

**ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER BUTI  
MANAMELA AT THE  
GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IMBIZO  
COASTAL TVET COLLEGE, UMLAZI CAMPUS**

**5 JUNE 2017**

I would like us all to take a moment of silence and remember and reflect on the tragic loss of Mangosuthu University of Technology student Zolile Khumalo who was allegedly shot at her Lonsdale Hotel residence on Durban's Point by her ex-boyfriend. We remember the life of 21-year-old Jabulile Nhlapo, from the University of South Africa, who also was allegedly shot and killed by an ex-boyfriend at a commune in Vanderbijlpark a few weeks ago. Let us take a moment of silence for countless young women who find themselves trapped in abusive relationships with no means of escape.

In our society, unfortunately the tragic loss of these young women's lives is not an isolated incident. The scourge of gender-based violence (GBV) within institutions of higher learning has been a constant plague that interferes with students' studies and careers, corrupts the integrity of the

education system and erodes constitutional rights to equality, dignity and freedom from all forms of violence.

Today's Imbizo is dedicated to Gender based violence, which as you all know is one of the biggest challenges facing the youth of our country and university and colleges. It is therefore apt that we dedicate this month of youth to GBV. This Imbizo is a build up to the launch of the GBV Policy and Strategy Framework that the HEAIDS Centre has been leading. The Higher Education and Training, Health, Wellness and Development Centre will on behalf of my Department develop and implement a comprehensive prevention, care and support GV programme across every university and college across the country.

In addition to the Women's Empowerment Programme that HEAIDS facilitates as part of its programme offerings, I have requested that GBV be elevated to receive particular attention in the coming months to ensure that in addition to the Policy and Strategy finalisation, we have visible and strong programmes at our sites.

This will mean that university and college leadership and staff at all levels will be called on to support this process. As will sister government departments and development agencies. UN Women and UNFPA in particular have been visible in their support of the development of the Policy framework and I wish to call on others to support the work as this is clearly not our problem alone.

Gender Based Violence is an issue that is very prevalent in our higher education sector. The following statistics from the latest HEAIDS Prevalence Survey speak for themselves:

- 39% of students and 60 % of staff feel unsafe on campus
- 62% felt that female students would be sexually harassed at their higher education institution
- The survey showed that male dominance was supported by male students and accepted by females

- 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
- 55% of males and 54% of females thought that “sexual violence does not include forcing sex with someone you know

We know that one of the most common forms of gender-based violence in the higher education sector is sexual harassment of staff and students. Research informs us that the victims of sexual harassment, in particular ‘sex for marks practices’, are often the more vulnerable among students. As it is the case generally in our society, the survivors of sexual harassment and rape often do not come forward and report the incidents, and that leads to a culture of silence on gender-based violence at our institutions.

We are here to encourage and support survivors of gender-based and sexual violence to speak out and to make them aware that you don’t have to come out

publicly but that there are channels opened for you to make sure that you do not suffer in silence.

Gender-based violence is a persistent problem that affects all races and age groups. It does not only violate human rights but also leaves deep-seated psychological and emotional scars, which may pose a challenge to public health, economic and social development. It destroys, not only the individuals, but families. It is a serious problem in all communities in the country and the educational institutions are not immune.

While we must create platforms and participate in activities such as this one, we need more education about sexuality and gender, especially when our sexuality is as diverse as it has become in our time. We need the sophistication of relating this to sexuality and gender sensitivity.

It is against this background that the Department of Higher Education and Training, through the HEAIDS programme, will soon be adopting as policy the first ever

framework for addressing gender-based violence at universities and colleges. HEAIDS, the Departments' agency for HIV, TB, STIs and related health and wellness programmes, was tasked with the development of the framework, which is likely to be gazetted and finalised for release in the third quarter of 2018.

The framework provides a set of standards and guidelines for universities and colleges in the public sector to take civil action against perpetrators of GBV on campus, whether the perpetrators be students, lecturer or institution personnel.

Not only will we aim to deter GBV, 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.

Our institutions need to ensure that their policies adequately address the needs of survivors of sexual

offences. Reporting of sexual offences needs to be taken seriously such that any individual thinking of committing such a heinous crime should know what awaits them in terms of punishment. But also, depending on the severity of offence, we should also apply corrective measures.

We have to strengthen collaborations with other government departments, and agents, such as, the Departments of Social Development; Justice and Constitutional Development; the South African Police Services; and the National Prosecuting Authority. It is through partnerships that we will manage to make a huge difference in our system.

We believe that collaborations between campus security and the SAPS in crime prevention initiatives and in responding to sexual offences must be strengthened. We are also focusing on lobbying support from different partners and stakeholders to generate a cohesive response, that centres survivors and provides them with the necessary support.

Imbizos like the one we are having today provide the platform for sharing information, interrogating complex issues that will allow us to understand the root cause of gender-based and sexual violence. We are determined to learn from these discussions in order for us to bring about a sector-wide strategy which we can align with national legislation, both within and outside of the higher education and training system.

On the 8th of June, together with the HEAIDS Centre staff, I will host a BackChat at the Durban University of Technology with a small group of students from universities and colleges in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The objective of Backchat is to develop and sustain conversations driven by young people on youth development matters in South Africa. I am committed to creating interactive platforms for discussion and interrogation of the issues and to provide opportunity for young people themselves to assist us in shaping solutions.

The fight against gender-based and sexual violence is not done by implementing dialogues or policies alone. We would also like to address you, the youth, college and university staff and community members, to step up and fight for the safety and security of young women and members of the Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) community.

I further want to share with you that in keeping with the Running with Girls Campaign that I support, I am keen to extend this support to the young woman at our universities and colleges, as we know the needs are extreme. I was thus very pleased to hear that our very own Coastal TVET College students have been manufacturing low-cost sanitary towels in Hammarsdale to respond to this challenge.

This is an example of optimal use of relevant resources to provide innovative training using leading technology to skill a diverse community and to manufacture quality products at the lowest possible price.

I will therefore visit the college tomorrow morning to see first-hand the wonderful work being done there and it is my desire to mobilise partners to work with HEAIDS to support and expand the initiative of providing sanitary pads to all our universities and college students that need them.

In closing, I would like to request our institutions to strengthen security measures at the campuses; intensify sex education; increase efforts to provide care and support to survivors; report gender-based and sexual violence immediately; act decisively where such cases are reported and with a level of certainty where perpetrators are known. Most importantly, let us work together as it's our collective efforts that will enable us to keep the momentum going in our efforts to address gender based violence.

Thank you.