



# Malibongwe

malibongwe  
praise be  
igama  
to women  
lamakhosikazi



LET'S DO MORE,

TOGETHER.





# WELCOME

By Cde Anusha Pillay



Welcome to our first edition of Malibongwe. This publication is launched during our observance of Women's Month and at a time when we are celebrating a significant milestone in our country's history: 30 Years of Democracy in South Africa. The theme for this year's Women's Month is fittingly commemorated under the theme "Celebrating 30 Years of Democracy Towards Women's Development". To give further impetus to this vital moment to reflect on the empowerment and advancement of women's basic human rights post-apartheid, we reached out to our Honourable Cadres in the Parliamentary Caucus to share their thoughts and views with us through articles, statements, photographs and videos.

These submissions have been captured in this publication as well as on our social media platforms. The articles have sought to highlight the trials and tribulations of women in our country but also the achievements and progress we have made in addressing the plight of South African women. The issues raised herein draw attention to many of the important issues that women in South Africa still face. Issues such as gender-based violence, discrimination, unequal pay, gender responsive budgeting, women in defence and the military and fair access to housing.

In 2026 we will celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the 1956 Women's March in Pretoria. This was a pivotal moment in South African women's history where thousands of South Africa women – ranging from all backgrounds and cultures including Indians, Coloureds, Whites, and Blacks – staged a march on the Union Buildings of Pretoria to protest against the abusive pass laws. The determination showed by these heroes of our struggle depicts the unification and strength of women across the country. In paying homage to these fearless fighters, and in the words of our first democratic President, Nelson Mandela: "Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression".

**Malibongwe igama lamakhosikazi !**

## WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF DEMOCRACY TOWARDS WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

The Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities in South Africa is crucial in promoting and protecting the rights and well-being of women, youth, and persons with disabilities. As we enter Women's Month, the importance of this department is emphasized once more. Women's Month is a month where we emphasize women and their contribution to a non-racist, non-sexist, democratic, and prosperous society. Throughout its history, South Africa has been battling with three forms of oppression of race, class, and gender. As we continue to fight these oppressions, the ANC continues to believe in its vision of a national democratic revolution, which will

Women's Month commemorations honor the courage and tenacity of women who struggled for freedom and equality. It serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made by women in the fight for a democratic and equitable society. This distinction encourages current and future generations to continue working for women's rights. The celebration also draws attention to ongoing issues confronting women in South Africa, including gender-based violence, economic inequality, and discrimination.

It provides a platform for discourse and activism, pushing society to confront these challenges and work towards creating a safer and more equitable environment for women.

The Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities is dedicated to addressing gender inequality and promoting women's empowerment across various sectors. Throughout its history, the department has made numerous interventions in the lives of women in South Africa, such as promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, accelerating the fight against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, economic empowerment initiatives, awareness and advocacy, and policy and legislative reforms. By advocating for policies and programs that support gender equality, the department helps to create a more inclusive society where women have equal opportunities to participate in the economy, politics, and social life.





One of the department's primary roles is to address GBVF, a significant issue in South Africa. By implementing the National Strategic Plan on GBVF, the Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities works to reduce violence against women and girls through prevention, protection, and support measures. This is critical for ensuring the safety and well-being of women in the country.

Zuma highlighted that the department had started working on initiatives to place women in the ocean economy. The program's main aim was to focus on the diverse sectors in the ocean economy, such as the maritime and maritime transport sector, aquaculture, underwater biodiversity, and gas and oil exploration. Other initiatives were related to tourism, leisure, entertainment activities, climate change adaptation, and environmental management, including pollution in the ocean economy. The minister later went on to highlight that women continue to suffer the second pandemic of gender-based violence and femicide. In an attempt to mitigate this scourge, the department submitted the Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Bill

to Parliament. The purpose of this bill is to coordinate all efforts of government, private sector, labor, and civil society in the eradication of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in our country.

The Department has created a thorough strategy, which is the Comprehensive National Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Prevention Strategy, whilst the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development developed the innovative National Integrated Femicide Prevention Strategy. For the financial year of 2023/2024, the NYDA provided training for more than 25,000 young people to be youth entrepreneurs; young women benefitted highly from that initiative.

