

**WELCOMING ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE HONORABLE MAYOR
COUNCILLOR Z.N NDEVU TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS DAY COMMUNITY
DIALOGUE AT SUGARBUSH COMMUNITY HALL, EMAXSESIBENI ON
THE 23rd MARCH 2022.**

Madam Speaker

Executive Committee Members

Chief Whip and Whippers

Councillors

Traditional Leaders

Government Departments and Chapter 9 Institutions

Municipal Management and Officials present

Ladies and Gentlemen

Ndiyanibulisa ngegama le ntuthukho kunye negama leNkosi yethu uYesu Krestu, Amen.

Government has today launched the 2022 Human Rights Month programme under the theme, “The Year of Unity and Renewal: Protecting and Preserving our Human Rights Gains. Human Rights Month is an opportunity to remember and honour those who made it possible for us to achieve freedom and democracy.

These include courageous men and women who marched in Sharpeville and Langa on the 21st March 1960 for the total abolition of the pass laws. The Sharpeville massacre and Langa march exposed the brutality of apartheid for the whole world to see and united our people’s unyielding resolve for freedom.

Even though the main event was held on the 21st March 2022, government uses the month of March to promote respect for basic human rights and to restore human dignity in line with the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights ensures that everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection.

It further ensures that everyone has the right to freedom of movement, to use their language, participate in the cultural life of their choice and to reside wherever they choose.

Socio-economic rights such as housing, water, education, social development and healthcare are included in the Bill of Rights. South Africa is also signatory to several international agreements such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

Our Constitution calls for the advancement and protection of human rights for all. It does not matter whether they are men or women, adult or child, rich or poor, landed or landless, urban or rural dwellers, earners or unemployed, workers or employers, citizens or non-citizens.

The Constitution obliges the state to protect and uphold these rights, and to ensure that everyone's basic needs are progressively met. The Constitution is founded on the achievement of equality. Today, a quarter of a century since the Constitution came into effect, we are confronted by a stark reality. We are a free people, but we are still a long way from being a nation of equals.

Ladies and Gentlemen; This year, we want to place an added focus on our young people, so that we may find and present amicable solutions to closing/mitigating the socio-economic gap that lies between them and business opportunities.

As part of my first 100 days in office, I committed in ensuring that we indeed support our local SMMEs especially our young entrepreneurs. This is not a goal but a constitutional obligation that serves to ensure that all young people have fair access to Municipal opportunities.

This is a fundamental right entrenched across all corners of society. Through our LED plans for the coming financial year, I've seen programmes that promote and support our agricultural sector. From the farmers mentorship

programme to the trading of livestock at the newly built auction pens in KwaBhaca. This is indeed a major milestone for us all.

It is worth noting that the WI-FI installation programme will also be rolled out in all wards to ensure that we mitigate our poor network infrastructure related problems. We want to make access to information and opportunities a fashionable thing in our rural communities.

We will reach our goals only if we are able to address the failures exposed and exploited by Covid-19, and apply human rights standards to tackle entrenched, systematic, inequalities, exclusion and discrimination from opportunities. However, we need to hold hands and ensure that our societal ills do not continue to survive in the near future.

I hereby refer to the ill traits of Gender Based Violence (GBV) at home, work, school, church and places of entertainment. This should not go unwarranted because our future generation is all we have to succeed some of our current societal ills.

I plead to all young men and adults in our communities to take a strong stance against gender-based violence. Our chapter 9 institutions have been apprehended about this offence and we dearly call upon all law enforcement agencies to effectively implement the transcripts of the law, so that all GBV perpetrators can be confined in prison.

Lastly, as Umzimvubu Local Municipality, we pledge on this Human Rights Day that we remain committed to progressively fulfilling the human rights of all. Let us work together to ensure that the Constitution makes a difference in the daily lives of all our people. Let us build a nation founded on human rights and dignity.

And let us leave no one behind.

I thank you

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Delivered by

Her worship, Mayor Cllr Zukiswa Ndevu