

## Traditional Leadership in dialogue on the protection of Human Rights

As the country celebrated Human Rights this month, the National Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) together with the Limpopo Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA) hosted a Dialogue with Traditional Leadership on the Protection of Human Rights within traditional institutions and structures.

Under the theme, “*The year of Indigenous Languages: Promoting and Deepening a Human Rights Culture*”, the dialogue focused on the challenges faced by women and children ; the role they play in traditional leadership structures, the protection of human rights within the context of traditional communities’ , cultural practices , traditions and customs.

Adding to that, presentations were made on the rights of women in structures of traditional leadership, traditional communities and royal families and, the right to practice your culture and religion within the context of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

Delivering the keynote address, Minister Zweli Mkhize thanked Kgoshi Kgabo Moloto III for allowing the dialogue to be hosted in his community.

“Our human rights are contained in the constitution, we therefore want to send a message that traditional leadership is not against but for the protection of human rights,” he stressed.

The Minister of CoGTA put more emphasis on the fact that the traditional institutions are the champions for the rights of women and children; the weak and disabled, and stressed that issues of violating human rights such as “*Uku thwala*”(unauthorised practices of initiation and the rape of especially the elderly, women and children) should come to an end.

CoGHSTA MEC, Jerry Ndou said he was proud to have been part of the dialogue and will continue to support any initiative that aims to evolve traditional leadership structures so that it is in line with the constitution.

Kgoshi Kgabo Moloto III expressed how pleased he was to host the dialogue on the protection of human rights for the first time. “You made no mistake by coming to pilot this programme in Moletjie. I urge traditional leaders to engage the minister on issues affecting us and clear the negative stereo type that traditional leadership has no place in society or is a form of dictatorship,” he said.

In conclusion, Minister Mkhize assured all participants that their concerns and challenges will be addressed.