Women's Month involves various events, campaigns, and educational programs that engage communities across South Africa. These activities aim to educate the public about women's rights and gender equality, fostering a more informed and supportive society. Community involvement in these events helps to build solidarity and collective action towards achieving gender equality. Women's Month in South Africa is essential for honoring historical contributions, celebrating progress in gender equality, addressing ongoing challenges, and engaging communities in the fight for women's rights and empowerment.

***Study Group on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities***



## WOMEN'S RESILIENCE: HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES OR, IS IT SURVIVES?

***By Cde Sello Dithebe (ANC MP)***

The ANC evolved over time focusing on the peaceful struggle to undo the institutionalization of white privilege and domination, as seen in the establishment of the Union of South Africa, in 1910. While African men were the dominant demographic in the makeup of the ANC membership and leadership collective, this was not a natural phenomenon. African women would thus bide their time and take their rightful place through the annals of history, as seen through the rise and shine of Charlotte Maxeke (born Charlotte Mannya) in the early twentieth century. She organized and inspired women under the aegis of the Bantu Women's League to protest the extension of pass laws to women in early 1900s (1913 to 1919), as well as others that followed in her footsteps, years and decades later. The 9th of August 2024 marks 68 years since our women bravely took to the streets in Pretoria, numbering some twenty thousand, to protest oppressive apartheid pass laws that infringed on their dignity and birthright to land. So seminal was the role of women that they cemented and consolidated what Charlotte Maxeke started,

by forming the Federation of South African Women in 1954, which played a central role in the 1956 Women's March, which today, is celebrated as Women's Day. With these seminal contributions by women of different generations, races and classes for a period spanning sixty eight years, it must beggar the question about what else can be done to improve the lot of women, given the vast terrain of transformative laws that have been enacted in the last 30 years, including but



**CDE SELLO DITHEBE (ANC MP)**



not limited to: Employment Equity Act (1998), Domestic Violence Act (1998), Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act (1997), Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000), National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Act (2024), and several others. Informed by vision, conviction and praxis, the government must use all tools at its disposal to translate every single one of the legislative and policy tools into the significant improvement of the lives of women, while the private sector, organized labour, civil society, and all legislatures across the three spheres of government, must equally complement all these endeavours. On the socio-economic front, water and sanitation play a crucial role in the day-to-day lives of women and households and ensuring water security and a regular maintenance of its infrastructure and that of waste-water systems, are not only important. Women must constitute a large complement of that cadre of qualified personnel, to consciously and deliberately reverse the entrenched trend of the fault-lines of race, class and gender that undergirded apartheid colonialism for so long. So important are water and sanitation that, not only does each contribute to the health of the nation and economic fortunes of our country but, to

the dignity of each citizen and most importantly women. When conditions are adverse in either sector, women are most often the first to experience the hardships.

As a whip of the ANC Study Group on Water and Sanitation, I am intent on ensuring that our Portfolio Committee plays a rigorous role in oversight to ensure that we all have access to a safe and reliable water supply system, especially the women in our country. It is an oversight struggle that will ensure that not only do we clamour for the effective and efficient functioning of the water treatment and waste-water treatment plants, but that we exhort as many women as possible to be part of the water and waste water engineering systems whose purpose it is to guarantee that our water is safe to drink.

In practice, it means that women must be at the forefront of knowing and understanding the meaning, implications and ramifications of the status of the Blue Drop, Green Drop and No Drop Certification programmes, which are aimed at improving the quality of municipal drinking water, waste-water management, conservation of water and demand management. Armed with this knowledge, they will become active participants in guaranteeing an enhanced quality of their lives and sustain their livelihoods. When we engender conditions of safety, security, peace and growth, women will prosper and when women prosper, the NDP prescribes to achieve a “decent standard of living by 2030,” becomes not only plausible



but possible too. This lofty goal will not be magically waved into existence. It requires women of sterner revolutionary stuff like Mama Charlotte Maxeke. It demands of women to decide that they want this shared and inclusive growth to take root inexorably; it dictates that they must believe they can achieve this lofty goal and above all, believe that it is possible.

