

**Message of Support from Thabazimbi Local Municipality on the occasion of World AIDS Day, by Cllr Two Days Molefe 1 December 2012, Amandelbult**

***01 December 2012***

**Programme Director**

**The General Manager of Anglo Platinum,  
Mine Management of Anglo American Platinum mine**

**Fellow councilors present here,**

**Leadership of Labour Unions present here,**

**Mine workers from Anglo American Platinum mine,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

**Good morning to you all.**

**Programme Director**, it is indeed a great honour and privilege for me to share this day with you and to be part of this very important event.

Today we join millions of people across the globe to mark World AIDS Day.

On this day each year, the world gathers to reflect on progress made in the fight against HIV and AIDS, and to recommit to taking the battle forward.

This year's theme is "A re dlale Safe for zero new HIV and TB infections"- "Let's play it safe for new HIV and TB infections". The global theme for World AIDS Day was announced last year and it will run until 2015, with three key messages: "**Zero New HIV Infection**", "**Zero Stigma and Discrimination**" and "**Zero AIDS- related Deaths**".

**Programme Director** Today is a special anniversary because the world is marking 31 years since the virus that causes AIDS was discovered on June 5, 1981 in Los Angeles, California.

It has been a long, hard and painful road since then in our country and beyond.

However, we are pleased to stand here today and say 31 years on, we can count some successes in the fight against the scourge.

We are steadily overcoming fear and confusion due to heightened awareness campaigns. We have overcome divisions, which were delaying progress in the fight against AIDS.

**Programme Director**, Knowing one's status is important for both staying negative and living positively.

Besides knowing one's status, the testing campaign is a powerful tool for fighting the stigma and discrimination.

The South African National AIDS Council, with the Department of Health as the lead department, are continuing to take testing to all corners of the country, including rural areas. The availability of medicines has also improved considerably.

We are truly making progress. Challenges remain, but overall, we can see the results of the hard work of all sectors of society and ordinary people from all walks of life.

We are heartened that the progress we are making as government is being recognised internationally as well.

**Programme Director**, Government is prioritising the fight against the abuse of women and children, through law enforcement as well as education and awareness. We need communities and all stakeholders to assist us too, as government will not win this battle alone.

With regards to the social impact, we urge society to support orphans and vulnerable children who have lost their parents to the epidemic.

We must ensure that these children are protected and are given every opportunity to prosper, despite losing their parents.

We appeal to the business community, non-governmental organisations and the religious sector, to continue working with government in this endeavour.

We acknowledge and praise the various community care givers and neighbours who already provide support to orphans and child-headed households. They are the unsung heroes and heroines of the fight against HIV and AIDS.

**Programme Director,** We also record the contribution of many dedicated health professionals - the nurses, doctors, pharmacists and all others who come face to face with the epidemic and provide care and support to the infected. They must keep up the good work on our behalf.

Today, we also wish to make a special appeal to all South Africans, that together we must eliminate the stigma, discrimination and human rights violations of people living with HIV or their families.

Let us support our family members, neighbours, colleagues and friends who are HIV positive. They need the love, understanding and support of family, friends and relatives to enable them to live long, productive and healthy lives like all South Africans. They must not be made to feel like lepers.

Let there be no more shame, no more blame, no more discrimination and no more stigma.

Let this be the start of an era of openness, of taking personal responsibility, and of working together in unity to prevent HIV infections and to deal with its impact.

Working together, we can achieve these goals.

**I thank you!**