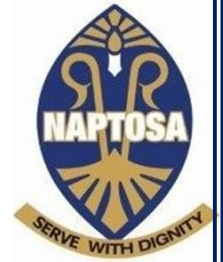


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9 October 2024

NAPTOSA Statement on the Death of Five Learners (Naledi)

NAPTOSA is devastated and deeply saddened by the tragic loss of another five children, aged between six and nine, who lost their lives after allegedly consuming contaminated snacks from a spaza shop in the Naledi area on 6 October 2024. This incident occurred exactly a year after two other young lives were similarly cut short under comparable circumstances. It is utterly unacceptable that such preventable tragedies continue to happen, highlighting grave concerns about the safety of our children and the broader systemic failures that persist.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families affected and stand in solidarity with the Naledi community as they navigate this immense pain. This tragedy underscores a dire need for urgent and robust interventions to safeguard the lives of our children. It is deeply troubling that local clinics and hospitals appear ill-equipped to respond adequately to such incidents. We cannot afford to have our medical facilities unprepared when swift and effective action is crucial to saving lives.

NAPTOSA, furthermore, calls on the government to do more to ensure that no family has to endure this kind of anguish again. It is imperative that stringent measures be implemented to ensure local shops comply with food safety regulations—not only while the wound is fresh, but as a continuous, long-term priority. Authorities must enforce these standards rigorously and hold those who fail to comply accountable.

We urge all stakeholders, including community members, government agencies, and local businesses, to prioritise child safety. Our children's lives are far too precious to be put at risk. It is high time for our government to step up and provide the leadership and resources necessary to protect the well-being of our communities.

Let this tragedy be a rallying call for immediate action, greater accountability, and sustainable safety standards. Our children deserve better.

Mr BL Manuel

Executive Director