As we edge closer to the 70th anniversary of the Women's Month in two years' time, every day must count in us addressing and achieving all the goals and targets of our NDP and echo its resolve, especially in so far as it relates to water and sanitation. It is now or never. Nothing can stop our women. Nothing stopped them in 1913, 1919 and 1956 respectively, and similar ounces of energy can and must be mobilized to achieve much more challenging tasks, under different conditions.





## CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

*By Cde Imraan Subrathie (ANC MP)*



As the Whip of the Portfolio Committee on Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation in the South African Parliament, I take great pride, on the occasion of the advent of Women's month, in highlighting the significant strides our nation has made in the empowerment and development of women over the past 30 years under the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC). This period has been marked by a series of transformative policies and initiatives that have laid the groundwork for a more equitable society where women thrive. Patriarchy remains a feature of our

society, and we should continue to advance gender equality and the creation of a non-sexist society. This year also marks the 70th anniversary of the 1954 Women's Charter by the Federation of South African Women (FSAW).

From the dawn of our democracy in 1994, the ANC has prioritised gender equality and the empowerment of women as integral to our developmental agenda. Legislative frameworks such as the Domestic Violence Act (1998) and Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000) have created legal safeguards for women against discrimination and violence. These laws have not only promoted the rights of women but have also encouraged a cultural shift towards respect and equality.

Education has been a cornerstone of women's empowerment in South Africa. The government's focus on universal access to education has significantly increased female enrolment rates in schools, with Approximately 14,5 million individuals aged 5–24 years attending school in 2022; 49,7% were females. Programs aimed at reducing dropout rates among girls, particularly in rural areas, have empowered women to pursue careers and contribute meaningfully to the economy. Economic empowerment has also been a key focus. The establishment of initiatives such as the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill and the National Policy on Gender-based Violence have facilitated increased participation of women in the workforce and entrepreneurship. Affirmative action has closed more than 70% of the overall gender gap, and in the public service senior management positions, 44.3% were women. By promoting women in leadership roles and creating success to funding for





women-led businesses, we have seen a growing number of women making significant contributions to various sectors, including technology, agriculture, and finance.

Furthermore, social programs targeting health care and reproductive rights have been crucial in enhancing the quality of life for women. The government's efforts to provide access to healthcare services, including maternal healthcare and reproductive health rights, have empowered women to take control of their bodies and health, fostering a healthier future generation.

At the highest level of National Government, the ANC has perhaps deployed its largest contingent of women parliamentarians. More women occupy posts as Speakers, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and Chairpersons of Portfolio committees than ever before, a true testament to the ANC's commitment to empower, advance and develop women at the highest levels of Government. In

the portfolio committee on Planning Monitoring and Evaluation alone, 3 of the 4. ANC committee members are women, of whom one is the Chairperson. Both Ministers over whose departments the committee has an oversight role are also women. This is perhaps the most women empowered committee.

Despite the progress we have made, it is essential to recognize the challenges that remain. Gender-based violence continues to plague our society, and economic inequalities persist. We must reaffirm our commitment to addressing these issues with the urgency they deserve. The ANC, which leads the government of National Unity remains steadfast in our mission to create a safe, equitable South Africa for all its citizens.

As we celebrate 30 years of consistent empowerment of women in South Africa, let us honour the achievements while recognising the work that still lies ahead. Together, we can continue to build a society where women are not merely beneficiaries of empowerment but are active agents of change, leading us into a brighter and more inclusive future. Let's do more and better together.





## **CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF DEMOCRACY TOWARDS WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT BY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION**

*By Cde Weziwe Tikana-Gxotiwe (ANC MP)*

### **Policy and Legislation**

On August 9th, South Africa commemorated one of the country's significant milestones on its march to a democratic country, a country where people of races, different religious beliefs, and different sexual orientations have equal rights. It was on the 9th of August in 1956 that a large group of women began a campaign to bring an end to the pass laws enforced by the apartheid regime. The pass laws meant that all black people were to carry a "pass" which they had to produce to prove they were permitted to enter a certain area designated for white people. Today, South Africans from all walks of life can move freely in their land.

