of perpetrators of gender based violence. The lack of and slow rate of prosecutions hampers our fight against gender based violence.

I'm happy to see many initiatives, led by men, whose intention is to highlight and put an end to gender based violence. They are more and most becoming an organic army that is determined to shout in unison and say No!

This is the type of army we need.

We need an army of good men who will treat women with the respect and dignity that they deserve. We need an army of good men who will not be intimidated by women's intelligence and power. We need an army of good men who understand and respect the meaning of NO! We need an army of good men who will declare that rape has no place in our society and that NO will never mean yes. This army of good men must stand up and be fine examples for the boy child and teach him that girls do not need to lose their power for him to assert his masculinity. This army of good men will not simply dismiss issues as "women's issues" but instead actively champion these issues because these issues affect us all.

This army of good men will find it within themselves to work with women and women's organisations. Not to lead, although men may lead where appropriate. But to support and most importantly to be led by women. This army of good men will believe in the agency of women and partner with them as they act and make choices. This army of good men will challenge the stereotypes, beliefs and actions of men that abuse and violate women.

I believe that Afriman Rising is such a place to cultivate this army of good men. Through your dialogues, events and performances, you are actively recruiting so that this army of good men can grow and flourish. I want to acknowledge the role that Sello Maake ka Ncube and his foundation is playing in addressing these issues. You are already a part of this army of good men. We need this growing army more than ever before.

This is AFRIMAN RISING. Sign up and be on the right side of history.

I thank you for listening.