

**ADRESS BY THE ACTING EXECUTIVE MAYOR CLLR.  
MATOME TAUEATSOALA DURING THE MEN`S PARLIAMENT  
SESSION IN WATERBERG**

**16 AUGUST 2022**

**LLEKA LEKALAKALA COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
MOGALAKWENA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

Programme Director, Chief Whip Monare,

The Mayor of Mogalakwena Local Municipality, Cllr.  
Ngoako Taueatsoala,

The Chairperson of Local House of Traditional Leaders,  
Inkosi Mahlangu,

Members of the Mayoral and Executive Committees from  
municipalities,

Councillors present,

Representatives from the National Men`s Forum,

Representatives from the Provincial Men`s Forum,

Members of the District Men`s Sector,

Representatives from Sector Departments

Members from Civil Society Structures,

Members of the community,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thobela,

It gives me great pleasure today to be part of this august event which provides for a safe, supportive and conducive environment to discuss issues of gender equality.

This session further coincides with the Women`s Month during which we pay tribute to more than 20 000 women who marched to the Union Building on 9 August 1956 in protest against the extension of the Pass laws to women.

The protest was led by Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, Sophia Williams and other heroines. The song they sang which was specifically composed for the event was titled “**Wa thint`Abafazi Wathint`imbokodo**” which translates – **Now you have touched the Women, you have struck a rock**. It was a peaceful protest but made a huge impact in the history of South Africa.

Women`s Month allows us to gauge how far we have come in transforming society, particularly the transformation of unequal power relations between women and men. Whilst also focusing on and addressing gender oppression, patriarchy, sexism, racism ageism, structural oppression and creating a conducive environment which enables women to take control of their lives.

Programme Director, the other reason why government decided to develop programmes geared towards gender equality is the social ills that are recently witnessed in our country. We therefore need to strengthen our partnerships with a range of stakeholders to deal with challenges confronting men and the society.

These are really hard times because most of the cases that are reported are committed by men. We need the strength to take on the challenges as and when they re-emerge. The recent statistics on increased prevalence that we have just heard are quite frightening because the prevalence was already high.

I am very glad that we have given some of these discussions a platform because we will be able to take full advantage of the knowledge gathered in this session to further preach the same gospel to other men who were not part of this exciting event.

When we leave here, we will leave with the true feeling that we have quenched our thirst from the engagements that ensued since this morning.

Honourable Members, the issue of gender equality is at the heart of human rights. It is in fact in many ways a determining factor as to whether we can still have a just society. The level of tolerance from all aspects of gender equality, including violence against women, sustains a narrative that almost accepts that you can oppress half of the society and still go on with your life as if nothing happened.

Our ability to change that narrative along with many other people who are not with us and who might even disagree with us, is something that we still need a way of addressing significantly.

We are now in the World of high proportion of young people with fifty percent of the world's population being under 30 years. A quarter of 1.1 billion girls in the world call Africa their homes.

The capacity of these girls to change the world for the best will be missed when we are unable to address the issue of violence against women and girls because they are facing all of the risks that are associated with violence against women.

Their life trajectories are a major future in the country's future stability and prosperity. Their lives and those of other many women and girls are being halted by the violence that prevails in their everyday life, and because so much of this violence happens from home, for many of them there is nowhere to escape or to run to. A place where you call home, your refuge, is actually where you are most vulnerable and if you are young where else do you go if home is not safe.

Even though domestic violence has always been a big area of focus, I personally don't think we have developed interventions proportionate to the size of the challenge. I think future programmes of this magnitude are needed to pursue the discussions around the matter.

Another new challenge that we face is how technology is fuelling the trafficking of women, cyber bullying and many other forms of violence that we don't even understand yet. When you add that to the traditional forms, like domestic violence, culture and stereotypes that oppress women perpetuate gender inequality that manifests into violence.

We also have access to justice as a major challenge such that even in our country where you have laws that are supposed to protect women and to prosecute any crimes against them, they just not receive the justice they deserve.

Coming back to our district, we need to organise ourselves, establish forums of this calibre and fight against this pandemic of Gender Based Violence.

The mobilisation of boys and men is an important component of our response. It is important to engage men in changing their own behaviour more than protecting women and girls. If the behaviour changes, there will be no need to protect.

We need these kinds of discussions between men to be much stronger than what transpired today. We should all be adopting the saying that “**Not in our name**”

At the same men must own up their humility by attending to their health, respecting each other and helping each other to build better individuals, families and communities.

We take this opportunity to call on men and boys in our district to lead by example and to teach our girl children to grow up knowing that it is not normal for one to be beaten up. These barbaric acts normally worsen during this period of the Women`s month.

Men have an important role to play in reversing gender based inequalities and violence. We need to localise these engagements to our local municipalities and adhere to the resolutions adopted in this session.

In conclusion Programme Director, we invite all members of our society to join as we seek to build a better, healthier, safer and prosperous Waterberg.

**I THANK YOU!!**