



WOMEN'S MONTH 2022 KEY MESSAGES

BRIEF:

The historicism of August 9, 1956 when 20 000 women marched to the Union Buildings against the Urban Areas Act has led to an annual commemoration of this day as the National Women's Day.

On this day, the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) led by four women Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa and Sophia Williams-De Bruyn delivered petitions to the then Prime Minister - JG Strydom's office in the Union Buildings.

This year National Women's Day and Women's Month will be celebrated under the theme: ***"Women's Socio-Economic Rights and Empowerment: Building Back Better for Women's Improved Resilience."***

Women throughout the country had put their names to these petitions indicating their anger and frustration at having their freedom of movement restricted by the hated and degrading official passes they were being forced to carry all the time. Although Prime Minister J.G.Strijdom was not at the Union Buildings to accept the petition, the women of South Africa collectively sent out a resounding public message that they would not be intimidated and silenced by unjust laws.

These 20 000 women stood outside the Union Building and remained silent for 30 minutes which was only broken by the singing of a women's protest song composed in honour of the occasion.

The 1956 Women's March was one of the largest demonstrations staged in this country's history and was underpinned by the adoption of the Women's Charter of 1954. Thus FEDSAW challenged the idea that "a woman's place is in the kitchen". Instead, they declared that a woman's place is "everywhere".

The official Women's Month programme will be launched on 1 August 2022, the launch will take the form of a full day workshop on Waste Management: identifying economic opportunities in the waste sector value chains for women, youth and persons with disabilities.

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
<p>Theme: Women’s Socio-Economic Rights and Empowerment: Building Back Better for Women’s Improved Resilience</p>	<p>The theme is a call to action to all of society, government and partners to take tangible steps forward in responding to the most persistent challenges affecting the lives of women.</p> <p>Women’s rights and empowerment continue to be impeded in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s Educational levels and Skills Development and Training, including increased access to STEM education; • Women’s Health and Well-Being, including the issue of better access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Menstrual Health and Sanitation and Family, Family Planning as well as Comprehensive Sexuality Education for Girls at school level; • Women’s Economic Levels, participation, representation, ownership, management, control as well as issues of the unpaid care economy; • Family and Social Support including access to child care and ECD • Community safety including issues of gender-based violence and femicide, engaging with women in the judiciary including developing training on GBVF related issues for the judiciary and crime and justice sector in general. • Physical environment including safe, healthy and clean environment, but also including issues of climate change, environmental disaster risk mitigation and participation in the green and blue economy opportunities.
<p>Together we pay tribute to many remarkable women in our country.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Women’s Month, we pay tribute to women in the liberation struggle and the women of today. • The women of 1956 and countless others set the tone for gender equality and empowerment in a democratic South Africa. • Their brave actions inspired women to take their rightful place in parliament, government and civil society. • Through their sacrifices, we now live in a country which recognises women as equal citizens, with equal rights and responsibilities. • South Africa’s Constitution and Legislation is recognised as one of the most gender equal in the world, however, societal and cultural practises severely impact on the rights of women. • Women’s Month is about putting a spotlight on the challenges that women still face, as well as celebrating the success of women in all spheres of life. • South Africa forms part of the global Generation Equality Campaign which pursues inter-generational partnerships to eliminate gender inequality. • South Africa chaired the Bureau for the 66th and 67th sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2022. The Bureau of the Commission plays a crucial role in facilitating the preparation for, and in ensuring the successful outcome of the annual sessions of the Commission. • South Africa will use this opportunity to champion the acceleration of gender equality following the fifth Beijing (Beijing +25) review in 2020 which revealed that despite some progress, real change has been slow, and no country can claim to have achieved gender equality almost 26 years after the adoption of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995.
<p>Our response to COVID-19 has prioritised the protection of women.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our government continues to uphold its constitutional responsibility to protect, promote and advance the rights of women. • Government acknowledges that women have been impacted by COVID-19 and prioritises the protection of women’s rights. • Survivors of gender-based violence have access to support and services, including the GBV hotline, shelters and centres providing support to victims of sexual violence.

