

WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

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PROCEEDINGS OF P20 WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT

The House met at 08:51.

The Speaker took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayers or meditation.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Hon members and delegates, I want to acknowledge those present amongst us today: the hon Speaker of the National Assembly, the hon Thoko Didiza, the hon Minister Chikunga and the House Chairperson of the National Assembly, the hon Cedric Frolick. Other Members of Parliament who are here with us, and I know that there are various Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Members of Parliament who are joining us on the virtual platform, I want to welcome everybody to this very important session of the P20 Women's Parliament in the 7th Administration - the first one that we are hosting. I would like you all to please

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rise for the national anthems of the Republic of South Africa and the African Union.

NATIONAL ANTHEMS SUNG

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you very much; you may resume your seats. Hon Speaker, I must confess that this is the first time that I'm surrounded by so many beautiful women in one room. But for some reason, I don't feel intimidated. Thank you very much.

I'd like to also acknowledge the presence of the Chairperson of the Multi-Party Women's Caucus who is with us today; thank you very much. It is my pleasure to welcome you to this P20 Women's Parliament.

Parliament is convening this historic first P20 Women's Parliament of the 7th dispensation under the theme, I quote, "Accelerating Equality, Sustainability and Shared Growth: Correcting the gender redistribution bias of growth and development - through the Women's Charter, the Medium-Term Development Plan, MTDP, and the 2025 G20 Development Priorities".

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Shirley Chisholm, the first black woman to be elected to the United States, US, Congress said, and I quote,

If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.

And that is what the women of our country did when they marched to the Union Buildings. They were not being given a seat at the table, so they walked to the Union Buildings and made their voices heard.

Hon Delegates, in preparation for the G20 and P20 Speakers' Summits, this historic session is being held to give women from all important spheres of society the opportunity to meaningfully participate in international policy and legislative deliberations. The P20 Women's Parliament is positioned as a high-level and strategic build-up activity in line with the goals and priorities of South Africa's G20 Presidency.

One of the key objectives of this session is to enable a purposeful focus on the implementation of South Africa's transformation agenda. The P20 Women's Parliament seeks to

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provide a platform for all South African women to clearly delineate gender-responsive and developmental priorities for targeted oversight by Parliament over the medium-term.

This session seeks further to institutionalise the three-sphere government, governmental preparations and co-operation oversight mechanisms to oversee the implementation of the key gender transformation priorities. Today and tomorrow, we will scrutinise the medium-term development plan, highlighting that development plans can either perpetuate inequality or drive transformation.

A key aspect of our reflection will be to evaluate the implementation of the 2021 Women's Charter for Accelerated Development. We must assess the progress made, identify the gaps and outline actionable steps to ensure its full realisation.

Let us, therefore, use this platform to challenge existing norms, share innovative solutions and forge alliances that will propel us towards a more equitable future. Together, we can turn the vision of equality and shared growth into a tangible reality for all South Africans.

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Distinguished Delegates, as we gather for this P20 Women's Parliament, we are reminded of the urgent need to address the scourge of gender-based violence that plagues our society - a plague that does not only targets women, but has now targeted our children from birth upwards. And that is a scourge which we need to address very seriously. It is happening far too often and we should not become cold to the fact that this is just another incident.

So, my message for you today is about gender-based violence and the violence that is perpetuated on the most vulnerable of our society - our children.

This conference presents a critical opportunity for us to reflect on the devastating impact of gender-based violence and to galvanise our collective efforts to combat it. Let us use this platform to come up with clear outcome-based oversight priorities that will guide our actions and hold all of us accountable. We must ensure that our discussions translate into tangible strategies, robust policies and effective implementation that will make meaningful differences in the lives of women and girls.

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Allow me to extend my heartfelt gratitude to every one of you for making time out of your busy schedules to attend this critical gathering. Your presence here, today, is a testament to our commitment to advancing gender transformation. Ayn Rand, the Russian-American author, once said, and I quote,

The question isn't who is going to let me; it's who is going to stop me.

You are the women of our country – women of strength. Let no one stop you. This is a platform for you to exert your minds and to come up with those tangible solutions that we all seek.

At this point, I just want to mention the rules of Parliament which most of us are familiar with. The rules for this session today, and tomorrow, have been placed before you. Please familiarise yourself with these rules so that we conduct ourselves in a dignified and orderly manner, and that we have a very meaningful session.

I also want to acknowledge the contributions made by hon Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, Minister of Small Business Development. You may have seen their displays in the Queen's

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Hall when you came in. When you have time during the day, today and tomorrow, visit those stalls and see the kind of work that's being done by that department.

Hon Members, I welcome you once again and I hand over to the hon House Chairperson, Cedric Frolick, who will now take over from me. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you, Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP. Good morning to all our esteemed guests, Excellencies, the Speaker, the Minister, as well as the representatives from different sectors in the country.

Some of you might find it strange that you have two males presiding over the opening session. I wish to indicate that we were fortunate enough to be given this responsibility of leading sectoral parliaments, which include the Youth Parliament, the Women's Parliament, the Men's Parliament, the Climate Parliament and so forth, looking at all sectoral activities. We were given this responsibility by two very esteemed ladies, the hon Speaker of the National Assembly and the hon Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces.

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I also want to acknowledge the presence of the former Deputy Minister, Zoe Kota, who is also in the audience, and there's also former members, the hon Maseko and the former House Chairperson in the Council of Provinces, the hon Ngwenya, who is also here. Thank you very much. It's good to see the familiar faces again.

My task is easy but also daunting. It is my privilege to introduce to you the sixth female Speaker ... woman Speaker of the National Assembly, who is no stranger amongst us. She has had a long stint in government as a Deputy Minister from 1994 onwards, thereafter a Minister, then she came back into Parliament as a presiding officer, and then as a Minister again, and today, the hon Thoko Didiza is the Speaker of the National Assembly. We are graced by your presence, hon Speaker, and I now invite you to deliver your keynote address. Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Hon House Chairperson, I thought you were not going to give me a timer, because I have given you, together with our House Chair, an opportunity to lead this process. So, that should have come with some benefits. Well, we are in Parliament. There are certain rules that apply to all of us.

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I would like to recognise our Chairperson of the Council of Provinces, who is not here with us, but in Gambia attending the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meeting and Deputy President, Paul Mashatile, who is with us online. I also want to acknowledge our Deputy Speaker and Speakers of provincial legislatures. As you are here, there are also women in the various legislatures of our country who are virtually part of this meeting. Our Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, hon Govender, our Minister, Minister Chikunga and other Ministers as well as Deputy Ministers who are on the virtual platform, our House Chairpersons, those that are here and those that are not here, hon Members of Parliament representing different parties that are here, but also representatives of women's formations who are here with us today, Mr Gomera, our UN Development Programme, UNDP, representative who is among us here, we also acknowledge your presence, the heads of some of our institutions that support democracy that will be working with us as we engage on this forum, and our chairperson of the Women's Caucus, hon Dunjwa and your team that is here today, we also acknowledge your presence.

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It is indeed an honour and a privilege that today we are here in the democratic Parliament of our country, particularly in the House of the National Council of Provinces, where many years prior to 1994 women were not a part of. Just imagine how these Houses looked like in 1993.

There was only one woman, who also came very late, who was then made a Minister of Health, Rina Venter, and later, before 1994, Sheila Camerer, as a Deputy Minister, was also brought in. You can imagine what the infrastructure of this Parliament might have looked like.

In terms of some things that we take for granted ... actually, one of the things that the women who came in 1994 found was that there was only one toilet for women. It tells you of the journey that we have traversed.

However, I must also say that we meet today during an important month where we celebrate the heroic struggles that women have led towards the attainment of our democracy. It is through these moments that we take stock of the strategies that they actually applied to ensure that they advance our struggle. These range from different epochs of our struggle.

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IsiZulu:

Abanye benu bayokhumbula ukuthi omama bachitha utshwala ematsheni ngoba bebona ukuthi obaba uma belibele ukuphuza lo mzabalazo angeke uye phambili. Siwukhumbula umzabalazo womama eBethal belwa emapulazini lapho kutshalwa amazambane.

English:

However, if you come here to the Western Cape, there are also many struggles. Many women, even prior to 1900, I mean 1913, started to fight against the carrying of forms of documentation that had to define where they could be at what moments.

It is also women who actually led the land struggles from a very early age, where they were able to stand their ground, even if it meant they would be arrested and imprisoned, to say, we will never tire as long as we cannot have access to land as a resource for our livelihood.

It is these women in our country who in 1954 were able to work across political, religious and class lines, and said, we will form the Federation of SA Women, Fedsaw, as a vehicle that will enable us to advance our freedom.

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Last year, we marked 70 years of the work of Fedsaw.

Instructive in what they did was the Women's Charter, which actually defined what dispensation women of South Africa wanted, not only for women but for the whole of society.

It goes back to 1962 ... the formation of the Pan-African Women's Organisation. Again, women of the African continent were saying, what do we need to do as women in order to advance our struggle?

However, as it always happened, the work that these women did, important as it was, always became ... in the shadows. When we all speak about the liberation struggle, people will say, 1963, the formation of the Organisation of African Unity, but women were already a year old in that solidarity of working together to advance our struggle.

Again, this year, we celebrate the Freedom Charter. Yes, it is important, but it was in 1954 that women of South Africa had already come together to say what South Africa we wanted and what dispensation we wanted for women.

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So, when we look back at the journey that women of South Africa in particular have traversed, we look back at some of those eras and say, what can we learn?

In 1956, it was women across the colour line, across religions and class, who said we want to make a statement. If it means we die on the doorstep of the government that doesn't represent us, so be it. With our children and our young people, we will say, *Strijdom*, as women we are not going to carry passes any longer. That was resilience, and that is what we reflect on and go back to, in terms of what women have done to advance our democracy.

It was in 1992 that South African women, led by the ANC, convened a meeting of different women's structures – political, religious, workers, and so on, and said, can we come together and actually define the South Africa that we want? Out of that process, the Women's Charter for Effective Equality was actually drawn.

The way in which it was done was by going around the country, listening to women and what women wanted. That became a learning journey, where women understood each other's

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livelihoods and struggles, so as to say, how do we collectively ensure that these concerns that women are raising can actually be addressed in a democratic South Africa?

Today, again, we meet when we celebrate 30 years of the UN ... held in Beijing in 1995, again looking at what we need to do to ensure that women's rights are human rights. What are those concerns that still have not been addressed to make sure that women's lives can actually be better?

I think one of the things that we as this Parliament, led by the Women's Ministry headed by a woman, hon Chikunga, need to do is to go back as a country and ask, what journey have we transversed since 1995? In those 12 areas of the platform of action, how has our country and our legislatures advanced to make sure that the lives of women are improved?

In my view, that acts as a template for us to capture the journey that we have traversed. Without pre-empting what we would need to do in that conference, I just want to say that one thing that happened in our country was to ensure that women cannot only have a voice but can be seen. It is women, representing our different parties elected by the electorate,

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who sit in these halls and define what legal framework must govern us, and who bring concerns from communities, not only about what women want, but what our societies and communities want.

It is these women, some of them very young, who bring to these halls of Parliament ... to say, what do we need to change for the girl-child, for the young women of our country, in order for our country to succeed? It is through the struggles of those who have gone before us which ensured that we are at the table where decisions are made.

Who would have thought that as we sit here 30 years on, we would have a Chief Justice who is a woman? In various provinces, we have divisions ... judge presidents are women.

Who would have thought that today you will fly from Johannesburg to Cape Town and you hear that the first officer flying for *FlySafair* or SA Airways, SAA, or Airlink or CemAir is Thokozile? Can you feel, wow!

Who would have thought that today many of our health professionals, not only nurses – because maybe we have been in

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those corridors for a long time – are women doctors who sit in those surgeries and decide how to open my heart. And it is okay. Who would have thought mam Thembekwayo here in front of us can stand tall and be a doctor, and nobody says ...

IsiZulu:

... ubani ...

English:

... but it just becomes, wow, another woman!

It is these achievements – which might seem very small – that we can point to and say, had it not been for the struggles of those women – some of them who were not even educated – who waged the struggle for women's emancipation to fight for an egalitarian society where women and men are equal, we would not be here.

So, as we take stock, one of the strengths that I want us to remember is how women in our history, in the history of our continent, in the history of our globe, have become bridge builders. I hope, mam Dunjwa, as the chair of the Women's Caucus, that our Women's Caucus will be able to transcend our

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political text and start to say, how do we make sure that the laws that we pass, the programmes that we undertake, prioritise women, girl-children and all of our societies before we think of our text as the EFF, as the ANC, as the MK Party, as the DA. Yes, those political homes are important, but what has always defined women in our country has been transcending those barriers and saying, our people first.

Had it not been for that capability that women have, we would not have had a situation in 1992, where women collectively demanded that those negotiators for a democratic South Africa were not only going to be men. If there had to be two negotiators, one had to be a woman, one had to be a man.

It is the collective of the women of South Africa who said that the Constitution will never be an acceptable one if the equality clause was not there. It was the women of South Africa who said that if this Constitution did not provide for the *Commission for Gender Equality*, which would allow for a body that would continuously monitor how our government, how our society ensures women's participation and inclusivity, it wouldn't be us.

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It is these women of South Africa who, at some stage say, we appreciate that we have had the status of the women's office in the head of The Presidency, but now we want a full Ministry. We have a Women's Ministry today, not because we were given it, but we demanded it. The challenge is, how do we make sure that that Women's Ministry works for women?

As I close, how do we make sure that we do not lose that agency of women that we have always had, of being able to connect between women in legislatures and our women's movement outside, instead of them and us? However, how do those women connect with us through the women's caucus in order to say, here is an agenda of what you, who have an opportunity to be our mouthpiece, must be able to drive. I'm sure that if part of what we have to do is to strengthen those bonds, we will be able to advance the lot of women.

In my view, as we go for the P20, given this history as South African women, we need to be very clear about how we build a global economy that is inclusive of women. How do we make sure that that G20 does not only speak in the air about the economy, but that the economy must talk to me and you and to uMaZondi eNgwavuma. How do we ensure that when the heads of

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state and government meet at that G20 summit, and they listen to the voices of women, they must be able to say, how do we address the issues of sustainability, such that our economic activity must not actually redress our ecosystem such that women become victims? How do we make sure that that G20 starts to reflect on how we address issues of sustainability to ensure that our environment is protected, such that it can look after us and look after our children and our great-grandchildren in the future?

So, as you engage with the P20 theme from a woman's perspective, I'm sure that we'll be able to deliberate on those issues so that when you host the other women a day before that Speakers' summit, you'll be able to say as South African women, not as ANC, PAC, EFF, but collectively, as women of South Africa, we can say this is what we want for an inclusive, sustainable world. This is how we want to act in solidarity with others in the world who may be in a worse situation than us.

I hope you will utilise today and tomorrow effectively to actually advance the lot of women, as our foremothers and great grandmothers did in the past. I thank you.

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The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:

Hon House Chairperson, hon Thoko Didiza, Speaker of the National Assembly, hon Mtshweni-Tsipane, Chairperson of the NCOP, His Excellency Deputy President Paul Mashatile, hon Ministers and Deputy Ministers joining online, hon Members of Parliament and provincial legislatures, chairperson of the Multiparty Women's Caucus, hon Dunjwa, leaders from government, civil society, organized labour, faith-based, traditional leadership, academia, the private sector, chairperson of the National Youth Development Agency, NYDA, Dr Sunshine Myende, Mr Gomera of the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, distinguished guests, and fellow South Africans, good morning.

House Chairperson, I am deeply honored by your kind invitation and grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the 2025 Women's Parliament. We are humbled, once again, that you have found it fitting for us, across the political spectrum, to come together to reflect on, commemorate, and honor the past, present, and future generations of women at home, across the continent, and around the world. Here at home, the year 2025 marks several memorable milestones in our country's rich heritage and struggle for women's emancipation, empowerment,

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and gender equality. It marks 30 years since the adoption of the historic Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995, seventy years since the adoption of the Freedom Charter, and most notably, we are just a year shy of commemorating the 70th anniversary of the historic Women's March of 1956. And so, this Women's Month, we take a moment to honor gallant heroines such as Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, Charlotte Maxeke, Sophia Williams-De Bruyn, Nokuthula Aurella Simelane, Happy Joyce Mashaba, and the many others whose sacrifices nurtured the tree of our freedom. Remember, in our first democratic Parliament in 1994, trailblazers like Mme Frene Ginwala, Mme Baleka Mbete, Albertina Sisulu, Gertrude Shope, and hon Thoko Didiza, who began dismantling centuries of exclusion, proving that women's leadership could shape the legislative agenda.

We pay tribute to women in the trade union movement for their contributions to bringing more just and humane conditions in the workplace. Today, we speak about paid maternity leave, dignified working conditions, etc. The work to preserve this legacy must continue now so that in the coming year, we can showcase and celebrate it with the reverence it deserves. Decades from now, future generations must inherit the

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knowledge that they are the descendants of women whose extraordinary courage, strategic foresight, and fearless leadership brought down one of history's most brutal systems of oppression - the apartheid system.

Hon Chairperson, women have come a long way. Our reality has been shaped by centuries of structural inequality, economic exclusion, and systemic violence. We remained concentrated on the margins of political, economic, and social power. Our contributions through the care economy remain structurally undervalued and underpaid and are never mentioned. Even today, globally, continentally, and locally, informal economies have become a lifeline for millions of women, yet policies neither recognize nor protect women working in these sectors. Land tenure systems continue to privilege men, while women's access to productive assets, land, credit, and technology is curtailed by both patriarchal norms and state policies that disregard gendered realities.

For far too long, violence against women and girls has remained pervasive, normalized, and inadequately addressed. As the digital divide further compounds this exclusion, women in rural and farming communities lack access to media

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technologies and are thus shut out of critical political debates and information flows. However, hon Chairperson, despite the setbacks we have identified at the national, regional, and global level, our country has made significant strides since the dawn of our democracy. The hon Speaker has referred to some of those gains.

Regarding meaningful representation in decision-making, which is very important for women, and law-making structures, today women make up 43,5% of Parliament, an increase from 28% representation in 1994, putting us within 10 countries, which have made such progress. And 43% of the executives are here today. This is up from only three women in 1994 who were in executive positions. As of February 2023, 45% of our 253 judges are women, up from only two women in 1994. Indeed, there are many women today who occupy strategic positions, including chief executive officers, CEOs, of big corporations, but we are not where we want to be.

In line with our National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, our President recently signed into law the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Act to underscore our whole-of-society effort to prevent,

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eliminate, and respond to violence against all women and girls in all its forms and manifestations in public and private spaces, online and offline. We have also completed the National Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Prevalence Study to ensure that our current and future interventions are based on sound evidence. Our country has surpassed gender parity in higher education participation rates, and over 60% of graduates from our colleges and universities are women today, which was not the case yesterday. Through our chairship of the G20 Ministerial Working Group on the Empowerment of Women, we are shining the spotlight on the care economy, paid and unpaid, promoting financial inclusion through preferential public procurement for women-owned enterprises, and ensuring that women have access to land and related productive assets and economic opportunities. We have come a long way, yet we remain very far from where we should be.

Over the years, scholars have correctly argued that a resilient economy withstands, adapts to, and recovers from various shocks and stresses while maintaining its core function and capacity for inclusive growth. Going forward, guided by our Medium-Term Development Plan, MTDP, we will pursue quite a few priorities. And of course, some of them,

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including women of our country, can look forward to a transforming economy where their participation is significantly expanded and ownership of economic assets is increasingly equitable. By 2029, at least half of all active registered enterprises must be owned by women, and as a matter of law, 40% of public procurement spending must be directed to women-owned businesses. And of course, we have a few initiatives towards that.

We have also partnered with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR, to create a value chain-driven agricultural co-operatives model that leverages CSIR's intellectual property and advanced technologies, including precision agriculture, to equip and prepare emerging women farmers for market success. We also aim to modernize and build the capacity of women-owned businesses and ensure that they produce, supply, and distribute high-quality goods and services. This means access to the latest manufacturing technologies and production equipment. In highly regulated sectors, we need to find ways to simplify the certification processes and help with obtaining certificates needed to bid on public contracts.

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Over the next five years, we will continue to support the implementation of comprehensive land reform policies that guarantee women's equal rights to land ownership, inheritance, and control. However, land alone will not build resilient local economies. Therefore, our land reform efforts must continue to be accompanied by financing mechanisms that enable women to turn land into productive and income-generating assets. We have recently met with the Minister of Land Reform in this regard. We will continue to rely on the leadership of the Multiparty Women's Caucus and the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, and the standing committee here in the House so that gender mainstreaming, gender responsive budgeting, and women's inclusion are visible in every portfolio committee, whether in finance, trade, policing, health, education, or infrastructure.

Ours, in summary, we want full equality across all spheres. We want to occupy the center of development, not merchants. Structural parities in Parliament, local government, and community leadership are what we need. We need economic power, land rights, innovation, and economic justice to be non-negotiable. Until then, and others are achieved, we say the struggle continues. Aluta Continua. Let Women's Parliament be

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the heartbeat of national accountability. We have come a long way, but the struggle continues, and I thank you very much.

IsiZulu:

Mnu SOLLY MOLAYI (Acting Deputy Director General: Population and Social Statistics South Africa): Malibongwe! Malibongwe!

English:

Good morning, colleagues. The reason I look so beautiful and handsome is because of my grandmother and my mother. So ...

IsiZulu:

... malibongwe.

English:

I'm here to share with you ... going to take you through a journey, through statistics. We're going to go through a statistical lens, just to give you a sense of where we are in terms of women and we're going to unpack it and give you some little bit of insight in terms of issues around unemployment, issues around poverty and also issues around economic exclusion.

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We are starting by giving an understanding of how many are we. We are sitting at about 63 million of us in South Africa and the population is growing at a rate of 1,2% annually.

It's clear that there are more females in South Africa than males. Let me repeat it again. We've got more females than males in South Africa. And I think I'm emphasizing this point because - the next slide - you need to take into account what I'm saying now, in terms of there are more females than males in South Africa. We're talking about 32,2 million females.

If you break down the population, looking at the age, women outnumber men at the age of 45. Meaning females live longer. We really need to invest in females.

Let's look at what's happening within the household and the families, in terms of the arrangement. We are seeing more female-headed households. If you look at the proportions comparing the national ... in terms of the national proportions, we're sitting at 42,4%. Provinces like Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, are leading in terms of female-headed households. We are finding more female-headed households in the rural areas compared to the urban areas.

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What are the children's living arrangements in the households? In South Africa we are seeing that 45,5% children live with their mothers only. If you look at provinces like your Eastern Cape, your KwaZulu-Natal, that's where you get most of the households where there's no mother or there's no father, which means you find grandparents.

If you look at provinces like your Gauteng and Western Cape, we are seeing that these are the provinces where you're seeing more households where there's both a mother and a father in the household.

Close to half of the households headed by women are in Eastern Cape, Free State, Limpopo and North West, and they don't have employed household member within the household. I think this talks to the arrangement that in the household you find a female is looking after the young ones and within the household there's no one who's working.

Next up we're talking about education. I think the Minister has already spoke about this. If you look at ... from the primary up until secondary there's a universal access in terms of education. There's still more sthat need to be done at the

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higher level or higher education institutions, your university and your technikon. And I think this is something that all of us need to make sure that the young ones, also, after the secondary schools, they also entering the higher education.

We also ask in our surveys, what are the reasons for the young ones between age 7 and 18 not attending education institutions? And I think I want you to zoom into one of the reasons where some of the girl child indicated to us that the family commitment is one of the reasons why we are not going to school. Let me simplify it. If there's someone in the household who is sick, and there's a boy child and a girl child, we are most likely to ask the girl child to stay behind and look after the sick one. And this family commitment, if you unpack it, if you look at the numbers that are coming from Home Affairs in terms of the young mothers who register their babies, you will see that we've got more young mothers who are registering babies in this country.

Yesterday we released the numbers around unemployment rate and because we are celebrating Women's Month, our focus was to bring the lens of the gender, looking at the labour market and also especially in employment issues. We are sitting, now, at

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33,2% employment rate, with about 8,4 million unemployed people in South Africa. We're sitting about 3,4 million discouraged job work seekers. If you unpack the discouraged job seekers, 1,9 million of them are women, which means that we've got more discouraged job seekers in South Africa that are female.

Now, if you take these numbers or these indicators and you look at it from a female, you'll see that unemployment rate for women stands at 35,9%, it's higher than the national average. I've already mentioned that the discouraged job seekers, we're sitting about 1,9 million out of the 3,4 million. One of the reasons why they are discouraged is because there are no jobs in the areas where they stay. The second reason is because the skills that they have, vis-à-vis the job that is available, there's a mismatch. The third reason is because they've lost hope looking for a job. These are the three most seated reasons for jobs discouraged job seekers.

Are females participating in the labour force market? The slide is answering that question. If you look at the labour force participation for women and men, you see that men's

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labour force participation is higher than the females. So, we've got more males who are participating in the labour force market. The reasons why they are not economically active ... we are seeing that the reason why they are not economically active is because of homemaker, which is looking after the kids, looking after the household and this is the care economy that the Minister was referring to, that we really need to pay attention to it and say, how do we bring the care economy and also paying attention into it.

I've always been asked if probably having a child, does it become a disadvantage for you to participate in the labour force market? The answer is no. The numbers are saying that regardless of the number of children in the household, the female participation rate in the labour force rose between 2014 and 2025. So, it's not true that having children means that you are not going to be able to participate in the labour force market.

Participating in the labour force market is one thing, the main thing is whether are you absorbed in the market? And absorption rate for female is way, way low compared to males. The difference between the two, between male and female, is

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10,1 percentage points. So, there's still a gap between a male and a female, especially when you look at it in terms of absorption rate. That's the reason why unemployment rate is sitting at where it is.

The next slide is giving you a picture starting from 2015 up until 2025, we are sitting ... we're talking about the 10-year period, and if you look at the slides, the female unemployment rate, the official one is started in 2025 sitting around 27,3%. As I already said, that now is sitting around 35,9%. It's always been above the national averages.

So, women are vulnerable to unemployment rate. Break it down by provinces, you are seeing that even if you break it down by different provinces, you are still seeing the same picture, irrespective of where you are, North West or ... ja [yes] ... also in Eastern Cape, the numbers are saying females are vulnerable to unemployment rate.

The next slide is going to give you more insight in terms of population groups. If you now take the unemployment rate and you break it down by population group, women, especially black African women, continue to be most vulnerable with an

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unemployment rate of 40,2%. So, it's not only just women, but black African women. And you can see the gap between the men and the women in terms of unemployment rate, overlaying it by a population group.

The next slide talks about the industries. Which industries where females are employed? Women are most likely to be employed in community and social services, trade service, finance and private household compared to men. If you look at the list and you go down the list, you'll look at some of the other industries, for example, your construction, you see that you're talking about 1,9%, you go to mining, you only took about 1%.

The next slide talks about the occupations. Looking at the occupations, only about 6,8% of females compared to 10,7% of males are in a ... as managers in their companies or organizations. So, there's still more work that needs to be done. Elementary positions, mostly you find females, and these are the numbers that we have seen over time and I think it's something ... collectively, we'll have to work around this to change these pictures.

