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Department:  
Women  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Media Statement

Attention Journalists and News Editors

Pretoria, 29 December 2018

## **DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN LAUNCHES MEN'S AND CHILDREN'S ROBOTS**

The Department of Women will on Sunday, 30 December 2018 officially launch the Children's and Men's Robots which aims to bring generational change and ensure a gender-based violence free society. The Children's Robots aims to condition South Africa's next generation on how to be a good friend, and educate them about the negative impacts of aggressive activities.

"As the Department of Women, we feel the timing of this launch is appropriate, as there is increased incidents of gender based violence during the festive period due to increased consumption of alcohol and drugs, as well as increased exposure to risky behaviour," said Minister in the Presidency Responsible for Women, Bathabile Dlamini.

In an effort to reach young men, the Department of Women will also embark of a series of dialogues across South Africa to introduce the Men's Robot to citizens and civil society organisations. The dialogues will be convened in partnership with the Departments of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training with the aim of bring about generational behavioral change. The department will take the Children's Robot into schools and will be used to educate younger audiences on healthy and unhealthy friendships.

This initiative follows the launch of the Women's Robot by President Cyril Ramaphosa on National Women's Day. To date, the Department of Women has empowered thousands of women and girls across South Africa through benchmarking healthy as well as unhealthy relationships.

The Women's Robot aims to quickly educate women and girls on telltale signs of when a relationship is healthy (green) to when it is becoming risky (orange) to when women are in danger (red). This tool coupled with country-wide dialogues in communities allowed the department to train young girls and women on how to identify early signs that a risk of gender based violence was present.

Through consultations with women and men during 16 Days Campaign, both men and women requested a Men's Robot which could educate men on how to be a good partner. "The idea sounds simple, but is immensely powerful. So many young boys and men said to us they are constantly bombarded with images of abused women, but they do not know or understand what it means to be a good man," said Minister Dlamini.

"The message conveyed to us by so many boys reinforced anecdotal evidence that there were not enough positive role models for boys and young men. The Men's Robot will be used as an educational tool to socially engineer a generation of healthy relationships, thereby drastically reducing incidents of gender based violence" added Minister Dlamini.

The intention of this campaign is to make gender based violence a household conversation. "It is only through education and families talking about gender-based violence, that this scourge can be beaten at community level," added Minister Dlamini.

Members of the media are encouraged to spread the content of the Women's Robot, Men's Robot and Children's Robot so as to join in the cause of ending gender based violence.

The robots will be issued via the department's Twitter account (@DepartmentWomen) and GCIS.

**ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN**

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