



**MINISTRY IN THE PRESIDENCY FOR WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X 931 Pretoria 0001: Tel: 012 3590013

**KEY NOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY MS MAITE
NKOANA-MASHABANE, MINISTER IN THE
PRESIDENCY FOR WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES**

**TO THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON SOUTH
AFRICA'S CHAIRSHIP FOR CSW 66 AND 67 AND 16
DAYS OF ACTIVISM FOR NO VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

Programme Director, Director-General Adv. Mikateko Joyce Maluleke, Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

Prof Hlengiwe Mkhize: Deputy Minister in the Presidency: Women, Youth & Persons with Disabilities

Ms Anne Githuku-Shongwe: UN Women Multi Country Office Representative

The Commission for Gender Equality

Government Officials

The Business Sector

Civil society Organisations

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you all for being here for today's National Consultation, for continuing to demonstrate your commitment and offer your contributions and views to the work of government.

I want to speak to South Africa's chairship of the 66th and 67th sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as the 16 Days of Activism Campaign for 2021.

You will recall that, post the 65th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65), National Consultation was convened to consolidate the national position. At that Consultation, the Department made a commitment to convene the post CSW National Consultation to provide feedback.

Acknowledging the Beijing+25 review and appraisal which has revealed that, no country has achieved gender equality 25 years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and that Covid-19 has exposed the existing inequalities in our society. I am appealing to all of us here today, not to lose heart and courage, but to continue to fight for women's rights and empowerment and hold the government on its obligation to promote, protect and fulfil the right of women in line with our national laws and legislation including the international human rights laws.

I would also like to say to you this morning, we have all felt the dreadful effect of Covid-19. We are in the distressing season full of exhaustion, heartbreak and

loss. And though circumstances are tough and as we are all constantly striving to survive, it is crucial that women (and men, too) continue in the fight for gender equality and the advancement of the lives of women and girls in our country. Gender Equality is not an end in itself, is not a goal, is not a means but is growth and development.

As we host this consultation during Youth Month, we are reminded of the challenges that young women face, particularly, how they are affected by gender-based violence and femicide.

Youth unemployment and the impact this has on young women is a concerning trend, especially when dependencies are exploited to cause harm to young women. Our work towards achieving gender equality seeks to address these challenges, and many more.

The fight against GBVF is a national priority and it is imperative that the monitoring of the implementation must be effective. This would require joint programme planning within and between the two Houses.

The annual “16 Days Campaign” spans the 16-day period between International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (November 25) and International Human Rights Day (December 10) to make the symbolic statement that violence against women and children is a violation of human rights. This 16-day period also highlights other significant dates including December 1, World AIDS Day, and December 3, International Disability Rights Day.

This year, we want to focus on accountability. We want government to respond to the question: What are you doing to end gender-based violence and femicide?

We are proposing the theme: *The Year of Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke: 16 Days of Activism from Awareness to Accountability.*

The theme aims to hold everyone to account for the scourge women face every day. We are aware there is a massive problem. We are aware of the war on women’s

bodies. What we are not aware of, is what is being done by every single organization to combat this scourge.

We want to hold the 3 spheres of government to account through the legislative arm of the state on progress made through the implementation of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign for No Violence Against Women and Children including those with disabilities in the past 23 years.

The Parliamentary response to the National Strategic Plan on Gender Based violence and Femicide is to encourage vigorous oversight and accountability over the departments meant to implement its various pillars.

The President convened a Joint Sitting on 18 September 2019 to address the scourge of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) in the country. Four key objectives emanated from the sitting that pertained to law reform, funding modalities, giving effect to the 2018 Presidential Summit on GBVF and finalising the National Strategic Plan (NSP) on GBVF.

The relevant Parliamentary Committees that has responsibility for oversight over the departments and the roles of the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Cluster of government departments and the Governance and Security Cluster of committees in Parliament is required to co-ordinate specific actions to give impetus to the NSP.

A total of 17 Parliamentary Committees (12 NA, 4 NCOP, Multi-Parry Women's Caucus), all bear some responsibility for oversight of the National Strategic Plan on GBV to a varying degree.

An Emergency Action and Response Plan was implemented over a 6-month period and a report presented to the President in this regard. The interim-steering committee charged with the development of the NSP on GBVF was discharged of its duties and submitted a report to the President.

Despite all these efforts, GBVF continues unabated with numerous incidents on heinous violent crimes

perpetrated against women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. It is imperative that a coordinated approach is finalised in Parliament to ensure more astute oversight on what the President has called the 'second pandemic' and what has become known as 'the silent pandemic of abuse and deaths of children'.

We have already begun meetings with parliament to set this plan into motion to access Parliamentary processes to hold government to account. Women are tired of words and want action. We envisage this 16 Days to be about reporting on what is being done. Not on what will be done.

Programme Director,

Prior to CSW65, the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) through the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) expressed interest to assume the Chairship of the CSW 66th (2022) and 67th (2023) and requested DIRCO to table and commence with the lobbying processes.

DIRCO consulted with the South African Permanent Mission in New York on the matter and conducted a background check to establish the possibility for South Africa to assume the Chairship. Prior to CSW65 the Mission confirmed that South Africa stands a good chance and that robust and distinctive lobbying exercise would be done within Southern African Development Community (SADC) and across the African Continent, to secure South Africa's interest.

The Africa Group in New York endorsed South Africa as the only remaining Southern African country eligible to chair the next two sessions of the CSW, considering that South Africa's term to serve in the Commission is valid until 2023. It should be noted that Namibia expressed interests to chair, however the country was not eligible for endorsement as Chair of CSW because its current term ends before CSW67.

As the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, South Africa will be leading about 45 Member States who will be the Member of the Commission and will Chair the 67th Session in 2022 under the **Priority theme:** *Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.* **Review theme:** *Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work (agreed conclusions of the sixty-first session)*

In 2023 it will preside over the Commission under the **Priority theme:** *Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.* **Review theme:** *Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls (agreed conclusions of the sixty-second session).*

The 45 Member States is comprised of 13 representatives from Africa, 11 from Asia-Pacific States,

4 from Eastern European States, 4 from Latin American & Caribbean States, and 8 from Western European and Other States.

South Africa has historic traces serving in the Commission as one of the 45 Member States. In 2004 to 2007, South Africa served as a Member of the Commission. Again in April 2018 South Africa was again elected as one of the 45 Member States to serve in the Commission from the period of 2019-2023.

This Chairship for the two consecutive years would provide an opportunity for South Africa to advance the national interests and African Union continental agenda on gender equality, gender mainstreaming and women empowerment.

It will also provide an opportunity for South Africa to work with about 45 countries serving as members of the Commission to explore the challenges and obstacles limiting Member States to effectively and efficiently accelerate gender equality. Moreover, the Chairship

serves as an opportunity for South Africa to draw from the expertise and experiences of other countries.

This will place South Africa at a centre to interact and gain insight into the interests and concerns of other countries, establish and build future strategic partnerships and beneficial coalitions. Furthermore, this position would enable South Africa to position itself to exert influence, build positive reputation and image as well as harness benefits from interacting with other strategic actors within the United Nations system on issues of gender equality and women empowerment.

However, as the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, it is critical that South Africa leaves a legacy. It for this reason we are here today, to discuss what South Africa can initiate as its Chairship deliverables or legacy

I therefore wish you all fruitful deliberations

I Thank You