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Let's go to the next slide that talks to financial ... access to financial and related resources by household. If you look at the income ... household income or the average household income in South Africa, most of the income are coming from work which is salaries. If you break it down by sex of the head of the household, you say that ... you notice that female-headed households earned significantly less income than males. You could see that the average for females is sitting around R93 000 and for males is sitting about R146 000 per month. So, this is the average household income by sex or the head of the household.

If you take into account the real growth of annual households between 2006 and 2023, taking into account all their incomes that are coming into the household, including the social grant, as part of the income that is getting into households, you see that the female-headed households have seen an increase from the income growth that is mostly driven by social grants.

The next slide speaks about what type of expenditures that are happening within the households, if you break it down by the gender of the head of the household. For female, they're

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spending more on housing and food items. It's not surprising because I already told you that they are actually looking for the young ones, so, they spend more of their money looking at ... I mean, paying the houses, water, electricity and other food items. So, if you're talking about the Consumer price index, CPI, and the prices and the type of food and also increasing the electricity and water, you need to understand that female-headed households are spending more on these items, including transport.

The next slide talks about the ownership. So, if you look at the type of dwelling ... I mean status within ... in terms of the dwellings, the female-headed households are more likely to occupy dwellings that are owned and fully paid off. And these dwelling units, we're also including the houses that are provided by government and these have driven these proportions over time, if you look at the trendline.

If you go and look at different bank products that are provided by different banks, from mortgage to credit card, male-headed households are more likely to access various banking products compared to females. But interesting enough, the next slide shows that when females are actually accessing

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these banking products, they are paying their debt repayments compared to meals. So, they're paying what is supposed to be ... at every month they're paying their mortgages compared to males. But few of them are accessing these products.

The next slides we're talking about the poverty. I'm looking at the time. Can you go to the next slide, where we're talking about the upper bound poverty line and the lower bound and over ... and also the food poverty line, which is sitting around 796. When we were doing this exercise we were talking about almost 25,2% of the population who are living below poverty line, will be coming with the updated numbers at the end of September, where we're going to look at what is the latest number in terms of the poverty lines. If you look at the poverty, especially the headcount gap, females remain disadvantaged compared to males in terms of poverty, and this has been a trend over time.

The next slides speak about what I've already mentioned in terms of what is the main source of income in the household, and we have seen that over time, especially in provinces like your Eastern Cape and Limpopo, grants are the main source of

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income, are contributing to about 23% of the households nationally.

If you break down these numbers, looking at the individuals that are accessing or they're benefiting from the social grants and then you overlay it by the household that has at least once, someone in the household who've got access to a grant or a social grant, and you plot these numbers over time, you are seeing that there are more households that have received at least one social grant, and we are now sitting at about 50% of the households where we have at least one person, either you have a grant ... a child grant or the social relief of distress, SRD, grant. If you look at it from population perspective, you are saying that individuals that have access to grants also have increased.

Let's look at the individuals who are running non-VAT, value-added tax, registered businesses. If we are talking about informal economy, the question is that: Who is running these businesses? And the numbers are showing us that male individuals are the ones who are actually running the businesses. We are sitting at about 1,1 million compared to 800 000 females. And if you look at the graph, it shows you

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that we had more females who are running businesses before covid, we were sitting at about two ... we were sitting at about 1,4 million, now, it has dropped. We really need to see how we can increase and ensure that females are actually also running these businesses.

This is my last slide. I've already told you that there are more females in South Africa. I've told you that when you look at the unemployment rate in South Africa it has got a face, it's women, it's black African women. I've told you that the labour force in terms of participation, there are more males who are participating compared to females. I've also told you that the absorption rate is actually also in favour of females. I've indicated to yourselves that if you look at the income within the households, for female is driven by social grants. I've even said that if you look at the living arrangements for children, female are the ones who are looking after females. With that, Chair ...

IsiZulu:

... malibongwe.

English:

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Thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you very much from Statistics SA and I think, hon delegates, we are very fortunate because Statistics SA, only yesterday, released the findings of the quarterly labour force. And I think we are fortunate that we are getting this information immediately after it has been released nationally, I think this is the first gathering of any kind that is receiving this kind of information and we want to thank you for that. And I think you did justice to the information.

But I think, more importantly, we will make those presentations available to everyone so that you will be able to follow through on it.

Ms TANYA COHEN (Commissioner: The National Planning Commission): Chairperson, hon members, good morning, I would like to acknowledge the protocol, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, the House Chairperson, the Chair of the Multiparty Women's Caucuses, Members of Parliament, hon Deputy President, Ministers, distinguished guests, good morning to you all. I have a

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presentation that I would like to share, and I hope that it is visible, you can just give me indication thereof.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Yes, we can see your presentation, go ahead.

Ms TANYA COHEN (Commissioner: The National Planning Commission): Thank you. This morning and in the time available I will speak to you about three key areas. The first one is around how do we give greater visibility and consciousness to women in the planning process, what it means to do gender mainstreaming, and what it means to do a gender-centred or gendered approach, and how do we look at our gender machinery and strengthen it in order to implement the elements of the Charter of Women's Development. It is obvious that men and women and other genders have equal rights and entitlement, and these are given effect to primarily two instruments. The first one is the Equality Clause in our Constitution, and the second one is the fifth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is very focused on gender equality, but it indicates that all the other areas of the Sustainable Development Goals need to have gender mainstreamed through them. And that is

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something that we see in all our policy instruments and legislation as well.

What is gender mainstreaming? It is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, whether it is legislation, whether it is policies, whether it is programmes, at every stage of the process and in all areas. It is not an isolated exercise, it is an integral part of policy and programme cycle, and gender responsive programmes hold exponential power to achieve the aspirations of the National Development Plan, NDP.

From the NDP perspective through to the Development Plan, Performance Plan, sectoral district plans, there is an argument to be made that at best they are gender blind, at worst they are gender hostile. And that is a term that has been something that we have discussed extensively within the commission and with stakeholders on gender. And it was coined by fellow commissioner Dr. Lebohang Liepollo Pheko who will be addressing you later in the day. But it has a key point to pause upon because we cannot just say that we forgot to put in enough about gender issues into these plans. What is the underlying reason we are not doing that? And there must be an

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underlying reason we are not doing that. And that is not just a neutral reason. It is something that is an affront to women and the contribution that women can make to the society and the economy.

In general, these are big generalisations, but I make them to demonstrate the point. Plans are often silent on women. When they are mentioned, they mentioned alongside other groups. Strategic interventions often refer superficially to women without modalities and interventions to address specific access issues and benefit by women. Interventions relating to women are often aggregated with other groups. It dilutes the focus and fails to address gender specific inhibitors.

Monitoring and evaluation are frequently done too late when there is little that can be done to course correct and address the challenges that arise in terms of ineffectual implementation in relation to women. The NDP includes women and gender as a cross-country priority, but it has limited further areas that deal with women. This is translated currently into our Medium-Term Development Plan, which outlines overarching elements in relation to reducing women's barriers and equitable participation, access to opportunities.

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And then you have your departmental, your provincial and your local strategic and your annual performance plans that are all required to set gender focus goals, set targets, outline programmes and interventions that will achieve gender development within their mandates. And this takes place to varying degrees across the state, but there is overarching statements of intent regarding women, but there is a lack of associated interventions. We see that there is a limited connection between the gender targets that are set at national, provincial, and local level.

We see that the targets of the Medium-Term Strategic Framework from the last administration have not been carried through into the Medium-Term Development Plan of the current administration. We see weak timelines, accountability and monitoring and evaluation. The plans often lack outcome-based targets. Interventions are often disconnected from the outcomes. So, you do not see the connection point between the strategic intervention and what it is going to deliver. And budgets are not aligned to the plans in many instances. So, these are general challenges, but they certainly apply in relation to women and gender as well.

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What does gender mainstreaming mean in planning and how do you start asking the right questions to make sure that there is a focus on gender in the planning process? The first question one needs to ask, and this is really something that I ask that parliamentarians, hon members, be very conscious of in the process of looking at legislation and policy instruments that come before you. The first is, what is the primary objective or focus of strategic intervention? Does it deliberately and consciously include women? The second is, who are the targets of those interventions, both indirect and direct? And who might be disadvantaged by those targets? The third is if the output or outcome broken down by gender in relation to the indicators. In other words, do you know at the start of the intervention, how many women and men will benefit from the various interventions? And what are your objectives at the end of the intervention, policy, or plan? And how will gender relations and impact be monitored? And that needs to be established right at the beginning.

So, in terms of mainstreaming gender, the objective is not to have mere quotas or tokenism. It is not to have a one-size-fits all gender policy. And it is not to have what we call add woman and stir approach, where you sprinkle on a bit of

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reference to gender, mix it in and then proceed not to do much about it going forward. It is about crowding in gender, but not along with other groups, because that dilutes. Gender needs to have a very distinct focus in targeted interventions.

Some examples would speak directly to the Charter for Women's Development, that if you look at early childhood education centres and there is a mass registration drive underway as we speak, many of the people that are running those early childhood education centres are women. And yet there is not a distinct strategy around women in that policy and in that rollout. There is an implication that women will benefit from it, but it is not a distinct area of focus, and it is not consciously entered.

Similarly, an economic growth strategy often focusses on higher returns, higher growth, and expansion of the formal equality. But it does not look, for instance, at the extent to which men and women benefit from those policies and interventions. And what we find is very often when there is not that distinct focus, it works to the detriment of women because there is limited access by women. The example is access to small, medium and micro-enterprises, SMME, funding,

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where the evidence shows that unless one puts into place deliberate interventions to ensure that women have access, is that often the take-up by women is lower for various reasons than it would be by men.

The sector master plans are also focused around sector growth, but they do not consider deliberately and consciously the ownership management and participation of women in work opportunities. Also, government services, licencing, and administration systems. There is an implicit assumption that if you provide these services better, if you improve the licencing process, you improve the systems, that women will automatically benefit. That cannot be assumed. Often very deliberate and specific interventions must be put in place to ensure that women are the beneficiaries of these processes and services.

Looking to re-engineering government's gender planning machinery, it is fair to say there have been many gender-centred policies developed which remain relevant, some of them older than others. And those include, for example, the National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment, which was developed in the year 2000. The Department of Women, Youth and

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People with Disabilities has recently completed a review. It is not yet publicly available but is due for release this year. There is the 2015 Gender Strategic Framework, the Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing Framework of 2019, Country Gender Indicator Framework 2020, and the Strategy for Economic Empowerment of Women, Youth and Persons with Disability 2024.

There is also quite an extensive gender machinery in place, but it is operating and functioning at varied levels. And this was a synthesis that we drew together with several organisations and informants. It might not be entirely accurate, but what you see is that under government, there has been the office on the status of women. It was changed into the Ministry. There was at some stage a Ministry exclusively around women, and it is now part of the Ministry of Women, Youth and People with Disability.

We also have a system within national government that there are gender focal points in the line departments. But when we have interrogated that, many of those are under-resourced. They are not well co-ordinated, and they are not sufficiently

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positioned within the departments to do the work they need to do around planning and implementation.

Within Parliament, there is also a variety of different committees and structures. We are informed that a lot of the parliamentary interventions around women used to be performed through a joint monitoring committee on the quality and life and status of women. But it now gets dealt with through the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and People with Disabilities. We think that might be a challenge because you lose the focus of women in every other committee by doing that.

And you need both, not one or the other. And then there are a few independent bodies and Chapter Nine bodies that focus on women and women's rights, notably the Commission for Gender Equality, which is a distinct entity set up for that purpose. And then you have civil society and a variety of women's organisations as well as non-governmental organisations. You see a very comprehensive network of co-ordinated structures within and outside of government. They are designed to collectively and collaboratively dismantle systemic

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inequalities to facilitate gender transformation. But they are operating at varied levels of effectiveness.

Looking further at the machinery and how it relates, there is the Department of Women, Youth and People with Disability, which leads co-ordination of the gender machinery. You have your non-state participation, which monitors and evaluates policies and practises of society. You have got your gender focal points for gender mainstreaming within departments. And then from a whole of government perspective, you have policy frameworks and machinery and mechanisms that this is limited co-ordination and integration of plans. Budgets are poorly aligned to plans, and plans are insufficiently outcome-based when one looks at gender.

In relation to the oversight mechanisms, from a parliamentary point of view, there is obviously the legislative organs of state that are mandated to conduct oversight. Parliamentary committees are required to include departmental briefing sessions and calls for submissions and petitions. And they can do so, - sorry, they are not required, but they can use those tools for the purposes of gender. And there is a variety of

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different interventions available within national government including co-operative governance.

There is a cluster system that speaks to the intergovernmental mechanism. And the cluster system could be a very good point of intervention in terms of gender. And in fact, the Department of Women, Youth and People with Disabilities participates in the Economic, Social Security and Governance Clusters. So that might be a way to strengthen the oversight mechanisms.

This is a very quick view, which I will not spend too much time on of the various evaluation mechanisms from the Auditor-General through to National Treasury, co-operative governance, and the Presidency. It is a framework that really calls for engendering the planning, monitoring and evaluation system and making it gender visible through all these levels and very conscious. We need to be far better in terms of gender responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation, and auditing, which is all contained in the framework, but make sure that the gender responsive evaluations and assessments. Similarly, under the National Evaluation Policy Framework,

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NEPF, we need to make sure that those processes are engendered.

There have been some successes and should be noted in the evaluation system when it comes to gender. So, the office on the status of women was initially successful in drawing up the NEPF. There was an audit early in the 90s that demonstrated strong political will and the legislative framework and administrative machinery. That was in place, but it said, but often it said that this machinery stalls and sometimes undermines gender initiatives.

The Commission for Gender Equality, CGE, has achieved some success with respect to public education, consciousness raising, advocacy and addressing complaints. And the Joint Monitoring Committee, particularly in the early days was very effective in setting gender into legislation, fast-tracking Bills that had a positive effect on women. And the National Women's Coalition played a pivotal role in the design of the national gender machinery. But there have also been challenges. The Ministry and portfolio committees responsible for women have been plagued by performance challenges. Feminist scholars - and this is an important point when

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considering the organisation of national governments, strongly argue against a single Ministry, favouring a multi-layered and multi-pronged approach. There have been extensive reviews of the CGE that point to a lack of strategic focus, limited powers, and a non-autonomous relationship with the state. And then the gender focal points within departments have been rendered ineffective due to appointments at lower ranks than stipulated in the framework, poorly defined roles, a lack of prioritisation of gender mainstreaming, and other areas including lack of resourcing and budgeting. And those focal points are also responsible for people with disabilities and youth. So as weak as they are resourced, that is then spread across three different areas as well.

When one looks at policies, plans, strategies, and the reviews that have been done of the NDP and the Medium-Term Strategic Framework in the previous administrations, the theme that runs through them is that despite some progress with advancing women's rights, persistent patriarchy, gender-based violence, and discrimination continue to have a disproportionately negative effect on women and girls.

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The Commission Gender Equality 2021 review said that the National Development Plan was gender-blind in that it did not cause specific interventions to ensure gender transformation. So that is a lesson for us in looking to the next long-term development plan in terms of how we create an improved vision for the future. And then out of the 55 Medium-Term Strategic Framework targets that were evaluated, twenty-five were lagging at the time of the 2021 Mid-Term Review, and those included hectares of land distributed to women, youth, and persons with disability, and preferential procurement's minimum targets.

If you look at annual performance reports, there is a level of sex disaggregation for targets and performance against departmental mandates. Most departments struggle to reach the 40% procurement target. Many of the departments lack targets, however, and except for higher education and training, departments do not include an indication of the contribution to the medium and long-term country targets as it pertains to gender. A lot of challenges in terms of how gender is articulated in those annual performance plans.

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Recommendations from the commission's work, and I do wish to say that the commission has been working on this quite extensively in the past two years. We have had the benefits of international development expert Dr Mariam Tanweer, a local government and gender expert Lerato Shai, and the contribution from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, FCDO, the UK High Commission's support to do this work. And so, this is a synthesis of work that has been done by various experts, as well as engagements with various members of government, civil society, and experts in the field. And we believe that it is very important that the Presidency needs to conduct an evaluation synthesis to inform a structural redesign of the national gender machinery to enhance its ability to orchestrate a co-ordinated and coherent gender transformation agenda in the country.

We think that the lead department, together with National Treasury, should conduct a comprehensive costing and increase the funding progressively over time for gender mainstreaming. One cannot plan in the absence of a budget, and we need to understand what funding needs to be in place for the optimal functioning of the institutions required to lead, co-ordinate, and implement gender mainstreaming. The Presidency, National

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Treasury, and Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation should synthesise and conduct an evaluation considering the implementation successes and failures in administrative machinery, with the aim of enhancing implementation capability. And the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation should conduct outcome and impact evaluations of critical policies and regulatory instruments in so far as they pertain to women, particularly notable employment equity skills development, black economic empowerment legislation, where women are specifically mentioned, but we need to understand the impact of these policies on women.

In terms of the regulatory level, we need to make sure that we are very deliberate in the design and implementation of interventions to dismantle patriarchal norms, and this should reach across all organs of state and be co-ordinated and supported by the national gender machinery. There needs to be a legislative consciousness. Every policy reform considered in Parliament should consider and deliberate on the gender implications of the specific proposal.

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This is something that should be done at the outset and should be a standard agenda item in every policy reform process. We need to mainstream gender within all the sector master plans. Lead departments should prioritise labour-intensive sectors with job creation potential, particularly for women, in the master plans, and be very deliberate about what those targets, goals and interventions will be to deliver the change that is required.

Develop a master plan for a care economy. This is a sector obviously predominated by women, and we know that it is part of the agenda to consider this. In contrast to other economy areas and sectors where they have master plans or specific focusses, there is no master plan in relation to the care economy. This really is something that could create a significant contribution in terms of the participation of women in the economy. This includes updating our time-use survey data to conduct modelling and analysis of the current economic contribution and potential of the care economy, because that does not seem to be available at this stage.

Then we need to also look at removing regulatory barriers that stifle informal economic activity. There is a combination of

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departments that should be working together to ensure that gender can be mainstreamed in those areas.

In terms of every area, and this is my last slide, our parting comments are that each strategic intervention of every plan, policy or regulation should be very deliberate at the outset. It should interrogate the baseline status, disaggregated by sex, of how many women and how many men are being considered in that policy and plan or regulation, and what is the target. The intended outcome of the strategic intervention needs to be clear for women. Specific interventions should be in place to ensure that the outcomes are achievable, and budget needs to be allocated to achieve such interventions.

In the delivery and the evaluation of every plan, there should be interventions that deliver on women-related outcomes and a very rigorous monitoring on the impact of the programme in relation to women, with the ability to rapidly intervene and course-correct where challenges emerge, so that we do not find out at the end that it has been very inadequate in relation to women's outcomes.

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We should ensure that gender machinery is working optimally and assess the gender machinery to ensure its impact, make sure that there is co-ordination between the spheres and the sectors of government, and really make sure that the gender machinery is delivering and effective. We need to take an Operation Vulindlela approach to gender interventions, have them co-ordinated, make sure that they are targeted, prioritised, and making progress.

In conclusion, we need to make gender visible, we need to be very conscious about it, we need to be very deliberate about it at every stage of a planning process and a regulatory development process. We need to evaluate the impact on women, and I would suggest and recommend that we are very honest in reflecting on the achievements and our non-achievements, our learnings, because that is going to ultimately determine how we enhance and deliver to the women's agenda going forward. Thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP (Mr P Govender): Thank you very much, Ms Cohen, from the National Planning Commission, for your valuable inputs. Hon delegates, I think something that we need to take away from here is that the three-sphere

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planning is something that we need to be serious about, because gender mainstreaming cannot take place in silos. It must take place across all three spheres of government, and it is up to us to drive that process so that it finds resonance amongst our people. Thank you very much for that.

Most events do not end with someone announcing that a vehicle is blocking a driveway and that there is a lost and found item. So, here I got a driving licence for Ms V N Daniels, who lost it somewhere, but I do not know if she still needs it because it expired in 2013. But if you still need it, if you still want it as a souvenir, it is here. You can pick it up from us. Thank you very much for that.

Hon delegates, we are very much on schedule, and I have been informed that the Deputy President will be joining us at 10h30 am. So, we have about two or three minutes. If you just want to greet the people next to you, who you have not seen for a long time, or who you are meeting for the first time, then you have two or three minutes.

Just watch the clock and we will introduce the Deputy President at exactly 10h30. But please try not to leave the

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chamber because getting people back might be a bit of a challenge. Thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Hon Speaker, Thoko Didiza, hon Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, hon P Govender, hon C T Frolick, House Chairperson of the Oversight and Public Participation Committees in the National Assembly, hon Members of Parliament, speakers of provincial legislatures, Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, hon Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga, Ministers, Deputy Ministers present here, representatives of the SA Local Government Association, Salga, commissioners of the National Planning Commission, representatives of the United Nations and regional bodies, Chairpersons: ANC and DA Multi-Party Steering Committee members in the National Assembly and NCOP, esteemed participants of the P20 Women's Parliament, ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured to address this important gathering of the P20 Women's Parliament under the theme: Accelerating Equality, Sustainability and Shared Growth: Correcting the gender redistributional bias of growth and development - through the Women's Charter, the Medium-Term Development Plan and the 2025 G20 development priorities.

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Reflecting on the relevance of today's theme, we salute the contribution of women towards the liberation of the oppressed people of South Africa. We further acknowledge considerable progress our nation has achieved in gender equality and inclusive governance. Today, we are proud to witness the inclusion of women in leadership positions in government and in the private sector.

When addressing the Women's Day celebration this past Saturday, President Cyril Ramaphosa highlighted that South Africa holds the second position among G20 nations regarding female representation, with women constituting 42% of the Members of Parliament. Certainly, this is a noteworthy accomplishment deserving of recognition. However, we must recognise the ongoing obstacles, and the efforts required to establish a truly equitable society for all. To achieve this, we must learn from the legacy of the women from the 1956 generation who united in the struggle against an oppressive and unjust system.

The 9 August 1956 Women's March remains a strong indication that women played a significant role in the fight for

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equality, justice, and the attainment of our democracy. Their chant ...

IsiXhosa:

... "Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo".

English:

... goes beyond mere words; it embodies the tenacity, resilience, and strength of women. This essence has not diminished since 1956. We continue to witness the same tenacity and resilience in contemporary women. Women continue to be a symbol of fortitude and courage. Although the contribution of women has brought the apartheid regime to its knees and ushered in democratic dispensation, the fight for gender equality continues.

We recognise the efforts women have made since the early 20th century towards achieving gender equality in South Africa. The Freedom Charter, which was adopted in June 26, 1955, explicitly addresses the creation of an equal society. This is also supported by the Women's Charter, which was adopted in 1954 and further culminated in the expression of a Women's Charter for Effective Equality, which has provided the

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framework for women's transformation as observed in South Africa's democracy.

The Women's Charter outlined women's rights for voting, employment, marriage, and family, which were later integrated into the Freedom Charter for a democratic South Africa, where all citizens, regardless of gender, have equal rights and opportunities, including participation in political processes. Although we have made progress in establishing a democratic system and eliminating apartheid's legislative framework, as envisioned by the Freedom Charter, we must question whether we are making progress towards gender equality and inclusion, particularly following the review and adoption of the 2021 Women's Charter.

The reality is that, despite an increase in representation in Parliament since 1994, as I have already mentioned, most sectors of our economy remain male dominated. This indicates that we have not fully realised the ideals of the Freedom Charter, hence we need to act decisively to achieve equitable representation in all areas of our society.

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Programme directors and hon members, you will agree with me that gender equality lies at the core of our democracy, for true democracy can only flourish when all individuals are treated with dignity and respect and have access to equal opportunities. Gender equality is not only a struggle for a fundamental human right, but it is also essential for achieving sustainable development, promoting peace and security, and fostering a more just and inclusive society. Women's rights are human rights. Regardless of our sex and gender orientation, all of us must be motivated to continue the fight for gender equality. We must pursue viable solutions to the persistent challenges, such as the gender pay gap and under-representation of women in leadership roles.

As leaders, we must consider women's needs and prioritise their empowerment to promote economic growth, reduce poverty, and foster a more just and equal society. The price to pay for gender equality is challenging patriarchal norms and structures and implementing gender-sensitive developmental policies and planning instruments that are effectively mainstreamed across all three spheres of government.

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We must be persistent in advocating for legislative measures that will guarantee women-owned small, micro, and medium businesses access to working capital and inclusion in the mainstream economy. Progress made without putting too much emphasis on the government's role and the results of our efforts speak for themselves. When it comes to achieving gender equality, our nation has achieved a significant amount of progress. South Africa's 1996 Constitution is one of the most progressive in the world and asserts the principle of gender equality as a key component of our transformation agenda.

The equality clause, enshrined in Chapter 2 of our Constitution, prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, and ethnic or social origin, ensuring the protection of women's rights. The Constitution laid the basis for the introduction of progressive, equal rights-based legislative instruments that are mindful of South Africa's gender realities.

Furthermore, sections 59 and 72 make provision for public access and involvement in the law-making processes of Parliament. Since the dawn of democracy, this Parliament has

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been able to pass progressive pieces of legislation that have enabled equitable representation of women in the mainstream economy, whilst ensuring that the rights and welfare of women are taken care of. These include the Employment Equity Act, Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act and the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Act that was signed into law in May 2024, to mention a few.

To demonstrate our commitment to gender equality, the government expanded the access of women to economic opportunities by setting aside 40% of public procurement for women-owned businesses. Through the National Empowerment Fund and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency, which both offer financial and nonfinancial support to small, medium and micro enterprises, SMMEs, there has been an increase in the amount of support provided to women-owned small, medium and micro enterprises.

To further address the gap associated with funding, the government has also launched the Technology Innovation Agency, Tia - a unique initiative aimed at empowering women in technology and innovation. The programme provides funding,

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mentorship, and an environment for innovation to thrive. The Tia will accelerate women's contributions to South Africa's technological advancements and economic growth.

Despite many of these interventions, we continue to face the scourge of violence against women and children. In recognition of the need to do more, in 2022, the government signed three new pieces of legislation to combat gender-based violence and femicide, as part of the Presidential Summit resolutions. The laws include the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 13 of 2022, Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Act 12 of 2022, and the Domestic Violence Amendment Act 14 of 2022.

These laws aim to protect victims of gender-based violence and make it harder for perpetrators to escape justice. They affirm the government's commitment to combat GBVF.

Hon members and compatriots, we must work together to address the interconnected issues of gender transformation and economic transformation in a way that is comprehensive and impactful. We can no longer allow gender inequality to plague our society and hold back the potential and contributions of

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half of our population. This means we must work hard to ensure that policies, programmes, and initiatives aimed at economic development prioritise gender equality and transformation.

We should provide women with the tools, resources, skills, and opportunities they require to make their dreams a lived reality. However, as we engage in this process, we must be cognisant of the fact that the policies, programmes, and resources we introduce are aimed at improving women's wellbeing, addressing gender gaps, and fostering inclusive growth.

As we move forward, I am pleased that the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa has decided to convene a series of build-up activities under South Africa's G20 Presidency's thematic priorities and objectives, as well as the country's development priorities for medium-term implementation. The strategic alignment of this 2025 P20 Women's Parliament with the ambitions and objectives of the G20 Presidency and P20 priorities is commendable. This will ensure strategic emphasis on the acceleration and implementation of South Africa's transformation agenda.

