

MLAMBO-NGCUKA: LAUNCH OF WAR ON POVERTY

Deputy President P Mlambo-Ngucka and senior government leaders kick starts the war on poverty campaign in the Free State

It was business unusual, as government descended on Jacobsdal in the Xhariep district municipality in the Free State to launch the war on poverty campaign. The deputy president led a high level government delegation and left the community with a message that partnership with government will go a long way in eradicating poverty.

The war on poverty campaign's unique approach draws on the experience of other focused and targeted initiatives such as the urban and rural development strategy, the project consolidate and izimbizo to bring about maximum impact in identified communities. All government departments will be working together in an integrated manner.

"Through this campaign we will ensure that the relevant implementing departments or agencies follow up poor households in need of services that they are eligible for", said the deputy president.

The campaign's approach is to make door to door visits to uncover household needs and to interview key stakeholders in the community to unearth community needs.

She added that government has successfully mainstreamed its anti poverty initiatives into the planning and implementation of its programmes and in the budgeting process.

"However our challenge is to ensure that households know about these programmes and can access them and that the poor have social networks to help break the poverty cycle".

The programme in Xhariep started with the deputy president visiting various households and schools in the area. The day culminated with her addressing the community at the local sports grounds. Deputy President Mlambo-Ngucka said addressing the campaign on poverty that there was never a higher calling than this, the fight against poverty. Describing everyone as a warrior in this fight she said "the enemy was poverty".

She said the fight should move from household to household and that by the time the whole country had been targeted, the poor in the country should be known by their names and not merely numbers.

The success of the campaign, she said, lied heavily on the partnerships with various sectors of society. "We appeal to individuals within households, social movements, civil society groups, and businesses in the country and faith organisations to join hands in this war our collective efforts have changed South Africa for the better once before let's do it again".

Many countries, she added, had gone through the same route we are currently undertaking proving to be a success.

The new minister in the Presidency Kgalema Motlanthe, accompanying the deputy president on the day, echoed the statement that government was in the fight for the long haul.

He said it was a big undertaking and those in the fight against poverty should show no weakness but not be overly confident. "If we make a success of this initiative in Xhariep the example can be emulated throughout the country."

The launch event in the Free State will not be the final step. All departments are committing to a minimum of three months aftercare in the communities visited in order to ensure that services that individuals are eligible for are attended to. The initiative forms part of an overall anti poverty strategy.

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