



government
communications

Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

WOMEN'S MONTH 2023 KEY MESSAGES

BRIEF:

Every year, in August, our country marks Women's Month, when we pay tribute to the more than 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 in protest against Pass Laws.

This year marks 67 years since the watershed 1956 women's march which was one of the largest demonstrations staged in the country's history. It was underpinned by the adoption of the Women's Charter of 1954.

Women's Month 2023 will be commemorated under the overarching theme: "***Accelerating socio-economic opportunities for empowerment of women.***" While our country has made numerous strides helping advance women, their full potential in our society is still to be realised.

The reality is that gender inequality still persists with more women than men mired in poverty and unemployment. The month will focus on interventions across government, civil society and the private sector to develop women in our nation.

Particular focus over the month is opportunities that women can access in the different sectors of the economy, including opportunities in the oceans economy. Specific focus is on representation in leadership and management, participation, job creation and entrepreneurship development within the oceans economy covering maritime shipping and transport, biodiversity, offshore gas and oil exploration, tourism, entertainment and leisure related activities, fisheries and fishing, aquaculture, oceanographic research, among others.

According to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), women account for only 2 per cent of the world's 1,2 million seafarers.

Another area highlighted over the month is opportunities for women in the South African Navy. In this regard, National Women's Month 2023 will showcase the different roles for women in the navy on 7 August 2023 at the SANDF Naval Base in Simons Town in the Western Cape. On 8th August, there will be a showcasing of the different opportunities for women in ports and harbour activities in partnership with TRANSNET, at the Cape Town Harbour, Western Cape.

National Women's Month 2023 will be launched on 1st August 2023 in the City of eThekweni, KZN.

The socio-economic empowerment of women in South Africa is about redressing the legacy of apartheid and the transformation of society, particularly the transformation of power relations between women, men, institutions and laws.

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. It will also focus on addressing gender oppression, patriarchy, sexism, racism, ageism, structural oppression, and creating a conducive environment which enables women to participate equally in the mainstream economy and take control of their lives.

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
<p><i>We pay tribute to the many remarkable women in our nation who have made a meaningful contribution and impact to society.</i></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 who marched to the Union Buildings in 1956 against Apartheid Laws in the face of great repression laid foundation stones for many other women since. • 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. • Inspired by the women of 1956 and so many others, let us end gender discrimination and advance the rights of women and girls in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres of life.
<p><i>We are striving for full and equal participation of women in the economy.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through our policies we are ensuring the full participation of women in the economy and driving an inclusive economy. • The promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment is central to our efforts to combat poverty and stimulate sustainable development. • Government introduced the Gender Equality Bill to accelerate the empowerment of women and attain 50/50 gender parity for the country. • Empowerment of women is everyone’s business and needs the support of government, business and civil society. • Let us all work to remove the barriers which prevent women from entering and thriving in the labour market. • It is the responsibility of all sectors of our society to make these progressive policies a lived reality that translates into tangible benefits in the lives of millions of women, particularly young women and those living in our rural areas.
<p><i>We are educating and encouraging women to seek for opportunities in the maritime sector</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our country’s maritime sector is growing and offers many opportunities for women to consider. • Women in maritime sector can become captains, deck officers, stewards, marine engineers, and technical officers. • Women interested in becoming personnel on these ships need to have qualifications which adhere to the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers. • Maritime companies are also encouraged to provide training and mentorship programmes to ensure the greater inclusion of women in the sector.

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The South African Navy also offers opportunities for women and is one of a very few navies that allow women access to all roles and musters within the navy. • Women now participate at all levels in the navy including the command of warships as well as being part of the submarine and diving crew. • The Navy's Equity Committee Forum, chaired by the Chief of the Navy, advances the representation of women in the navy.
<p><i>Government is working to draw more women in the productive sectors of the economy.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government announced that at least 40 per cent of public sector procurement will go to women-owned businesses. • In ensuring women's participation in procurement, we have established an institutional framework as well as capacity building and training workshops for women-owned businesses. • Women continue to be prioritised for work opportunities through the Presidential Employment Stimulus, for example, 63 per cent of participants are women. • 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. • There are opportunities for women to start their own businesses and government remains committed to scale up our support for female entrepreneurs.
<p><i>Together we must fight against women and child abuse.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All South Africans must act to prevent abuse and to ensure a safer society for women and children. • We can and must do more to prevent violence against women, support survivors of abuse and bring perpetrators to justice. • Through our collective efforts we can create greater awareness, reduce the number of sexual offences and attacks on women and children. • Government alone cannot eradicate this scourge and calls on all sectors to partner with it in creating safer communities. • 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 everything we can to promote and protect the rights of women and children.