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As part of this strategic alignment, the P20 Women's Parliament should consider partnering with relevant G20 working groups to advocate for the prioritisation of women empowerment programmes that focus on issues like the care economy, financial inclusion, rural women empowerment programmes, agricultural support initiatives, and combating gender-based violence.

In this regard, structures like the Empowerment of Women Working Group and Women20 Engagement Group, which are chaired by South Africa, should be used as conduits to advance women empowerment programmes, especially within the African continent. These working groups are specifically focusing on strengthening discussions around gender equality and supporting G20 countries in addressing gender inequalities.

I trust that at the end of this P20 Women's Parliament, all participants will have assisted this collective to identify critical legislation for review and amendment to accelerate and transform the lives of many women, create gender equity, and put to the complete stop the scourge of gender-based violence against women and children. This includes strengthening the mandate for the three branches of government

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to enhance gender mainstreaming and implement the 2021 Women's Charter for Accelerated Development, an engendered MTDP, Agenda 2063, and South Africa's 2025 G20 Presidency priorities.

Together, we can construct a future that empowers all individuals, irrespective of gender, to realise their full potential and make meaningful contributions to our society. The South African government is committed to achieving gender equality, and we are ready to collaborate with you to bring the vision of a truly democratic and inclusive South Africa to fruition.

IsiXhosa:

... "Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo".

English:

I thank you, hon Speaker and hon Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces.

The DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE NCOP: Thank you very much, hon Deputy President. We are indeed most grateful to you for adjusting your schedule to make time to address this august

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gathering today. We are indeed grateful to you. I think while I was looking around the room while you were speaking, the delegates here were taking notes, writing down the key points that you have raised, and especially the issue of the build-up activities that we as government are planning as we go towards the P20 and G20 summits. The key issues from this sitting here will form a report that will be taken into the P20 agenda that we will be hosting late September.

Having said that, and having thanked the hon Deputy President for availing himself to address us, we now move on with the programme. I will introduce the next speaker, who is Dr P N Mbava, the Chairperson of the Finance and Fiscal Commission. She will be speaking about the role of the Finance and Fiscal Commission in ensuring that government's medium-term budget commitments effectively make provision for the Youth and Women Development Agenda. Dr Mbava, over to you. Thank you very much.

IsiXhosa:

UGqr. PATIENCE N MBAVA (Chairperson: Finance and Fiscal Commission): Malibongwe!

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English:

Formal greetings to the Speaker of National Assembly, Ms Thoko Didiza, greetings to the Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, hon Govender, hon House Chairperson, Mr C T Frolick, Minister of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities, hon Chikunga, MPs who are present with us today, and on the virtual platform as well, Speakers of the Provincial Legislatures, and all esteemed delegates. My presentation today ... if we can just zoom in into a slide? Chairperson, my presentation is just going to touch on the gender redistribution that we have found in the May 2025 budget. We are also going to look at Budget Vote 20, which is the budget for women, youth, and persons with disabilities with regards to how we have found any of the performance metrics in that vote, if they are gender responsive. Also going to give some analysis on the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework that is still coming, the next budget in 2026. We are also going to look at the newly tabled gender budget statement, which was in the budget documents for budget 2025 and then we are going to come with some concluding remarks and recommendations as the Financial and Fiscal Commission.

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Just briefly on slide three. Who is the Financial and Fiscal Commission? We are a constitutional institution. Our role is to make recommendations to Parliament, to provincial legislatures, and any other authorities determined by national legislation regarding matters specified in the Constitution. For today, our mandate mandates us to look at gender responsive budgeting and to look at the equitable share, as well as how equitable is the gender in the budget process.

If you can go straight to slide 19 where we look at budget 2025. Hon Chair and delegates, when we look at Budget 2025, we looked at assessing whether Budget 2025 was explicit in terms of gender distribution. So, the May 2025 budget overview does not, as per our analysis, explicitly incorporate gender redistribution as a central component of its fiscal or development strategy. While the budget does include significant allocations for social spending, employment support and community development, these funds are not aligned with clear gender-based outcomes. So, the slide that you see, it shows you that there is lack of alignment across specific budget areas. For instance, when you look at job creation and labour, which was allocated a budget R23,7 billion. It is not gender specific in terms of the programmes that are mentioned

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in there. Therefore, in our analysis, then the gender focus in this area is absent.

Then we move to slide number 20, where we look at Budget Vote 20. This is the budget for the Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities. So here, what you are trying to find, looking at the performance metrics in this slide here. This slide highlights that the department has successfully, can be seen as an example, a good example of a gender-focused department in terms of its budgeting. However, there are still gaps. There is no clear evidence yet of co-ordination with other departments in terms of gender budgets. What you also saw when we look at the analysis of Budget Vote 20 in terms of Programme 2, within this department, it includes some small-scale partnerships, as noted in the gender budget statement. Crucially, these partnerships are not clearly scaled up or integrated into broader government efforts.

Also, other programmes within Budget Vote 20 do involve monitoring and evaluation. However, they do not disaggregate beneficiaries by gender. This means they do not effectively show how the budget promotes redistribution towards gender equity. So, in terms of the general performance indicators on

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Programme 2, these are quite general. While they aim to support empowerment, they may not be specific enough to demonstrate explicitly how they show redistribution or detailed gender outcomes.

And then we move on to slide 22. We will see that in Budget 2025, for the first time, government included a statement called Gender Budget Statement. Whilst we welcome this statement from government, which shows government's intention to infuse gender budgeting in the budget process, we do find some gaps, as we can see in slide 22. So, the Financial and Fiscal Commission identified several critical gaps in the current budget statement. What we found is that there is no structural root cause analysis. So, there is a significant gap in terms of the underlying reasons why gender inequalities exist. So, the statement itself is silent in explaining why we have gender inequalities. It does not address the patriarchal labour practises that continue to disadvantage women. This means that policies may not be targeting the fundamental issues that are contributing to inequality.

We also find that the statement as it is currently now, fails to disaggregate impacts by race, by location, by disability,

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and by age. So, there is a lack of an intersectional lens. So, this lack of an intersectional lens is crucial because these factors are vital for understanding the distributional bias and how different groups of women experience inequality without this disaggregation. It is difficult therefore to fully implement some of these interventions. Lastly, we also find out that the statement as it is now, does not assess how taxation and expenditure affect men and women differently. So, we call this the fiscal incidence analysis.

Moving on to slide 23, in some of our remarks there, as Financial and Fiscal Commission, we have found that there are still gender disparities that we found in our analysis. So, these disparities obviously highlight that we have population dynamics that show inequity in our allocations of budgets. We have labour market outcomes obviously that include unemployment and inequality and education outcomes as well as household dynamics.

But a crucial takeaway from budget 2025 is that it reveals that gender redistribution is still not present. There is still a bias in terms of growth and development and these remains a fundamental structural challenge. And the efforts

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are limited and fragmented in terms of our budgeting process because of gender disparities, which are limited in scale, fragmented and insufficiently institutionalised. So, we did find that there is a lack of embedded gender consideration as well as disaggregated data. So, we have the data in the departments but it is not split by gender. And then one of the key issues as well in terms of our recommendations that we wanted to put forward is that we need to continue as government to ensure that in our fiscal policy, we mainstream gender dynamics. So, we need to continue to integrate gender responsive budgeting.

We did find that currently the May 2025 budget overview does not explicitly incorporate gender redistribution and allocations that have been made in the budget are not gender specific and are not aligned to clear gender-based outcomes. One of the other recommendations that we are making, looking at slide 24, we are recommending that there needs to be a continuous review and rationalisation of the performance indicators specifically within the department of Budget Vote 20, Programme two, Department of Women and Youth and Persons with Disabilities. They should review some of the performance indicators. What is the goal here? The goal is to ensure that

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those indicators target specifically more towards poor and marginalised women.

We also recommend that we need to look at intersectional gender disaggregation. So, the commission strongly advises that gender monitoring should be integrated to assess how different groups of women experience inequality in public programmes and government services. So, this requires that, across all performance indicators by government, we should look at issues around youth in terms of the key performance indicators, disability and economic development.

One of the recommendations we are also making is that, we need to consider undertaking a national gender inequality diagnostic. So, why is this important? Despite strong legislation that we have in terms of policies, our country continues to rank among those with the highest gender gaps in employment and economic opportunity. So, therefore the commission notes that without understanding the underlying social and dynamic drivers of gender inequality there is a risk of continued misdirection of policies that we are making and the allocations of public resources.

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So, we need to understand and unpack the root causes of why we still, despite having this gender machinery in place, have endemic and persistent gender inequality. We believe that having that national gender inequality diagnostic will help us to understand as a country why we still have these problems. I thank you so much.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms M L Dunjwa): Thank you very much Dr Mbava. We will now proceed to Mr Gomera, my apologies if I am not pronouncing your surname correctly. He is the UN Development Programme president representative in South Africa and the director of UN Development Programme Africa Sustainable Finance Hub. You have 15 minutes and speakers are doing very well. My name is Lindelwa Dunjwa for the benefit of those that may not know me. At a particular time, I will hand over to my co-chairperson, Ms M P Lekgwase who will come when she is to preside. Over to you, Mr Gomera. May you please look at the clock because I have never been a presiding officer. So, I would not like to tell you to stop you. So, please watch the clock in front of you. You have got 15 minutes.

Mr MAXWELL GOMERA (UNDP Resident Representative, South Africa and Director for the UNDP Africa Sustainable Finance Hub):

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Chair, don't worry, after an hour and a half I will stop. I must start by saying good morning, hon Minister, it's good to see you here. Also in her absence, the hon Speaker who addressed us this morning. Every time I hear her speak, I must say I grow a few centimetres tall. She's got that presence in her. You know, when I think of why we are here, I think of the women that I saw this morning who are exhibiting outside, and I would like to invite you to look at the exhibits that they've got.

Women like Yumna sitting over there, who is trying to innovate how we do our accounting and finance. Women like Pai, who's selling bags out there. Women like Milisaint who was showing me how she's doing with Eau De Parfum. But I also think of my mother. Everyone thought my mother was wrong until she was right. Like millions of entrepreneurs in Africa my mother went from bank to bank looking for a loan to grow her business. No one would take a chance on her. My mother was invisible to a system that only saw collateral, not potential.

I grew up in a small town called Kadoma in Zimbabwe. My mother was a smallholder farmer and a greengrocer. During school

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holidays, I would join my mother with a big dish of tomatoes on my head, delivering tomatoes and other vegetables to her customers across the townships and suburbs. My mother kept a very small book, but with meticulous notes on each customer. She knew very well what they liked, how much they owed and when they paid. She knew who to trust for a week's credit and she knew who to give a month's credit.

To my knowledge, my mother invented "know your customer" before the banks did. She bought bicycles for me and my sister to deliver food and produce to her customers. We did so with the kind of intimacy and reliability that today's technology giants and retailers would envy. We were better than Pick n Pay. Again, to my knowledge, my mother invented Uber Eats before it became a thing. But her business was stuck. The capital she needed was always out of reach and the loan criteria were written for someone else. Someone that the banks already trusted, and it wasn't my mother.

We had a familiar story today from Mr Molayi here. I would like to speak to the picture that you painted because you told us what it is today. I would like to talk about what it could be and what the power that we have in this House to reach that

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vision. For my mother, it wasn't about her will or ability, it was about a financial system that did not see her. It was about a financial system that did not believe in her. It was a financial system that did not back her. Her story is the story of millions of women entrepreneurs in Africa and the story of the women that I met outside there because they told me the same story, and in their eyes, I saw my mother.

We know the facts. We were told the facts this morning by Mr Molayi. I would like to say globally, women-owned small and medium enterprises face a \$1,7 trillion gap. We know that. Here in South Africa, women make up nearly half, we were told, of all entrepreneurs, yet they receive less than 10% of venture capital and a tiny fraction of bank micro and small enterprises, MSE lending. We know that. We also know that women repay their loans more reliably than men. We were told this morning. The data is consistent. In South Africa, default rates for women on unsecured loans are several points lower than men. We were told this morning. Women's groups in stokvels outperform men's groups. We also know that.

So, if we are serious about value for money, investing in women is a low-risk high return strategy. But our capital

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markets don't see that. The question has to be, why? Why is it that our capital markets are still built based on old rules? They still demand collateral-based lending. The demand rigid risk models. To the intermediaries and to the parliamentarians in here, I would like to talk to the issue of intermediaries because government is making an effort to put money into the system. But I have not understood why you are using the same intermediaries who are using the rules that prevent women from accessing that money.

We are using intermediaries whose performance is judged on their own bottom lines, not on public outcomes. But then, if public money is in the value chain, then public outcomes must shape those rules. The parliamentarians in here have the power to do that. Where we are using public money, then public outcomes must shape those rules. That's why we need five fiscal disruptions to unlock capital for women entrepreneurs.

Firstly, we must reward lenders who back women. We must give lenders lower cost if they meet clear targets for lending to women. We must write these targets into the budget process and track them publicly. Dr Mbava, this is what we must do. You asked the right questions and there is one of your potential

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answers. Secondly, we must share risk and lower the cost. We must use public funds to take first loss and buy down interest rates for women, making lending to women in high value sectors more attractive. At the moment, it's not attractive. So, we mustn't be surprised by the outcomes that were described this morning.

Thirdly, we must turn contracts into cash flow. When a woman-owned business wins a government contract, she should get fast payment and access to working capital immediately. If we make her wait for a month, two months, six months, by the time we give her the capital, the business is down. We know that and we've got the power to change that. Fourthly, we must open the field beyond banks. This is important. We must bring in co-operatives. We must look at Fintech. We must look at specialist funds who are paid for the business they help to grow, not the collateral they collect. Finally, we must make every budget gender smart. You are doing a fabulous job in tracking that as well as you. We must tag every programme for its gender impact. We must publish the results in a public scorecard and hold ourselves accountable for delivery.

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We know that bold action is possible. During COVID-19, the Loan Guarantee Scheme showed us that fiscal and monetary tools can be mobilised. So, this is possible. Let's now direct that same power to women and youth. We know that we have the intermediaries who can deliver. From the National Empowerment Fund, NEF, Women Empowerment Fund to Fintech innovators with cash flow-based lending. We know the sectors where women are undercapitalised but are present. Those sectors include green energy, manufacturing and agriculture. Go outside and have a look at some of the sectors as well, that women are working in.

Colleagues, this is not about softer hearts in banking. It's about hardwired incentives in fiscal policy. I'm not appealing to your goodness here. I'm just saying our fiscal policy must deliver the results that we all want, and we talked about in the morning. Let's disrupt the way capital flows. Let's pay intermediaries for who they reach and the business that survives, not for the collateral that they collect.

If my mother had been able to access the right kind of capital, her business could have doubled. It could have continued to create more jobs today and it could have

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transformed our economy. She could have been the owner of Uber today. Today we can make sure no woman with the will and talent to succeed is locked out because the market doesn't see her. This is not just an economic imperative, it is a moral one.

Although my mother did not live long enough to see it today, she might have been proud that the son she raised through selling tomatoes is standing in the best Parliament in the world, and shouting to all of you ...

IsiXhosa:

... wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo!

English:

Thank you.

Ms KARISHMA GOVENDER (General Counsel - National Empowerment Fund): Hon Members of Parliament, distinguished guests from the government, civil society and the private sector, fellow speakers, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

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It is an honour to address this historic sitting of the P20 Women's Parliament and to do so under today's theme, Accelerating Equality, Sustainability and Shared Growth, Correcting the Gender Redistributive Bias of Growth and Development.

This sitting comes at a critical time, not only for our nation, but for the world, as South Africa holds the G20 Presidency and by extension, leads the dialogue on inclusive economic growth, sustainability and gender equality. The Women's Charter, which forms part of the guiding framework for today's proceedings, challenges us to go beyond commitments and deliver measurable change. It calls for boldness, for urgency and for the dismantling of structural barriers that continue to exclude women from the heart of the economy.

Ladies and gentlemen, while South Africa has made progress since 1994, the reality is that black women, especially African women, remain overrepresented among the unemployed and underrepresented in business ownership. Structural barriers persist, such as the lack of startup capital, exclusion from procurement value chains, limited financial literacy, limited access to business networks, high cost of credit and

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restrictive collateral requirements that Mr Gomera mentioned, and limited access to markets, which is quite a critical one that we find.

For women in rural and township economies, these challenges are compounded by geographic isolation, infrastructure deficits, and in some cases, traditional norms that restrict economic participation. If we are to correct the gender bias in economic participation, we must address these barriers through targeted budget-driven economic interventions that create real opportunities for women to lead and own businesses.

The National Empowerment Fund exists to drive the sustainable participation of black people in South Africa's economy. The National Empowerment Fund, NEF has a deliberate focus on women, youth and rural and township communities. In 2014, recognising the persistent exclusion of black women from the access to finance, the NEF launched the Women Empowerment Fund, or Wef. This flagship initiative has become one of the most important tools for transformation by the NEF.

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Since inception, the Women Empowerment Fund has disbursed more than R2,4 billion to black women entrepreneurs, creating 13 000 new jobs. In the past financial year alone, women-owned businesses accounted for 36% of our disbursements at the NEF, and we are now setting the bar higher, aiming in the medium term to exceed 50% of all our disbursements of funding to women-led and women-owned businesses. The NEF's funding ranges from R250 000 to R75 million through term loans, equity, bridging finance, revolving credit facilities, and other instruments.

The fund deliberately does not require traditional collateral, focusing instead on commercial potential and empowerment impact. The Women Empowerment Fund supports businesses across the value chain and across sectors, from retail to heavy manufacturing, agriculture, logistics and construction. Importantly, the Women Empowerment Fund offers more than finance.

We acknowledge that there is a gap in the market, and we provide mentorship, business turnaround services, and market linkages. And this support gives women more than just access to capital, but a fair shot at long-term success.

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I would like to just share a few examples today of the real women-led businesses that we have funded as the NEF to give you an example of the impact of some of the funding that we disburse.

Just last week, we launched the Atrium Boutique Hotel, nestled in the heart of Polokwane. The Atrium Boutique Hotel is a powerful symbol of the growing success of Black-owned, woman-led enterprises in the hospitality sector. Founded by wife and husband duo, Ms Lesetja Mukwevho and Mr Matodzi Mukwevho, the hotel is 100% black-owned and 60% woman-owned. A proudly South African story of vision, grit, and empowerment.

The hotel offers premium accommodation with luxury rooms, a full-service restaurant, executive boardroom, conference facility, and a vibrant bar. The project was made possible through strategic partnerships with the Department of Tourism, the NEF, the Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency, Sedfa, and the Tourism Equity Fund. Combined funding of over R24 million enabled the development of a world-class black-owned hospitality destination. Beyond bricks and mortar, the Atrium has created 54 permanent jobs and stands as a model of what inclusive tourism can achieve.

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Another example, a few weeks ago at Decorex Africa at Sandton Convention Centre, one of our investees, DeNic Cabinets, was exhibiting amongst the best of the best. Ms Dipuo Phakathi was the first black woman-owned business to exhibit at Decorex Africa under the kitchen and bathroom category, highlighting her commitment to innovation and excellence.

The NEF's investment in DeNic Cabinets has made it possible for them to acquire modern machinery that has enhanced production capabilities, sped up delivery times, and allowed the business to take on larger contracts. DeNic is also exporting to other parts of the continent. DeNic Cabinets is an excellent example of how women-owned businesses can thrive with the right support and resources.

And the third and last example I would like to mention is Isipho Capital Engineering. The NEF funded Isipho's acquisition of Smith Capital Equipment, a company that manufactures aerial platforms used to reach elevators, such as streetlights, as well as drilling rigs and pylons for the mining sector. Smith Capital was established in 1973 and is a leading name in the aerial platform market through its own brand, Superlift.

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The CHAIRPERSON (Ms M L Dunjwa): Your time has expired.

Ms KARISHMA GOVENDER (General Counsel - National Empowerment Fund): Okay, let me get to the conclusion, Chair. I'm sorry about that.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms M L Dunjwa): When your time has expired, you have to get off the podium. Now I'm looking at the presiding officers.

Ms KARISHMA GOVENDER (General Counsel - National Empowerment Fund): May I have two minutes to conclude, Chair?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms M L Dunjwa): Is she allowed to request for more minutes? Okay, two minutes.

Ms KARISHMA GOVENDER (General Counsel - National Empowerment Fund): Thank you, Chair. To conclude, from the NEF's perspective, there are several priorities in terms of how to move forward with unlocking the potential of women entrepreneurs. The first one being ring-fencing the budget allocations at all levels of government for women-owned Small Micro-Medium Enterprises, SMMEs, align these allocations with

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the National Development Plan and sector master plans, use of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act to secure a greater share of public procurement for women-owned businesses, and incentivise the financial institutions to develop affordable, accessible financial products for women.

These measures align directly with the charter objectives and will give tangible effect to our shared vision of economic justice. Today, I extend an open invitation. Let us work together, Parliament, government, the private sector, and development finance institutions to scale these successes. Let us build budgets, policies, and partnerships that place women at the heart of our economic and growth strategies, because when women lead in the economy, we don't just create jobs, we create lasting legacies. Thank you

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms M L Dunjwa): Thank you very much, Ms Govender. You really put me on the spotlight. Now, I will then have to be consistent. The next presentation is from Dr Apostolov, the chief executive officer CEO of SHE-Power Medical Manufacturer, who has got six minutes on the dot. I don't want to be accused of being inconsistent. Thank you.

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Dr RUTH APOSTOLOV (CEO -SHE POWHER Medical Manufacturer): Hon Speaker, hon Chairperson of the NCOP, hon Minister Sindisiwe, hon chairperson of the Women's Caucus, fellow civil society representatives, distinguished Members of parliament, ladies and gentlemen, in 1956 mothers and grandmothers marched to the Union Building with nothing but determination in their hearts and hopes in their hands. They marched for dignity, equality and for the right to shape the destiny of this nation.

If they could stand in this House today, they would not be here to applaud our leaders, they would be here to look them in the eyes and ask: "After all we fought for, after all we have sacrificed, why are South African women still finding the doors to opportunities locked from the inside?" Almost 70 years later, it is a national disgrace that women are still fighting for the most basic of rights. The right to participate fully and equally in our own economy.

The Freedom Charter promised that people shall share in the country's wealth, yet here we are in 2025, the women who are the backbone of families, our communities and industries are still treated as if that wealth, that opportunity and that

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dignity are gifts that you may choose to grant rather than constitutional promises that you are duty bound to honour.

I am here today to represent every entrepreneur throughout this beautiful country. I am here to give those women who are chasing dreams a face. I am here to get to the heart and to let you know that these business women here are undeniable people that represent every statistic of failure and the unshakable story of resilience. I am that woman who dared to dream that entrepreneurial dream.

Mine was in the medical manufacturing space, a male dominated sector where breaking through requires more than just skill; it demands survival against systems built to keep us women out. I had every government agency department door closed in my face. Funding was never an option. Even the smallest request for the tiniest help towards SA Bureau of Standards, SABS, testing became a wait that never ended well.

After three years of knocking on every door, from the first step to the last, it was a living nightmare. Even the simplest request for help for market access as been a master class in

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frustration. The truth is plain; the current systems are just not designed to help women and certainly not to see us win.

Fast-forward three years, I stand here only by the grace of God and my attitude of I will not give up. I stand here by the grace of God, and I would like to repeat that. no thanks to any sector of our government. I have a world class medical manufacturing facility that is producing premium 21st century sustainable SABS compliance menstrual cups. That is solving our national crisis of period poverty.

With millions of girls and women in our own country lacking access to basic menstrual products, and 30% of school girls missing up to 50 days of school a year, period poverty is not a side issue; it is a national crisis. Our work is not only to address this urgent need but also to support the circular economy by reducing waste, promoting reusability and creating cleaner and more sustainable future.

I am so proud to say that I have overcome every obstacle, pushed through every barrier and reached every finish line they said was beyond my reach. I have done it entirely without

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the support of the very institutions created to help women like me to succeed.

So, I wait with bated breath for our rightful share of this 40% procurement pie. That share will do more than chip away the national crisis of period poverty. It will stimulate the gross domestic product, GDP, growth and create dozens of jobs throughout the value chain. Government now has the power to turn this into a South African success story. All it takes is one bold choice and government be the off takers of our women businesses. You be our first off takers, honour your promise and invest in us so our resilient becomes the nation's return.

Over 90%, safe to say, in this House are probably salaried employees. You collect your salaries at the end of each month, no matter what the storms range outside. You will never know the hollow ... [Inaudible.] ... staring at the ceiling wondering how you will make payroll, keeping the lights on or food on the table. That is the journey of us women that are trying to walk this road of entrepreneurship.

You will never feel the crushing weight of carrying that dream on your back with no financial safety net. Knowing that one

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bad month could mean you lose everything you've built and everything you've sacrificed. I appeal to you behind every badly written business plan, is not incompetence; it's exhaustion of women. Behind that desperate phone call for help is not weakness; it is courage in the rawest form. It is a woman standing on the edge of the unknown, willing to risk everything because no one has ever handed her a chance.

Start seeing her, start really seeing her as your mother, your sister, your daughter. Handle her with the same protection and urgency you would your own family. Go out of your way to help her, because sometimes the smallest act of genuine assistance is the thin, fragile thread between a dream realised and a life shattered.

Hon members, inclusion is not a favour to us as women, it is a force multiplier for national progress. When women are economically included, everyone benefits. However, we will not reach these outcomes through rhetoric ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms M L Dunjwa): Your time ...

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Dr RUTH APOSTOLOV (CEO -SHE POWHER Medical Manufacturer):

Please, two more minutes, please? We set a precedence ...

Effective support for women and inclusive budgeting for small business. I get to my biggest ask above all. The loudest and the most urgent call from women in business is access to markets and the single most powerful way to deliver this is for government to be our off taker. Honor your commitment.

In my conclusion, I rise to demand urgent and measurable accountability. We cannot continue to sideline women as we have for decades. Symbolism must give way to substance. We require result driven approach in which women who were once shut out, now lead competitive industries. That 40% procurement must not be just talk; it must result in action.

Let us pledge to return next year with new stories to tell, not of women begging for opportunities, but of women standing in Parliament and filling our national platforms with stories of triumph. Let's unite to make women's economic inclusion and invest in the greatest investment. Women are our investment and your investment in human capital. Let's make it a reality in our lifetime. Thank you.

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The CHAIRPERSON (Ms M L Dunjwa): Deputy Chair, Minister and the two presiding officers, if I can disclose. I was panicking because of time. I told the organisers that we are going to be speaking on issues of women, and it is going to be very difficult at times when there is that moment that touches you to say, please stop.

You have been exposed. They are not as kind as me. When my time has expired then I have to leave the podium. I think you have given us some more food for thought, hon Minister, on what was said from Mr Gomera up to the last speaker.

As I would be calling on Ms P Nkomo - you would see there is a change in the programme - who is a director and acting executive of Oxfam SA who is going to do the presentation, I do not want to say how many minutes ...

As I would be leaving, my co-chair is then going to take over. Thank you very much. Over to you, Dr Nkomo.

Ms PHELISA NKOMO (Development Economist & Oxfam SA Board Chair): Yes, I'm not a doctor, but I do accept the title. I'm not yet there. I want to acknowledge my colleague Nkateko,

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who's with me. She is the Executive Director. I am the Board Chair. I'm a Development Economist and the Board Chair of Oxfam.

