# *Speech delivered by the Mayor Mangena of Greater Tzaneen Municipality on the 16 days of activism campaign on 28th November 2016*

# *Programme Director*

# *Distinguished guests*

# *Ladies and gentlemen*

*Good morning.*

*First and foremost I want to thank you for inviting me to address you on a very important topic, a topic about women and child abuse and how together we can fight it.*

*It is indeed a matter that concerns all of us.*

*It is one of the most pervasive violations of human rights in the world, one of the least prosecuted crimes, and one of the greatest threats to lasting peace and development.*

*I am talking about violence against women and children. I am honoured to be here, at your request, to address this urgent matter as you join hands together to advance human rights, democracy and the common values of humanity.*

*In this country, here in South Africa a woman is killed every 8 hours by someone they are intimate with. This is unacceptable because there are signs but as neighbours, brothers, friends we fail to alert authorities before it’s too late.*

*We all know that we have to do much more to respond to the cries for justice of women and children who have suffered violence. We have to do much more to end these horrible abuses and the impunity that allows these human rights violations to continue.*

*When government started the 16 Days of Activism against women and child abuse, we made ending violence against women and girls one of our top priorities.*

*I think we can all agree that the time for complacency is long gone, has passed and belongs to another era. The silence on violence against women and children has been broken and now is the time for stronger action.*

*It is time for action when up to 70 per cent of women in some countries face physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime.*

*When one in three girls in developing countries is likely to be married as a child bride; when some 140 million girls and women have suffered female genital mutilation; when millions of women and girls are trafficked in modern-day slavery; and when women’s bodies are a battleground and rape is used as a tactic of war – it is time for action.*

*This violence against women and children has tremendous costs to communities, nations and societies—for public well-being, health and safety, and for school achievement, productivity, law enforcement, and public programmes and budgets.*

*If left unaddressed, these human rights violations pose serious consequences for current and future generations and for efforts to ensure peace and security, to reduce poverty.*

*The effects of violence can remain with women and children for a lifetime, and can pass from one generation to another. Studies show that children who have witnessed, or been subjected to, violence are more likely to become victims or abusers themselves.*

*Violence against women and girls is an extreme manifestation of gender inequality and systemic gender-based discrimination. The right of women and children to live free of violence depends on the protection of their human rights and a strong chain of justice.*

*Government has enacted laws on violence against women and we continue to enforce them. We must assist our government enforce these laws.*

*Programme Director*

*For an effective response to this violence, different sectors in society must work together.*

*A rape survivor must have rapid access to a health clinic that can administer emergency medical care, including treatment to prevent HIV and unintended pregnancies and counseling.*

*A woman who is beaten by her husband must have someplace to go with her children to enjoy safety, sanity and shelter.*

*A victim of violence must have confidence that when she reports a case to the police, she will receive justice and the perpetrator will be punished.*

*And an adolescent boy in school who learns about health and sexuality must be taught that coercion, violence and discrimination against girls are unacceptable.*

*Today. We are transforming the attitude of men towards gender base violence*

*If our women can have greater access to global cultural scripts through urban living, education, or access to media they are more likely to reject intimate partner violence.*

*if we are to successfully fight this war, we need to ensure that our women have access to health-care services including post-rape care, emergency contraception and abortion, immediate and effective police responses, psychological support and counselling; legal advice and protection orders; shelter, telephone hotlines, and social assistance.*

*Responses must be timely and efficient to end a culture of hopelessness and impunity and foster a culture of justice and support.*

***Programme Director***

*When it comes to the prosecution of offenders, we know that ending impunity means that laws must be enforced.*

*Women must have access to the police to file a criminal report and receive legal advice and protection orders.*

*The response to violence must be immediate, coordinated and effective so that crimes are punished and justice is secured.*

*This is true for times of peace and conflict. There can be no lasting peace when women suffer sexual violence.*

*Courts and the justice system must be accessible and responsive to criminal and civil matters relating to violence against women.*

*Women must be informed of their legal rights and supported to navigate the legal system.*

*And for this, we need more women police officers, prosecutors and judges, because we know that women serving on the frontlines of justice strengthen justice for women and children.*

***Programme Director***

*When it comes to preventing violence, we must address the root causes of gender inequality and discrimination.*

*Evidence shows that where the “gender gap” is greater—in the status of women’s health, participation in the economy, education levels, and representation in politics— women are more likely to be subjected to violence. Especially important is economic empowerment as a prevention strategy*

*This means that we need to take a long-term, systemic and comprehensive approach that recognizes and protects women’s and children’s full and equal human rights.*

*We must promote a culture of equality between men and women through institutional and legal reform, education, awareness-raising and the full engagement of men and boys.*

*Distinguished guests*

*Government has established a Council on Violence against Women and Children. The Advisory Council comprise of key government departments, civil society organisations and other relevant partners. It will coordinate comprehensive initiatives implemented to stop the scourge.*

*Government provides support to children to fight child poverty.*

*More than 10,5 million children benefit from the child support grant, while we provide foster care benefits to over 563 000 vulnerable children.*

*Government subsidises close to 800 000 children at early childhood development centres to enable children from poor households to obtain early education.*

*In addition, more than eight million children at primary and secondary schools benefit from school-feeding schemes.*

*The Expanded Public Works Programme and a community works programme provide short-term employment opportunities while also responding to pressing community challenges.*

# *These are some of the many programmes designed to address gender and race inequality in the country.*

# *What we must learn today is that whenever you fail to report a woem or child abuse case, you are in a way promoting abuse.*

# *We need the constribution of each member of socieryt to effectively deal with this scourge.*

# *As a Mayoress I will fight to ensure that women and children get maximum protection and freedom wherever they live here in Tzaneen.*

# *We all know that victims of abuse especially women suffer in silence and others have accespeted the ongoing violation of their rights and bodies as normal and they all believe they deserve to be abused*