This was a segment of our revolution that had women at the forefront, a milestone in the country's rich history that has delivered it as a global success story of trial and triumph. And that is no mean feat.

But, as this democratic government, we are fully aware of the fact that trial and triumph is a daily challenge. It is something that we must strive for on a daily basis. It is for that reason that we have public policies in place to help us achieve that goal on a daily basis. Policies, such as the Employment Equity Policy, are aimed to redress past imbalances and improve the conditions of individuals and designated groups that have



**Cde Weziwe Tikana-Gxotiwe**

disadvantaged based on race, gender, and disability.

We are encouraged by the look and feel of this house (Parliament) and the look and feel of this Government of National Unity. We are encouraged by the reflection of the country's demographics, both gender and race and the representation of those living with disabilities. We are not by any means saying that it is enough, but we are edging ever so close to where we need to be.



Mindful of the challenge to do better, the government has put in place framework such as the Skills Development Act of 1998 for developing and improving the skills of the South African workforce and financing skills development through a levy-grant scheme and a National Skills Fund, the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999, the Promotion of Equality as well as the Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act.

### **Representation**

Women Representation in Public Leadership has been on a steady increase over the past 30 years. Parliament Women's Representation in 2024 is now at 46% from an embarrassing if not insulting 3 percent before 1994. In the first cabinet, we had only two women ministers, Hon. Sankie Mthembi-Mahanyele and Hon. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

Gender Pay Gap has been one of the challenges that we need to tackle head-on. This problem is well documented, particularly in our male and female national sporting teams. In the spirit of the Olympics, we continue to call for equal pay

between men and women. Affirmative Action has and continues to be one of the best things this government has ever done.

We are calling for its protection and continuation without any fear or favour. It is Affirmative Action that has closed more than 70% of the overall gender gap. Today, Public Service Employees Profile is reflective of the racial demographics, while Senior management positions are now at 44% were women.

One of the greatest achievements of this post-apartheid government has been the appointment of the country's first ever female Chief Justice, current Deputy Chief Justice, Mandisa Maya, with effect from September 1st.

This is a moment in history, and a giant leap in the continuous drive for women emancipation and a massive step forward towards the transformation of the country's judicial system which continues to male dominated.

Today, more and more young Black aspirant lawyers continue to enter the legal field uninhibited, and I strongly believe that with the appointment of our first female Chief Justice, this will inspire even more Black girls to pursue their dreams, to know that being a woman is not a limitation to pursuing any of your dreams.



## **HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND WOMEN DEVELOPMENT**

**THE DEPARTMENT HAS ALLOCATED 5.5BILLION TO BUSINESS ENTITIES OWNED BY DESIGNATED GROUPS NAMELY, WOMEN (R3.5BILLION, CONSTITUTING 64%)**

**IN THE 2022/2023 FINANCIAL YEAR: A TOTAL OF R 134 338 215,89 WAS SPENT TOWARDS BUSINESS ENTITIES OWNED BY WOMEN – R50 739 311, 49 YIELDING 38%**

**IN THE 2023/2024 FINANCIAL YEAR: A TOTAL OF R461 226 616,06 WAS SPENT TOWARDS BUSINESS ENTITIES OWNED BY DESIGNATED GROUPS: WOMEN – R 172 101 996, 04 YIELDING 37,31%**

**WOMEN CONSTITUTE MOST BENEFICIARIES OF THE FIRST HOME FINANCE SUBSIDY PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTED BY NHFC. DURING THE LAST TWO FINANCIAL YEARS (2022/2023) A TOTAL OF 61% FEMALES RECEIVED SUBSIDY APPROVALS TO THE VALUE OF R249 598 163.35 (2023/2024) WERE FEMALES TO THE VALUE OF R193 665 999.5 60%)**

**THE DEPARTMENT HAS REGISTERED 108 008 TITTLE DEEDS, OUT OF WHICH 52 980 WERE ISSUED TO FEMALE BENEFICIARIES WHICH CONSTITUTE 48.70%.**

