

2010

North West Provincial
Legislature

Public Participation Unit

**REPORT ON PERSONS' WITH DISABILITY
SECTORAL PARLIAMENT –HELD AT
NORTH WEST PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE
CHAMBER ON THE 26 NOVEMBER 2010**

Introduction

The North West Provincial Legislature dedicated 2010 Persons with Disability Parliament to the development of people in the sector, focusing on educational, economic, health and social issues to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are not overlooked. Participants were invited from all districts to ensure that all regions are awarded an opportunity to raise their concerns, frustrations and make recommendations. The report covers issues raised by participants, responses, challenges and recommendations thereof.

Purpose

- To destigmatize Persons with disabilities, acknowledge them as part of our greater communities, sensitize them of their innate potential and prepare them for existing opportunities as well as how to access them.

Objective

- The objective of this initiative was to promote the rights of Persons with Disabilities as fellow South Africans as espoused by the Bill of Rights – Chapter 2 of the Constitution.
- Encourage and empower Persons with Disabilities towards self actualization.
- To emphasize the importance of independence and healthy living for Persons with Disabilities.
- Encourage full economic, political and social participation within communities
- To instill self-worth and the will to live despite living with disabilities
- To hold departments and all relevant structures accountable on matters related to their competencies.

Issues raised per Department.

Department of Social Development, Women, Children, People with Disabilities

- Disability grants are not enough thus people with disability end up buying poor quality food and this impacts negatively on their health.
- There must be fully equipped centers for People with disability.
- Centers for People with disabilities are headed by able persons who are not capacitated enough to understand and handle issues facing people with disability.
- People with disabilities experience long and tiring queues at social development pay points
- The Department of Social Development must prioritize the needs of people with disability
- Private sectors should invest on projects run by people with disability
- NGOs are lead by people who are not disabled
- Centers for disabled people are owned by official but not disable people themselves.

Department of Health

- Itsoseng health care center does not have workers who are disabled.
- People with disabilities do not have access to health specialists such as physiologists, dieticians etc, therefore, government must employ enough specialists to deal with different types of disabilities.
- They do not have access to devices for various types of disabilities
- People with disabilities need a place/facilities where they can repair / fix their devices such as crushes, shoes etc as they get worn-out in no time.

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Department of Education

- North West Province does not have enough schools for people with disabilities and the existing ones are not accessible due to distance.
- Government must fund special schools, monitor and evaluate how the allocated funds are spent.
- Learners must be encouraged to develop their talents and skills as most of them do not cope with mainstream education
- Educators with disabilities are not developed so that they could hold senior positions in the department

Department of Roads and Public Works

- Roads must be repaired to accommodate people with disabilities especially for people on wheelchair and crutches.
- Busses must be accessible to accommodate people on wheelchairs.
- Buildings must be accessible

Department of Finance

- ATMs must be improved to cater for blind people. Currently in South Africa we have only silent ATMs.

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Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism

- Financial institutions must plough back to the society and fund people with disabilities to establish and sustain their businesses.
- SMME programme does not benefit people with disabilities.
- Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism must create awareness on entrepreneurial development to benefit people with disabilities.

Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs

- The Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) must also benefit people with disabilities.

Provincial Legislature

- The number of people with disabilities who are supposed to receive training is 4% and North West is still lacking in this regard thus we call for Legislature intervention.

Office of the Premier

- Office of the Premier is not monitoring and evaluating progress made on Awards that were issued to projects in Bojanala for people with disabilities.

Department of Human Settlement and Public Safety and Liaison

Human Settlement

- There is no housing delivery specially designed to benefit the needs of people with disabilities.

Public Safety and Liaison

- The recurring physical and sexual abuse of young females with disabilities is a serious outcry within the community.

Cross Cutting issues: all Institutions and Departments

- Sign language must be introduced in all departments and government officials need to be trained so that they can be able to communicate with deaf people.
- Deaf people are not considered and short listed for interviews due to lack of sign language expertise.
- Lack of recognition of capabilities of people with disabilities
- The 2% employment equity plan of employing people with disabilities must be adhered to.
- The data base in the Office of the Premier should be used in order to address the challenges faced by the Province.
- Exclusion of people with disabilities on the decision making process that affects them
- Government: disability internships are advertised mostly in Mafikeng news papers therefore people living outside Mafikeng cannot access information.

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Cases Reported during disability parliament.

- Johannes Thole from Maquassie in Dr Kenneth Kaunda District was assaulted by white people and the case ended without perpetrators being prosecuted. On the day of the Sectoral Parliament the case was left unresolved with 4days left before appeal.
- Mr. Kegakilwe Khumalo from Kagisano in Dr Ruth S. Mompoti District was verbally abused by a police officer the case was reported to the police but nothing has been done to date.
- Mr. Ramapha Mathule from Ditsobotla was knocked down by the car on 03/12/2009 at Klerksdorp. No statement was taken by police officials.
- Mr. Karabo Real Qobolo from Vryburg in Dr Ruth S.Mompoti District reported that in 2002 he was amongst the 16 people with disabilities who applied for emergency medical services but he was the only person who was not considered without being given a reason. Furthermore, in 2009 he got married to government official and since then his grant was stopped.

Responses

MEC M. Mokomele-Mothibi for Social Development, Women, Children and People with Disabilities emphasized that the department holds people with disabilities with high esteem as it is mandated by the constitution Act 108, 1996.

The department would increase the budget and positions and employ more people with disability. The relationship with other stakeholders should be strengthened. People with disabilities will have access to both print and audio media. Commitment and assistance to people with disabilities would be enhanced and monitoring and evaluation on the projects/ businesses would be the practice of the department.

MEC Dr. Masike for department of Health emphasized that all relevant issues raised during the sectoral parliament would be referred to his department for attention.

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MEC T. Modise for department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism indicated that while she was serving as the chairperson for the portfolio committee of the said department she raised a number of questions which she will prioritize. The MEC assured tangible feedback on the needs of people with disability.

Recommendations by Participants

- Starting from next year MECs must attend all sectoral parliaments to respond on issues relevant to their departments.
- Districts workshops must be conducted in order to prepare participants to the provincial event.

Conclusion

While physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychological variations may cause individual functional limitation or impairments, these do not have to lead to disability unless society fails to take account of and include people regardless of their individual differences.

Addressing pertinent issues regarding Persons with Disabilities has become a global issue and South Africa is not left behind. This was evinced by the appointment of Dr Siva Moodley, who has a long history of serving in the disability sector to serve in the United Nations Committee of Experts on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The convention was adopted by UN General Assembly in 2006 in responding to an overlooked development challenges facing Persons with Disabilities. Its purpose is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. South Africa ratified the Convention in 2007. It is against this background that the Legislature of the North West held Persons with Disability Parliament as part of its mandate.