

# PROVINCIAL DRUG MASTER PLAN FOR THE EASTERN CAPE TO BE UNVEILED

JUNE 24, 2017



The Provincial Drug Master Plan, headed by the Eastern Cape's Department of Social Development, will be unveiled at a launch even in Cala on Monday, coinciding with the United Nation's International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The Social Development Department spokesperson, Mzukisi Solani, said the Plan was a response to what they see as a drug and substance abuse epidemic, particularly among teenagers in the Eastern Cape.

"The high rate of substance abuse in the Eastern Cape manifests its negative effects on the youth. This situation has resulted to the increase of social ills such as high rate of crime, school dropouts, and maternal and child mortality through high prevalence of foetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) and other conditions," said Solani.

Solani stated that alcohol is the most dominant form substance abuse in the Eastern Cape.

"A recent study by the Foundation for Alcohol Related Research (FARR), shows that one out of every ten Grade 1 learners in some parts of the province have been born with the consequences of their mothers' drinking during pregnancy," he said.

"Many Eastern Cape women start to drink alcohol at ages as young as ten years old and the area now has the highest reported rate of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) in the world."

"Thirteen percent of Grade One learners in the Nelson Mandela Bay areas of Bethelsdorp and Helenvale have been diagnosed with FASD. The FARR study was commissioned by the Eastern Cape Liquor Board in 2013, and will continue through to this year," said Solani.

Solani said the goal of the Provincial Drug Master Plan goal is to reduce the social burden and health impact caused by substance abuse in the Eastern Cape, through the provision of mechanisms aimed at demand, supply as well as harm reduction.

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