**THE NATIONAL HOME BUILDER REGISTRATION COUNCIL (NHBRC) TRAINED A TOTAL OF 2134 WOMEN IN THE CATEGORY OF HOME BUILDER TRAINING PROGRAMME WHICH IS A TECHNICAL SKILLS PROGRAMME THAT INCLUDES TRAINING OF FEMALE ARTISANS, INSPECTORS, ENGINEERS AND YOUTH BRIGADES.**





**Over and above, the NHBRC is currently phasing in the new intake cohort of the Social Transformation Empowerment Programme (STEP) At-least 100 women owned business companies undergo mentorship for a period of two years through partnership with the Gordon Institute Business Science**

**The Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA) achieved its 50% target of disbursements of grants through its institutional Investment Grant. Thereby empowering women social housing institutions to participate in the delivery of affordable social and rental housing**

**The Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority (PPRA) supported 487 Black women through the Principalisation Programme to increase participation of women as principal property practitioners.**

**Most Housing development agencies performed significantly well in the allocation of budget set- aside to women, this includes, the NHRC, SHRA, Housing Development Agency (HDA) and Community Schemes Ombud Services (CSOS).**

**The Department of Human Settlements has appointed 56% of women to Senior Management Positions.**

**Study Group on Human Settlements**

# GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING ANC STUDY GROUP ON FINANCE



As we are celebrating 30 years of democracy towards women's development, it is important to note that while the past was dark for women, the present shines a beam of light, and tomorrow will be even brighter. Section 9(2) of the South African Constitution guarantees full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms by people of all genders. In line with this mandate, South Africa has committed to several international conventions and protocols aimed at promoting gender equality, which include but not limited to: 1) Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development, African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (SDGEA) 3) Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) 4) United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

These agreements focus on women's inclusion in economic activities through legislation, resource allocation, and other mechanisms. Despite this involvement internationally, South Africa has made significant strides in addressing development challenges, critical gender inequalities and social problems which have a negative impact on the lives of women and girls. According to the Global Gender Gap Report: 2023, South Africa ranked 20 out of 146 countries, on an evaluation done on analysing improvement on gender disparities between females and males across economic, educational, health, and political outcomes. To prioritise the gender equality project in South Africa, a Framework on Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Auditing (GRPMBEA) was designed and approved by Cabinet in 2019, with an aim to ensure a more sustainable, comprehensive, and multi-sectoral approach to gender mainstreaming within the country's planning, monitoring and evaluation and public financing systems. It should then be highlighted that Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) which is an important component of GRPMBEA is a budget strategy that is planned, approved, executed, monitored, and audited in a gender responsive way. Its primary objective is to ensure that resources are raised and spent to eliminate gender disparities. This is where we speak about women being recognised for senior positions, which were previously reserved for men.



Through the National Treasury, government has implemented the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework which serves as a guideline on which all procurement activities are to be based. Its aim amongst others is to advance the development of women owned SMMEs and historically disadvantaged groups. Today we have many successful women owned businesses that were funded through different government funding initiatives that recognises women. It is not an understatement to say our women are still drawing strength from the spirit of Mama Winnie Madikizela Mandela, they are still drawing their strength from the spirits of Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa and Sophia Williams-De Bruyn who chanted their way to the union buildings in Pretoria chanting “Wa thintha abafazi, wa thinth’ imbokodo”. The women who are never backed down by difficulties.

In the current sphere of politics we speak of women like Mama Phumzile Mlambo-Ncuka who has made a significant footprint on a global stage-as the United Nations Executive Director. We speak of many women who are leading in the Higher Education fraternity, women like Adv Mojankunyane Gumbi who is the chancellor of University of Venda, Justice Sisi Kampepe the Chancellor of University of Pretoria, Dr Precious Motsepe who is the chancellor of University of Cape Town, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma who is the chancellor of University of Limpopo and Dr

Gloria Serobe who is the chancellor of TUT, this is just a few amongst many. Through the GRB initiative which also speaks to allocating a budget for women in Sport, including women with disabilities. Today Kgothatso Montjane is a shining example of excellence in the world of sports. Born in Limpopo, Montjane has risen to become one of the top wheelchair tennis players in the world. She has set many records, including being the first African wheelchair tennis player to compete and win the Wimbledon women's doubles title. The achievements of South African women across various fields highlight the incredible progress that has been made towards gender equality, but they also remind us of the work that still needs to be done. By celebrating accomplishments made by women, we acknowledge their contributions that inspire future generations to continue breaking barriers and achieving greatness. As we honour these women who not just leaders but pioneers, ceiling breakers and changemakers; we are reminded that when women succeed, the entire nation moves forward, and I repeat “Wa thintha abafazi, wa thinth’ imbokodo