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social security net has been increased to protect vulnerable families, especially women and children from the economic impact of the pandemic. • We will continue to ensure that measures to protect and stimulate the economy are targeted at women. • The promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment is central to our efforts to combat poverty and stimulate sustainable development. • Women are adversely affected by the economic fallout of COVID-19. Women must be a central part of efforts to build back better.
<p><i>The empowerment of women is key to our nation’s advancement.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the country works towards overcoming the social and economic fallout of COVID-19, we must ensure greater advancement of women. • Under the Decade of Women’s Financial Inclusion, women must form a central part of efforts to build more inclusive economies. • Empowerment is also about women experiencing the freedom to participate freely in the day to day activities – such as exercising on public roads without victimisation of catcalling or other forms of GBVF. • Together we can end gender discrimination and advance the rights of women and girls in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres of life. • We must continue to expand the programmes and processes to accelerate women’s participation in supply value chains through preferential procurement in the public and private sector. • By ensuring that women have access to and ownership of productive resources we will build our economy and our nation. • We call on women to play their part in building the economy by actively participating in the implementation of the Infrastructure Investment Plan. • The Infrastructure Investment Plan aims to revive the construction industry as well as improve skills and institutional capacity. • There are opportunities for women to start their own businesses and government remains committed to scale up our support for female entrepreneurs. • Among the key issues in this regard are equal access to the economy, equal pay for work of equal value, equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, an end to sexual harassment, including in the workplace, and all forms of violence against women and girls, access to quality health-care services that respond to their needs, and equal participation in political life and decision-making in all areas of life. • The empowerment of women in South Africa is about dealing with the legacy of apartheid and the transformation of society, particularly the transformation of unequal power relations between women and men, and fundamental changes to institutions and laws. It is also about addressing gender oppression, patriarchy, sexism, racism, ageism, and structural oppression, and creating a conducive environment which enables women to take control of their lives.
<p><i>Together we can fight women and child abuse.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a nation we must move beyond shock and horror every time a woman or child is raped or killed. We must all take concrete actions to ensure safer families and safer communities. • We can no longer turn a blind eye to the cries of help from the most vulnerable in our midst. The culture of bystanderism must stop. We must report all cases of assault, abuse and harassment. • We must not normalise harassment of women • It is the responsibility of all South Africans to end the culture of silence around gender-based violence and report perpetrators to the police. • All of us, whether in our communities or in our homes must do all we can to promote and protect the rights of women and children.

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide requires all of civil society to pull together in realising the plan. • We want a society free from any sort of violence targeted at women and young girls, or the LGBTIQIA+ Community. • There is also evidence that shows when women are economically empowered, it decreases their vulnerability to gender based violence.
<p><i>Women in the Green Economy</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A green economy improves human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. • Absence of a green economy would translate to degradation of natural resources and ecosystems, loss of biodiversity and cases of increased poverty. This would affect everyone but women are more prone to bearing the biggest brunt. • The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in partnership with UN Women, Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) and Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) recently launched the Policy Assessment Report on the Economic Empowerment of Women in the Green Industry. • Underpinned by drivers such as Climate Change, the Sustainable Development Goals, Post Covid-19 economic recovery and the drive towards Gender Equality, the Economic Empowerment of Women in Green Industry in South Africa must not be overlooked. • Food security, drought, and impacts of industrialisation all affect women so women’s participation in policy making in the green economy must be prioritised. • Women need to participate in decision-making within the sectors, as well as be given opportunities to enter these fields as entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses. • The opportunities the green economy potentially holds for women’s participation in green growth relate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ green production and manufacturing processes (eliminating (chemical) inputs and hazardous working conditions), ○ green consumerism (creating new business opportunities and markets), ○ micro, small and medium enterprises development and ○ female entrepreneurship (including new professions, product development and use of green technology).