Our opening statement this morning is that if it's not budgeted for, it's not a priority. And I think for me, that's where we're going to be grounding our presentation. And if we talk about the political economy of budgeting and macroeconomics, there are four points that we make. Firstly, our public governance system is actually based on patriarchal norms, and it delays empowerment of women. Secondly, it does not recognize the care work, right. It extracts value without rewards, without economic and social recognition. And gender barriers block opportunity. Women entrepreneurs compete without resources. They rely on families, but also at the same time, they have minimal support in the system. Access to education is often recognized or assumed to be an equalizer without recognizing other barriers, which amongst those are linked to class, race, gender, and geographic location.

I think the point has been made here about where women are located. I'm not going to repeat because I want to save one more minute to raise issues that have not been raised. But at

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the heart of everything, I want to say that women are actually participating in the economy from a demand side by selling their labour, but also as well from the supply side perspective, they're right at the end of the value chain.

They're not in the primary production, they're not in the supply chain, but they are selling products that have already been actually manufactured. And amongst the key issues as well is the fact that women have limited access to land.

Now, one of the basic things I want you to remember about this morning, even if you don't remember my name, there are six factors of production in any economy. The first one is access to education. The second one is access to land. The third one is access to infrastructure. The fourth one is access to finance. The other one is access to data, which is actually becoming a lot more an issue now in South Africa, even over the world, by the way. And the other one is access to energy. And they will never be going to be able to build a vibrant economy and integrate those that are excluded if these six factors of production have actually not been addressed fully. So, it's always a strong framework onto which we use in economics.

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Other structural barriers of women are conscious and unconscious business. When you walk in, in a bank, you are a black woman. You have no collateral. And amongst the key things is that worse if you're not educated, because we actually make the link between education and intelligence with multiple degrees. And we actually forget that a lot of women have been raised, or families are raised by women who sell tomato, onion, and actually who are doing sewing projects. And I do think that we must recognize in our system that dualism that is embedded in our economy. I think the other one is, we must talk about the human cost of exclusion. I think we've not been able to raise, because the fact that you have 42% of black women, Africans, who are economically disengaged, who live unproductive lives in this country, who rely on social security, it means that society is not able to draw its dividends fully to those women, because they are only earning R250. But in fact, if the system was open to them, they will actually be contributing into the society a lot more.

The issue that we want to raise as Oxfam is that firstly, we think that budget can entrench either, can entrench or exclude. So as long as our budgeting system is actually within the patriarchal norms, we're always going to struggle. We're

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thinking one of the other things is that the risk of underwriting enables timely access to credit.

Our colleague from National Empowerment Fund, NEF, amongst the key things we must ask, when last was NEF being recapitalized? And it's meant to support businesses whom some of them have no history, they're actually startups. So, when NEF appears to Parliament tomorrow or anything, I'm asking members of parliament to ask, when last have you been recapitalized? Because if you don't recapitalize development finance institutions, women are always going to be excluded through access to finance, right? The other one, I think procurement issue has actually been raised. Government must demonstrate a lot more risk in supporting women. We can't rely on commercial banks or private sector, but government must show risk appetite and support its citizens.

I think the other issue that we're also raising here, four transformative issues we want to raise, is that firstly, we think that enforceable definition of women-owned business is one thing. We think that set-asides must be one of the things that should be a part of our procurement programme, access to bridging finance, and as well as guarantees that support

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women. Invoice discounting is also something that is important.

I think the other issue, South Africa hosts G20, so we must talk about what should be the G20 agenda that we should be pursuing as a country. I think amongst those, Agenda 2063, for example, we talked about inclusive growth that requires women's economic agency. The second one, it's how we use the Africa Free Trade Agreement to remove structural barriers within cross-border trade. The third one, opportunity to champion gender in our financing and procurement standards. Last one, we establish regulation that removes market barriers and supports women.

Our call to action before I've been asked to, our call to action is fund the economic inclusion and social inclusion, introduce decent universal basic income, build procurement pipeline to support women, but also as well as work with development finance institutions so that the whole SMME ecosystem is actually getting support, share the risk. Women are taking more risk. In fact, women are expected to put in their own primary residence as a collateral for them to secure business. But in a country that you have a history of

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exclusion, where black women, from a class perspective, women who still live in rural areas but who are sitting with unproductive assets are actually expected to share the risk alone, and the state is not able to support that.

Eliminate cash flow cliff by providing bridging finance. In fact, we do want to ask NEF and other development finance institutions to relax the access to finance and to make it sure that they make it easy for women, but also fundamentally to stop relying only on the track record of the person, of the business, but also to take risk. I mean, the higher the risk appetite we have as government, as development finance institution, the more we're actually creating an opportunity for women.

The last one, define who counts. Women count. We constitute more than 51% of the population, and therefore we count in the same way we fought against political exclusion. It's the same way that we should fight against gender exclusion. Thank you.

THE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Thank you very much, Maa'm Nkomo. A very good morning once again, esteemed participants, and welcome to this interactive session where panellists have

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shared their valuable insights on promoting youth and women development through budget commitments and economic empowerment. I'll now open the floor for discussions, questions, and sharing of ideas on exploring ways to unlock the potential of women entrepreneurs to address issues on gender bias, on economic participation, and promote inclusive budgeting for small business development.

Participants, we only have 35 minutes for this session, so I am going to request that we stick to the rules. I will allow each speaker to have at least two minutes to get straight to the point. I know it's going to be difficult, but I'm going to request that we leave preambles before asking questions and making submissions. Because we have members on the virtual platform and on the overflow next door, I am going to request that we start in the House. I will note five hands in the House, then go to the virtual platform, and I know, or let's say five in the House, get to the overflow. Already three hands have been noted and then we'll go into the virtual platform. I will not waste time and do not know each other's names. I am Ms Legwase. I'll recognize you and you'll follow the session, and I'll give you numbers in a way of recognizing you. Can I get the five hands that would like to engage on the

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presentations that have already been put before us? Ma'am, you'll be the first one. The second one will be here in front. The third one, it's your good self. The fourth one, can I get on, Councillor Huma, you'll be the fifth one. For now, let's take this round of hands, colleagues, and I'm going to request that if maybe we stick to the time and we still have time left, we might consider coming back. But if we do not have time, we'll have extra sessions that are coming that women will engage on their issues. In that order, I am going to request that you take at least two minutes. Thank you. Okay. Thank you.

Ms KHOLOFELO MORODI (Action SA - Tshwane: Thank you and good morning, I'm Kholofelo Morodi representing Action SA from City of Tshwane. I think my comment is going to be on the presentation by Dr PN Mbava. I think what she had to say was an eye opener, especially when it comes to Vote 20. Because as much as we are putting money in the budget, but that money is not translating into what we want to achieve for women. So, I think what she mentioned about us having a gender diagnosis to see what the real issue is, why are we not seeing change as much as we are budgeting it? Why are we not seeing that change? I think that is very important. I think that should be

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the starting point. We need to understand why money is being put on programmes, but those programmes are not dealing with this 40% of women not being able to find jobs. It's not translating as much as there is willingness. But it's not translating into results that we want. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): I'm just giving you an opportunity because you are part of the presenters and one would be expected that I allow other colleagues to make presentations. Can you allow me for now to suppress you, then maybe by the time you respond to what has been raised, you'll make your point. Thank you.

Ms AYANDA ALLIE (BOSA - Gauteng): Thank you so much, presiding officer. I'm of the view that there can be no true freedom. And before I continue, let me perhaps introduce myself. I think this is a burning passion that I have about women's issues that made me forget to even introduce myself. My name is Ayanda Allie. I am a member of build One South Africa at the Gauteng Provincial Legislature as a member there. And just to continue my point, I'm of the view that there cannot be any true freedom for any woman without economic freedom and I'm not saying that because I'm sitting next to my colleagues from

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the EFF here. But I'm saying that because I believe that as a woman, he or she who feeds you has control over you. So, if you do not have the means of production, if you do not have the ability to put food on the table for yourself and your children, your dignity is at risk, and your sense of somebodyness is at risk.

So, I just want to appreciate the fact that this morning's presentations have been largely focused on, including women in the economy. Great strides have been made. This was alluded to by Speaker Thoko Didiza, Minister Chikunga juxtaposed the composition of Parliament in 1994, that of today. So, I think we all of the view that we have come a long way. I don't want my opinion to be seen as negative. We are all in agreement. We are not where we used to be as women, but the gentleman from the SA Revenue Services, Sars, Mr Molayi outlined that it's not yet Uhuru. The face of poverty in South Africa is still very much black and female. So, the question is as follows. The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry as the poem goes. We can have the best plans in the world, but in and of themselves, if these plans are not supported by rigorous action and the careful and thoughtful monitoring and evaluation thereof, the plans will be futile and impotent.

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Mr Gomera spoke about the ability to track properly and publicly all the initiatives that we have. My question, therefore, to Minister Chikunga is what incentives are in place to ensure the implementation of all the plans that we've discussed? What punitive measures or consequence management will be in place to address those who fail to implement whatever plans that we can put together or targets that we put in place? I say this as someone who has been sponsored by Minister Chikunga on a number of platforms. So, how do we make sure that there are incentives of those who put in place the targets and what do we do to punish or put punitive measures and consequence management for those who fail to put to pass or bring to pass that which we discussed? Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Thank you, Miss Allie. I allowed you because the first speaker took only one and a half minutes. I'm going to be very strict on time, the fourth speaker. I noted you, number 4 that's why I'm saying the fourth speaker.

Ms B E MACHI (IFP): Thank you so much, Chairperson, mine is directed to correcting the gender redistribution bias of growth and development through the Women's Charter. How can

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the Financial and Fiscal Commission ensure that the government's medium-term budget allocations are not only gender responsive but also measurable in advanced youth and women's development, particularly in rural and under resource areas? Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Thank you very much. You were spot on and on time.

Cllr SHEILA MABALE-HUMA (Salga): Thank you very much, Chairperson, please allow me to ride on the protocol that was established earlier on. As you correctly said, I'm councillor Huma representing Salga here on behalf of the municipalities in the country. Today's formal opening for P20 is an opportunity to set out the tone of unity, the inclusivity and urgency around women's empowerment.

I will go straight to what we are recommending at Salga to today's gathering, not necessarily asking questions from the presentations. But we've got recommendations from a local government that there is a need to affirm local government's role by positioning municipalities as their delivery arm of gender responsive development and in terms of

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institutionalising gender mainstream, we are saying the municipality councils must adopt standing agenda items on gender transformation and equity.

Then in terms of public participation, there is a need to strengthen the ward committee's engagement with women's organisations to ensure local priorities inform national and G20 commitments. And then to localise the G20 gender priorities, we need to develop a municipal level gender transformation scorecard that is aligned with G20 and the NDP goals. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Thank you very much. I'm going to request Mme Vuyiswa Nzakana to come in. The three that are from the overflow are Vuyiswa Nzakana, Zakhe Lujabe and Linda Langa in that order two minutes each.

Ms VUYISWA NZAKANA: Thank you, Chairperson, as we've been asked that we must stop the preambles. But my culture requires me to greet everyone. My one today is about appreciating this opportunity that we've been given here, and I would say before 2020. As if I had this opportunity of this nature, I would be focusing only on the economic aspect of women in the country.

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However, after 2020, what I've seen, what our country has been going through, specifically to women and children, of course with hunger and poverty, that was actually an embarrassment, if not a shame.

Up to date, today I would like to not really criticising this the gender, the efforts that have been there for gender mainstreaming and inclusivity or for men into the economy of this country. However, it is also looking as if it's becoming a bit of a rhetoric now. So, quickly going to the recommendations because I wanted to do some summary, but due to time I would like to make a recommendation. The recommendation would be, Chairperson. We've got one Ministry that has to look at all the gender aspects from children, women, people living with disabilities. And out of that, we need implementation and the implementation we've got National Youth Development Agency, which is actually doing or making great strides in terms of working with youth.

However, we know that the country is still having a very high youth unemployment, but to fast-track and accelerate empowerment and inclusivity of women in the economic mainstream of this country. I would like to recommend that the

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government should look at women empowerment and development agencies, as it did with the youth. Those budgets that are actually decentralised everywhere ... and other departments and whatever, some are even underutilised. They can be actually centralised into one unit and therefore anything that has to do with the programme to empower and to develop women can actually be accessed through that Board, that council or that agency.

Secondly, women are carrying historical debts - a lot of them, and our country explains it as well, because there were exclusions and even after that. We know that some women have issues whereby some got into marriages that were not aware of. When they got out of those marriages, they carried some debts that they were not even aware of. So, we know that most houses in this country are actually women-headed houses. So, there's a lot that's on the shoulders of women. So, we would also like the government to consider the amnesty of women on those debts that are of that nature. There are various.

The last but not least, the boy child, the prisons, the drugs, the Inkabi, the extortionist, Chair.

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The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Ma Vuyiswa, I am sorry. I will have to refer you to the rules. Kindly stick to the agreed rules of the House.

Ms VUYISWA NZAKANA: Yes.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): I would suggest, especially that you are making recommendations rather than asking questions and you've already used one minute of the previous speaker. Kindly submit your recommendations to the Table. They will be considered and recorded as one of the outcomes or the resolutions of this gathering. Thank you very much.

Ms VUYISWA NZAKANA: Thank You, Chair, The Last One Was About The Boy Child.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Yes, you will make submission.

Ms VUYISWA NZAKANA: Alright.

Ms Z LUJABE (Eyethu Youth): Thank you, Chair, my greetings to everyone. I'm going to contribute on what bhuti has introduced

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something that has to do with statistics. On the family commitment, he said when he spoke the best child that they took was the girl child. I want to ask the Minister if there is anything that can be done to protect that child? It's not within her right. It's not. She doesn't want peacefully that thing, but she is being asked by the family. A bill of some sort like any other bills that protects the child's right.

Secondly, what I want to ask is based on the statistics showing that 48% of black women are unemployed and whatever, and that in rural areas grandmothers are looking after those children in those houses. We all know that it is caused by unemployment. If we can check the statistics on these women which age group is affected by the unemployment rate? We know we cannot lie about it that the government from the age of 38 to 55 there isn't anything spoken about that age group. I think now it's time that age group to be considered as well. Thank you.

Ms LINDA LANGA-MAYEKISO: Yes, my name is Linda Langa Mayekiso. I've listened to the people who were talking here, and I think what I want them to do now is that with the recommendations that they've made to implement those recommendations, because

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they were very interesting. What I'm doing as a woman, I was owning a business. I'm one of the people who left out the business before COVID-19, which I couldn't go further because of funds that were not coming out.

But because women take risks. Now I'm doing soccer for seniors in the Western Cape. I'm happy to be here and we have taken four seniors from the Western Cape to France in 2019, and nothing is happening. Now we are expecting people from all provinces. We are having 14 teams which are coming to the Western Cape on the 10th of October. But we see nothing that is happening. They are coming to us and liking Cape Town as one of the best provinces in the country. So, we are expecting 14 teams from different provinces, but nothing is happening in the Western Cape where they assist a woman to proceed. We are all taking risks in this province of doing things that they can make this province and shine. But we expect them to be helped by this province. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Thank you very much. Can I get an indication by show of hands from the virtual platform if there's anybody that would want to make a submission, ask a question, or make recommendations as those that have presented

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before the House? Any indication on the virtual platform? I don't see any hands.

Hon MEMBER: We've got three hands.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Miss Busisiwe, Miss Mabatho and hon Thandi in that order. We only have three hands for now. The fourth one will be from hon Xaba. [Interjections.] I am going to request that we become orderly. If you cannot raise your hand on the virtual platform, in the chat box, just write your name and indicate that you would want to speak. So far, I've noted four hands. I will give Mam Busisiwe to make her submission.

Ms BUSISIWE MGANGXELA: Greetings to everyone. My name is Busisiwe Mgangxela. I'm in the Eastern Cape. I'm an agroecology farmer, a beneficiary of land reform in the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy, PLAS, the PLAS farmers that are fighting for title deeds at this moment.

But then my question would be in the line of this 40% that is being asked for women to be funded by the departments. I will talk of Department of Agriculture. They do have that 40%, but

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the struggle is the criteria that they put that makes women not to be able to apply for the funding. And if then the funding is there with the 40%, they say women are not applying because the criteria, it is not making it possible for women to be able to apply. For instance, they will put that a woman must have a turnover of R250,000 as an example, or else they must have a title deed or else then they must have a branding if then it is livestock. So, all those things are things that are putting the women off from now even applying for that. So, as we are talking about this 40%, let us also look at the criteria that is taking the women off these applications. Thank you so much.

THE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Colleagues, I'm sorry about that. Colleagues on the platform, if you have difficulty with showing your face, you can just switch your camera off. Thank you.

Ms MMABATHO MAKENA: Chair, mine are two things. The issue of accountability is the only thing that can make us move. We have policies in this country that do not benefit women, not because government does not want to, but public officials who are supposed to be ensuring that 40% goes to women-owned

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businesses also have their own patriarchal notion that these women are going to be rich more than everybody else. So, we're suggesting that every portfolio committee, every government department that comes, the question on 40% procurement must be part of that so that if they do not comply, the director, not the Director-General only, because this thing of holding Director-Generals accountable, while the officials who are being paid to ensure that there is a 40%. So, each and every official who has a programme that has procurement must be held accountable for non-compliance.

The second thing, the Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities, I heard the Member of Parliament earlier on saying that there must be another entity focusing on women. What we are doing, we are saying to government departments that do not want to empower women that now we will have another agency. Each department in this country, its responsibility is to ensure that women-owned businesses are supported. Fifty one percent of the population are women. Therefore, the more we get departments having agencies for women, we're not holding every member of society accountable. The department is one of the least funded. That is another

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issue that I think the portfolio committees needs to look into when we go ahead.

And lastly, chair, I think the presentation by Dr. Ruth on menstrual cups, that is a solution that we as a government of South Africa, a suicide of South Africa, business sector of South Africa must look into. If there's a product that supports girls and it's friendly, it lasts for 10 years, we now know that the fiscal is low. So why don't the government start looking at that product, support it because they know for 10 years, they don't need to be putting money for menstrual products because there's a product, every child has that product and they can focus on something else. So that I really support what Dr. Ruth was presenting. Thank you, chair.

Ms C T NONTENJA: Chair, I'm unable to show my picture at the moment. Chair, my first question is to say, I heard the Deputy Chair of NCOP acknowledging the Chairperson of the Women's Caucus in Parliament. I would like to know when and where does that caucus take place? Because I've never heard of it as a woman in that Parliament. And is it for certain parties or all the parties in Parliament? My last question, chair, is to say

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The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): I am going to request that we have order in the in the House. Everybody is entitled to their questions and they're going to be responded to accordingly. She's going to be responded accordingly. Let's give her time.

Ms C T NONTENJA: Thank you, chair, for the protection. Chairperson, what I would like to know from the Ministry now is, is there any plan in the pipeline that talks to saying how do we get all these glorious policy frameworks to be implemented on the ground? Because the problem is on implementation. Everything is aligned, everything is there, but the implementation is not visible on the ground. Is there anything that the department is planning to do? For all three vulnerable groups, women, youth, and people with disability, is there any way that the beautiful frameworks can reach the targeted targets? Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Colleagues, I do not want us to leave this House or this sitting without clarifying something. All female Members of Parliament knows, it is unfortunate that hon Nontenja is not aware. The steering committee of this Multi-Party Women Caucus was elected at S12A

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in the NCOP building. And all notifications are going into our WhatsApp group, and it's also the responsibility of the whips of each and every party to make sure that their members are in all these committees.

So yes, there is a Mult-Party Caucus that sits in Parliament and that is taking place, and the steering committee was elected in S12A of the NCOP. I think that one is largely covered. I noted four hands from the virtual platform. I see three additional hands, and it's Mme Zukiswa, Mme Hendricks, and Mme Matshobeni. These will be the only hands that we will take for submissions for this session, and then maybe later we'll have deliberations on other presentations, but Mme Matshobeni will be the last. For now, let me recognize hon Xaba from Gauteng Provincial Legislature.

Ms BUYISIWE ANNAH XABA (MKP-GPL): Chair, my name is Buyisiwe Xaba from Gauteng Provincial Legislature representing uMkhoonto weSizwe Party. Today's presentation suggests that gender equality is not just a social issue, but an economic challenge. I have three questions directed to the hon, Minister Chikunga. How is the Women's Charter being used to actively reshape economic policy and development programmes to

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prioritize women, particularly rural and township women, especially in guiding national and provincial efforts to ensure that women benefit equally from inclusive and sustainable growth? And the second question would be what mechanisms are in place to hold departments and municipalities accountable for failing to meet gender equality and development targets? And lastly, how will the Seventh Administration ensure that gender equality and transformation are not just cross-cutting themes, but are actively embedded in the planning, budgeting, and implementation of national priorities, particularly in sectors critical for inclusive governance and sustainable economic recovery? Thank you, Chair.

Ms ZUKISWA MQOLOMBA (Deputy Chairperson - Public Service Commission): Chairperson, can you hear me?

THE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Yes, we can hear you.

Ms ZUKISWA MQOLOMBA (Deputy Chairperson - Public Service Commission): President officer, my name is Zukiswa Mqolomba. I'm the Deputy Chairperson of the Public Service Commission and my question is to the Oxfam Board Chair, Ms. Peliswa

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Nkomo, regarding the women's movement and the gender architecture in the country. My question is the fragmentation, lack of unity, and general weaknesses in the women's movement and gender architecture of the country, is it not what can be attributed to the poor status of women in the country in general, in the country? What is her perspective of this? Thank you very much.

Ms A HENDRICKS: Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity and good morning to all, protocol observed. My contribution to the setting, Madam Speaker, is that the first comment that I'd like to make is that all these presentations that was made currently does not filter down to the ground levels. Secondly, I've heard all the previous speakers speaking and predominantly making reference to black women and I would assume that this is African black women.

My question to this platform this morning is, what is this committee doing to be more inclusive of the minority groups like the coloureds and the Indians? And then thirdly, the problem with access to markets, that still seems to be a big, big, big problem for women in business. And then with regards to procurement processes, what is this setting doing to ensure

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that women in business are given preferential treatment in terms of procurement processes and access to funding? And I'm speaking up particularly for the groups that has been left behind, such as the coloured groups and the Indian groups, and even some of the white female groups. And then lastly, Madam Speaker, with regards to the aggregation of tenders, what is this group doing or the setting doing to ensure that more people have access to tenders instead of awarding tenders to one, two, three individuals? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): There was a last hand that was raised on the platform. I do not see it. If the speaker still wants to make a submission, you are allowed to do so.

Ms A MATSHOBENI: Yes, it's true. Yes. Oh, thank you ...

[Inaudible.] ...

THE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): You may proceed, and your network is bad.

Ms A MATSHOBENI: ... [Inaudible.] ...

THE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): We cannot hear you.

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Ms A MATSHOBENI: Let me greet all delegates that are here. May I audible?

THE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): You are not audible. I think you have a problem with your connectivity. We cannot hear a word from you.

Ms A MATSHOBENI: Is it?

THE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Is it possible for you, maybe to make a written submission to avoid us going up and down?

Ms A MATSHOBENI: Oh, okay, it's fine.

THE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Are you okay? I am so sorry for that. I am so sorry for that.

Ms A MATSHOBENI: Yes, I'm fine, hon.

THE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Okay, thank you very much. Esteemed participants, we have made our submissions and most of the submissions made were recommendations and suggestions

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on how we move forward. I had a few questions for the hon, Minister, for Dr Mbava, Mme Nkomo and Ntate Molayi. I'm going to request that you take each three minutes to wrap up because if I give you three minutes, we'll go to 36 minutes that was allocated three minutes each to summarize the responses of each member and kindly respond from where you are seated to avoid wasting time from your seat to the podium.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Chairperson, let me also welcome the questions and comments. I wish our approach was not problem based but solution based, because seated here are people who have answers and who can help us, together with the Members of Parliament that are here, so that we know the questions to ask and what to do going forward. So, I wish we were solution based because otherwise it's easy to talk about problems sometimes, and not solutions. I wish we were just approaching from a solution based than problem based, I just wanted to say that. The question was asked by Kholofelo to say, what are we doing about the Budget Vote 20 since there's money? As a matter of fact, our Budget Vote allocation is R1,3 billion. Of that budget, about R1,1 will be retransferred to the National Youth Development Agency, NYDA, and I think R97 million goes to the

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Commission on Gender Equality, CGE. Therefore, as a department, we remain with R239 million. From that R239 million, we then pay the staff and for goods and services, we remain with less than R40 million. Those goods and services include anything starting with the tools for staff, your cell phone, etc.

So, it's a department that does not have budget. I think a person who raised that issue was raising an important factor because for people in the department to go out, reach out to the South Africans and do the monitoring, the question that was asked is, when you have three people for disability in one branch who are responsible for the whole of South Africa, including private and public sector and the municipalities, etc. So, that is the matter that I think it's important for everyone to be aware of, it's three people from one branch. So, I'm just saying that. However, we do have a responsibility as a department, firstly, to co-ordinate, which we are trying to do using platforms and many of them, to advocate, mainstream, monitor and evaluate. We do that through policies that we have actually sent out to the departments. We also have a policy which I think she referred to on Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and

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Auditing Framework, GRPBMEAF, for that matter. So, these are the policies that we are using and we are monitoring, and we get feedback from other institutions as she was reporting to that, and we're able to communicate those findings to departments. Also, like I said, the monitoring...

THE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): You can wrap up.

The MINISTER OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:
Okay. Monitoring also is actually the role of Parliament itself, it's the role of each department by itself, and that is why each department will have internal auditors. It's the role of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, which is that another department that does that, and of course, like I've said, Parliament is such. On the issue of Women's Charter and how do we reach out to women who are in rural areas, that is our mandate, but also other departments, the small department, for instance, the NYDA, from our side. However, every one of us will say will only be able to do certain amount of work based on the amount of money that we have. Minister Stella Ndabeni will be able to empower small businesses only within the budget that she has, and the NYDA will do the same thing. So, one other thing that will restrict

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us, will be the resources that we have and that we need to spend, Actually, I think we can do better. Thank you.

Dr PATIENCE N MBAVA (Chairperson: Finance and Fiscal Commission): Chairperson, let me also appreciate the questions that were asked. I'll be brief. Indeed, we do make a strong recommendations that 30 years later, as a country, we still have the same endemic problems. We still have income inequality, which has a gender phase, poverty, which is also gendered, we have women who have access to basic services, which is unequal, women as well do not have asset ownership. So, all these issues are supposed to have been resolved at this point given that we have this gender machinery, these laws that we have as a country, the implementation thereof. So, we're saying that, let us pause, maybe, and have a diagnostic study to say, what is not going right, what can we do to actually move the needle forward? That is the one thing because, essentially, what it means is that we still have social and dynamic drivers that are still underlying, that are actually causing us not to achieve the goals that we have. If we keep doing the same thing over and over again, that is not correct. We have policies which are not really getting the outcomes that we want.

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Also, there's a question which was asked by one of the delegates to say, how do we ensure that our budget is responsive, especially for women who are in the rural areas and are in underresourced areas. I think what is important there is to say that the plans and the Annual Performance Plans, APPs, and the strategic plans of the various departments, are these gender responsive? Also to say that, it is not for the Department of Women only to have a budget that is gender sensitive, it's for all departments. Maybe the question we should ask is that, do we have capacity building in terms of the departments themselves understanding what is gender-responsive budgeting? Do they actually understand how to come up with the Key Performance Indicators, KPIs, which are responsive? So, maybe we need to say to the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, have you done enough capacity buildings that the departments themselves are able to understand how to come up with the KPIs? We could be sitting here and blaming everyone, whereas it's a matter of people not understanding what exactly is gender-responsive budgeting.

