

## Media Release

### For Immediate Release

15 July 2016

### Madiba's Legacy through the eyes of a child

**Johannesburg:** The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund (Fund) has on Friday 15 July 2016 celebrated significant milestones in the 21 years of its existence. A moment of silence was observed for the deceased 7 children and 1 caregiver at the Lakehaven Child and Youthcare Centre in Durban before the celebration proceedings commenced.

The Fund, its main beneficiaries the children and other partners celebrated the birthday of its late Founder Nelson R. Mandela at the Johannesburg office. The celebration was used to reflect on the achievements of the Fund in changing the lives of the children for the better, the building of a new Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital that is due to open in due course; and the completion of a new five year strategy from 2016 to 2021.

The new strategy was informed by a comprehensive research on the state of the South African Children; and the findings identified poverty, lack of access to quality education, and lack of formal housing as some of the pressing issues affecting children. This research has informed the Fund's new strategy which will focus on three overarching themes being Child Survival and Development; Child Safety and Protection and Youth Leadership. The Fund is emboldened by these interventions and preparations are well underway to roll out together with its implementing partners.

#### 1. **Child Survival & Development** (First 1000 Days of a Child's Life)

The programme focuses primarily on reduction in Child Mortality, access to health care, and an improved and responsive care systems for children under 3 years of age.

#### 2. **Child Safety & Protection** (Safe Schools)

The programme has its core focus on prevention of sexual violence, prevention of bullying, conviction of perpetrators, and creating safe spaces for children.

#### 3. **Youth Leadership** (Youth Think Tanks)

The programme focuses on ethical leadership, civic participation, human rights and entrepreneurship

As the Fund marks 21 years of existence, the theme - "**Madiba's legacy through the eyes of a child**"; is a befitting tribute to the Founder.

The Fund CEO Sibongile Mkhabela says the organisation will continue to honour Mr Mandela's wish of celebrating his birthday with the children, and she welcomed guests from

Malawi, Ethiopia, Uganda, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Nigeria by saying Madiba stood for all Children of the African continent. Also present at the event was the Head Coach of the South African Senior Men's National Team (Bafana Bafana) Shakes Mashaba, who recently won the COSAFA Championship in Namibia.

“For many years Madiba gave fully his time and energy; engaging the youth in vibrant discussions about their dreams and hopes; telling stories; and finally sharing his birthday cake with his eager little guests. In memory of Madiba, we continue to celebrate his birthday by giving our children the space to play, speak and command attention. Together with our NGO and corporate partners we are privileged to honour the country's youngest citizens. This year we will again be with our children doing what we do best; giving them a chance to be kids, and ensuring that their voices are heard. We are honoured to have the doyen of African story telling Gcina Mhlophe narrating Madiba's life journey to the children”; said Mkhabela.

The story telling tradition will create an environment for children to talk to each other and express their views through art and play.

The event presented an opportunity for children and young people who have never interacted with Mr. Mandela to learn about his values and principles through storytelling, poetry, dance, painting, exhibition stalls, Spelling BEE, Video Screening, rides, jumping castle and other artistic activities for children.

The cutting of a well decorated birthday cake brought joy and excitement to the children.

End.

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