

# Minister Nkoana-Mashabane must show leadership in her department

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Thank you, House Chairperson

The department of women, youth and persons with disabilities has failed dismally. This department is supposed to be playing a key role in protecting the vulnerable groups in our society and improving their lives. Yet, it has failed at every turn.

Today we still see increasing levels of gender-based violence and femicide in our country.

We still see thousands and thousands of young people who are unemployed; who have brilliant business ideas but are not able to access government funding which would help them get those businesses off the ground.

Today we still see the exclusion and neglect of persons with disabilities.

The question is, what is the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities doing to turn this situation around? The answer to this question is plain and simple: NOTHING!!

The department has shown that it is not a caring one by failing to prioritize the Disability Rights Bill which persons with disabilities in this country have long been calling for.

Instead of taking appropriate measures to advocate for, and monitor, the inclusion of persons with disabilities, the department has decided to remove a target from Programme 4 which deals with the Rights of persons with disabilities.

It has also cut R5.2 Million from Programme 4 which was meant to help strengthen the National Disability Machinery. This clearly shows that the department has scant prioritization and lacks a proper plan to address the concerns that are being raised by persons with disabilities.

This is deeply concerning, given the fact that people with disabilities in this country still face exclusion and discrimination.

According to a research brief on Equality and Disability in South Africa conducted by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), it was estimated that eight in ten persons with disabilities in this country are unemployed.

It further noted that persons with disabilities still face discrimination in various social and economic spheres, including in education and economy.

Why hasn't Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane taken necessary steps to deal with the challenges facing persons with disabilities and making sure that her department's Annual Performance Plan and its targets are smart enough to alleviate these challenges?

Why is the minister not doing anything when her department fails to do what it was established for and that is advocating for the improvement of the lives of women, youth, and persons with disabilities?

Now is the time for the minister and her department to rise to the occasion and start listening and responding to the concerns of women, youth and persons with disabilities. As the Democratic Alliance, we will continue to exercise artful oversight over the department to ensure that it plays its part in improving the lives of women, youth and persons with disabilities.