Thank you so much.

THE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Ms K Govender, would you like to come in, especially that you were surprised earlier?

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Ms KARISHMA GOVENDER (General Counsel - National Empowerment Fund): Chairperson, mine was not a question so much as a response. We do acknowledge as the National Empowerment Fund, NEF, the issue that was raised in today's forum, talking about access to markets, and it's definitely something that we acknowledge as a problem, and that we are trying to find active solutions to which we do at the moment, but I think it can definitely improve. Also, I just wanted to encourage everyone in the House that would like to engage with us as the NEF and for us to put into reality some of these solutions, to please come through, approach me and let's engage because the NEF is an implementer of policy of these programmes of government as part of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, DTIC, and we are definitely for a lot more women and youth-focused because we see that's where the greater need is. So, I just wanted to encourage anybody who has ideas or thoughts that they would like to share regarding implementation and what you would like to see happening, to please engage with me and we will try and actually make that happen. Thank you.

THE CHAIRPERSON (Ms T I Legwase): Dr Apostolov, do you have anything to say, your parting shots, Ms Chauke, Mr Molayi?

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Mr SOLLY MOLAYI (Acting Deputy Director General: Population and Social Statistics South Africa): Chair, I think mine is just a quick one. Statistics SA do have data in terms of looking at different age groups. So, when we're submitting our presentation, we'll definitely give this House even more details in terms of unemployment rate by different age groups, including even the location also. Thank you.

Ms PHELISA NKOMO (Development Economist & Oxfam SA Board Chair): Chair, I think the question by Zuki is actually so profound. In fact, it's such a pity that we won't have time. There're several things why women's movement is not achieving some of the things that are articulated very clearly in the Constitution. Section 9 of the Constitution promotes equitable access to resources for South Africans, but women are consistently caught into or trapped in poverty. Firstly, women's movement is weaker, we're highly polarised, but also, we've seen post the democratic dispensation that the gender dividend as well, has been also drawn in by women who may not entirely represent an agenda that advances women. Patriarchal system has also supported women whom they know that they give them portion of power with very much little support, but also, when women are rising to position of power, they are also

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given responsibility where they have to lead institutions that are in crisis.

Even the younger generation of feminist movements who are coming up, don't have a lot of support. So, I do think that perhaps part of the call to action for this conversation is to make it sure that we really talk about how do we unite even though we might have differences in terms of ideological foundation but based to one agenda. The last point I want to address is the issue around access to a market. The key issue is that one of the key reasons why a lot of women struggle with access to market, firstly, it's financing because they don't have funding to manufacture produce in terms of scale, but also, secondly, government has very stringent regime or policies that actually inhibit women participation markets, and also, thirdly, is that private sector as well has not been able to prioritise women, but also embed hand holding support, part of it it's a reflection of a weaker, small-medium enterprise, SME, ecosystem, and that's why there were some of these challenges. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms S Ndhlovu): Hon members, my name is Sanny Ndhlovu, I am a permanent delegate from Limpopo and I'm going

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to drive this session. I will be co-chairing with hon D James, and I will only be inviting the presenters. Before that I would like to start by greeting the Deputy Chairperson, House Chair, the Minister, the Speaker of Parliament in absentia and greetings to yourselves, hon members and our guests. I'm not going to waste time because, indeed, time is not on our side. Let me just rush to request hon Prof Jantjies to come and do the presentation because I'm told I'm reshuffling because Dr Pheko is no longer available to do the presentation as it is outlined in the programme. So, now I'm going to give an opportunity to Prof Jantjies. He knows very well that we are very much strict in terms of time. It's not the first time he's doing the presentation, he used to do it in our committee. So, 10 minutes is enough for you, Professor. Thank you.

Prof DUMISANI JANTJIES (Director -Parliamentary Budget Office): Chair, good afternoon, everyone. Let me start by following protocol: Madam Speaker, Chairperson of the NCOP, Deputy Chairperson, House Chairperson, Ministers, Members of Parliament and distinguished guests, could I please ask my slides to reflect.

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I will try to cover some of the points that were left out. I will just re-emphasise some of the points, because some of the points I am dealing with have already been covered by colleagues. Can I have the slides flagged? So, my presentation will really cover some of the key issues that we have picked up from the current approach that we have in South Africa, regarding the Gender Responsive Budgeting Framework. It also talks about the issues around the role of the budgets. It has been discussed quite a lot. It also talks about the role of monetary policy, which hasn't had specific discussion, but it has been flagged as well. And lastly, we recommend the next slide. I think I am already on slide four. Yes, I am here.

So, it also looks at some of the specific issues of the landscape around higher education and employment in our country. It is just a quick high-level landscape. Given that the economy is quite wide, I focused largely on employment. Lastly, some of the key recommendations we make around ...
[Inaudible.]

That is where we are. Next slide. I really want to emphasise the importance of this meeting today. I want to really

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emphasise that it's not merely timely, but it is a very important discussion for a lifetime, in my view.

And really, I want to remind members, colleague, guests about what Thomas Sankara said, before I start my presentation, and I quote: "Revolution cannot triumph without the emancipation of women." And I want to recommend that we adopt it for our discussions today and say that our economy cannot truly triumph, without a full equal participation of women. What we have seen over the years has been a lot of ... I don't have sight of time, and it has moved quite quickly.

We have seen a lot of discussion on GDP, yet we have assumed that it means everyone will benefit from it. And clearly, everything else shows that it is impossible to just pursue GDP. It must be a different thinking altogether. I am just trying to move quickly with the slides.

The next slide. I will start with the section that deals with some of the key primary recommendations around the strategy, or some of the issues we have highlighted around the Gender Responsive Budget approach that we have in South Africa. I have highlighted three points.

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Firstly, it asks us to assess how the budget framework has been performing over the last few years or so. And in that regard, we do see that the evidence has shown that the approach we have adopted of fiscal consolidation for the years of budget cuts in other areas, over the decades has had unintended consequences, specifically when we look at economic growth, development, but also around social service delivery.

And such a framework has obviously been implemented within society, with gender inequality. And as such, in certain instances, it worsened the situation, indeed. Our concern, backed by domestic and intentional evidence, does show that the current budget framework would make it impossible, as it is now, to fully give effect to the Gender Responsive Budget Framework that we have.

In particular, we look at the additional money being allocated. We also look at the issue of incremental budget, because incremental is incremental on what? And that really raises a lot of concerns around the framework.

Next slide. The second point we raise is around gender tagging, which requires government departments to break down

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spending per gender with the current framework. Now, our concern is that, yes, gender tagging does work to a certain extent, but it has so many limitations that render the process less effective itself, and it takes longer to get the outcomes we want. One example was given in one country where the mechanism did not work, in particular. So, we call on a review of or rethink about the gender tagging, as part of the framework.

The third point is about the concerns that the current approach of the Gender Responsive Budgeting Framework mainly focuses on the experience side of the budget, while it deliberates less on the role of the Tax Policy perpetuating gender inequality. As we know, the literature does show our concern that, as much as the primary objectives of the Tax Policy is social objectives or social creation, in our view, we feel it should have been one of the areas that should be targeted as well. A proper consideration for the social objectives of the Tax Policy would require us to unpack the Tax Policy, taking into account the gender's perspective and how women are impacted by different tax policies.

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A good example was in 2018, when the VAT was proposed where Parliament ensured that sanitary pads were part of the items exempted. It was a very good start, but we should have built up on that and ensured that the Tax Policy does impact. I will jump quickly to the second part of the issue, which leads to monetary policy.

Next slide. I think I am moving faster than the slides there. One of the things that we were concerned about is that the debate on the appropriateness of our monetary policy has failed to properly take into account the full effects of gender distribution that it impacts. Despite this weakness and the complexity around measuring the distribution impact, we can agree that the monetary policy, which is really targeting inflation, has a direct impact on other microeconomic issues like unemployment, earnings, and income inequality.

For example, if the monetary policy took into account the effect of the decisions that are made by the policy on a gender's perspective, certainly we will have different views, particularly when we think about increased interest rates, and what it means for women or different genders, when it increases interest rates, and so on. We feel that should be

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part of the discussion that leads to including the monetary policy as well. Jump to the next slide.

Some of the key examples there relates to the issue around the evidence that shows that more women are more likely to lose employment than men, when interest rates are raised, for example. That would require proper or different thinking in terms of what kind of monetary policy we want to have, which supports a fiscal policy from a microeconomic perspective. An example relates to the savings. Someone spoke about savings and official assets and the policy impact relations of different genders. We need to really think about that.

Next slide. So, in conclusion on this section, I want to talk about the need to have better co-ordination to provide some recommendations. I will skip quickly, because of the time, but we will talk about the implications or the recommendations on how to have better co-ordination between macroeconomic instruments and your fiscal and monetary policy, in that regard.

I will give a quick overview of what we did here. We just require a quick overview to look at what is the level of

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success in higher education, where you see more gender. We will see more female. We looked at the recent data, but it ... [Inaudible.] ... where we looked at the gender representation situation in higher education access.

And we do see very good success. We see more women having access to the sector and in all variables, either by mode of delivery, by gender, by population types, or by different forms, we see success, where more women are represented than their male counterparts. And even in the different fields, such as science and technology, you see more women being represented in those areas.

I think the point of showing this slide, which I will just quickly skip, is to get to the point I want to make - agenda paradox - where you do see how the data demonstrates strong female presence in the South African higher education systems, with females dominating enrollment figures at the aggregate level, but also when broken down to learning mode, population group, and field of study. This success, however, stands in stark contrast to the challenge women face in labour and market. So, this cannot translate into labour market, where we actually see the inverse statistics, in this regard.

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And that is what the next section is talking about. We just looked at the first quarter data - high unemployment, and what the distribution shows. We see that more females are unemployed, particularly when you go down with the population groups. We see black women, as Mr Mulla mentioned, are worse off than other races as well.

Even with the labour absorption representation rate, women are 10% less than males within the context, in that regard. And there are studies globally that shows that - I think, somebody has quoted it - women earn 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. That is particularly what I want to point out and highlight. So, clearly there is a broader issue. And I am very happy that this debate will be taken to the G20.

In quickly trying to conclude, one of the areas ... I think in the next slide, one other point that we have is the data ... [Inaudible.] ... equality in labour force.

Okay, let me go to the next slide, where I will try to wrap up. The significant issue that I want to leave with you, and I think it has been highlighted, is that we need to address economic planning, regarding the relative burden of unpaid and

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care community project work, in particular. Here we see more women. Even though you don't have more women in the mainstreaming of employment labour, you see a lot of women in this sector.

And our policy should reflect that, particularly when it sees the statistics that reflect how much more women, we have there. I will just go back to conclusion and recommendations for this section. Just go to the next slide.

There are three main recommendations around the section. Firstly, there is a need to implement a gender-sponsored budget that addresses those three questions and concerns you have raised. Secondly, the enforcement of parity and the promotion of women participation must be more deliberate, particularly when you look at the picture in the private sector.

Also, it is important to invest in care and community development infrastructure. Many times, women are placed there. I will leave there. I will just leave by saying that the last slide, the next section just shows the recommendations that we have made. Next slide.

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Yes, these are the recommendations that we have made for the G20. I will leave them for members to think about. Mandate countries must have gender statements, establish G20 gender targets, and accountability mechanisms. [Time expired.] Thank you very much.

Ms ZUKISWA MQOLOMBA (Deputy Chairperson - Public Service Commission): Presiding Officer, I would like to send our greetings on behalf of commissioners for the purpose of this commission to the hon Speaker of the National Assembly, Miss Thoko Didiza; to the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, hon Dr Lotreat; to the House Chairperson Committees, Oversight and Public Participation, hon Frolick; to the Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disability; hon Members of Parliament; distinguished speakers at the very first P20 Women's Parliament of South Africa's seventh dispensation, ladies and gentlemen, ...

IsiXhosa:

... manenekazi ...

English:

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... and all protocols observed. I would like to start off with an insightful quote by Thomas Edison who basically says: "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." So, I will be speaking on industrialisation and employment, looking at advancing industrial development and employment creation through public service delivery and oversight.

In essence, industrialisation epitomizes this notion as it involves diligent effort in building, producing and shaping the future through our endeavours. Nevertheless, it remains the most reliable avenue to employment creation, to ensure the dignity of women and shared disparity amongst the genders. Today we draw our transpiration from the women of 1956 who courageously marched against the apartheid pass laws. Their bravery transcendent sheer resistant and embodied ...

[Interjections.] ... Hon Chair, there is noise in the background. May I continue, hon Chair, there was noise in the background?

It is this very proclamation of the women's movement that was founded not on oppression but on the equality, justice and opportunity. The Freedom Charter adopted at the congress of

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the people in Kliptown, in June 1955, just a decade after World War II in a world still divided by the Cold War's ideological conflicts boldly asserted: There shall be work and security, most importantly, that men and women would receive equal pay ... [Interjections.] ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms S Ndhlovu): Can you remove them, please. Just remove them, especially if they are men in this platform. Can you remove them. Thank you. Our apologies, Ms Mqolomba, may you continue.

Ms ZUKISWA MQOLOMBA (Deputy Chairperson - Public Service Commission): Hon Presiding Officer, I hope you will give me an additional five minutes for these disruptions during my speech. Basically, and most importantly, is that the vision of a new South Africa is articulated in our Constitution and is boldly founded on equality of pay, equality of work and ensuring that women enjoy equal rights to the distribution of wealth and to the promotion of industrialisation in the country. That is why in 1955, a vision for South Africa was articulated that justified and made sure that women enjoyed equal rights in the country.

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Chairperson, historical evidence indicates that industrialisation is not a product of chance, rather it is a result of deliberate government action. In the 19th Century, the government established the groundwork for the industrial revolution by enacting laws to safeguard property rights, enforcing contracts and implementing targeted tariffs and incentives to protect emerging industries. They developed infrastructure such as railways, ports, power grids, dismantled barriers to labour mobility and invested in the skills required by industry. Classical development theories recognise that the state has a critical role as the primary catalyst responsible for bridging the structural gaps in gender and industry, co-ordinating large-scale investments and collaborating with the private sector to drive economic transformation.

As Mr Yun Cheng perceives that almost all of today's wealthy nations actively employed interventions industrial measures, trade and technology policies during their catch-up phase with more advanced economies. The lesson is very clear, hon Chair, that when government acts with vision, co-ordination and purpose, industries flourish, economies grow and economic

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opportunities increase and not just for men but for women as well.

What we have seen now in South Africa over the years has been the decline of South Africa's industrial capacity. When you look at statistics, it paints a very stuck picture of the manufacturing sector declining from 25% to 13% an average decline of 0,55% each year starting from 1991. The cause for this is documented and it means that the economic uncertainty, deteriorating infrastructure, shifting global trade patterns and inefficiencies within state-owned enterprises have resulted in a weakened industrial base, fewer jobs in particular for women and diminished economic resilience.

Global history shows that sustained industrial success is built on infrastructure. The United States has its interstates highways, Europe maintained its industrial corridors, the east Asian Tigers put resources into transport, ports and power generation. They built and they kept building. South Africa once invested heavily too. Before 1960 and 1976, public sector investment in infrastructure grew steadily, but since then there has been a long decline, a decline that the democratic era has not been able to reverse.

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So, yes, our transport networks, power systems and water infrastructure still exist but they are eroding. It needs to be maintained. According to our beloved President, President Ramaphosa, who warns us, he says: To achieve the levels of growth of the economy that the country needs to create enough jobs for its people, we need far more construction and more reliable and consistent infrastructure maintenance. And yet, by any honest measure South Africa is not as yet a construction site. Between 2014 and 2023, our economy has grown by just 0,76% a year. This is not growth, it is actually stagnation and something needs to be done about it to make sure that we reverse the stagnation.

However, this is not a permanent condition. We possess the potential, the resources and determination to alter the course and herald a new era of growth and prosperity for our country, South Africa. Since 1994, South Africa has implemented a comprehensive industrialisation programme aimed at revitalising its manufacturing sector, promoting local production and fostering economic growth through various initiatives and policies. Key components of South Africa's industrialisation programme have included the National Industrial Policy Framework, the Industrial Policy Action

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Plans, Black Industrialist Programme and Special Economic Zones, as well as various sector specific master plans.

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition and these agencies have encompassed and invested in more than R1,8 million workers in the economy, representing approximately one-eighth of private sector for more jobs. The Black Industrialist Programme initiated in 2016, has sought to enhance meaningful participation of black-owned companies in the mainstream economy in alignment with the Industrial Policy Action Plan. The partnership objective has been to leverage the state capacity to unlock industrial potential within black-owned and managed businesses operating within the South African economy for deliberate, targeted and well defined financial and nonfinancial interventions. Also, the department through its agencies has been successful in ensuring that billions worth of rands is invested to promote industrialisation in the country.

However, there are significant challenges that persist in expanding the achievements of the Black Industrialist Programme which include limited access to support and facilities from commercial banks, which is attributed to the

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absence of established business track records or sufficient so-called collateral. It is because of concentrated markets that incumbent firms often effectively restrict the entry of new competitors, for instance, exclusive leases in shopping malls have prevented smaller grocery retailers from accessing major market platforms.

Thirdly, limited market experience in certain sectors leading to overexpansion restricting capacity to adapt to rapidly changing market conditions and preventing small businesses for accessing the market. There has also been an excessive dependence on civil contracts which have been unsustainable and uncompetitive in the long-run, just to make mention quite a few examples.

However, we have seen a number of women who have been able to break the glass ceilings to ensure that they dominate and lead at the frontier of sectors which have been exclusively male dominated for a very long time. Those have included industrial infrastructure sectors like gearboxes and shelving systems, mineral beneficiation including alloy-rim production, chemicals and pharmaceuticals exemplified by condom manufacturing, steel and metal fabrication and agro-processing

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particularly in the production of nutritional products.

Chairperson, among the existing ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms S Ndhlovu): Miss Mqolomba ...

Ms ZUKISWA MQOLOMBA (Deputy Chairperson - Public Service Commission): Yes, ma'm.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms S Ndhlovu): Yes, I gave you extra two minutes and already ...

Ms ZUKISWA MQOLOMBA (Deputy Chairperson - Public Service Commission): ... let me close then, let me close. Basically, we have seen a number of women who are leaders and chief executive officers, CEOs, of Afrobotanics. Phakamile Industries and Wasaa Gasses are women-owned and have been at the forefront of ensuring that they break the glass ceiling and don't allow any situation to limit them on the basis of gender.

As Nelson Mandela, our former President, was always wont to say: It always seems impossible until it is done. It always seems impossible until it is accomplished. Ours, therefore, is

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a call for action. Let us make sure that the women empowerment becomes a reality in our lifetime and that we use our industrialisation measures, instruments, policies and strategies to empower women so that they too can share in the country's wealth. Thank you very much, hon Chair.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms S Ndhlovu): Thank you, hon Mqolomba. Hon members, for this session we will not continue with the question and answer. I think that is it for this session. I will request the Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP to come forward. As the P20 Women's Parliament, we would like to call upon all our presenters who have made inputs this morning, to come forward to accept a token of our appreciation. Your contribution to the gender transformation discourse does not go unnoticed. So, I will call your names and then you will come forward so that you can receive your token of appreciation. That is the first announcement.

The second announcement is that, immediately after the issuing of the token of appreciation all members who are here in this platform, especially those who are in this Chamber, let us go to the entrance of the NCOP for the group photo. All of you, right. I will call Mr S Molayi, Dr P N Mbava, Mr M Gomera,

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Miss K Govender, Dr R Apostolov, Dr P Nkomo and Prof D Jantjies. It is our token of appreciation to you.

Thank you, Deputy Chair. Hon members, that brings us to the end of the session. Can we go to the entrance of the NCOP for a group photo. Thank you. After the group photo, we will be directed to where we will have our lunch, ne. It is within this building. Thank you.

Session adjourned for lunch break at 13h00.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms B E Machi): Hon speakers, hon members, distinguished delegates who have joined us here and those virtually and fellow participants in this year's P20 Women's Parliament, good afternoon. My name is hon Machi. I am a Member of Parliament and the member of Multiparty Women's Caucus Steering Committee. It is an honour and a privilege for us as women to be part of this gathering to amplify women's voices, share perspectives and work collectively toward a South Africa where gender equality is not only a constitutional right, but a lived reality.

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I believe my fellow colleagues will also agree that we are encouraged by the diversity of thought and experience represented here today as we explore solutions that advance the empowerment of women, the development of youth and the building of an inclusive economy. Let us engage with purpose, respect and shared commitment in shaping a future where no woman or girl is left behind.

For now, I'll request Reverend H L Petersen who, I believe, is on virtual platform. He is the chairperson of the synod of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, UCCSA, reformed transition to take the podium. Thank you.

IsiZulu:

UMfu. H L PETERSEN (Chairperson SA Synod – UCCSA Confirmation of the UCCSA's Reformed Tradition): Saubona ...

English:

... and greetings to all that are present there. Am I auditable, presiding officer? I wish to offer greater thanks to the hon Cedric Frolick together with all the relevant organisers and participants. I especially want to thank you, presiding officer, for the warm welcome and for the space to

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which you invite us as the church to participate. I need to use contemporary language to greet the three young women of our church that are participating in the conversation. Just a great thank you to them as they are there. I trust you will recognise their presence in the gathering.

As I speak with you this afternoon understanding that the confirmation of the reformed tradition of the UCCSA, its national presence and commitment to justice, the framework that I wish to speak to, speaks of only a few of the responses, the intentional and deliberate work that we do as a church. It is certainly not exhaustive, but it speaks to thematic areas that we as the church participate in by choice because the responsibility of justice is a responsibility that we take very seriously.

As I address you this afternoon, I want to begin with a quotation that guides my initial response but also my advocacy. This is how it reads, and it says:

This, my dear, is the greatest challenge of being alive: to witness injustice in this world and not allow it to consume our light.

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I have noticed among those that are present in this sitting as we are gathered, Mr Dereleen James who forms part of a community in Eldorado Park where I began my work and ministry in the year 1997 – a time that has remained with me. The changes that have happened in Eldorado Park are indeed a challenge for us to be alive and to witness the injustices in that community. I will speak about others as we continue. What is it that we do to speak to the injustices? What is it that we do to address the atrocity of violence and femicide? What is it that we do to teach, to educate, to equip and to capacitate those among us? I wish to speak to those in the time allocated to me.

I want to begin with the Thursdays in Black campaign, which is a global movement that works intentionally for the world free from rape and violence. It is a stance that we stand for we as the church. The practical expression of the stance includes the weekly focus of dressing in black as a statement, as an advocacy stance that we take against death untimely uncalled for, but also in the hope that we can be agitators to work against it. I am wearing a cross, and on this cross is an inscription which says Christ is counting on you. Every time I dress myself to present myself for the work that I'm called to

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was an advocate, I'm reminded of this particular responsibility that Christ is counting on me. The amuletic focus of the ancient public biblical command to choose life, to do good and to work for justice remains a responsibility and a command understanding that the mission imperative to create safe spaces for those who were victims and helping those from immune from violence to find their voice again. Christ is counting on us.

I now move to a different consideration. The work that we do as a church in relation to child and human trafficking and the organisation that I am particularly connected with and work with is called Awareness for Child Trafficking, Act, Africa. The organisation's mission is saving lives through awareness and education. Their focus is to prevent and break the vicious cycle of gender-based violence and human trafficking. They provide basic assistance to victims and creating campaigns focused on prevention. There are two important elements here. It is the first that they work in schools, both primary and secondary schools. They teach the tools of identifying how to find help, how to know when you are at risk and where is it that you will find spaces in which to work. I place before you a tangible tool of a board game called No to Violence with its

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objective being to invest in the endeavour including children understanding the dehumanising effects of gender-based violence and the deprogramming of any undesirable social learning behaviours learned both at home and at school. I wonder if the government would take this on and buy that particular board game as a teaching tool for every school. I place that as a consideration before you.

I want to lead to safe spaces and the only place I can site now is the Eldorado Park community where I have worked and continue to work, where safe spaces are created but with the help of all stakeholders including the MPA, No to Victims Organisation and the Department of Social Development to name but a few. Ms Dereleen James works on the ground together with all other people and stakeholders, ordinary people, volunteers and times givers. The structured programme where women meet on a Thursday once a month called My Life Matters so I Spoke Out is the space in which the community gathers to tell this story. We are all story beings, and we all have a story and some of our stories lead to a conversation like this where it is not about life, but instead it is life that was denied.

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What I am encouraged by in relation to the community work is the therapeutic services that form part of this particular space in which women are called together and listened to the risks that need to be mitigated because they don't currently have a language to express themselves. I salute the work.

I move from that particular citing to the marginalised in relation to the youth. There is an organisation, a group that we work with called Growing Champions. It is a youth mentoring programme that is in the business of changing lives, passionate professional volunteers, their services to provide a scaffolding for children born into the depth of poverty, criminal rings, addiction, violence and abuse to rise and free themselves off the shackles of inheritance. The church is present. The church is there. If we pay attention to the churches nationally, you will find the footprints and the fingerprints so clearly visible of the presence of the church in each of these communities and other community expressions by government and local stakeholders that can do that.

As my time draws to a close, I want to place before you for consideration as you are gathered. Firstly, what systems can be effectively instituted to remove the perpetrator from the

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context of violence as opposed to removing the victim? All they have is their home and what offers them security, yet they, who are the victims, are removed and not the perpetrator. How can we change that system? Secondly, how do we eradicate the corruption in our system that denies life and spaces of safety? Marginalisation of young people can be reduced if what is intended for them in the system that is broken is looked after and the custodianship has an accountability. In the most recent conversation of the SA Council of Churches, SACC, conference on anticorruption there was a statement made very boldly that said corruption is violent, and it's ready to defend its death. We see it, we know it, we live it and those who ought to benefit from the gifts that are intended for life for all do not get to enjoy that because corruption defends its death. Here is a personal commentary that I want to place before you. What have life's most profound test is bearing witness to injustice, to cruelty, inequality and the sufferings that permeates our world. Yet within this challenge lies an opportunity of profound growth, to witness injustice in choosing instead, to let your light shine, to act with empathy, to fight for fairness and to nurture kindness will be a testimony to the resilience of the human spirit. We commit to act with courage

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and to lead with justice. Together we are the church's close speaking, still rising and still moving. Thank you.

Ms N DLAMINI (Contralesa): Hon Ministers, hon members, esteemed guests and fellow advocates, I greet you all in the name of Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa, Contralesa, Women's Wing, good afternoon. The Contralesa Women's Wing appreciates the honour to be invited to form part of P20 Women's Parliament of South Africa under the theme: "Accelerating Equality, Sustainability and Shared Growth:

Correcting the Gender Re-distributional Bias of Growth and Development - through the Women's Charter, the MTDP and the 2025 G20 Development Priorities".

Mine is to deliver the speech under the topic: "Custom, Culture and Religion as Subjected to Equality Clause in the Bill of Rights". That is the topic we are given to breakdown and digest.

The Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa was formed in 1987 to rise as a voice for traditional leaders during the apartheid era. It formed a key role in the transition towards

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democracy. The Contralesa has since placed a few members to serve as public servants in local, provincial and national government.

