



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

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**ADDRESS AT THE MEDIA LAUNCH OF NATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH, 1  
AUGUST, GCIS, PRETORIA**

**DELIVERED BY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY FOR WOMEN, YOUTH AND  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: MS SINDISIWE CHIKUNGA, MP**

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- **Programme Director, Adv Joyce Mikateko Maluleke, DG: DWYPD**
- **Deputy Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities: Ms Mmapaseka Steve Letsike**
- **Deputy Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture: Ms. Peace Mabe**
- **Members of the Media**
- **Distinguished Guests**
- **Ladies and gentlemen.**

**Good Morning.**

I am honoured to welcome you all to this media briefing on the launch of the 2024 National Women's Month, taking place under the theme: **“Celebrating 30 Years of Democracy Towards Women's Development.”**

We commemorate Women's Month in August to pay tribute to the roles played by Women in the decades of struggle against all forms of discrimination, subordination, and exploitation.

We also commemorate women's month in order to celebrate how far we have come, the journeys traversed and victories attained by the Women of our country in the three decades of our democracy. This is a month where we also reflect on missteps with the aim of correcting them.

The **30 Years Review Report** shines the spotlight on some of the commendable progress achieved in ensuring gender equality and social mobility. For example, in the past 30 years, the representation of women in Parliament has increased from 28% in 1994 to 45% in 2019. The Representation of Women in **Senior Management Positions** in the private and government sector workforce has increased from 20% in 2001 to 36% in 2021.

At our Universities, as of 2017, the share of *female graduates* was about 61.5% compared to *males* at about 38.5%. At both the undergraduate and postgraduate level, women in South African public universities have been in the majority. While these are significant strides, a lot more still needs to be done.

### **Programme Director;**

The year 2024 marks 101 years since women were allowed to enter the legal profession as practitioners. Here at home, following our democratic breakthrough, our journey to transform

the gender and racial composition of the judiciary has been nothing short of exemplary.

According to the **International Association of Women Judges** open quote:

**“In 1994, there were approximately 165 judges, 160 of whom were white men, three were black men, and two were white women; no black women were judges at that time. As of February 2023, there are 253 judges, of which 113 are women (45%). Additionally, 42 are white men (17%), 39% are black men, 13% are white women, and 32% are black women”.** Close quote.

We have every reason to be proud of this transformative achievement. **On that note, on behalf of all women of South Africa and the continent, we wish to congratulate Chief Justice Designate Justice Mandisa Maya.**

On Thursday, the 25<sup>th</sup> of July, His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the appointment of Chief Justice Mandisa Maya as the first South African woman to occupy the position of Chief Justice and Head of the Apex Court, the Constitutional Court. This is a monumental achievement for the people of South Africa in pursuit for justice. Chief Justice Maya stands tall as an inspiration to all South Africans, especially women from all walks of life.

In the same breath, let me extend my heartfelt congratulations to Tatjana Smith who won South Africa's first gold medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics. **We wish Tatjana and the entire South African Team the best of luck for the remainder of the tournament.**

**Programme Director;**

Just yesterday, we welcomed the first cohort of Solar Mamas who are young South African women, who recently completed their initial training in India. The Solar Mama Project aims **o to cultivate emerging industrialists** through Infant Industries Development, Product Development, Market Access and Expansion to domestic, regional, and global value chains and networking.

Through our **Solar Mamas Initiative**, we are expanding the nurturing of emerging industrialists in the designing, manufacturing, installation, and maintenance of renewable energy components by ordinary young South African women.

This will continue to be our flagship project after reconceptualization, taking into consideration lessons learnt from the first cohort. We congratulate this group of 22 young

women from the Provinces of Limpopo, North West and Free State.

**Programme Director,**

The year 2024 is significant as it marks several milestones in the struggle for the emancipation of women and their pursuit for the right to self-determination and self-actualization in all areas of human development.

