

## **Itekeng Savings Scheme Eradicates Poverty**

*Faith Tshabo, Daily News, Thursday, February 14, 2013*

Francistown: Monarch Customary Court president, Mr Gunny Moses, says the Itekeng federation savings scheme is an organization that saves money and eradicates poverty. Mr. Moses cited an event organized by Itekeng Savings scheme in conjunction with Tebelopele Voluntary Counseling and Testing Center to encourage residents of the Monarch community to undertake HIV/AIDS tests. He noted that within the SADC, Botswana had previously been the only country without savings scheme members.

Mrs. Gladys Matlape, a federation member, noted that the through saving she had been able to support her children and connect water and electricity to her home. Mrs. Matlape stated that the federation consisted of two schemes; one that covers minor needs such as groceries and the second which covers major needs such as building projects. She further encouraged youth to join the federation as a means to achieve independence.

In addition she noted that the federation has a programme that helps members to buy plots and build and run businesses through a P20/month contribution. This programme also consists of land, health and burial components for members. Mrs. Matlape said that the members of the Itekeng scheme had approached the land board with one voice to ask for plots as it was becoming increasingly difficult for individuals to secure land. She noted that scheme members had a variety of income generating projects including manufacture of earrings, jam, polish and flower pots (all skills which they learnt from fellow federations who visited from Zimbabwe). She further encouraged the youth to engage in these projects and avoid crime and HIV/AIDS.

Speaking at the event, Mrs. Goitseone Mooketsi of Botshelo Clinic, said that the rate of people infected by HIV in Monarch was too high attributing the trend to lack of education and alcohol abuse. She indicated that even children at primary school indulged in sexual activities and parents needed to educate their children on such issues from an early age....

Mrs. Keletso Stacey, who is a member of the scheme, said people should refrain from stigmatizing those who lived with the virus as it negatively impacted the war against the pandemic. She continued that testing for HIV/AIDS showed responsibility and the more that people knew about it the less afraid they became.