A debate always ensued whether Contralesa respects the voice of women and youth as an organisation. As a listening organisation, Contralesa has since launched the Contralesa Women's Wing and the Contralesa Youth Wing, both with fully fledged and legally elected structures. It is out of this confidence that Contralesa Women's Wing will participate in this session.

We will confidently address the theme of "Custom, Culture and Religion as Subjected to the Equality Clause in the Bill of Rights" because we know we are led by a listening organisation.

The Contralesa Women's Wing notes that the nature of governance in South Africa is in such a way that traditional leaders need recognition from government when it was supposed to be the other way around. Traditional leaders are indigenous leaders; they don't need to be elected in power. Traditional leaders generally represent the voice of the people as well as

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the land they live on. To our understanding, government is the face of resource mobilisation that must still account to the people led by traditional leaders.

It is against this backdrop that we open and unpack the theme of "Custom, Culture and Religion as Subjected to the Equality Clause in the Bill of Rights" with the context of women in traditional leadership. Women in traditional leadership are queens, chiefs, princesses and headwomen. There are various other titles given according to the nation, tribe and clan that each woman belongs to.

As we all know, South Africa has grouped various nations and given them a cluster under the 11 spoken languages, namely: English, Afrikaans, Sesotho, Sepedi, Setswana, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, siSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga with sign language accommodating persons with hearing disability.

These languages represent a painful past where it was mistakenly believed that there are only 11 nations in this country. Slowly we are educating one another that under each language represented there are in fact various houses of

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traditional leadership also known as clans and tribes. Their existence guide custom, culture and religion.

With regards to custom, approximately 30,75 million out of a local population of 60,14 million are female. The female population is projected to be 32,13 million in 2024 representing 51% of the total population, according to Statistics SA. Naturally, women are more than men in South Africa. When it comes to traditional leadership, women are leaders in their own right. Although there are more male traditional leaders than there are females, traditionally a woman is a natural nurturer of the family and support.

Across all cultures in South Africa, the man is regarded as the head of the household. This has various meanings and become open to translation and various kinds of abuse. A family can be woman-led, hence both matriarch and patriarch terms exist in traditional leadership.

With regard to culture, the design and beauty of culture is mostly formed by women, both in attire and upbringing of the children. Women are entrusted with the natural role to teach children culture of the family and the clan they belong to.

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Although women are carriers of human life, they are the ones that promote and teach traditions of the family which form a culture. There are traditions that are women-led and traditions that are men led. In culture and tradition there is equal division of tasks and that belong to men and tasks and responsibilities that belong to women.

With regard to religion, similar to culture, women are the beauty of each religion. Religion is broad and different per person, family, nation, tribe and clan. Women play various roles in religion. Depending on the religion the woman belongs to, her right and ability to lead may be questioned.

All above give us a clear indication that traditionally, men and women are supposed to have equal responsibilities with different roles. It is disheartening that unfortunately women find themselves in difficult situations where their rights as women are not upheld. The following examples give us an indication that women are still treated unfairly as individuals, in families, communities, in South Africa, across the continent and globally.

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When it comes to jobs, men still earn higher than women. In marriages, men can decide to have multiple wives, the other way around would be frowned upon. It is only in a few countries where Africa and Asia allow polyandry.

Gender-based violence is on the rise, women in the majority under siege. Female traditional leaders are given a hard time by their councils and their female counterparts. Women don't support women.

In conclusion, it is evident that we can never say that women are equal to men. Statistically, women are more. There is a long journey that women need to take to bring the confidence of women in traditional leadership. Women are capable of doing many things ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms B E Machi): Ma'am, your time is up.

Ms N DLAMINI (Contralesa): May I wrap up? Thank you.

Women are capable of doing many things including leadership.

We are looking forward to the time in this country and history

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where we will have a female president and a female deputy president that will serve a full two terms in office.

The Contralesa Women's Wing appreciates the invite and is looking forward to the success of its first term to serve the women across this country in villages, townships, suburbs and in all places where women exist in this country. On behalf of Contralesa Women's Wing, I thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms B E Machi): Thank you. Each and every woman here is waiting for that time to become a president of the country. Thank you so much.

Fortunately, our hon Adv N Sepanya-Mogale, chairperson of the Commission for Gender Equality has arrived. Take the podium. Thank you.

Adv NTHABISENG SEPANYA-MOGALE (Chairperson: Commission for Gender Equality): Good afternoon, everyone, leadership, fellow activists out there to make the world a better place. As it has been introduced, I am from the Commission for Gender Equality, CGE, and the topic has also been introduced. I just want to emphasise a few points. It is essential to begin by

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highlighting the significant role that the South African Constitution plays in safeguarding the rich tapestry of both religion and culture in our diverse country.

The Constitution enshrines these elements as an acknowledgement of the vital contribution to the fabric of a diverse and democratic society, and to ensure that the unique beliefs and traditions of various communities are respected, protected, and promoted. Specifically, section 9(3) of the Constitution prohibits discrimination, including against religion, belief, conscience and culture. Then section 15(1) guarantees everyone the right of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion.

Section 15(2) then allows religious observation at state institutions, provided they are equitable and voluntary. Section 15(3) permits recognition of religious marriages and systems of personal law, if they align with constitutional principles. Section 30 gives everyone the right to have languages and participate in a cultural life of their choice, provided it is consistent with the Bill of Rights.

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Section 31 protects the rights of individuals belonging to cultural, religious and linguistic communities. There is no clearer evident voice than this from our Constitution that each and every one of us belongs, irrespective of religion, culture or language.

In addition, you have Chapter 9 institutions, such as the Cultural, Religious and Linguistic, CRL, Commission and the Gender Commission, set up to ensure that these rights are actually achieved, ... I did not see you ... promoted and protected in whatever way we can.

Culture and religion can serve as profound and uplifting forces within society, nurturing a sense of community, belonging and shared identity. They can unite individuals, creating bonds that transcend differences and promote collective well-being. Yet, paradoxically, these are the very same constructs that can be exploited to justify or perpetuate gender inequality.

Numerous cultural religious traditions have historically been interpreted through patriarchal lenses, which serve to reinforce male dominance, while significantly limiting the

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role and rights of women. This often manifests in the ways sacred texts are interpreted, rituals are conducted, and societal norms are established. For example, certain cultural practices are often defended as tradition, despite the clear violation of fundamental human rights.

In many cases, women may be permitted to serve as regents, acting temporarily in leadership capacities, yet denied the authority to make decisions to govern permanently and independently. The CGE has researched this area significantly, and we often find that women are prejudiced in such a way that necessitates a prejudice when there is allocation of communal land, to a point where very old and older capable women rely on young boys to be apportioned land. Religion as an authority is the same.

For example, in religion, you have texts under Christianity like Genesis 3:16, Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. This verse has historically been cited to justify male dominance. In Islam, you have verses that say men are protectors and maintainers of women.

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This verse is often used to justify male leadership in households. In Judaism, you have Genesis 2:18, which says that a woman is created as a helpmate for a man, which some commentators interpret as implying subservient. Hinduism has equal verses that restrict women's autonomy, such as requiring them to be under the male guardianship throughout their life, the same as Buddhism.

This leads to certain social controls that are normalised. These social controls manifest themselves in certain restrictions. If I don't make sense, you will forgive me, colleagues. I am jumping all over because of time.

Additionally, cultural norms may impose limitations on women's freedom of movement, restricting their access to education and employment opportunities, and thereby curtailing their potential and capacities.

In some cases, religious doctrines are wielded to justify practices that limit women's sexual autonomy, such as the enforcement of chastity norms or the prohibition of premarital relationships. These dynamics create a framework where women's choices are heavily monitored and controlled.

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I actually wanted to highlight the issue of age in a way, just to amplify it for all of us around here. I know, we all cherish our youth in so many ways, but I just find that there is a very limited understanding that age is actually a patriarchal construct. It is associated with the prime of a woman, where they are able to please a man, where they are able to bear children for a man, where they are able to be productive in order to amplify the role of the men in society.

And when we talk about age, I just want to say, let's be careful that we do not undermine the wisdom that comes with that age. Sometimes, it ends up in some communities, as we know, with women being violated or even being killed in the name of she is a witch, when all she has is osteoporosis, dementia, and Alzheimer's. So, age must be relooked at. Then I will skip. How then do we look at this, in terms of the way forward?

Advocacy and research are critical components in promoting gender equality. To foster meaningful change, the following strategic approaches should be considered.

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Firstly, we must engage with religious and cultural leaders. At the CGE, we work very well with cultural leaders. We have a very good relationship, and I am proud of that. Secondly, there are public education campaigns, which also need to be taken by each and every one of us in our constituencies. Thirdly, there is also policy advocacy, which I would like to throw back at all of you esteemed hon members who are sitting here today.

There are also community dialogues. Maybe we can jump on the bandwagon of the upcoming national dialogue in our communities, especially the rural communities, to see where the role of the woman is in all of this. But when you look at community dialogues and everything else that comes with it, there has to be an implementable action plan to achieve tangible transformation. This tangible and implementable action plan to achieve transformation needs champions to redo and role model progressive behaviors.

Our Constitution is clear that these champions are role models and there are role models. And I am counting almost all of you here as those. In its preamble, the Constitution says we, the

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people of South Africa, believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

We, therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt the Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic, lay the foundation for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people. And every citizen is equally protected by law. Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person.

Let us be those public representatives, who are needed to be progressive role models to free the potential of all and achieve a democratic country, where the quality of life and the potential of all is unleashed, protected and sustained. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Dr S S Thembekwayo): Allow me to extend the greetings to the Minister who was here earlier, the Speaker who was here earlier, the Minister, hon Frolick, hon Govender, the Chairperson of the Multiparty Women's Caucus, including the steering committee, the parliamentarians and all delegates that are present here in the P20 Women's Parliament. I am Dr

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Susan Themebekwayo, member of the Steering Committee of the Multiparty Women's Caucus, and a member of the EFF.

Minister, I just want to make a suggestion to say that it would be good for us as South Africans to have this type of Parliament sitting on a yearly basis, for sustainability and continuity purpose. And secondly, we can influence those who are organising this by saying that there is a possibility for rotation. We can go to different provinces to do the same thing, so that we hear the voices of the people that belong to municipalities, districts and so on - the real people, the real communities that call the shots or that are supposed to call the shots in this type of decision-making.

I have one announcement. We had a tea break on this programme, but unfortunately, it was cancelled, because we just had food now. So, we are just going to continue until we are where we are supposed to be. Allow me to invite the three speakers that will speak on the Women's Charter's perspective, but more importantly, concentrating on deconstructing patriarchy and inequality in political civil life, advancing women's adequate representation across the three spheres of government.

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Dr HAZEL GOODING (Deputy Representative of UN Women South Africa Office - Pretoria): Hon Chairperson, good afternoon. I am Hazel Gooding, deputy representative of United Nations, UN Women South Africa office, based in Pretoria, and I'd like to stand on the established protocols and to address the esteemed Members of Parliament, MPs, representatives of the executive and judiciary, institutions supporting democracy, development partners, United Nations, UN, colleagues, civil society, delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

It's both a privilege and an honour for us as UN Women to be here with you today at this inaugural P20 Women's Parliament of the Seventh dispensation.

I bring you greetings on behalf of our entity and to commend the Parliament of South Africa for convening this timely platform under a theme that calls on us all to accelerate equality, sustainability and inclusive growth, especially through the lens of gender equality.

Ladies and gentlemen, the theme before us actually challenges us, in our opinion, to look beyond numeric representation and to really interrogate the deeper social, institutional and

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normative structures that continue to limit women's urgency and access to decision making spaces.

So, as you've mentioned, hon Chairperson, deconstructing patriarchy in governance is not only about addressing discrimination in appointments or elections, but also about shifting how leadership is actually defined, how power is distributed and how systems are made accountable to all citizens, especially those most historically excluded.

So, this is not for us a symbolic task, it is a transformative one and it is inseparable from the broader goals of peace, democracy and sustainable development.

So, we gather at a critical moment, not only in South Africa's democracy, but within a global context where the call for women's full and meaningful participation in public life is growing louder and much more urgent than ever before. So, for us, the world is watching, and we have an opportunity as an international community ... as part of the international community to define the history that we want to leave behind.

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We highlighted the quotation from UN Secretary General ... former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, about where he kind of put into context why achieving gender equality is the smart thing to do.

But I want to take this opportunity to remind us that as an international community we have all agreed that gender equality leads to better outcomes for all of society, where all participate equally in economic growth and decision-making processes; men, women, boys and girls.

As we know locally ... local government in South Africa shows lower levels of representation with women comprising only 37% of councillors, for example. In the judiciary, while recent appointments have improved, the gender balance culminating in the appointment of the first female Chief Justice, representation still falls short of parity. In the private sector, another example, the numbers are more sobering, only 7% of chief executive officers, CEOs, are women, and women hold less than 20% of board seats across the stock exchange limited companies ... the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, JSE, limited companies.

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Shifting, now, to globally, the picture actually mirrors these trends. As reflected in the Sustainable Development Goal, SDG, 5 and particularly target 5.5, the world has committed to ensuring that women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership is actually there in a tangible way. Yet, global averages tell us that women hold just 27% of parliamentary seats and 28,2% of managerial roles. At this pace we don't need the experts to tell us, but it actually says it will take us more than 140 years to achieve gender parity in executive leadership roles.

Importantly for us, we want to underscore ... take this opportunity to underscore that gender equality is not just about representation, it is about redistribution of power and the creation of systems that enable women to lead safely, effectively and with impact. Too often, I'm sure you would agree with me that, women leaders are expected to thrive in political environments that were never designed for their inclusion to begin with. Online abuse, harassment and political intimidation continue to silence many voices.

The United Nations strongly affirms that a woman cannot be expected to lead in spaces where she is not safe. Nationally,

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electoral bodies, law enforcement and political parties must act decisively to protect women in public life.

Just to touch on Beijing briefly, there are certain policy frameworks that you are well aware of. But just to touch briefly on Beijing+30 [30th anniversary of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, BDPfA], the review processes and celebrations which further compel us to reflect critically on South Africa's progress in this regard, particularly in advancing women's representation across all three arms of government, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. It is a moment for us to take stock of these frameworks that we have before us and to celebrate as well, the milestones in closing the remaining gaps with renewed urgency.

The government of South Africa has shown commendable leadership in aligning these international frameworks. As regards, the Women's Charter, which is a strong national commitment to gender equality, we just wanted to underscore this. It's rooted in proud legacy of struggle, solidarity and progress.

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We touched a bit about moving from policy to action, deliberately here, because while these policy frameworks exist, we want to make sure that emphasis is placed on actioning these policies. It's particularly urgent to consider the experiences, for example, of rural women who remain disproportionately excluded from decision-making, particularly in traditional leadership structures. Their leadership, their insights and lived realities are crucial to building a democratic system that works for all. Good practices are not enough on their own. They must be backed by strong implementation mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation systems and, above all, consistent political leadership.

As Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW, general recommendation 40 makes very clear to all of us, parity must not be aspirational alone, it must be also a legal, political and institutional standard.

UN women reaffirms its commitment to supporting South Africa in this journey through our partnership with government, civil society and the private sector. We stand ready to provide

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technical support, share global practices and mobilize resources to deepen gender equality at all levels.

Hon members, allow me to conclude by reiterating that this work is not about charity nor is it about symbolic gestures, as I hinted to before, it is about justice, democracy and shared prosperity. It is about building a state where leadership is not confined by gender, but driven by integrity, inclusion and the will to serve.

The Women's Charter is not just a document, but a living promise. Let us breathe life into that promise together, not only through speeches and policy, but through action, through funding, through financing, through enforcement, through accountability. Thank you ever so much for your kind attention.

Ms LULAMA NARE (CEO - Progressive Women's Movement of South Africa (PWMSA): Hon Chairperson, please allow me to greet everyone in the House and to say, all protocol observed. It's difficult to be a speaker when there were so many other speakers who were busy deconstructing what you have to deconstruct. But I'm going to zigzag. I think one of the

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questions that I wanted to put in the House is what Frantz Fanon said, I quote:

Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it, or betray it.

That's exactly where we are in this room and around the country as women in South Africa. But now you see, unlike America, women in South Africa. Include the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender And Intersex, LGBTQI. because we recognise that without our LGBTQI community, we are living parts of us behind. These are our sisters. These are our brothers. These are our children. These are the Caster Semenyas. If we were to change the Constitution on issues of equality, we will leave so many of us behind.

We can't prescribe to the notion that says, there's only two genders, male and female. We know that. But what about my child who is gay, who's lesbian, who's intersex, who's bisexual? Where do I put that person? This is my child. It's my offspring. So, with South Africa and our Constitution, as women in this country, if we can ever lose the Bill of Rights, we must all know that it's over for many of us.

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I want to segue into something that is an x for me. When we were presenting, I saw myself in the presenters in terms of my race, my language possibly. But there's one thing that I saw, we are all educated at some point. I think we have masters, we have doctorates, we have degrees, we have matric. You can be a premier with matric. So, we are all educated, but here is my gripe with everyone ...

IsiXhosa:

... ukuba ngaba siza kuthetha isiNgesi oko, sishiya abantu bethu ngasemva. Siphinda sibuzwa ukuba iphi intshukumo yabasetyhini (women's movement) Siphinde kwathina siyicacise le ntshukumo yabasetyhini ngesiNgesi sithi...

English:

... the women's movement is here in the room you've heard the different people, traditional leaders speaking, the religious people speaking.

IsiXhosa:

Sihlalo, abantu bezorhwebo, ezoqoqosho ...

English:

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... and statistics when they were presenting here, it's specialised language that you speak when you talk economy, you talk Treasury, you talk this and all those frameworks ...

IsiXhosa:

... nangoku besivota ukuba ...

English:

... is it vat or tax. All that is specialised language. Now, if we cannot do it in our own indigenous languages, just summarise by one and giving our people just the language ...

IsiXhosa:

... yorhwebo ukuba sithetha ntoni ngayo. Sithetha ntoni ngeenkukacha-manani. Sithetha ntoni ...

English:

... about Treasury and its responsibility to the women's movement. The responsibility of Treasury to fund the agenda of women, then we are not saying anything. So, if people are using courts to talk to Treasury, then we as women's movements sitting around here, we also need at some point to go to court or to the Constitutional Court and ask the Constitutional

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Court to clarify for us when are women going to be given equality in South Africa. Then we can talk about any other thing.

Let me acknowledge my former colleagues. I have in the midst Ms Mazibuko. She's from the nongovernmental organisation, NGO for albinism. We all know the vulnerabilities of our albinism community. How they are used for traditional *muthi* and are just targeted. I also have a young person Zonke and I thought that young people are the future. We cannot carry on, I understand the age, but we cannot carry on talking to ourselves.

IsiXhosa:

Asikwazi ukuthetha sodwa lonke ixesha singabantu abadala, kufuneka intetho yethu ifake nabantu abatsha. Luxanduva lwakho mntu omtsha ukuba...

English:

... you carry the same burden. There are elder women who are without their RDP homes right now. There are women who are vulnerable, who have given all their identity documents to our illegal immigrants. They are sitting now, not even able to do

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birth certificates for their own kids because they are addicted to drugs. They are addicted to games.

IsiXhosa:

Badlala amakhasi ekoneni.

English:

They get recruited and they give away the only pass that is applicable in South Africa after the Dora Tamana said: "We will not be carrying these passes; they make our road narrower." Then in our lifetime, this is why Frantz Fanon is asking us what is our mission in our lifetime? Why are we agreeing that our young women's birthright is being misused and used? If your mom loses the RDP house, she cannot even have the small equity that our government decided to offer to its people for free. We gave our people our RDP homes. A house has land underneath it. So, when you sell your RDP house, you're selling the building. You're selling the land.

IsiXhosa:

Ingaba uza kuphinda uyifumane nini?

English:

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How are you going to go to the banks now because you don't have equity? The RDP could easily be your equity. The RDP can easily be your inheritance of every generation or all your generation. If you sell it for nothing, then you are losing out. I think that is one thing that we should be encouraging our people to keep everything that the government is giving to them.

Going fast, patriarchy is something that is taking away from us. I think that is why I was encouraging us to approach the Constitutional Court because other people, for all the rights, remember the economic rights, free water, free watts, free electricity, those people went to the Constitutional Court, and the Constitutional Court had a ruling. It's about time we take action to things that matter to the majority 51% in the country. This is not for us, it's for us and our generations.

Let's go to political parties with my one minute, because there's evidence here. We are all sitting here and I must quickly give us. There's 54% women representation. There's a political party in the House that has 54% and other political party has 53% women representation. Another one has 37%. The other ones you do not even see. Where they are two, you see

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two males. Where they are nine, you see six males. But we are all here, generation after generation, we are not saying anything.

If we are in our multi-party focus, one of the things that we need to do is to work together as we are sitting here and actually try and strategize how we are going to our principals who are owning the political parties that were are in and say, isn't it about time that we talk about women, gender, the LGBTQI and women's representation? We want to also talk about women in the informal settlements. Is there water there? When we say to them, grab a land, is there going to be water? Is there going to be a toilet? What are we doing? And we are just talking for women and children. So ...

IsiXhosa:

... kha nisincede maqabane.

English:

In your political parties, advance for women. As I go down, I think my former colleague, the Chair of the Gender Commission, has said it all about age. I want to give you one statistic before I go Chair with your permission. The most women who are

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voting Chair, is women who are in the age category, 70-year-olds to 79. They double the males there. For all females in South Africa, the difference between the males and females is 2%. So, women are committed to building this country. They go and vote for a change. Let's agree with Frantz Fanon, each generation should be able to define its mission. So, what is our mission going to be after we've heard everything?

IsiXhosa:

Siza kwenza ntoni? Enkosi Sihlalo.

Ms L SAPO (ANC): Hon Chair, several things have been raised, which speak to patriarchy and how it shows its ugly head within our structures. But it is important to indicate that patriarchy is an adopted system promoting persevering women as less capable leaders compared to their male counterparts. As such, women are excluded from participating in or being part of key decision-making roles and positions within the structures of the organizations and in government. It shapes social systems and norms. Its dominant feature is giving power and authority to men while excluding and marginalizing women. Now, it is important to note that it shows itself in different ways, one of them being unpaid care work that an hon member

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spoke about earlier on. Cooking, cleaning, taking care of the household, and taking care of those who are sick, including men, is still dumped on the shoulders of women. And that deprives them of an opportunity to participate fully in politics and in community structures besides stokvels, which are known as being the only structure that women are supposed to participate in.

Secondly, Chair, is the prevalence of violence in politics. The verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, physical assault, and sexual harassment still exist within political structures and in government. And men usually use this to advance their own interests. We have been noting the number of rape cases and cases of gender-based violence, which exist within the structures, both in politics and government, and most of the time, they are done by men who are within the structures themselves.

Now, those women who manage to be in key positions, either in administration or in government, are always being accused of sleeping their way to the top. And that usually comes from one woman to another woman. Hon Minister, unfortunately, she is not here. There are several things that we need to implement,

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several initiatives that can assist us both in our communities and in our workplace. We need to implement the development programmes, especially for the child-headed households, because they tend to be vulnerable and are used simply because they have no one to speak to on their behalf. Now, most of the child-headed households are simply because of parents who have died or, in some cases neglected by their own parents. And most people in communities tend to take advantage of those families. Hence, it is important for government institutions to keep on driving those programmes so that they can be capacitated and be able to take care of their families at a young age. But it is also important at least to be capacitated so that they can be able to deal with the challenges that they are facing. Another thing is the issue of developing a boy child. While we are trying to protect and capacitate a girl child, it is important to also groom the boy child so that they can be responsible in our communities. It then speaks to what was raised earlier on by the hon member from the Contralesa. There has been a case in the Eastern Cape where a young traditional leader had assassinated and beaten women. That does not only speak to the fact that traditional leaders have a responsibility in the community, but are they capacitated enough so that they can be able to understand

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their role beyond being just traditional leaders within our communities?

Lastly, hon Chair, is on the issue of mentoring young women to be integrated so that they can also be responsible women. The fact of the matter is that the world is becoming younger and faster than we anticipated. So, it is important that ...

IsiXhosa:

... njengoko abantu abadala beguga ...

English:

... at least young women are integrated. In politics, they usually say the current leadership has a responsibility to build the second layer of leadership. Now, young women must be integrated into all forms. Chairs of both the Houses, the NA and NCOP, it is very important that at some point we must discuss how we legislate the 50/50 gender quota in the structures of Parliament and provincial legislatures. Yes, we do understand that in most government institutions, there are those provisions that are being made that, at least at a senior position, there must be several percentages being given to women. But let us go beyond. It goes to what was raised

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earlier on by the member who just left the podium to say, even in politics and our structures, we have a responsibility to make sure that women are being integrated and the gender quota is considered.

The last thing that I want to raise is how we then go back to our institutions, both at the basic level and in the higher education sector, and change the curriculum, because what we teach our learners and what we teach our students at the higher education level is very important. Now, we must reach a point where we discuss how we deal with the curriculum reviewer. Hence, it is important that our life orientation must be able to integrate gender-sensitive matters so that at the lower level, students can understand them, both in ensuring that there is gender-neutral learning material on empowering both the educators and the learners.

In conclusion, Chair, yes, the country has done enough in terms of empowering women, but yes, we still need to do more as the hon Speaker of the NA spoke earlier on. Women themselves need to continue to fight and tackle patriarchy in all forms. There is no need for us to be afraid. It is only we

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who can fight patriarchy. No one is going to fight on our behalf. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms D W Fienies): Thank you very much, hon member. Greetings to the hon Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, to the House Chairperson of the NA, as well as the Speaker, and the Minister in absentia. Greetings to the hon members, as well as every delegate in the Chamber and on the virtual platform. My name is Desery Fienies. I am a permanent delegate of the NCOP from the Northern Cape. I am also the chairperson of the Select Committee on Social Services in the NCOP. Our next session will be where we discuss the Women's Charter perspective under the theme: Women and Climate Justice. The first presenter will be Ms Fuyani from a gender activist and founder of Black Girls Rising. Thank you very much.

IsiXhosa:

Ms XOLI FUYANI (Gender Activist and Founder of Black Girls Rising): Ndicinga ukuba siza kucula iculo elinye lokuba ...

English:

... there's a lot that has been said throughout the day. I mean, a lot that I wanted to present has already been

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mentioned in terms of data and stories, but I was also thinking, perhaps there's a voice that's missing in this room, which uMama Nare has actually alluded us into that the people that are in the margins, the people that are currently being impacted by climate change, are not being represented, and I was thinking maybe to bring their voices and speak on behalf of them. Can someone bring my presentation up please?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms D W Fienies): Can I ask the officials to please play the presentation?

Ms XOLI FUYANI (Gender Activist and Founder of Black Girls Rising): Okay.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms D W Fienies): You can proceed.

Ms XOLI FUYANI (Gender Activist and Founder of Black Girls Rising): We will proceed. It's not coming. Okay.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms D W Fienies): You can proceed, they will get it up and then they will ... [Interjections.] ... to us.