### ***STUDY GROUP ON FINANCE***



## INTERVENTIONS THAT HAVE MADE NOTABLE CONTRIBUTIONS WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

### 30 Years of Achievements: Women in South African Defence and Military Veterans Sector

**By Cde Thokozike Sokhanyile (ANC MP)**

Over the past three decades, South Africa has made notable progress in integrating women into the Defence and Military Veterans sector. This transformation reflects a broader commitment to gender equality and the recognition of women's contributions to national security and military excellence. The following document highlights key reforms and achievements that have empowered women within this sector.

#### Policy Reforms and Integration

South Africa has introduced several significant policy reforms to enhance the role of women in the Defence and Military Veterans sector. These are:

- **Gender Integration Policy (1998):** This policy laid the groundwork for gender equality in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), setting the stage for increased female participation in all branches of the military.
- **Defence Review 2015:** The review emphasized the importance of inclusivity and diversity,

leading to increased opportunities for women in senior military positions and operational roles.

- **Military Skills Development System (MSDS):** The MSDS, introduced in 2003, includes provisions for gender equality in training and recruitment, ensuring equal opportunities for women in military training programs.



**Cde Thokozike Sokhanyile (ANC MP)**





### **Increased Female Participation**

There have been significant achievements in increasing the representation of women in various roles within the Defence and Military Veterans sector:

- **Combat Roles:** Women have been progressively integrated into combat roles, including infantry and artillery units. Notable milestones include the appointment of Major General Wendy Hogg as the first female Major General in SANDF in 2012.
- **Senior Leadership:** Women have achieved high-ranking positions within the SANDF, such as Brigadier General and Colonel, showcasing their leadership capabilities and strategic contributions.
- **Peacekeeping Missions:** South African women have actively participated in international peacekeeping missions, demonstrating their competence and commitment on the global stage.

### **Empowerment and Support Programs**

South Africa has implemented various programs to support and empower women in the

Defence and Military Veterans sector:

- **Women's Military Network:** Established to provide a platform for women in the military to connect, share experiences, and support each other's professional development.

- **Training and Development:** Specialized training programs focus on leadership, management, and technical skills for women, promoting their advancement within the military ranks.
- **Veteran Support Services:** The Department of Defence provides support services tailored to female veterans, including career transition assistance, mental health support, and family services.

### **Addressing Challenges and Inequality**

Efforts to address challenges and promote equality in the Defence and Military Veterans sector include:

- **Anti-Discrimination Measures:** Implementation of policies and training programs aimed at combating discrimination and harassment, creating a more inclusive and respectful working environment for women.
- **Equal Opportunity Initiatives:** Initiatives to ensure that women have equal access to career advancement opportunities, including promotions and specialized assignments.
- **Advocacy and Representation:** Increased representation of women in policy-making bodies and committees focused on gender equality and military reform.

### **Achievements and Recognition**

The contributions of women in the Defence and Military Veterans sector have been recognized through various awards and honours:

- **Military Decorations:** Women have received prestigious military awards and decorations for their bravery, leadership, and service, such as the



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South African Military Medal for Bravery.

- **Public Recognition:** The achievements of women in the military have been acknowledged in national media and public forums, highlighting their significant impact on national security and defence.

Over the past 30 years, South Africa has made substantial progress in integrating

and empowering women in the Defence and Military Veterans sector. While challenges remain, the ongoing commitment to gender equality and the recognition of women's contributions continue to drive positive change. These achievements reflect a broader commitment to inclusivity and excellence within the South African military, paving the way for future advancements and opportunities for women in defence and security.