First, 2024 marks 70 years since the adoption of the Women's Charter, a declaration of intent by the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) which clearly defined the rights, and privileges for women, by women in South Africa. This Women's Month, three decades short of a century since the adoption of the Women's Charter, we draw inspiration from this charter and affirm their bold declaration that, quote:

**“We, the women of South Africa, hereby declare our aim of striving for the removal of all laws, regulations, conventions, and customs that discriminate against us as women, and that deprive us in any way of our inherent right to the advantages, responsibilities, and opportunities that society offers to any one section of the population”. Unquote.**

Secondly, alongside our democratic dispensation, 2024 also marks 30 Years since the adoption of the **Women's Charter for Effective Equality** adopted by the **National Women's Coalition Structures** in 1994. Three decades later, we echo their sound belief that, quote:

**“For decades, patriarchy, colonialism, racism and apartheid have subordinated and oppressed women within political, economic and social life. At the heart of women's marginalisation is the patriarchal order that confines women to the domestic arena and reserves for men the arena where political power and authority reside”. Unquote.**

Fighting patriarchy should therefore be considered a central tenet and weapon in our continuing struggle for a more just and inclusive society. Across professional, educational, religious, cultural, sporting, and political spaces, Women's Month provides an opportunity not only to honour this legacy of resistance but also to challenge norms and values that continue to promote and justify patriarchal chauvinism in our communities.

Equally, the three strategic priorities announced by H.E. President Cyril Ramaphosa during the Opening of Parliament; which are, **firstly**, to drive inclusive growth and job creation; **secondly**, to reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living;

and **thirdly**, to build a capable, ethical, and developmental state, must assist us in addressing norms and values that promote and justify patriarchal in our society.

A few days ago, on the 23rd of July, H.E. President Ramaphosa also signed into law the **Public Procurement Bill**, the legislation that will regulate public procurement, including preferential procurement, by all organs of state. We welcome the president's decisive intervention in this regard.

As a department, we will be bringing forward tangible interventions through which this legislation will serve to redress the longstanding and ongoing socio-economic exclusion of women, youth and persons with disabilities. The socio-economic empowerment of women is fundamentally about empowering society as a whole. Through advocacy and mainstreaming, we will ensure that the plight of women in business, government, farm workers, mining, and among the unemployed receives the same level of attention and resources.

## **Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Programme Director;**

As part of the National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide, during this month, we will intensify initiatives aimed at rallying all South Africans behind the country's fight against persistent acts of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

(GBVF), including those perpetrated by intimate partners and family members.

There is an urgent need to move beyond slogans and invest adequate resources towards a whole-of-society and whole-of-government response to GBVF. The GBVF Statistics are extremely concerning.

We are fast-tracking the institutionalization of the National Council GBVF Board of the on GBVF as part of the implementation of the National Council on GBVF Act 9 of 2024. The setting up of this Council is critical for enhancing accountability and strong leadership in government and society at large.

Through legislation, we will strive for systemic change, prevention, and enforcement as constitutional imperatives. We aim to bring together researchers, scholars, advocates, and activists who will go beyond mainstream narratives to obtain a granular picture from communities facing violence at the community or street level, ensuring that justice is served.

### **Members of Media;**

We have noticed a new trend that has emerged of employed women who are being targeted by men, who in the name of love, convinced them to resign or take early retirement. This is done with the notion of starting businesses after-which the same

lifelong savings are extorted and men perpetrator disappears with all the earnings. We alert South African women not to be victims of such extortion and fraud.

### **In Conclusion:**

#### **Programme Director, members of the media;**

We have a plethora of activities lined-up for August Women's Month, amongst which includes the celebration of National Women's Day, in the Puffader, Namaqualand in the Northern Cape; where His Excellency, the President will officiate and sign the Men's Pledge Against Gender Based Violence. We will also have a Men's March against Gender Based Violence in the province of KwaZulu-Natal which will be led by Isilo SamaBandla, King MisuZulu and the Deputy President Paul Mashatile.

We will also launch the first ever Report on the Prevalence of GBVF in South Africa. We expect that all government departments in the three spheres of government, the State Owned Enterprises, the Private Sector and civil society to participate in the Women's Month activities. Their participate must reflect and plan forward on how they have and will continue to empower women on the basis of the three priorities of the 7<sup>th</sup> Administration. As a Department we are going to closely monitor the implementation of the three priorities in all sectors.

We will have a separate media engagement to detail the 7<sup>th</sup> Administration Priorities of the Department.

As we launch the Women's month, we echo the voices of women who gathered at the **First World Conference on Women** in 1975 and declared that, open quote:

***“In the world outside, we are ignored, we are invisible, we are not important ... We've got to change these attitudes toward us — smilingly, if necessary, angrily if necessary, and aggressively if necessary. Otherwise, there will be no such thing as true equality”.*** Close quote.

I thank you.