

MEDIA ADVISORY

30 October 2019

MINISTER LINDIWE ZULU TO ADDRESS THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE CONFERENCE AND FAMILY-RELATED INTERVENTIONS

In the last few months, South Africa witnessed violent protests against the proliferation of drugs and drug-related violence in communities throughout the country. At the heart of these protests were community calls for government to curb illegal drugs by ensuring amongst others, that drug dealers face the full might of the law, that appropriate interventions are implemented to prevent youth involvement in illicit drugs and to ensure that communities become drug-free spaces.

It is against this background that the Department of Social Development and the Central Drug Authority (CDA) will host an International Conference on Substance Abuse and Family Interventions from 31 October-2 November 2019.

The objective of the conference is to review prevention, demand and harm reductions, including law enforcement strategies and to address new and emerging trends as well as mitigation of the impact of the scourge of alcohol and substance abuse on families.

The conference will also discuss the implications of the recent Constitutional Court on the legalisation of possession, cultivation and personal use of cannabis in South Africa. This will include sharing best practices and benchmarking with countries such as Canada where the use of cannabis is legalised.

The conference, under the theme: “The impact of Substance Abuse on Families”, will be officially opened by the Minister of Social Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu on the final day of the Social Development Month, 31 October 2019.

The conference will bring together government, civil society, private sector and drug experts, including representatives from SADC and international countries to discuss how to reduce the demand for illicit drugs and substance, and how to effectively combat drug and substance abuse. The conference will also enable South Africa to obtain recent data that could contribute towards various treatment, prevention, rehabilitation, aftercare and reintegration programmes.

The conference is the first of its kind in the country and the department intends that it should take place every second year for the country to be on par with its international counterparts, particularly as South Africa implements the National Drug Master Plan.

The NMDP serves as a blueprint for combating the scourge of alcohol and substance abuse, which has reached epidemic proportions in South Africa.

Members of the media are invited to attend the International Conference on Substance Abuse and Family Interventions arranged as follows:

Date: 31 October-2 November 2019

Time: 11h00-14h00

Venue: Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre, Boksburg-Gauteng Province

Media can RSVP by contacting Ms Nomfundo Lentsoane on 066 480 6845 / NomfundoLe@dsd.gov.za and Mr Jaconia Kobue on 0632495120/JaconiaK@dsd.gov.za

ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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