

**ADDRESS BY HER WORSHIP CLLR TLOTLANANG
MOGOTLANE THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF
WATERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY DURING
THE 2015 WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION AT
MOKURUNYANE MULTI-PURPOSE CENTRE IN
LAPHALALE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY AT 11H00**

Programme Director,

Mayor of Lephale Local Municipality Cllr Maeko.

Magoshi a rena,

Speakers and Chief Whips present,

Members of the Mayoral Committee and Exco,

Councillors in the District,

All women present,

Officials from sector departments and municipalities,

Members of the Media,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and gentlemen.

Dumelang. Thobela.

It is a great pleasure for me to be part of this important event. On behalf of the people of Waterberg, let me conveying my token of appreciation for your presence in this important gathering.

Programme Director, On 9 August 1956, about 20 000 women of all races marched to the Union Building to protest against the discriminatory pass laws which had restricted the movement of black people in the country.

This march has been celebrated since 1995 as Women's Day to recognise the important role that political activism by women played during the struggle for liberation against colonisation and apartheid

We are gathered here today to celebrate and honour the class of 1956 and the role women play in society since the dawn of democracy in 1994.

The 2015 Women's Day is commemorated under the theme: "**Women United in Moving South Africa Forward**". This year's Women's Month is taking place against the backdrop of 60th anniversary of the Freedom Charter and the Women's Charter in 2014.

Furthermore, the African Union has prioritised women empowerment by declaring 2015 as the "**Year of Women Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063.**"

Programme Director, over the past 21 years South Africa has made significant inroads insofar as gender parity and women empowerment is concerned.

Since apartheid the country has moved from a history where women suffered oppression based on their gender, colour and class to one where gender equality is now a constitutional imperative.

South Africa's advances were confirmed by the recent Beijing +20 Country Report which was presented at the 59th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March 2015.

The report indicated that there have been major shifts in the status and conditions of South African women and that there is a narrowing of the gender gap. It also pointed to the following achievements:

- The sound human rights based legislative framework in the country;
- The institutional mechanisms put in place to promote women's human rights, dignity empowerment and gender equality; and
- The remarkable achievements in the representation of women in decision-making structures and processes, both in the public and private sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, the representation of women in Parliament increased from a mere 2.7% before 1994, to 34% in 2015. Women constitute 52% of Chairpersons of Committees in Parliament. This ranks South Africa third in the world in terms of representation of women in Parliament.

In provincial legislatures, female representation has almost doubled since 1994. Female representation in provincial legislatures increased from 23.5% in 1994 to 41.5% by 2013. Of nine speakers of provincial legislatures, eight are women.

In our District currently out of seven municipalities we have four women Mayors, six women Speakers and three women Chief Whips.

Our country will always be indebted to the women who participated in the 1956 march and whose actions set the tone for gender equality and empowerment in a democratic South Africa.

Due to the sacrifice of many unsung heroes and heroines, we now live in a country governed by a Constitution which recognises women as equal citizens, with equal rights and responsibilities.

The Women's Charter, the Freedom Charter and the 1956 March greatly contributed to the full participation of women in all spheres of government.

Due to the selfless acts of many, South Africa women have taken their rightful place in parliament, government, the private sector and civil society.

Since 1994 great strides have been made to ensure that women enjoy the same rights as their male counterparts in relation to education, employment, property, inheritance and justice.

Over the past 21 years South Africa increased the access of girls to education, initiated bursaries and training programmes for young women and allocated funds for women entrepreneurs.

Since 1994 government has implemented legislation to create an enabling environment for women, and to improve their participation in income-generating activities in the economy. South Africa has met most of the Millennium Development Goals targets on gender equality, if not exceeded them.

These demonstrate that women are now taking their rightful place in leadership roles.

Programme Director, despite the great strides made, we have a long way to go in achieving absolute gender parity. Research suggests that the percentage of working women in senior management posts throughout the country, not only leaves much to be desired as it continues to remain lacking, it has also remained static for the past six years.

In 2013 just over one quarter of top decision-making roles in the country's businesses were filled by women. This is a long way off government's ambition to ensure that 50% of senior management positions are filled by women.

As has been the case since 2009, only 28% of the country's senior management positions are filled by women and the statistic has disappointingly flat-lined for five years.

This stagnant five-year trend is the same when global averages are reviewed, with international businesses also showing no improvement since 2009, remaining at 14%.

South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030, seeks to create a united, prosperous, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society.

How this will be achieved, is by focusing on creating equal opportunities, and specifically, nullifying factors such as gender and ethnicity, and by so doing, righting the wrongs of the past and ensuring true equality before the law.

Programme Director, the NDP envisages an economy and developmental society that serves the needs of all South Africans, rich and poor, black and white, skilled and unskilled, those with capital and those without, urban and rural, women and men.

However, it should be noted that because the NDP is the vehicle that will address poverty, unemployment and inequality in South Africa, it therefore becomes an imperative that the strategies of implementation become explicit about the approaches that will be used, so as to ensure the inclusion of the previously marginalized, such as women, and thereby achieving gender equality.

We know that women, especially in rural areas, still live in poverty. As women, we must be organized and form cooperatives such as vegetable gardens for sustainable food security. The Department of Agriculture is able to assist in this regard.

Ladies, I would not do justice if I don't talk about the scourge of HIV and AIDS, and the drug abuse by our children. Due to mining activities in the district the prevalence of HIV and AIDS will increase if we do not educate our children about it as is currently the highest in the District at 30,5%.

On Thursday we attended the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in BelaBela Local Municipality. I am disappointed to say that BelaBela is number one in Nyaope abuse in the Province.

We call on all parents to monitor their children's progress at school and how they behave. Let us build a better future for our children. Women must take the lead in saving our country.

Working together we move women and South Africa Forward.

I THANK YOU.

