



REPORT 3 OF 2014

REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, PETITIONS AND MEMBERS' LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL OF THE 5TH MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE: WOMEN PARLIAMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa empowers the Legislative arm of the state, particularly the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature with responsibilities inclusive of Law-making and Executive Oversight. Section 118 indicates that the legislature in executing its responsibilities must involve the public. As part of the mechanism, noting that public involvement in the Legislative process must find expression in all committees and activities of the Legislature, the Legislature has established a Select Committee on public participation, petitions and members' legislative proposals hereinafter referred to as the Committee to intensify public involvement in the Legislative Activities.

The Committee, in line with its delegated function, presides over sectorial parliaments. One of the Sectorial Parliaments which the committee presided of is the Youth Parliament. The Legislature has therefore delegated the Committee to conduct a Women's Parliament.

1.1 THEME OF THE WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT

The Women's Parliament took place under the theme: "The Legislature empowering women, through oversight to improve the quality of their lives."

1.2 OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the event was

- (i) To do oversight on mainstreaming women issues into government business.
- (ii) To celebrate 20 years of democracy.
- (iii) To assess the extent to which government has implemented the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs).
- (iv) To add impetus to the Women's Month.

2. METHOD OF WORK

The project team conducted three districts workshops in preparation of the Women's Parliament and the Committee met on 25 June 2014 to discuss the state of readiness for Women's Parliament subsequently to that the Committee host Women's Parliament on the 15 August 2014 at Legislature Chambers in Mbombela. The event focused on drawing the women from three districts in the province namely, Ehlanzeni, Nkangala and Gert Sibande. Each district was represented in the debates and commissions.

The following organisations were identified as core to the business and these parameters were used to select participants:

- Organised women
- Women in business
- Women in politics
- Women from rural areas
- Members of the Executive
- Members of Legislature, and
- Members of the public

3. INPUTS BY DISTRICT EXECUTIVE MAYOR

Executive Mayor of Ehlanzeni District, Cllr L Shongwe made an input to the Women's Parliament, capturing the following:

- To fight the abuse of drugs and gender equality of women.
- To fight poverty facing women in rural areas.
- To improve maternal health and fight HIV and aids among women.
- Every woman must go and test for HIV, including with their children.
- Threatening Programmes that involve women.
- Women must teach their children on how to report service delivery issues.
- There is a need to build a better economy for South Africa.
- Women must establish co-operatives that are sustainable.

4. INPUTS DURING COMMISSIONS

During the Women's Parliament the commissions gave a report on the following issues:

4.1 Our achievement in 20 years of democracy

Women have a good story to tell: Our achievements in 20 years of democracy

4.1.1. Women and health

- Women have a good story to tell in that the number of women who have access to primary health care has increased.
- The number of women infected with HIV and Aids who can have access to Anti-Retroviral (ARVs) and other necessary medication has improved;
- Women infected with HIV can now give birth to healthy babies.
- Grants are also made available to women with HIV and Aids to allow them to get the necessary healthy food.

Challenge

The challenge is the lack of correct information available to women, especially to women living in deep rural places.

Recommendation

It is recommended that government must increase awareness campaigns about HIV/ and AIDS and places that are in more rural areas must be targeted.

4.1.2. Women and Housing Pre-1994

Women needed to be attached to men before they can have access to houses. Women have a good story to tell because since 1994 women can now benefit from the houses that are provided by the government. Women can also have access to bonded houses. Women no longer need to be attached to a man in order to have access to a house.

Challenges

- The fact that women now can easily have access to free housing; this has increased the number of foreign nationals entering the country, some illegally so.
- Women who are in the public service cannot have access to RDP houses and at times they cannot afford to buy bonded houses.

Recommendation

It is recommended that government must come up with a way to assist those women who are in the public service, who do not qualify for RDP houses and who cannot afford to buy bonded houses.

4.1.3. Women and Welfare

- It should be noted that before 1994, women were receiving government grants, but only once after two or three months.
- Since 1994, the number of women who can have access to grants has increased. These grants are received every month and the government increases the amount every year.

Recommendations

As women we recommend that the government must intervene and sort out all the irregularities that are experienced by other women when they go to the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA),

- It is also recommended that women must stand up and report all the irregularities that they experience when they go to SASSA.

4.1.3. Women and Land and Agriculture

- Women have a good story to tell because the number of women who own farms has increase since 1994.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that government reviews its policies to ensure that agricultural activities like food gardens are re-introduced in schools.