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Ms XOLI FUYANI (Gender Activist and Founder of Black Girls Rising): So, maybe then this is the opportunity to come from the heart, I guess. Well, I mean, it is a profound honour for me to stand here representing the South African women in dialogue, but also as a founder of Black Girls Rising and an organisation committed to empowering young girls from the age of nine, from marginalised communities to become climate leaders, and these girls, they're not our ordinary girls that we see every day. These are the girls that are unseen, they are coming from the deep rural areas, who don't have access to water and health care, but yet, they do want to be in the forefront and fight for what's right to them.

So, in my interventions with these young girls and young women, I have witnessed the daily realities of how climate change is currently impacting girls and young women. In South Africa, we all know that climate change is not a distance threat. I mean we've seen the floods in KwaZulu-Natal, and recently, we've seen floods again in uMthatha and what they did to those communities, and If I could take us maybe back into 2017 in Cape Town, where we were just like close to day zero, all of these phenomena were not just a punishment from

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uThixo [God] which I often hear when I go to these communities where people say ...

IsiXhosa:

... hayi, siyagwetywa ngoku. Hayi asigwetywa ...

English:

... it's it is climate change. It's here and it is deeply gendered. I mean, the UN woman and the IPCC recently released a report that said that women are four times likely to die due to climate change than men, and if we were listening from Mr Molayi this morning, he mentioned that the people that are in the margins of population are women. Oh, there we go. Yeah. If you can go to slide three. Okay. Yeah! Thank you. So, as I said that it is a reality, it is something that is happening. So, even though there has been much progression in South Africa in terms of technology to address climate change, but we have been looking at one sector, which is energy, and again, from Oxfam, we've heard that we cannot just look at one sphere, we need to look at land access, water and education, which are currently big disparities and are truly accelerating how women are currently impacted by climate change. Next slide.

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If we really dive deep into the realities of these women that are currently in the margins, we will see that as sis Busi mentioned earlier on zoom that women, to this day, don't have access to land if they are given land. If they are given land, there is no paperwork to trace that they are the custodians of the land. So, when there are big natural disasters that happen in these villages, they can't claim, and also, we know that there are more than 3,8 million children that don't have access to water in South Africa, in 2025, and most of those children have to travel more than two kilometres to get access to water. Probably to zoom in into that access, I would like now to talk about a girl that I met five years ago, her name was Yola. I met Yola when she was 10. I remember going to her school because we were scouting for these girls, you know. We came across her, and she was very loud and very outspoken. We then asked the school if we could follow her in her home just to better understand her reality because she stayed in a nearby informal settlement.

When she got home, as any other child, she took off her uniform and got dressed in the civvies, and then as she was about to make herself food, she realised that she didn't have access to water. She then took a 25-litre bottle and we

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literally walked with her. She took 1 500 steps to get access to water, and that was just one way. In that way, she risked her life, health and education. This is her daily reality. Five years fast forward, and I would like now to present Yola to you. So, if you can go to the next slide and play the video, please. Yes, that one. Oh, there's no audio. Tech issues, yeah!

YOLA CAPTURED ON THE VIDEO: To ask people, I believe that whatever that is happening through the climate can ...

[Interjections.]

Ms XOLI FUYANI (Gender Activist and Founder of Black Girls Rising): Can you perhaps start it from the beginning? Sorry.

YOLA CAPTURED ON THE VIDEO: Climate change is not only affecting what's happening to the environment, but also what's happening to us, people. I believe that whatever that is happening through climate, we as humans are at the centre of it. In 2019, it was a very difficult and challenging time for my community and my family because we didn't have water for weeks, I mean, we didn't have access to water because we didn't have enough money to buy water or buy ... [Inaudible.]

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So, climate change is affecting children's rights because it's every child's rights to have clean drinking water, as well as to assist them to get food. This is when I wanted to be the voice of change and to actually do something about it. I teach young kids in my community between the ages of nine to 11 years old, I took three girls to different parks, township and parks in high centre places.

Ms XOLI FUYANI (Gender Activist and Founder of Black Girls Rising): Okay, perhaps we'll leave it there.

YOLA CAPTURED ON THE VIDEO: The park in Khayelitsha is harmful more than the one here. If you live in an environment where it is not clean and very harmful, it can affect your health. I believe that it's very vital for every young children to take a stand to unite despite our differences and backgrounds, and also where we come from, there's no planet B, we have to be in the forefront and work.

Ms XOLI FUYANI (Gender Activist and Founder of Black Girls Rising): Yola's story is not unique, you know. I see it again in the villages from the woman who go to the fields with nothing to harvest because of drought and the extreme heat,

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and therefore, if you can go to the next slide please. Thank you. As I said that, I mean, these stories echoes in the villages of smallholder woman farmers who watch their crops wither from prolonged draughts, and in urban settlements where flooding wipes out every little thing. Even here in Cape Town a couple of months ago, we had floods where a lot of girls, even our girls, our beneficiaries needed to be moved to different communities because of their homes being flooded. These experiences remind us that women are not passive victims, they are agents of change. However, for the potential to be realised, our system needs to change. So, without central land rights, I mean these women cannot invest in climate smart agriculture. In South Africa, women make up nearly half of the agricultural workforce, yet only the fraction hold legal land titles. This needs to change. I mean, not today, but yesterday, so that when these changes happen, we know that these women will be able to secure food for their communities. Also, we need to look at policies that needs to ensure the equitable access to land, water and natural resources, so that women can be stewards of sustainability. Next slide.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms D W Fienies): Hon.

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Ms XOLI FUYANI (Gender Activist and Founder of Black Girls Rising): Is the time up?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms D W Fienies): Yes, the time is up. You can wrap up in just five seconds.

Ms XOLI FUYANI (Gender Activist and Founder of Black Girls Rising): Okay, I will. Maybe just to close is to say that, we actually have girls from Cape Town all the way to Kenya who are not afraid to stand up and fight for their rights, who are not waiting for government officials to tell them what to do, but are coming up with innovation and solutions to mitigate their own community environmental issues. Some of these girls have social enterprises where they're harvesting hyacinth woven baskets and using that money to educate themselves. Also, I think as ma'am Nara also said before that we need to invest in young people, you know. The majority of the population in Africa is, in fact, young people, and we also know that when we give resources to girls and women, we are not just giving it to them, but we're actually enabling the whole system and the whole communities to rise. So, let's keep on investing on girls and women, and if you want ways of working with these communities that are in the margins, we are

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very often very happy to share our resources, ways of engaging with them, because how we speak in these spaces is different to how they engage with their communities. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms D W Fienies): Thank you very much, Ms Fuyani. Hon members, especially us as women, the one thing that she said is that 40% of women are most likely to die of climate change issues. So, we have no choice but to combat and to make other people aware of climate change because we are the ones who die first. So it's just a thought for us as woman. The next presenter will be Dr Pheko from National Planning Commission, and she will do two presentations on gender economy as well as climate change.

Dr LEBOHANG LIEPOLLO PHEKO (Commissioner National Planning Commission): Chair ...

Sesotho:

...bomme le bontate, baholo, bahlomphehi ...

English:

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... all protocols are observed, and I stand on previous protocols, but mainly I stand on the history of the many women whose shoulders we stand on.

The first presentation, as it has been said, is about how to entrench gender-aligned feminist inclusive economics, and what are the kind of paradigms for implementation that we can think about. This presentation highlights critical issues concerning the gendered nature of inequality and economic inequality, lack of women's economic citizenship in the country. And there are three things, a few things I'd like us to consider.

The first is that social reproduction identifies that patriarchy and the disproportionate burden of social reproduction, usually called unpaid care work, rests on women and acts as a structural barrier. Now, feminist economics emphasises that this unpaid labour is essential for the functioning of the economy, yet it remains unvalued, uncounted and unseen in the gross domestic product, GDP.

I would like to argue that the GDP is not the best or the most useful measure of progress, of development, but it has become the default. And I also want to add that not all care work is

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unpaid work, which is why the term social reproduction encompasses it more clearly.

The second instance we have to think about is how globalisation also links to the increased demand for very cheap labour, especially women's labour. Now, the export-orientated industries often rely on women's cheap labour, and it intensifies and really exacerbates the squeeze on women's time who have to balance paid work and unpaid work with household responsibilities. And as I've said, care work and the care economy does not only happen in the household, but it is one of the main sites of reproduction.

And also, to mention the erosion of social safety nets. Now, there are big debates around the basic income grant, around the social wage and around the whole social benefit welfarist structure. We have to really think around how these link to the kind of history that we have as a country, which has left us with the legacy of intergenerational poverty, which is deeply racialised and deeply gendered against this backdrop of generations of families who don't have income and assets to spare, who don't have cash reserves or asset reserves of land, for example. The erosion of social safety net is really the

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only thing that keeps many people away from complete destitution.

Now, austerity measures, which really involves the retraction of the state and the whole push towards privatising what should be public services and turning citizens into clients and consumers instead of users, so payment for health, education and so on, means that there's much less money to be spent and fewer resources, time resources and financial resources and even social resources on things like childcare and healthcare.

I'd also like to speak briefly on the labour market dynamics and the data on labour market participation, unemployment and sector-specific earnings reveal very big gender disparities that many of the speakers during the day have spoken very articulately on these. African women in particular are vulnerabilised and made even more precarious. And what are some of the impacts of this precarity?

Firstly, the informalisation of our labour. Now, there's increased competition from international markets, including multinational corporations like your Amazon and so forth.

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There's a race to speed up production outputs, often at the expense of basic employer and worker wellbeing. So, this leads to the informalisation of labour, where women are unfortunately often highly concentrated because of our social structures and because of social attitudinal problems.

Now, informalised work offers very little security, low wages and no benefits. You'll notice that I'm saying informalised rather than informal. My concern with us calling this informal work is that it gives the impression that it's just a random thing, a random occurrence or a random phenomenon. And yet you and I know that there are people who we see every day.

You can set your watch on seeing a particular person who is selling fat cakes. You can set your watch against a particular person who's selling newspapers or all kinds of things, cell phone chargers at a particular set of traffic lights. You can set your watch on a particular person who is selling muffins, cookies and more going from office to office, and people are sent to university on that labour. And I think to call it informal, does it a great disservice.

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Job displacement. Now, globalisation displaces workers in what we can call traditional sectors, with women often disproportionately affected due to occupational segregation, and also the increased outsourcing and internationalisation of very bad working conditions. So, the race to decrease labour production costs means that there's a race to the bottom, including in wages.

This attitude that many multinational corporations and systems have, which is that if you don't want to work for R5 an hour, there are many people who even work for R4 an hour. This take it or leave it attitude, is also leading to this job displacement. And unfortunately, women are often at the receiving end of that.

And this then links to my next point, which is the feminisation of labour, where some sectors see a deliberate feminisation of labour, hiring women intentionally for lower wages in more precarious conditions. These kinds of things include the international care economy, the international care complex, where millions of women are literally going around the world, caring for other people's children, or caring for elderly people in other parts of the world, whilst leaving

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their own children and parents to be cared for by others, and not by choice. This is a form of migrant labour. And again, this is really the extent to which feminisation of labour and the prospects of employment in many countries have been shrinking.

I'd like to speak to the Women's Charter for Effective Equality. I think there was much that was said about it earlier. So, I'll skip this, except to say that it is a living document. And I think that we should view it not as something that is cast in stone that should be left in 1994, but in a document like many others, that we should engage with and rigorously review, and rigorously give life to at various times.

I think that I'd also like us to think about what the importance of Article 3 was in securing a place for women that is central in the economy. It speaks to economic policy, advocating for economic policies that prioritise gendered equality as a central goal, not as a peripheral concern, not the add women and stir that was spoken about earlier.

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It speaks to participation and the barriers to women's economic participation. And what I have called in some of my writing, women's economic citizenship, which speaks to decision making, which speaks to urgency, which speaks to autonomy. It also speaks to redefining economic activity and advocating for a broader definition of what economic activity actually is, including social reproduction.

This means that we need to rethink and redefine how we even measure what work is.

Sesotho:

Mesebetsi ke eng?

English:

And include recognising the value of home production and other informalised economic activities, both the tangible and the intangible. The next is that it speaks to the unpaid labour. The call for the inclusion of unpaid labour in the national accounts, and the implementation of policies to recognise and redistribute care responsibilities. This shows, of course, that national income accounting has also sometimes become

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quite infused with very masculine ideas about what work is and what is not.

And I mean, the national system of account comes from the post-World War II development when supposedly men were men and women were at home. So, there's a need to contemporise how we even view and measure the national systems of accounts. And this has become a real point of contention, especially in feminist and gendered scholarship, where the sphere of non-monetary or subsistence production that is mainly performed by women is incredibly important.

How do we then view what productivity is? I think I'm not the only person who's heard people say things like their wife doesn't do anything. She just sits at home, sits at home. That house could fall into pieces if she's not there. You need a chef, you need a cook, you need a driver, you need an au pair. It's a whole thing. And this whole notion that it's not productive labour just because it's unpaid or intangibly measured is really problematic.

And lastly, of course, to combat stereotypes. South Africa is an outlier across several factors, including our very low

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equilibrium with low GDP growth. I've already mentioned that there is a critique around GDP as the only measure. However, we need to think around why it is our manufacturing and our industrial manufacturing mechanisms and capacities have decreased so much, not only as a result of the electricity crisis that we know about, but also as a result of some of the de-layering.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T A Khanyile): Your time is up.

Dr LEBOHANG LIEPOLLO PHEKO (Commissioner National Planning Commission): For the first presentation?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T A Khanyile): Yes, your time is up. You were allocated ten minutes, and you've used all of it.

Dr LEBOHANG LIEPOLLO PHEKO (Commissioner National Planning Commission): Okay can I move to the next presentation?

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T A Khanyile): Unfortunately, you only had ten minutes, ma'am, and you've used it up.

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Dr LEBOHANG LIEPOLLO PHEKO (Commissioner National Planning Commission): Okay, I was given the impression that I had ten minutes for each presentation, and I asked the secretariat to do this. We've taken the time to prepare Mme, respectfully. We've taken the days and days preparing for two presentations. And I've also been sitting the whole ... there's been quite a bit of back and forth about when I was and was not going to speak. So, I think this is very regrettable.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T A Khanyile): Can I ask you to summarise the second presentation because you've used up all your time. Thank you.

Dr LEBOHANG LIEPOLLO PHEKO (Commissioner National Planning Commission): I'll do my best. I'm not sure if this presentation is being screened but I will speak to it briefly. I think the first is just to name that climate change isn't neutral and that climate change in South Africa is a justice crisis and it's rooted in the mining energy complex.

Can you hear me?

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The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T A Khanyile): Apologies. There was a miscommunication. You have ten minutes now for the second presentation. I apologise for that. You have ten minutes.

Dr LEBOHANG LIEPOLLO PHEKO (Commissioner National Planning Commission): The mining energy complex, which was built on theft, and it's also distributed along lines of race, class, and gender. So, a climate justice approach is probably what's needed to address the structural roots of vulnerability of redistributive resources and power, and to centre those whose labour knowledge and survival strategies have sustained communities in the face of both historical and ecological adversity.

We need a feminist and not just a gendered approach. And this goes beyond just adding women, but it interrogates why women are overrepresented among the indigent and addresses causes and not just symptoms. It also recognises intersectionality. It recognises the race, class, and labour, and rural urban divide. It also values ecological knowledge systems. And that's the difference there between the gender approach and an African feminist approach.

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Epistemic justice is really important. It speaks to the idea that women are the holders of ecological knowledge systems critical to adaptation and resilience. It speaks to indigenous farming techniques. It speaks to seed preservation and biodiversity. It speaks to sustainable water management and climate adaptive practices, and yet this knowledge is rarely valued in formal policy spaces.

Now, the political economy of climate vulnerability is to do with apartheid industrialisation, colonial expropriation, and neoliberal restructuring post-apartheid, and this explains why indigent and rural communities are disproportionately women-headed.

It also explains that livelihoods face existential risks from decarbonisation, and that land and water and productive assets must remain concentrated. So, we need a decolonial policy approach that insists that climate transition must also be a reparative project, correcting the historical wrongs and ensuring that the benefits of low carbon economy flow first to those who are most harmed by the old order, predominantly African women in this case.

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The just transition is also a site of struggle. There are three principles that I'd like to speak to. The notion of distributive justice, where we distribute land, finance, and economic opportunity for the land to be viable.

Restorative justice, which includes gendered reparations for disproportionate harm, such as unlawful land seizures, unlawful inheritance laws, and all of this and also procedural justice, including women's leadership in decision-making.

Managing the transition is also very, very challenging, including for workers and communities, as well as women. I don't like the way this is clustered here, the youth and the poor, but be that as it may. But for women in particular, for youth in a different way, and for indigent people in a different way.

And people must be at the centre of this climate change response. We must redesign the economy to benefit most citizens and deliver much more effective, dynamic, agile responses to climate change. These solutions to climate change also involve women much in being, tend to be far more effective because we live embodied experiences. These are

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embodied solutions and not just abstract theoretical ones.

There are a few statistics here that I won't go into, but the scant literature on gender-induced farming shows that there are deep income differences.

So, a few statistics, two million South African households, women as farmers, producers and knowledge holders, two million South African households engage in small scale farming. Women make up 60 to 80% of these farmers. And if women had the same access as resources to men of land, yields could increase by 20 to 30%. There are plethora of contributions that they are making. The systemic barriers include land, tenure, insecurity, limited access to credit and input, exclusion from extension services, under-representation in decision-making.

Of course, there are a few other things that we have to think about. Water stress, women travel further for water, increasing time, poverty and exposure to, of multiple forms of violence, crop failure and other extreme events, many of which are beyond their control, their systemic or structural control. There are also intersectional impacts on this.

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I'd like us to go to the next slide and that speaks to the kind of policy directions that we can think around. These speak to firstly, redistributive justice, restorative justice, you can read them and procedural and epistemic justice. But we must think around ecological restoration in communities.

We must think around targeting investment at women-led enterprises. And we also have to think around providing dedicated climate finance, which are grants and that don't lead to further indebtedness. And of course, accelerating land reform with secure tenure for women.

We also have to rethink transforming the labour market and prioritizing women in green job creation, but not green washing, friends. Removing participation barriers, social protection as well, which are these shock responsive safety nets in case of, right? So, a lot of farmers in different parts of the world, a lot of states actually provide insurance for farmers, for small scale farmers, especially because the vagaries of climate mean that we are only one bad rainfall away from complete destitution or drought, which is a life-or-death situation. It's also important to embed gender-based

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violence protection and prevention and response in disaster risk management.

So, how do we build a reparative climate future? We need to think around how we deal with racial capitalism, ecological exploitation, and patriarchal exclusion. And if we fail, climate action that fails to address these structural inequities will not be just, it will be another chapter in a long history of exclusion. And I'm done. Thank you so much.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms T A Khanyile): Thank you so much, ma'am I'd like to take this opportunity and greet the Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP, the House Chairperson in absentia, the Speaker in absentia, the Deputy Speaker, the Minister in absentia, hon members, and all delegates.

My name is Angel Khanyile. I'm a Member of Parliament in the National Assembly. I'm also a member of the Steering Committee on Multi-Party Women's Caucus, as well as a spokesperson on women, youth, and persons with disabilities. We are going to have the following speaker on the same theme. That will be B. Kagoro and he's from the Open Society Foundation. He's a managing director, MD of Programs Geographic Lead Africa.

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Thank you. Can you put our hands together for B.Kagoro.

Apologies, sir. [Laughter.]

Mr BRIAN KAGORO (MD: Programmes - Geographic Lead Africa:

(Open Society Foundation): There is no offence caused. Hon Chairperson, all protocols observed, women holds 23% of the jobs in technology in South Africa, which means, out of the 300 000 jobs in technology in South Africa, women holds less than 60 000. If you are coming to finance, women represent 52% of the labour force in finance but only holds 34% of the executive positions. So, the executive positions held by women in technology is 5%.

I raise this because I've been listening since morning to people talking about how finance and technology would be the solution. I am suggesting to you that you cannot undo the master's house, as Audre Lorde said, using the master's tools. What I have tried to do is just to demonstrate to you that beyond rhetoric and realisation, consciousness demands practical action. The point of practical action is to look at where power lies in finance and where power lies in technology because they will determine how we reshape our future imaginaries of emancipation and liberation.

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So, I wanted to base my own conversation on the erudite presentations made by all the previous speakers before, including an observation of how food insecurity, the health impacts of climate change, displacement, increased care burden, as well as increase in gender-based violence and unequal access to resources determines. I want to associate myself with my sister and comrade, Lebogang Pheku, who spoke earlier on how the South African economy, as all economies within this region, was founded on an acerbic antiblackness or at the very most, the idea that Africans had no sophisticated conceptions of economy no understanding of real capital, of how it is formed, distributed and redistributed and that the intermediate and the institutions within the economy were structured around elite interests and were controlled by elites, cartels, monopolies and oligopolies.

In this, was not only the juniorisation of all people, African or [Laughter.] non-white but also a particular juniorisation and infantilisation of women, which portrayed them as perpetual dependence of their husband, their fathers, their brothers, although long was abolished by the South African Constitution as perpetual minors. When you are explaining the history, the question of access to land, to credit, to

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technology and you are juxtaposing it against women's role as community leaders, as agricultural innovators and as policy changemakers, you must understand that the gendered formal and informal labour markets are the outcome of particular choices of who we are, what we want to be and what we want and ought to become.

So, when you are looking at the question of asset ownership and access to capital and credit and asking yourself, who holds the capital? Why do women who produce most of the food that we eat continue to hold capital precariously, continue to be subjected to unequal gender pay gap? You must actually understand that the nature of the formation of capital in this country was based, as Lebogang said, on undervaluing the resources whether it is land, gold, etc, and undervaluing labour, especially African labour and undervaluing African ideas so that even for Africans, the major problem is not that they can't think, it is that they have been taught not to respect their own ideas.

For women in particular, some have been taught to think through their less talented male counterparts. This essentially means that our problem is not just inappropriate

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and inadequate resources or antiquated policies or inadequate money or institutions. We need to transform mindsets and to do so quickly. To go beyond, see beyond, do beyond the limits of historically constructed black anti-economies. The idea that anything that you do when you go to a bank if you are black, the first assumption is that you will steal the money and do something stupid with it.

This idea of a perpetually stupid black person is translated, you can imagine when it is a construct of women. However, it also meant that idea that emerged from how we ourselves generate economies of value is not respected by our own. So, future economies, historical and current problems, untapped potential are in this milieu. In this milieu where we don't respect our own value. Let me give you small components that will constitute our imagination of the future and what Lebogang talked about reparations or return accountability of history of the present and of the future.

We need to heal from what has been done to us by others, we need to heal from what we have done to ourselves but we also need to heal from what we constantly continue to do to ourselves. What should be done if you are changing hearts and

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minds? There are 820 000 or thereabouts stokvels in South Africa. These stokvels generate savings of R50 billion annually. The membership of these stokvels, as we were told in the morning, is almost 60% women. There is no real symbiotic relationship established in our financial architecture between stokvels, pension funds and concessionary lending mechanisms.

So, in essence, these trust-based economies where people contribute and do repayments are not seen strictly speaking as part of South Africa's imagination of financial emancipation from donor dependency, from external dependency nor is it seen as the premise upon which women who build \$50 billion of their own money annually are not seen as bankable, as financeable? Come on! Who is missing what?

Now, if you take this into the question of women harnessing the power of stokvels and other for asset accumulation, for investment in productive ... [Inaudible.] ... for building local assets and for local economic development and ask yourself, how much you link this to South African women who are in the digital economy, who are involved in digital innovation and how much you link this to the limited number of women who are in leadership in the financial sector? However,

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the large number of South African women who constitute 52% are the financial services sector.

I want to suggest to you that co-operative banks perhaps do offer something you must think about, as well as the National Development Bank. Those funds that Maxwell Gomera talked about, the burial stokvels, the groceries stokvels, while these shop around for what is the best price for bulk buy, I want to suggest to you that the major problem we face in South Africa is the value chain of production, is not controlled anymore by women and yet the most expensive food in South Africa, whether you go to Pick n Pay or Woolworths, is organic food and organic food is what you grow in your villages. How can you grow it and you don't control it? Who has locked in the pricing? Who has locked in the supply chains and who has gone to sleep whilst this has been happening?

I want to suggest to you that I didn't come to you so that we can complain. If we will undo what has been done there is need to appreciate the hybrid financing to deal with the climate impacts that we talked about, needs to look at how to stimulate women in production in agriculture, women in the agro-based industries, how to stimulate other components women

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who are in health who provide services and women who are providing climate solutions. It also essentially means that women are the most effective managers of natural resources.

How do we deal with their leadership in this sector? I want to suggest to you that when you are considering multiple vulnerabilities, kindly consider multiple opportunities and capacities. I thank you.

Ms ZINGISWA PHYLLIS LOSI (President of COSATU): The hon Chairperson, hon Minister and Deputy Ministers, hon Members of both Houses of Parliament, Congress of Traditional Leaders of SA, Contralesa, Women's Wing, comrades and fellow South Africans.

Indeed, as a federation, we want to appreciate the P20 Women's Parliament for convening this important engagement on women's charter, not as a ceremonial document but as a living framework for justice.

We are meeting at a time when the world is in turmoil. From Palestine to Sudan, from Ukraine to Yemen, working class women suffer from the wars, climate disasters and economic

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instability, yet remain underrepresented in the spaces where decisions are made. This, Chairperson, is not only a foreign policy problem, but also a South African reality. And this reality demands that the Women's Charter be more than history; it must be the blueprint for advancing gender-sensitive workers' rights and eradicating the gendered poverty that has kept millions of women trapped in it.

Hon members, patriarchy is not only in our homes. It is built into our labour market, our economy and, yes, sometimes it is in our own diplomacy.

I think of Noma, a retail cashier, working ten hours in a shift for a mere R4 500 a month. She asked for maternity leave and was told she would be replaced if she takes one. And Maria, a domestic worker who boards two taxis each way to work and home, yet earns below the national minimum wage because her employer says that she is part of the family. That family gives her no pension, no medical aid, no sick leave. Or we can talk about uThandi, a nurse in a rural clinic doing the work of three people without proper equipment, then going home to cook, clean and help with homework.

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These are not soft issues; they are a daily reality of working-class women. They are the heart of the Women's Charter promises. From the shop floor to the global stage, Congress of SA Trade Unions, Cosatu, women have raised the same demands, and these are the issues that we raised.

We raise the issue of equal pay for work of equal value because the gender pay gap is theft from women's children. We raise the issue of paternity and maternity leave, without career penalties. We raise the issue of affordability and accessible childcare, as no mother must choose between her job and her child's safety. We're raising the issue of enforceable protection against workplace harassment in line with the International Labour Organisation, ILO, Convention No. 190. We're raising the issue of gender parity in decision-making because policies about women must be with women in the room.

So, let us also name the crisis plainly - poverty in South Africa is gendered. Women make up the majority of the unemployed. Those who are employed are concentrated in the lowest paid, most insecure sectors, which are domestic work, cleaning, retail, community care and farm work, amongst others. Women carry five times more unpaid care work than men

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- invisible in the gross domestic product, GDP, but essential for society's survival.

Covid-19 showed us what happens when crisis strikes. Women were the first to lose their jobs and the last to be rehired. In rural areas, the picture is harsher - no transport, no childcare, no safe workplaces. For a rural woman, getting to work can cost more than she earns on that day. And this is not a South African issue.

Globally, Chairperson, in trade talks, climate negotiations and peace processes, working class women are punished or are rather pushed to the margins, while decisions that shape their livelihoods are made without them.

