

Remarks by Eastern Cape MEC for Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism Hon. Lubabalo Oscar Mabuyane at the Institutions of Higher Learning Anti- Alcohol Abuse Campaign held in East London on February 25, 2019.

The Chairperson of the EC Liquor Board

The CEO of the EL Liquor Board

Vice Chancellor of our Universities

SRC Leadership present

The student community at large

Molweni,

Thank you very much for inviting us to this very important Indibano. **Bafundi sinengxaki.** Problems need people to solve before they get out of hands and become catastrophic. We have witnessed with concern disturbing incidents of student to student violence that is creeping in, in our universities. The murder of sixth-year medical student Lwando Mantshontsho at WSU in Mthatha and the rape of female students at Nelson Mandela University and Rhodes Universities by their fellow peers shocked us.

What is clear though from these incidents is that alcohol is somehow involved. Personally I don't drink alcohol but my logic tells me that if you drink it to a level where you can go on a rampage to kill or rape a fellow student or any other human being for that matter, then it is a wrong product for you. Research studies show that alcohol use amongst tertiary education students, particularly female

undergraduates, is increasing. It further reveals that heavy alcohol use by tertiary students leads to a variety of alcohol-related problems. Off major concern to us is its impact on poor academic performance and to your health which leads to dropouts and a potential bleak future for students. We need to save you from yourselves before your careers spiral out of control into abyss.

This is a challenge we should not be dealing with in our country as it is delaying the progress we want to make towards a better quality of life for all. On Tuesday next week as MEC for Finance, I would be tabling a Provincial Budget which has to implement government policies to improve the lives of our people including yourselves, students. I should be talking to you here about what you would like to see in the budget, how you want the government to assist you to realise your true potential when you graduate and how to access internship programmes and business startup opportunities that government has. Instead we are here at a place where you are supposed to learn and acquire knowledge to talk about your high levels of indulging on alcohol. This is not on. But so serious is this matter that I decided to leave preparations for the budget speech to come and talk to you. I hope when you come out of here you would after this engagement you would have a different perspective about the subject matter and life in general.

By the way how did we get here at these high levels of alcohol consumption in our country? It seems as if the apartheid system banned us from drinking and suddenly after 1994 democratic victory flooding gates were opened for people to drink uncontrollably. This

phenomenon is not confined in Universities but is evident in the broader community.

Our concern though when it comes to you students is that you are the future of this country. Government is investing billions of rands to create a brighter future for you and be able to contribute positively to society. Some of our villages do not have services; people are staying in filth in informal settlements in places such as Duncan Village. Many people from our province leave to look for work opportunities in Cape Town and Gauteng leaving the comfort of their home because there are factories to employ them. The money to do that is paying for your free higher education needs. Why are you then jeopardizing the chances that you have to make a better life for yourself and your families by engaging in acts that you did not come to varsity for?

So in a nutshell what I am trying to put across you is that as government and leaders of your Institutions we care about you, the responsibility is yours to change your ways. We are here today to launch a campaign under the theme: ***Sober mind, bright future***". This campaign is intended to equip you to deal with issues that are related to drinking alcohol including resisting peer pressure. We will walk this journey with you. There is so much in university life that one can do than excessively drinking alcohol. During my days at Forthare I was concerned about the issues that were affecting students and i decided to take up their struggles hence I became SRC President. Some of my peers were good at sports they spent most of their time in sports fields. Other students preferred to concentrate on their studies. Some enjoyed what we are here to

talk about today. Guess what, most of them never acquired their qualifications and some of them are now unemployed. We don't want you to become an addition to the statistics of those who did not qualify.

We are wiping your slate clean. Izono zixolelwe siqala isiqalo esitsha ngoku. Our call to you today is for you to think deeply about the kind of life you want to lead from now on. Secondly, we urge you to be ambassadors to show the way to others who do not see the dangers of excessive drinking. Thirdly, we want to say enjoy student life but do so responsibly and finally we want you to stay sober because a sober mind has a bright future.

With those few words let us work together to Grow our Province.