



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MINISTER SINDISIWE CHIKUNGA, MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY FOR WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, AT THE G20 WOMEN TO AFRICA EVENT, HELD IN PARTNERSHIP WITH STANDARD BANK AND TIME AFRICA, UNDER THE**

**THEME: “COLLABORATIVE ECOSYSTEMS FOR SUCCESSFUL AND RESILIENT WOMEN BUSINESSES”**

Inanda Club, The Polo Room, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Friday, 29 August 2025 | 13h25 – 13h45

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## **Section 1: Salutations**

- Programme Director, **Advocate Nzinga Qunta**,
- Deputy Minister of the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, **Hon. Mapaseka Steve Letsike**
- **Mr Luvuyo Masinda**, Chief Executive of Standard Bank Corporate and Investment Banking, representing our hosts Standard Bank,
- Our partners from **TIME Africa**,
- Her Excellency **Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma**, Former Chairperson of the African Union;
- **Adv. Mikateko Maluleke**, **Director General** of the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
- **Dr Gertrude Mongella**, Founding President of the Pan-African Parliament,
- Honourable Ministers, Deputy Ministers and senior government officials,

- Leaders of multilateral institutions including the African Union, United Nations, World Bank and African Development Bank,
- Captains of industry, members of the diplomatic corps, entrepreneurs and innovators from across our continent,
- Distinguished guests, comrades and friends —

**Good Afternoon.**

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## **Section 2: Opening & Purpose**

Allow me to begin with the words of **Graça Machel**:

*“Women’s strength, women’s industry, women’s wisdom are humankind’s greatest untapped resource. The challenge of the 21st century is to ensure that this resource is brought into the heart of all human development efforts.”*

We gather here under the banner of **Women to Africa** not only to affirm the truth spoken by Graça Machel, but to anchor it in the economy — in finance, in ownership, in value chains, and in leadership.

Today’s gathering, held in partnership with **Standard Bank, TIME Africa, and the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities**, is guided by the theme: **“Collaborative Ecosystems for Successful and Resilient Women Businesses”**. Its intent is clear: to weave together

governments, the private sector, development institutions, and women entrepreneurs — not for dialogue alone, but for **action, capital, and accountability**.

We meet at a moment of **extraordinary significance**. For the first time in history, the **G20 sits on African soil**. This is not just South Africa's G20 — it is **Africa's G20, the People's G20**. A Presidency anchored on the call for **Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability** — values that must translate into real change for women across our continent.

**August marks Women's Month on the South African calendar, commemorating the march of 20,000 women in 1956 to the Union Buildings against the apartheid pass laws.** Among them were leaders like **Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, and Sophia Williams-De Bruyn** — women who proved that freedom cannot be built on women's silence. And across our continent we honour kindred giants like **Yaa Asantewaa of Ghana, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria, Wangari Maathai of Kenya, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia** — women who remind us that Africa's story of liberation and progress cannot be written without women.

It is therefore fitting that we gather in the **closing week of Women's Month 2025**, under the theme ***"Building Resilient Economies for All"***. Because no economy can claim resilience

if more than half its people — women, young and old — remain locked out of markets, of finance, of safety, and of dignity.

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### **Section 3: Global, Continental and Domestic Priorities**

Colleagues, The priorities before us are clear — globally, continentally, and here at home.

At a **global level**, our department has the honour of chairing the **Empowerment of Women Working Group** under South Africa's G20 Presidency. The three priorities of our chairship are;

1. **The care economy**, because it is the invisible infrastructure of growth. Therefore we must cost care work into the GDP, support childcare in workplaces, and build national care economy strategies.
2. **Financial inclusion for women**, because no economy can grow when half its population is excluded. We must expand women's financing windows, create risk-sharing guarantees, and reform procurement systems so that women-owned firms access real markets.
3. **Ending gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF)**, because safety and dignity are preconditions for participation. We need a continental GBVF prevention pact, survivor support funds, and digital tools for reporting and accountability.

These priorities sit firmly within Africa's broader **G20 Presidency agenda** — reforming global governance institutions, financing sustainable development and climate action, driving inclusive growth and job creation, harnessing digital transformation, and building peace and resilient societies. None of these can succeed if women are left behind.

At the **continental level**, **Agenda 2063** reminds us that Africa's future will be people-driven, especially by women and young people. The **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** — the largest integration project in the world — must open its value chains to women, who already make up **70% of cross-border traders**. If AfCFTA does not work for women, it will not work for Africa.

At the **domestic level**, South Africa has made progress — women now make up **43% of Cabinet, 43.5% of Parliament, and 45% of the judiciary**. The new **Public Procurement Act** makes the 40% set-aside for women-owned businesses binding, not optional. Yet challenges remain: **35.7% women's unemployment**, with young women above 44%; women represent less than **13% of patent holders**; and the cost of GBVF drains our economy of billions each year.

These realities remind us that **progress without transformation is organised inequality**. And they demand that

Africa's G20 Presidency must not end with words, but with a **legacy of systems that work for women.**

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#### **Section 4: Three Bold Shifts and Legacy Projects**

That means three bold shifts — not just commitments, but concrete actions.

**First:** We must finance the missing middle by unlocking affordable capital for women-owned businesses that are too big for microfinance and too small for traditional banks.

**Second:** We must place women at the frontier of Africa's new industries — from renewable energy and agritech to digital and advanced manufacturing — as leaders, owners, and innovators.

**Third: We must institutionalise accountability beyond events.**

Conferences do not change the world — systems do. That means setting measurable targets, enforcing fair payment norms for women-owned businesses, tracking progress publicly, and embedding zero tolerance for gender-based violence in every workplace.

These shifts are not abstract. They are reinforced by the **legacy projects of Africa's G20 Presidency:**

- The **Disability Nerve Centre**, ensuring inclusion is real for persons with disabilities.
- The **Positive Masculinity Project in Schools**, shaping boys and young men to reject violence.
- And the **Strategy on the Care Economy**, to finally value the work that sustains our societies.

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## **Section 5: Closing – From Women’s Month to Legacy**

Colleagues, as we close, let us remember: this G20’s legacy will not be written in communiqués after the ministerial meetings and leaders’ summit later this year, but in whether women across our continent gain access to capital, safety, and leadership.

And we know this cannot be done alone. It requires **collaboration and partnership** — across governments, multilateral institutions, civil society, and the private sector. I therefore thank our partners — **Standard Bank, TIME Africa, and all sponsors of this gathering** — for walking with us on this journey.

Allow me to end with the words of **Thomas Sankara**, who declared in 1987:

*“The revolution and women’s liberation go together. We do not talk of women’s emancipation as an act of charity, or because*

*of a surge of human compassion. It is a basic necessity for the triumph of the revolution. Women hold up the other half of the sky.”*

Friends, the future can indeed be **African and women** — but only if we act boldly, finance differently, and govern with accountability.

**Malibongwe igama lamakhosikazi! Let the name of women be praised!**