

**Welcome Address by MEC for Health and Social  
Development Mme Dikeledi Magadzi during the Age-in-  
Action Conference at Forever Resort, Belabela, on 11<sup>th</sup>  
October 2011**

Minister of Health Dr Aaron Motsoaledi

Deputy Minister of Social Development Mme Maria Ntuli

Help-Age International, Africa Regional Development Centre in  
Kenya Mme Nesta Hatendi

National and International speakers

Age-in-Action executive committee members and the staff

Delegates

Members of the media

Ladies and gentlemen

Good afternoon

Programme director, the fact that we still have proactive older persons in the country who are willing to plough back the knowledge acquired into their communities and contribute greatly towards community upliftment make us happy as government.

We expect you to also contribute positively towards health by encouraging the youngsters to exercise on regular basis, eat healthy food and breast feed their children.

Living a healthy life style will also assist to increase your life expectancy, like the Nkowankowa-based grannies' soccer team Vakhegula Vakhegula who have won the international soccer tournament in Massachusetts the United States last year. The team's oldest player is a defender who is 85 years old.

Based on Statistics South Africa's 2001 population census the country had 3,5 million older persons which was 7,3 percent of the population to make the country's population one of the demographically oldest populations on the continent. We expect the figures to increase after the announcement of this year's census.

According to the World Health Organization it is projected that, by 2025, the proportion of older South Africans will increase to 10,5% and 5,23 million in numbers. Such growth in numbers is expected to occur in each five-year age group above 60.

Programme director, in line with the African National Congress' dictum "Working together we can do more" we are working well with the Non Governmental Organizations rendering services to older persons including other Community-Based Organizations and Non Profit-making Organizations. You need to mobilise other older persons from your neighbouring communities to be organized to contribute essentially in their communities.

Let us all work together to contribute positively towards “A long and healthy life”. Living a healthy life is one of the greatest weapons against the Non Communicable Diseases like diabetes, lungs and heart disease, cancer and stroke.

In an African culture the visitors feel welcomed after they got warm and comforting words from the host.

You are all welcomed to Limpopo and we wish you all the best in your deliberations throughout the conference.

I thank you