## CELEBRATING WOMEN IN SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE



Our country's first democratic President, Nelson Mandela, valued sports and referred to it as national building and uniting action for our diverse society. Legislation passed by parliament in the 30 years of democracy opened up opportunities for women to participate in different sporting activities. Amongst women who lifted the South African flag high are: Castor Semenya, in athletics, Bongiwe Msomi the netball captain, Nolusindiso Booie in Woman rugby team, Portia Modise and many more other phenomenal players.

Progressive and transformative legislation allowed South African women to excel in sport, thus unplugging the

potential and excellence amongst women. The impressive performance by our women athletes at the Olympics this year is a proof that empowering women provides platform to excellence.

With regards to our culture, legislation has allowed the reintroduction of indigenous games which promotes acknowledgment of our culture and heritage. Acknowledgement of indigenous skills in art by our people provides a platform for them to thrive in production of different artefacts which are sold in international markets.

In South Africa we recognise sign language as one of the official languages which is progressive and a great achievement. Thirty years of democracy in language development ensured that indigenous languages and skills are recognised.

*Study Group on Sports, Arts and Culture*



# STATEMENT ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

The democratic breakthrough of 1994 has had a significant impact on the voice of women and the role women play in our democratic institutions. Significantly, South African women's representation in parliament increased from 8 women MPs in 1994 to over 46 percent to date.

While the representation of women in legislatures is significant, it does not automatically lead to women's issues being prioritized, hence the need to consistently monitor the impact that government spending has on the lives of women. Tax revenue collection has improved consistently since 1994. Gross tax revenue collection increased from R147,3 billion in 1996

to R2.3 trillion during 2023/24 financial year. The appropriation of revenue through Parliament's appropriation committee from the National Revenue Fund (NRF) has enabled the ANC-led government to transform the lives of many previously oppressed and disadvantaged women.

The Public Procurement bill recently signed into law by the President will Accelerate the empowerment of women which will enable the set aside of 40% preferential public procurement for women owned businesses

The 2022 Commission for Employment Equity Report highlights that women representation in top management increased from 13,0% in 2001 to 25,8% in 2021, and on senior management from 20% to 36,4% over the same period. There are however weaknesses in the levels of representation in top management in the private sector, a lot more needs to be done to hold the private sector accountable

The standing committee on appropriations continues to ensure that the the budget is responsive to addressing the gender disparities, and oversighting gender-responsive planning



*Study Group on Appropriations*

## HERSTORY MATTERS: TOWARDS GENDER TRANSFORMATION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA

*By Cde Khusela Sangoni Diko (ANC MP)*



As we stand on the cusp of National Women's Day on 9 August, it's more than just a celebration. It's a moment of reflection, a moment to acknowledge the strides made in gender transformation, especially at the higher echelons, in the local media industry. While the journey towards gender equality in our industry is far from over, the progress we've witnessed is a beacon of hope for the future.

Three decades into our democracy, women are claiming their rightful places in newsrooms and the media industry. This is not just a milestone, it's a testament to the significant strides we've made.

Female journalist pioneers like Ruth First, Noni Jabavu, Jubu Mayet, and countless others have multiplied. Their trailblazing efforts have not only laid the groundwork for the current generation of female journalists, but have also etched their names in the annals of history. We owe these remarkable women a debt of gratitude for paving the way for Nomavenda Mathiane, Lizeka Mda, Lakela Kaunda, Rehana Rossouw, Phindile Xaba, Karima Brown, Ferial Haffajee, Katy Katopodis, Anneliese Burgess, Phylcia Oppelt, Audrey Brown, and many other prominent female journalists.

Most recently we have seen the appointments of veteran journalist Mapi Mhlangu as editor-in-chief of Newzroom Afrika, and the Sowetan's editor Nwabisa Makhunga as the chairperson of the South African National Editors Forum. These appointments are a welcome affirmation of the media industry's commitment to gender transformation. However, it's important to remember that these women at the top are not the norm, but the exception.

Their rise to the top, while inspiring, also underscores the challenges that still exist. It's a stark reminder that we must continue to push the boundaries, break the glass ceilings, and challenge the status quo until the day when women in leadership become the rule, not the exception. The end, every step forward is a step towards a future where every voice matters, where



## **Trailblazers**

Trailblazers like Terry Volkwyn, Yolisa Phahle and Phuti Mahanyele-Dabengwa have not just broken the glass ceiling, they've shattered it. Their leadership in major listed media companies is not just a victory for them, but a beacon of inspiration for others to follow. Yet, let's not forget that this is not the endgame. Gender equality is not a destination, but a journey, and it's a journey we're all a part of. Especially when the reins of many media outlets are still firmly in male hands.

