

***INCLUDING ALL INDIVIDUALS WITH
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES!***

Media Release

**WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY – 21ST MARCH 2024
ENDING STEREOTYPES FOR PERSONS WITH DOWN SYNDROME**

Join us to promote full inclusion on World Down Syndrome Day and help #EndTheStereotypes.

March 21st is World Down Syndrome Day (WSDS), this global awareness day has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012. In a world where diversity is celebrated and inclusion is paramount, it is imperative to address and dismantle stereotypes that hinder the progress and acceptance of persons with Down syndrome. Today, we stand united with the global Down syndrome community to end these harmful stereotypes, and embrace their unique talents, abilities and contributions, regardless of their genetic makeup.

Stereotypes surrounding Down syndrome have persisted for far too long, perpetuating misconceptions and limiting opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome to fully participate in society. These stereotypes often lead to discrimination, exclusion, and denial of basic human rights.

WSDS presents an opportunity for Heads of State to observe this day in their respective countries and to encourage awareness programmes on the condition. The South African government having signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) should take this opportunity to officially recognise and support this event.

For WSDS 2024, the global Down syndrome community calls for Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities. Every person with a disability has a right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination on the basis of their disability. The WHO - Global Report on Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities, reports that persons with disabilities die earlier, have poorer health and functioning, and are more affected by health emergencies than persons without disabilities.

Inequality in South Africa's healthcare system is leading to inefficiency in both the public and private sector. Out of pocket expenditure on healthcare is contributing to poverty to a sector that is already overburdened due to their socio-economic circumstances. Factor in inaccessibility of specialised services and transport, unaffordability of services, negative attitudes and discrimination and lack of accessible healthcare information, all leading to greater vulnerability and poorer health outcomes.

Equity is key to Universal Health Care Coverage, this means there should be appropriate financing and strong leadership, to ensure that all people, including persons with disability have access to the highest attainable standard of health.

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What will we be doing?

On the 20th March 2024, DSSA in collaboration with UNISA, Centre of Excellence in Disability, will be hosting a symposium at the UNISA Muckleneuk Campus under the banner: “DISMANTLING STEREOTYPES- UNITING VOICES FOR CHANGE”. Important discussion topics on stereotypes around Health, Education and Employment will be addressed. Join us in our advocacy campaign to ensure that persons with Down syndrome are not defined by their condition, recognise that they are scholars, artists, athletes, entrepreneurs, and so much more.

Follow us on **Facebook throughout March and #EndTheStereotypes,**

Down syndrome is the most common occurring genetic condition caused by a full or partial extra copy of chromosome 21, commonly referred to as Trisomy 21. This extra chromosome causes delay in both physical and cognitive development.

For more media enquiries, please contact:
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Our members: DSA Amathole, Free State DSA, Port Elizabeth DSA, DSA Pretoria/Tshwane,
DSA Western Cape, DSA Support Cape, Intathakusa Support Group eMalahleni

Non-profit organisation 009-415/ Public Benefit Organisation 930019699