

TO ALL MEDIA/ NEWS EDITORS

JOHANNESBURG, GAUTENG

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NYDA EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER RISING TEENAGE PREGNANCIES FOLLOWING FESTIVE SEASON BIRTHS

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) notes with profound concern the persistent national challenge of teenage pregnancy. This concern is heightened by provisional reports from provincial health departments indicating a significant number of births to adolescent mothers on Christmas Day and New Year's Day 2026.

Initial data reports that more than 160 teenage girls gave birth on New Year's Day alone, a figure representing twice the number recorded on the same day in 2025. Provinces, including the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, reported notably high instances of teenage deliveries during the festive period. These reports reflect a distressing national trend, as Statistics South Africa recorded 123,971 births to mothers aged 19 and younger between January 2024 and February 2025.

Teenage pregnancy remains a profound youth development and social challenge that undermines education outcomes, health, and future economic participation. Evidence consistently shows that adolescent pregnancy is linked to school dropout, increased vulnerability to poverty and gender-based violence, and limited life opportunities, particularly for young girls.

The NYDA is concerned that the burden of teenage pregnancy continues to fall disproportionately on young women. At the same time, underlying drivers such as poverty, violence, limited access to youth-friendly services, and harmful social norms remain inadequately addressed.

As the state agency mandated to champion integrated youth development, the NYDA recognises young girls and young women as a core part of its constituency. The Agency is dedicated to enhancing a holistic response focused on prevention and sustainable support, structured around four key pillars:

- **Prevention and awareness** - including life-skills development, rights-based education, and gender equality programmes.
- **Education and skills retention** - supporting young mothers to remain in or return to education, training, and skills development pathways.