Now, hon members, the Women's Charter cannot gather dust. Parliament must legislate its principles into daily lives and, as Cosatu, we are calling for mandatory gender pay audits for all large employers, with penalties for non-compliance. We're calling for strengthening of the Unemployment Insurance Fund, UIF, maternity benefits and equal paternity leave to promote childcare and shared giving. We're calling for funded

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public childcare and workplaces that have creches as part of the national infrastructure.

We're calling for the ratification and domestication of the ILO Convention No. 183 on maternity protection alongside Convention No. 190 on violence and harassment. We're calling for gender responsive procurement policies that prioritise women-owned enterprises.

We're calling for decent work that is guaranteed for the Expanded Public Works Programme, EPWP, and other public employment programmes, with real career pathways. We're calling for a universal basic income grant that is targeted at the unemployed, especially women. We're calling for a gender responsive national budget, ensuring that every rand that is spent advances equity.

We need Parliament to ensure that it capacitates the state to provide frontline public service that working-class women depend upon, be it reducing the teacher-learner or the nurse-doctor-patient ratio. Or, to train our SA Bureau of Standards, Sabs, members on the progressive amendments to our laws that are tackling gender-based violence or ensuring that we have

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sufficient labour inspectors who will help to enforce our labour laws.

We are calling for employers, society and Parliament, including ourselves as organised labour, that we too must be part of this journey and play our respective roles in making this Women's Charter a lived reality for uGogo in Mount Frere to the young student in the University of the Western Cape, UWC, or the female mine worker at the Kopanang mine.

Women and girls should no longer live in fear. In this country, South Africa, indeed we celebrate women because we have women trail blazers in diplomacy. We're talking about Mama, Getrude Shope and ambassador Mathu Joyini who have championed climate justice, trade equity and gender rights on the global stage. But the Women's Charter demands us to go further, Chairperson.

It demands us to democratise decision-making so that a farm worker from Limpopo or a nurse from Kwazulu-Natal has as much influence on policy as a corporate boardroom. Workers' rights and social justice are not just add-ons, but rather they are a foundation of peace, prosperity and sustainable development.

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Hon members, gender-sensitive workers' rights are not a favour; they are justice. The Women's Charter must live in every pay slip, creche, collective agreement and budget vote. Because when you uplift women, you uplift South Africa. And when you centre working-class women in power, you build a just future for all.

So, as I end Chairperson, the demands of the 1956 women and the Women's Charter will only be fulfilled when working-class women live lives of dignity with decent work, with a voice and with justice. I want to close with the words of the great "Mama" Maya Angelou when she said, and I quote,

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave. I rise.

Still, we rise. Still, we organise. Still, we lead. Still, we demand. To women, young and old, to people living with disabilities, to our queer community, you are the revolution. We see you. We need you. You are the future. And you are not just the future; you are the now. And we will not stop until every girl, every woman, every worker, every person living with disability, every member of the queer community in this

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country lives in freedom, dignity and equality. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Adv S SALIE: Hon Chair ...

Islamic:

As-salamu alaykum.

English:

Good afternoon to all. Many of the matters that was discussed touched our hearts in many ways in this just limited times. I want to discuss just one particular aspect, and that relates to lack of gender parity in political parties as well as the different spheres of government.

I would like to call on especially the women in Parliament who are duty-bound to legislate and create and amend laws. Please consider assistance in a Private Members Bills or urgent policies to ensure that on all levels of government that political parties ensure equal representation of women as well as decision-making on leadership positions. We need to ensure policies of accountability that prevent exploitation of women who often does more work but are not provided with the

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positions and are often overlooked. We still have patriarchal systems and mindsets and norms gatekeeping positions and lack of gender parity. Please use your power to effect the change that is needed and voices of equality represented on all workspaces. I thank you.

Ms ZOLISWA KOTA-MPEKO: Chairperson, I just want to say that every day, we are here to welcome the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa, Contralesa women ...

IsiXhosa:

... ndithi, ukwanda kwaliwa ngumthakathi.

English:

The issue that I wanted to raise was with regard to the issue of children. At the moment, we have a dilemma in South Africa. This forum, we cannot make it if we don't see children, especially small children, four years, six years, are abused and killed by their mothers, often behind doors. It's critical when we have a forum like this one to reflect on those issues because we don't know where we are going as a country. We are really in a dilemma. The other issue I wanted to raise was with regard to Mama Dora Tamana. One speaker said Mama Doro

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Tamana spoke about the pass issue. That's MEC Linga. Mama MEC Linga did not carry pass until she died. Dora Tamana is an icon. She said, whose children are killed like vultures, speak. You who have no homes, speak. You who have no creations, speak. That is Dora Tamana.

When I speak on this platform, I remember that the Women's Charter, it is a document that needs to be reviewed by all of us. I think the work that we have done there is critical for the gender issue with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 30 years. So, as we celebrate those moments, it's important to reflect to the Women's Charter because next year, we are celebrating 70 years for the Union Buildings. So, that Women's Charter must be part and parcel of what we review as we're going forward. I must accept the speech made by the President of the Congress of SA Trade Unions, Cosatu, because it's taking us forward. But I just want to say, Chairperson, I think these documents must be made available to the rest of us because it's like a Bible that we're putting together here today. Thanks.

Ms ZONKE VILAKAZI (Progressive Women's Movement): Chairperson, my name is Zonke Vilakazi. I am a member of the progressive

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women's movement, a member of Barsadi on Point. I'm a member of the Moving Spirits Book Club that has recently also launched a programme, Teen, Young Adult, TYA mental health for girls' programme. I'm a member of many women organizations because I believe if you are not invited to the table, you create your own table. My first question would be to the Deputy President Paul Mashatile ...

IsiZulu:

... angazi noma ngimuzwe kahle. Uthe ...

English:

... there are 42% women in Parliament. Maybe my question is why?

IsiZulu:

U-50-50 wamaphesenti uqala nini?

English:

... if the highest office does not have 50% or more women. And also, just propose to the leadership, if the President is male, then can the Deputy President be female? Because we know, even in political structures, if the President and the

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decisions are made between the highest levels, so in political structures, I would then further propose if the President is rather male, the Secretary is female. Because there are two tables, and those are the highest tables. And also, just to share maybe your story, because I mean, you have spoken greatly about the legal framework and policies are clear. They represent women.

Maybe just to add also, another important aspect is culture and environment, which to a certain extent ...

IsiZulu:

... ngibonge ...

English:

... Comrade Lulama who did know these things actually translate to a certain extent; the culture leads to how we internalise our societal norms. If I can tell you a story, maybe, personally, when my father died in 2017, he was a taxi owner. Patriarchal norms detected that even though my mum was there, my brother, who knew nothing about business, lead that business. That business failed dismally. And after my mum took over ...

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IsiZulu:

... sekusele amatekisi amabili.

English:

She was able to sustain and maintain the family. So many of those incidences that are happening, especially in South Africa, or in the African continent. Another one, the issue of biology, I didn't hear us speaking much. As women, we are going through menstruation, we are going through menopause, and the hormones that we go through when that is happening affect our mood, our concentration, our energy, everything that has to do with our emotions. But I do not see the workspace or the political space supporting us or being flexible to those. Also, the issue of ...

IsiZulu:

... ukuzikhethela ...

English:

... when we want to give birth or not or but there won't be a continuation of reproduction. Personally, I've got a C-Section, and because of that now, I'm unable to stand long, I'm unable to work in places like where I am standing. I do

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not see us speaking about those things. Because as much as we've got the framework and the policies issues, I don't see us speaking much on them. The issue of Statistic SA, they did say that women do pay well when it comes to, and also, again, my mum was a widow, when my dad passed on, those debts, and women pay well. So, as it fell for my mum, now they inherit that, and there's no consideration. So, she must now also take on that debt. They have got so many things here. But, yeah, I think I'll leave it there. Thank you, Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms S M Mokoena): If I can just ask that the questions be summarised in about a minute, because I would like to give more people a chance for questions to just go around. Thank you.

Ms NKATEKO CHAUKE (Programmes Director & Acting Executive Director | Oxfam South Africa): Chairperson, I would like to ride on the protocols observed earlier. My name is Nkateko Chauke. I'm the Interim Executive Director for Oxfam South Africa. Mine is in terms of how we use this platform, the Parliamentary 20, as a means of really amplifying that which we have been talking about today. But it's quite surprising to see how climate change comes later on in the discussion when

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it's such an intersectional issue. In essence, it's the overarching issue, it's the connective issue for all the things that we have talked about here, particularly as we imagine a care economy as a country.

One of the things that I'm also noting is that very much under-deliberated here is the issue around a gender-responsive humanitarian action plan as a country. How many of us have been to the Eastern Cape, in particular the District of Amathole, with the floods that we've seen recently? This is a question to the House. I've personally been there, seen a devastating impact that have affected 4 780 households and 1 300 households led by women, as well as 80% of a combination that includes children, but also babies who have been affected by this crisis.

Now, what have we missed here when, as a continent, we are looking at climate-induced hazards as something that's continuously affecting us and hard-hitting us the most, and yet we fail to be prepared? What Eastern Cape teaches us here is the importance of being prepared, one, but also responsive planning, two, and recovery. A lot of the interventions that we've seen, predominantly led by civil society organizations,

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including ourselves, has focused on dealing with the trauma aspects of humanitarian response. We have to prioritize this, and as an organization ourselves, Oxfam, we are in these spaces, the G20, leveraging it, happening for the first time on African soil, but also ensuring that we use other processes that have implementation mechanisms, such as the United Nations General Assembly, UNGA, to amplify these issues, and Conference of the Parties, COP30, as well.

So, our call, Chair, and also to the Members of Parliament, is to use this House to also amplify the importance of gender-responsive humanitarian action planning in the country but also having a deepened conversation at national level around improving leadership and coordination in humanitarian response. Thank you.

Ms M P KOBE: Chair, my name is Malebo Kobe. I am a member of the National Assembly. Before I begin with my submission, I'd really like the House to acknowledge the last speaker who was at the podium, Zingiswa Losi, for her vital role that she played while they were at the White House. I think that the work that she did really alleviated the issues when the President was visiting the President of the USA. I think you

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did a sterling work. You managed to highlight the issues that women face at such a global arena. Remove the conversation away from a very narrow interest. Thank you for that.

Malibongwe!

With regard to my submission, the Planning Commission came here and spoke about how we as women really dominate the informal sector. I just want us as the House to start reimagining a world where women not only dominate the economic value chain right at the end, or the political value chain right at the end, but maybe right at the beginning where the high profit margins, maybe we become owners of the economy, owners of factories of production and even in politics. We not only have the highest vote base as women, but we value find that political parties are putting women right at the top as political candidates to run. We are the ones who produce or we are the highest consumers of goods, we are the ones who are right incredibly doing sterling work at the tail-end of the value chain in terms of sales, in terms of marketing, and in terms of consuming products, but we are barely the owners of it. I would like the House to start reimagining how women can start becoming participants right at the beginning in terms of

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tipping the scales in the political or the economic value chain. Thank you, Chair.

Ms M L DUNJWA: Chair, for the benefit of those who were not here, I think it would be important for me to introduce myself. I am Lindela, Dunjwa. My comments is from ourselves as the multiparty women's caucus. We request all stakeholders, but making more emphasis to the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa, Contralesa, and the religious sector, that please interact with us on the most important issue of gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Propose on how as communities ... because it is not an issue of government only.

The issue of how best we do ensure that ... as much as we speak about a girl-child, we balance with the boy-child. And it is not a government issue, it is a societal matter. In the centre of that is parenting. Everybody that has spoken, from the Speaker, nobody has elevated the importance of parenting. In my view we are in this challenge as the country. At the time that we are parent, because we are all parents here. What is it that has gone wrong? The stakeholders must assist. Our responsibility is also to interact. they must also come to the party and say, Parliament, this is our view and come to our

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areas. I think the structures like Contralesa and the religious institutions are central in the issue of parenting. Thank you, Chair.

Ms THABILE NGWENYA (Student at UCT): Chair, I thank you for the opportunity. I'd like to start by saying good afternoon to the beautiful women in this room and all protocol observed. My name is Thabile Ngwenya. I'm a second-year economics and politics student at the University of Cape Town. I'm also a member of student parliament at the University of Cape Town. I'd like to start by saying the consequence of not being in politics or thinking you are too smart for politics is being led by people who do not represent you or people who sometimes lack the care and intellects to make real change.

My question to the House is: How do we simplify politics and how do we make politics desirable so that we can start hearing young girls say, I want to be a politician? Thank you.

Ms LINAH JIYANE (2nd Deputy President of DENOSA): Chairperson of the session, I'm Linah Jiyane, the second deputy president of the Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa, Denosa. Greetings to all the beautiful women in the House.

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Thank you very much for the speakers that have spoken to us. But there is one thing that I'm actually missing. I want to believe that the reason why I'm missing this thing is because as women we are going through a lot. The thing that I'm missing is substance abuse. It is something that I believe it affects all of us - civil society, government, religion, you name them.

As women, I want to believe that if you have children that are not on substance abuse, you are having neighbours that are on substance abuse. As a result, they affect you in one way or the other. Substance abuse is affecting us as a country in such a way that we have high teenage pregnancy rate, we have crime rate, violence and gangsterism. Let us look at how our schools are today. Let us also look at how our hospitals or our institutions are today. The 72 hours for the mentally ill patients is no longer responding to the needs because of the increased in high rate of mentally ill patients that are caused by substance abuse. If we were to build hospitals, how many hospitals would we build for the mentally ill patients? I want to believe that as women, we need to do something. We need to take it upon ourselves to make it a point that we fight substance abuse at its latter. It affects the young and

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the old today, it affects both males and females and it affects the young and the old like I indicated. Thank you very much, Chair.

Ms SIMBULELE GOSANI (United Congregational Church Of SA):
Presiding officer, I am Simbulele Gosani. I am representing the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa. Women do not form a society separate from men. We are one society. We can't be given the benefit of the doubt just because I am a woman totally ignoring her capabilities, academic achievements and her will power. Young women are capacitated and are improving every day. We are not emotional. That should not be an excuse for us not to lead. We have charters in place to pave the way for emancipation from the unfreedoms that still prevail.

The church's role in gender equality and socioeconomic issues spoken here today are multifaceted with varying perspectives or perspectives on its responsibilities and influence. Taking from the words of the minister earlier on of having an action driven approach in our inputs and the words of ...

IsiXhosa:

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... siza kwenza ntoni ...

English:

... issues affecting young people and women have come a broken record that repeats itself over and over again. I would advise that we should move away from rhetorics and act locally at grassroots level looking at the impact of what we deem as championing implementations and development.

I would also advise that every school-going child should have a copy of the Freedom Charter and Women's Charter that it be indoctrinated at an early age, making sure the future is aware of what is expected from them. They should not be relegated to only a political mission, but as a way of doing things. The daily struggles of women and young people, just to make their voices heard, should be an indication that something is wrong and we should not be comfortable with how we are doing things. Let's change how we do things as woman first before the other gender dares to minimise our games. All our approaches should be realistic, practical and inclusive in combating this epidemic. Thank you.

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Ms JOYCE SAKATI (Cosatu): Chairperson, good afternoon. My name is Joyce Sakati from the Congress of SA Trade Unions, Cosatu. I'm not going to be long because my president has already alluded to many things that we were supposed to talk about. The only thing that I want to highlight is: How possible for this Women's Parliament could be to bring us feedback, and not always receive complaints? We are doing these speeches, but we don't get any response. We need responses in the next one. When I check from the last one, some of the other things that we talked about last time we are still talking about them even now continuously, and we don't get the necessary responses that will make the difference when we go back to the masses. Thank you.

Rev TANELLE WELFF-DIXON (African Religious and Traditional Leaders Council): Chairperson and all protocols observed, I'm Chaplain Rev Tanelle Welff-Dixon on behalf of the African, Religious and Traditional Leaders Council, ARLC. I just want to reiterate the previous speakers in terms of social justice. There's no social justice without restorative justice. There has been a notion that we used the nongovernmental organisations, NGOs, and the religious sector to take up the responsibility of government where they have failed us in

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terms of the plight of the whistleblowers, the issue around substance abuse and gang violence, as women and mothers, the plight of women where they go, what needs to happen to them and how the religious sector gets involved without having to be funded for the programmes that are necessary to deal with social issues.

The issues that we deal with are social, economic, multisectoral, multidisciplinary, proactive and responsive solutions that we need to be able to participate in. Thank you.

Ms P MARAIS: Chairperson, I would like to speak to Cosatu - the things that the president was talking about. I was a shop steward from 1987 until 1994. The issues that she was discussing about. The creches at the workplace and the maternity leave, all those things were part of our agenda in 1987 already. To listen to the same things that we are still asking almost 14 years later is very disheartening.

Then we look at the mothers at 6:00 going to work in the morning with a small child to drop them at a creche, and then later come rushing from work because the creche is closing at

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17:00. I think these are the issues that we really need to address. It has been going on for a very long time. I've been a Cosatu member, and I've been a shop steward.

I think there's one thing that we are also missing in the local municipalities. In the local municipalities, the community areas where we have women that are single parent, the municipality doesn't consider them when it comes to rates for that house. Women are really struggling. We need to have a look in that thing.

The last thing I would like to say is about the old age homes. We have such a lot of old age homes, but they are too expensive for our people. When you are a parent, when you are a mother and you need to work to make sure that there is food on the table for your children, and you also have a parent that is disabled or a parent who had an accident or whose legs have been removed, these old age homes are so expensive for our older persons to go there. The SA Social Security Agency, Sassa, money is not enough. I think we should address that issue as well. Poverty and unemployment in our communities is making it difficult for our people to survive especially with the expensive water and electricity rates.

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The Congress of SA Trade Unions, Cosatu, has been fighting that battle. I was there, and it is still happening, and we still don't have answers. It is so disappointing because the ratio of women in Parliament is not what it's supposed to be. The ratio in leadership is not what it's supposed to be. I also feel that leadership need to be improved because woman cannot be the front runners in everything but they are always marginalised. Thank you, chairperson.

Ms MMABATHO MAKENA: Hon Chair and everyone, good afternoon. I think for me, it is a comment, but also a question. We speak about gender equality and women's empowerment and we need to know that it will never be achieved if we continue doing things the same way that we have done in the past 31 years. Now, we have got four years to go for the Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, for us to reach gender equality. Women have marched and are continuing marching even today on the same issues that have been raised since this morning, but there is no change.

For me, as I am sitting here, I feel this committee has so much power to change the trajectory in terms of women's empowerment and gender equality. This committee is what we are

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hoping for as civil society organisations, CSOs, to be a game changer going forward with regards to parenting. We know that South Africa has the highest number of female-headed households. We have got more than 7 million children who do not stay with their own fathers. So, as we speak about the burden of care on women, Parliament must also start asking the questions, especially in the public sector and in the legislatures and municipalities. Most of these men are working for government, and they are not paying maintenance for their children. As a result, you find women having to work two or three jobs because they have got children that they are taking care of.

There was a campaign some years ago of Isondlo where civil society organisations were asking government to start asking your employees how many of them have children, how many of them are paying maintenance. If not, it becomes a responsibility of the employer, being government and Parliament, to ensure that they help these women who are raising children with their fathers around but not taking care of them. Again, we are in a country where gender-based violence, GBV, is a pandemic and the questions that we continuously hear is, what is the Department of Women, Youth

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and Persons with Disabilities doing? But all the departments have the responsibility, according to the national strategic plan, NSP, to have programmes on GBV. It is not the department or the government that can start talking about GBV and eradicate GBV if they do not put money.

So, the portfolio committee, going forward, and the multi-party caucus as a group have got a responsibility of looking at the budgets before you pass the budget. We have got a country like Uganda who only provides an approved budget if you show targets in terms of gender, in terms of age and ability. So, those are the things that you can start cracking the whip around departments to say if you cannot show us where this money is going to, we are not going to pass your budget.

Again, I think the private sector is getting away with murder in South Africa and we are hoping that the portfolio committees ... we also call them. There is no way that the country can be at the bottom because they are not reaching the target and it is not about government, it is the private sector. So, we are hoping that the portfolio committees will also call the private sector to show how their employment practises and where their monies are going to. Many of them

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now have the corporate social investment projects, CSI, projects. Those CSI projects are run now by their families. They are avoiding paying tax, they have opened CSIs, but the CSI is going to their wives and children. So, they are not assisting us as a country to achieve the objectives.

Now the brothers that spoke about co-operative banks and organic food versus genetically modified organisms, GMO food. I think South Africa, it is time that we need to look at GMO foods. We cannot speak about climate change while we are having seeds that are not assisting the women in the village who have got small-scale farming and cannot even use their own seeds because the GMO seeds have been approved by Parliament. So, we are asking Parliament to go back to that GMO seeds that we have approved as South Africa because those have excluded women in the villages to have their own food because they need to have these seeds that can reproduce.

So, I want to thank you and mention that menstruation, only women menstruate and government must support women-owned businesses for menstrual products. Thank you very much.

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The CHAIRPERSON (Ms S M Mokoena): Thank you very much. And to now our final hand that I would allow. Apparently, we could not see her. It is our final hand of the day. If you could please speak up. Thank you.

Ms SAMUKELISIWE NDLOVU (CO-CHAIR. currently doing her MBA at the UCT Graduate School of Business): Hon Chair, my name is Samukelisiwe Ndlovu and I chair the Women in Business Organisation at the UCT GSB as an MBA candidate. Chair, I am going to propose a solution that comes with the question at the end. I think my solution is that, as Women in Business Organisation, we have been working on establishing young women from different societies and cutting off disparities between people in informal settlements and people who are high orders of government or high orders of private sectors where we allow them to meet in the same space and ask questions. Perhaps sometimes the issue is not really funds, but sometimes the issue is knowledge. Sometimes the issue is skill sets.

Beyond this working for us as an academic institution, I think I would like to scale this organisation for it to go far to our communities, because perhaps it might solve some of the issues and problems that have been raised by the House. Chair,

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my question to you is that, how do we then partner with the different governments to scale or to grow this organisation? I was funded by the Women in Business Organisation and I was the only black woman in class doing an MBA at the UCT GSB. Perhaps maybe we can assist other young black women out there in the townships to also grow and have the opportunity to sit in such engagements and grow. So, how can we partner with the government and with different organisations to scale this organisation so that we can assist young women from disadvantaged backgrounds? Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIRPERSON (Ms S M Mokoena): Thank you very much. That takes us to the end of the questions and comments. I would like to now take the opportunity to invite the House Chairperson of the National Assembly, hon Frolick, to show a token of appreciation to all our speakers today. I am going to call them one by one: Advocate Sepanya-Mogale, Ms Ndlunkulu Dlamini - I apologize if I am going to say that wrongly - Ms L Nare, followed by Ms Fuyani, Mr Kangoro, and Ms Z Losi. Thank you very much to our speakers. I think I speak on behalf of everyone. We say we are very thankful for the impactful presentations by all of you. I would now like to call hon

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James, our deputy chair of the Multiparty Women's Caucus, to close the session.

Ms D E JAMES: Thank you so much to the Acting Chairperson. It seems like we only started engaging and being ourselves closer to the end. What a day it has been. Allow me to introduce My name is Dereleen James. I am the deputy chairperson of the Multiparty Women's Caucus, and what an honour to be here today. Before I reflect and I give the closing remarks of today, and as we reflect on the brutal impact of gender-based violence, GBV, let us reference the murder of four-year-old Nikita from Eldorado Park, who is on the lips and minds of all South Africans, all mothers and all women, who was allegedly brutally raped repeatedly for hours, strangled, drowned, and assaulted last week Wednesday by her own dad. I would like us to have a moment because what has happened to Nikita is not an isolated incident in Eldorado Park. It is unfolding in all pockets of our country. And that is one of the most important reasons why we gathered here today. Let us have a moment of silence for the little Nikitas and the many other children who are trapped behind the doors of violence and destruction. Thank you so much.

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As women of this country, we are going through the most. Speaker of the National Assembly, hon Didiza, Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, hon Govender, House Chairperson, Committees and Public Participation, hon Frolick, Chairperson of the Multiparty Women's Caucus, hon Dunjwa, Members of Parliament, Esteemed Speakers, as we conclude today's session of the P20 Women's Parliament, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to each of you for your active participation, insightful contribution, and unwavering commitment to advancing gender equality. As we conclude the first day of this historic P20 Women's Parliament, we take note of your valuable insights shared, recommendations made, and focused deliberations engaged in.

Hon delegates, the Commission for Gender Equality has mandated us to embark on a series of intensive public participation initiatives to challenge harmful societal norms while honoring and respecting cultural identities. I want to say that again, honoring and respecting cultural identities. It was recommended that these campaigns should include targeted educational programs and community outreach, aiming to promote a culture of equality, respect, and understanding. We must

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hence reiterate the importance of engaging with communities and fostering dialogues to bring about lasting change. We further note the critical insights shared this morning by the Planning Commission, highlighting that mainstream macroeconomic policies often assume a gender-neutral economic posture. However, this assumption ignores the reality that fiscal trade and labour policies have a gender-differentiated impact - tongue twister - austerity measures and public cuts, for instance, inappropriately affect women, exacerbating existing inequalities. As legislators and stakeholders, we must acknowledge and address these challenges. We must work collectively to develop and implement policies that consider the unique needs and experiences of women, ensuring that our economic framework promotes inclusive growth, equality, and social justice. By prioritizing policies that benefit the most vulnerable and marginalized, we can create a more just and equitable society, as advanced by Oxfam South Africa in their input.

Hon members, as Parliament, we have been charged with the critical responsibility by the Finance and Fiscal Commission to ensure that gender commitments are translated into tangible fiscal commitments through the budget process. Given South

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Africa's persistent gender inequality, we must allocate resources in a way that addresses the unique needs and challenges faced by women and girls. By doing so, we will be able to bridge the gap between policy intentions and practical implementation, ultimately promoting greater equality and empowerment for all. We must also agree with assertions made by Oxfam South Africa. I quote the 2021 Women's Charter for Accelerated Development that "if it is not in the budget, it is not a priority." This statement underscores the critical importance of allocating resources to support gender equality and women's empowerment.

As we conclude, it is crucial that we identify tangible ways to correct the gender redistribution bias of growth and development. Let us work together to develop concrete strategies that promote gender responsive budgeting, economic empowerment, and social protection for women and girls. By doing so, we can ensure that our growth and development initiatives benefit everyone, particularly those who have been historically marginalized. Distinguished guests, once more, we thank you for gracing this event with your thoughtful insights and for empowering us as we head to the 2025 G20. Your

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contributions have undoubtedly enriched our discussions and broadened our perspectives.

As we move forward, let us ensure that women's voices are heard and consistently integrated into policy discourse. By amplifying their experiences, their needs, and their ideas, we can create more inclusive and equitable policies that benefit our society. Thank you. We are looking forward to hearing from you again tomorrow. The program starts at 8h30 tomorrow. We will be on time. Given the packaged agenda and our goal to conclude the P20 Women's Parliament at one o'clock tomorrow, we therefore kindly request that you arrive early and ready to engage. Let us work efficiently and effectively to maximize our time, ensuring that we thoroughly discuss and finalize key outcomes that will inform the gender transformation mandate and the agenda of the Multiparty Women's Caucus and Parliament as a whole. Thank you.

The Council adjourned at 17:01.