Since the dawn of democracy, the discourse around newsroom transformation has been dominated by race, leaving gender in the shadows. According to the 2024 study on race and leadership in the newsroom by the Reuters Institute, South African newsrooms are a global exemplar of racial diversity. In 2020, 68% of top editors were persons of colour, a figure that rose to 71% last year.

But when it comes to gender and despite progressive policies instituted by the ANC such as affirmative action, we're lagging behind.

Why is the narrative of transformation so one-sided?

Why is the gender conversation not as loud as the race conversation?

## **Time to shift the focus**

It's time to shift the focus, to bring gender into the spotlight. It's time to challenge the status quo, to question the norms, and to provoke a change. Because the future of our industry depends on it. And the future should be one in which every voice matters.

In a country where women constitute more than half the population, it's a stark irony that only 30% of newsroom leaders were women six years ago. The needle has moved, but not enough. The media industry, both public and private, still favours men, particularly black men, for leadership roles. Black African women journalists often find themselves at the back of the queue.

## **Amplifying women's voices**

The fight for gender equality doesn't end with appointing a woman as an editor or newsroom manager. It's about amplifying women's voices, incorporating gendered perspectives into reporting, and giving women equal coverage and airtime. Yet, the rise of cyber-misogyny, especially against female journalists, is a chilling new threat. The recent report by the International Center for Journalists on online violence against senior women journalists in South Africa is a wake-up call.



## Progressive agenda

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## WOMEN ADVANCEMENT WITHIN ESKOM AND THE ENERGY SECTOR

Eskom has made significant strides to ensure gender equality, with 33.43% of the Eskom workforce being women, 20% of women at the executive level, 42.81% at senior management and 39.59% in professional and middle management roles, however, more still needs to be done. Eskom, a decade ago, created a Women Advancement Programme (EWAP). Over ten years, this has resulted in the proportion of women senior executives in the State-owned national electricity utility increasing from 29% to 42%.

Some of the achievements in EWAP over the past 10 years include the following:

- Eskom's gender pay gap dropped from 41% to below 6%
- Spend on black women-owned businesses increased from R6 billion in 2013 to over R16 billion in 2022
- Representation of women in technical roles such as artisans, operators and technicians had increased
- 55% of further study opportunities have been taken up by women The same programme has reduced the gender salary differential to 6%.

All four Eskom coal-fired power stations that are currently maintaining electricity availability factors (EAF) of more than 75% are headed by women.

Currently the utility has a programme to develop women executives, both senior executives and future executives. This involves 100 women.

The Energy and Water Sector Education and Training Authority (EWSETA) has developed an executive training programme for women, to give them the confidence to make an impact in high-level management, including on company boards.

Eskom is one of the companies in the country that has pledged its commitment and is a signatory of the Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs), which offer guidance to businesses on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community. The WEPs are a primary vehicle for corporate delivery on the gender equality dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

In September 2022, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) launched the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Strategy. It includes working alongside renewable energy companies and associations to bridge the gender gap in the energy sector on employment and pay.

The energy sector is not well represented and women have shown they know little about the energy sector but a vehicle is needed to inform them about how they can participate.



As well as the renewable energy industry being associated with a higher proportion of women in the workforce than fossil fuel energies, the development of agriculture in former mining areas has the potential to drive economic growth and lift women out of unemployment.

“The country has an opportunity to restore the dignity and rights of women who were left behind during the era of fossil-fuel-powered industrialisation. But to make this happen, the just transition process must be more transparent and inclusive. Women need to be included in the policy-making process, as well as in implementation. There is also a need for more participation from women in research on renewable energy solutions. This would help mainstream gender from the drawing board down to real world implementation. In addition, gender balance monitoring and audits will help ensure the energy transition travels in the right direction for South Africa’s women.” Dianah Chiyangwa 2023

### ***Study Group on Electricity***

