



**Paraffin Safety Association**  
Southern Africa

**For immediate Release**

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FINALLY THE FACES AND VOICES OF PAIN HAVE SPOKEN**

More than 240 delegates gathered at the Kopanong Hotel & Conference Centre outside Benoni on the East Rand on June 27 & 28 June, 2007 for a 2 Day Household Energy Safety Summit. The delegates, representing all the 9 provinces in South Africa came to deliberate, agree upon and deliver a Declaration of Demands on Household Energy Safety to the Department of Minerals and Energy as one of the important outcomes of the 2 day summit.

The Managing Director of the Paraffin Safety Association's Patrick Kulati handed over the Declaration of Demands to Mrs Nonhlanhla Ndebele who represented the Department of Minerals & Energy at the Summit. "I felt like I was carrying in my hands the very aspirations of about 18 million South African domestic users of paraffin and appliances who are sick and tired of harmful paraffin related incidents. It was also very touching for me when I listened to Marcus Tumi Modiba, a young survivor from Alexandra township in Gauteng. This bright young boy suffered burns from a paraffin heater when he was used as a "Human Shield" during an argument between a couple at a neighbour's house", says Patrick Kulati.

The main objectives for all these summits organised by the Paraffin Safety Association were to

- To position Paraffin Safety as a Human Rights Issue
- To propose government policy and way forward for safer paraffin system
- To find out and discuss Low Income Sector's household energy needs and challenges.
- To discuss strategies for communities to take action on household energy safety and especially paraffin safety as part of community mobilization
- To discuss possible solutions such as packaging and labeling

All the survivors of paraffin related incidents felt so comfortable to open up and share their harrowing and heart-wrenching stories at the summit. This was influenced by the fact that the interviewer herself is a survivor of sexual violence perpetrated by her biological father. Andile Carelse is now the chairperson of the Open Disclosure Foundation, presenter of Khumbul'ekhaya on SABC 1, a musician, women's rights activist and a very influential and successful celebrity.

The overwhelming majority of the survivors never received counselling after their horrible experiences. It became clear to those of us who attended the summits that indeed this is a reality for millions of other disadvantaged people who experience injuries from using paraffin and its appliances daily. As much as the paraffin-related impact to the economy has been estimated at R104 billion per annum, its real impact on human life is not quantifiable.

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Keynote speakers who addressed delegates at this summit were from the National Consumer Forum, South African NGO Coalition, Human Science Research Council, Department of Minerals & Energy, Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital burns unit, ESKOM, Liquefied Petroleum Gas Association, Energy Research Centre at the University of Cape Town, the Department of Provincial and Local Government and the Regulatory Division of the South African Bureau of Standards.

Mr. Kulati concluded by saying, "This summit, which was a culmination of 3 Regional Summits held in Durban, Port Elizabeth and Rustenburg, mandated the Paraffin Safety Association:

- 1. To speak on behalf of all the delegates present at the summits and other domestic paraffin users.**
- 2. To ensure that the Declaration is included in the Department of Minerals and Energy's integrated Household Energy Plan.**

We are also calling on people of South Africa to please assist the survivors. The survivors need assistance with counselling and this was also confirmed by the counsellors present at the summit, clothes and building materials, fast-tracking of ID application processes, food, and money. Although we as the association cannot accept cash, we can link anyone who wants to help directly with the people concerned".

**END**

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