The government must also have more programmes to capacitate women who want to be part of the agricultural sector;

- The government must also ensure that bursaries are made available to students who want to study agriculture in schools and universities.

4.1.4. Women and the Economy

- Departments have implemented economic empowerment projects and programs with the intention to ensuring economic empowerment opportunities for women.

4.1.5. Women, Power and Decision-Making

- Before 1994, women had no access to political power and decision making positions.
- Women have a good story to tell because after 1994, the number of women in politics and in decision-making positions is increasing.
- Women appreciate the fact that 60% of the members of the Executive Council in the province are women.

Recommendation

The government must continue to encourage and monitor the appointment of women in senior management position to reach and maintain the 50% representation.

4.1.6. Women in Education

- Women have a good story to tell because the number of women accessing tertiary education is increasing since 1994.
- The number of women accessing ABET has also increased since 1994
- Government to make bursaries available to students more especially women who want to tap into the scarce skills.
- There is still a long way to go in ensuring that women tap into those sectors that were mostly dominated by men.

4.2 Women's Economic Empowerment: A case study of the Province

- Women are exploited by men and are used for fronting in businesses.
- Age limitations (18-35) in accessing funds disadvantage women
- Women lack skills in business and financial management
- Women have a pull down syndrome
- Lack of understanding of co-operatives
- Number of members in the co-operative is normally too high
- There is a lesser number of women taking opportunities availed by government.
- Women shy away from responsibilities and risks in employing specialists (professionals)
- They often want a support from male partners
- There is a pre-approval requisition of R300 000 minimum turnover before approval of the loan by the Department of Trade and Industry.
- Women empowerment departments are at urban areas
- Women SMME's do not invest on the little that they make

- The Department of Trade and Industry uses consultants who are not patient with the public.
- The Phezukomkhondo project must leave women with proper skills and they must be placed in government departments after the end of the contract.
- Police must be trained on how to take statement case of rape women and disable women.
- The rehabilitations centres are far away from the people.
- The disabled women must be employed not be depended on grants.
- Government must empower women to be independent.
- Police officers must be rotated from the different police stations.
- The law must be harsh on those people raping children.
- Women must not hide children living with disabilities and those children must be taken to disability care centres for proper care.

5. FINDINGS

- The areas that are under write in full, and then CRDP projects women are not benefiting instead people outside.
- Municipalities must run road show about programmes that will benefit women.

Recommendations

- The departments that are dealing with women empowerment should review the age requirements on the projects such as (EPWP).
- At least 30% tenders should set be aside for women who above 35 years and be localized.
- The Department of Trade and Industry, Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA) should strengthen their programmes on skills development such as business and financial management.

4.3. Eradicating gender based crime

- Trafficking of girls and women in Mpumalanga Province
- The threatening of boarder post.
- Rape cases are reported every day in different police stations.
- Fas-tracking of rape cases and rapists must get life sentences.
- The involvement of sign interpreters must be compulsory in courts.
- Women selling at schools must be monitored so that they do not sell drugs to learners.

The Committee made the following findings:

5.1 The age limitation to EPWP project is excluding women above the 35 years of age.

5.2 The Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency and the Department of Trade and Industry offices are not accessible to women in rural areas.

5.3 Women in rural areas are suffering because of network on their cellular phones and this is a hindrance on communication.

5.4 There is a lack of understanding by some women on how to form the co-operatives.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee made the following recommendations:

6.1 That government departments should consider all women that are unemployed to be involved in the EPWP project.

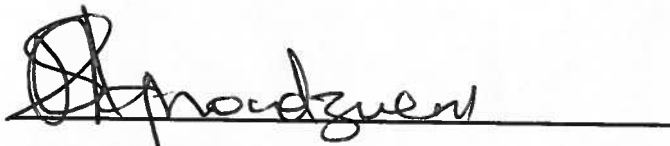
6.2 MEGA and DTI must have programmes that will make rural women have the access to them.

6.3 The Department of Communication must communicate with the network service providers to provide service to rural areas.

6. The Department of Finance must educate women on how to form the co-operatives.

7. CONCLUSION

The Chairperson of the Select Committee on Public Participation, Petitions and Members' Legislative Proposals thanked the Honourable Members and Legislature staff for their contribution to the success of the Women's Parliament of 2014. She also thanked the Office of the Premier, government departments, MECs, Executive Mayors and Speakers of the Local Municipalities for their meaningful participation in the Women's Parliament.



HON JL NGHONDZWANI

04/09/2015

DATE

**CHAIRPERSON: SELECT COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, PETITIONS AND MEMBERS
LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS**