

# **REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, PETITIONS AND MEMBERS' LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL ON WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT HELD ON 31 AUGUST 2018, EZIPHUNZINI COMMUNITY HALL**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa empowers the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature with a responsibility, in terms of section 118(1), to facilitate public involvement in legislative and other processes of the Legislature and its committees. It further directs the Legislature to conduct its business, sittings and its committees in open manner and in public.

As part of the mechanism, the Rules and Orders of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature establishes and empower the Select Committee on Public Participation, Petitions and Members' Legislative Proposals (the Committee) to facilitate Women's Parliament, among others, which provide a platform for discussing critical issues with women in the province.

The Committee tables this report, in terms of Rule 118 of the Rules and Orders, to give full account on the subsequent hosting of the 2018 Women Parliament at Eziphunzini Community Hall, Mkhondo Local Municipality on 31 August 2018.

## **2. THEME**

The theme for this year was "Improved socio-economic livelihood: Celebrating mama Sisulu Legacy".

## **3. THEMATIC AREAS**

Discussions and interaction in commissions were guided by the following approved thematic areas:

- 3.1. Women and economy.
- 3.2. The fight against gender based violence.
- 3.3. Women and Land.

#### **4. OBJECTIVES**

Within our broad strategic objective of increasing public involvement in processes of the Legislature and Petitions, the objectives of this Women parliament are to:

- Create an opportunity for women to engage with the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature on issues affecting them;
- Encourage the women participation, as key role players, in the oversight and public involvement processes of the Legislature.
- To do oversight on mainstreaming women issues into priorities of public and private sector

#### **5. METHOD OF WORK**

The Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature scheduled the hosting of Women Parliament to be held in Mkhondo Local Municipality on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2018. The Cross-Functional Task Team was then established and assigned a function to work on the hosting of the Women Parliament. The conceptualization of the sector parliament was left to the province of the Office of the Speaker since the program of the Legislature did not provide for committee meetings.

The mobilisation was targeting the attendance of three hundred (300) participants from all the three districts of the Province. The 300 participants were distributed proportionally represent of the political parties in the Legislature and include other women formations outside political parties.

To provide feedback to participants of last year's event and take them through the concept and planning, district workshops were conducted as follows:

- |                |                       |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 23 August 2018 | Nkangala District     |
| 27 August 2018 | Gert Sibande District |
| 24 August 2018 | Ehlanzeni District    |

The preparatory district workshops were attended by government departments that gave elaborate progress made on the implementation of issues of last year.

Commissions were conducted on 30 August 2018 to deliberate on the thematic areas thus creating tangible recommendations on each area.

## **6. WELCOMING MESSAGE**

Hon P Ngobeni made the opening address that welcomed all participants to the event. She contextualised the value of women engagements in the business of the Legislature and bringing a better life to the citizens of our country.

She shared with the participants the history of the struggle waged by women in dealing with the challenges of the country. In essence she laid the foundation for the Women's Parliament 2018 event.

## **7. MESSAGES OF SUPPORT**

### **7.1. Economic Freedom Fighters**

Ms A Nkosi delivered a message of support on behalf of the Economic Freedom Fighters. She encouraged women to take charge of the elections in 2019 by registering in the Voters Roll and ensuring that residential addresses are corrected

### **7.2. African National Congress**

Ms Gumede presented the message of support on behalf of the African National Congress. She acknowledged the liberation movement and its leaders for making it possible to have this type of platforms.

## **8. KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HON POLLY BOSHIELO**

MS BP Shiba, MEC for Social Development, in her address contextualised Mama Sisulu Centenary Celebration as follows, "the ANC's January 8 Statement 2018, declared among other things that this year, we will be celebrating the centenary years of the first democratically elected president of the country, Dr Nelson Mandela, and former ANCWL president, Albertina Nontsikelelo Sisulu, the undisputed stalwarts of the liberation struggle. They would be turning 100 this year.

Let me share some key historic facts about Mama Albertina Nosikelelo Sisulu whose contribution to the struggle for women's rights and the country's freedom is unquestionable, though inefficiently told.

Mama Albertina was instrumental in the formation of the ANC Women's league in 1948. This is actually where her political life began.

She was part of the Defiance Campaign of 1952 that lifted the ANC's Women's League into a new era of action. From this a new breed of women leaders emerged who would later form the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW). It aimed to establish a broad-based women's organisation that would not only fight for national liberation, but specifically address issues of gender inequality that were driven by the state against African women.

The ANCWL and FEDSAW Set up a joint working committee in 1956 to coordinate the women's anti-pass campaign. One of the strategic moves was to try and bypass the security forces planned clampdown on buses that would transport marchers to Pretoria. It was decided that the trains would be used as these would be harder to stop than busses, and Albertina was at the Phefeni train station at 2am on the 9th August 1956 buying and distributing tickets to women attending the march.

In a march that was coordinated to precision, a memorandum with more than 100 000 signatures was handed over to then Prime Minister JG Strijdom. They stood in silence for 30 minutes, thereafter chanted in unison, "Wathint' abafazi wathint' imbokodo!"

In 1958 Albertina was part of the 200 women who were arrested for protesting on Freedom Square in protest against then removals in Sophiatown. Nelson Mandela represented them in court and they were all acquitted.

After Walter Sisulu skipped bail and went underground in 1963, the security forces arrested Albertina, and she was the first woman to be arrested under the General Laws Amendment Act of 1963.

Tortured, taunted and bruised, she remained resolute.

MaSisulu was again arrested in 1983 charged under the Suppression of Communism Act for allegedly furthering the aims of the ANC, just before the launch of the United Democratic Front, whereat she was elected as co-president in absentia.

While on appeal for the 4-year sentence that was given to her, she was arrested again in 1985 with other UDF leaders and unionists and charged with treason. They were later acquitted for lack of evidence.

So, jail and activism became part of her life, but she never surrendered.

In 1987, referring to rent boycott in Soweto and women's role, she said: "*Women are the people who are going to relieve us from all this oppression and depression. The rent boycott that is happening in Soweto now is alive because of the women. It is the women who are on the street committees educating the people to stand up and protect each other.*"

After all the charges against her were dismissed and her passport released in 1987, MaSisulu led a delegation of UDF leaders to Europe and the United States. She met the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher and the American President, George Bush Snr.

This is the brief history of Nonsikelelo Albertina Sisulu. Like many other revolutionaries, the more they are tortured to brake their spirit, the more they become resilient and resolute.

Programme director, equipped with inspiration from Albertina Sisulu, we must be more inspired to develop committed activists to transform the lives of women. No one can deny the fact that poverty, inequality and unemployment affect women more than anybody else. Hence the women transformation agenda needs to be elevated now more than any other time before.

The incidences of women suppression at work, particularly, in the private sector, the incidences of rape and murder of women, the incidences of inter-spousal assault and brutality, and many others, are a clear indication that the road ahead is still rough and steep, and will need more than just an effort”.

The MEC shared practical measures in women must take in stimulating their economic inclusion in the mainstream. She discouraged the culture of flooding one service (eg catering) to the ignorance of the rest.

She encouraged women to play a meaningful role in the fight against poverty, gender-based violence and mainstreaming of the economy.

## **9. COMMISSIONS REPORTS AND DELIBERATIONS**

### **Women and Economy: Mainstreaming women into the economy of our country**

The commission noted that:

- The Province is implementing the Nkomazi Special Economic Zone (SEZ) to focus on logistics & Transport, Minerals & Energy, Agro-processing and, Automotive. It will create employment for many young people and women
- Pension pay-out points become a centre of economic activities for rural communities, thus moving them by SASSA to the post office has killed small businesses that benefitted in the previous.

- There seem to be no progress in skills development is programmes such as CWP & EPWP because beneficiaries are still found to be economically inactive after the end of the programme. They struggle to fruitfully use the skills they acquired
- Private-Public Sector Partnership does not assist women since the companies are focusing on maximising returns. Women end-up used as fronts instead of benefiting in the relationship.
- The commission acknowledged the set-asides that government has determined with a view to stimulate entrance of women into government spending and the economy at large. Where land forms an integral part of the economic factors, it is still not set aside for women.
- Grading of small business is not fair because it does not make distinction between a woman owned and other enterprises.
- Co-operatives are struggling to find business from government and they still have no land

### **Commission's Proposals**

The commission proposes that

- There must be an incubator for co-operatives owned by women in each district to support them in entering the mainstream of the economy.
- Private Public Sector Partnership must be reviewed so that the strategy is geared to accommodate women.
- Government must speed up the process of giving land to women for farming

## **FIGHT AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

The commission noted that:

- Lack of economic independence among women is a key driver of gender-based violence. It is hard for women who are economically dependent on their male partners to leave such abusive relationships.
- Unemployment in South Africa is high, many young men do not work and some are wholly dependent on women for survival. Some men feel that women have usurped the roles that were previously allocated to men, resulting in uncertainty, insecurity and anxiety.
- Alcohol abuse is linked with an increased risk of all forms of interpersonal violence, including gender-based violence.
- Substance abuse has been positively linked to gender-based violence in many studies.
- There is the culture of “Ukwendziswa” practiced which removes a woman rights to choice of spouse, but delegated as family decision. It perpetuates gender-based violence since it involves a young vulnerable woman.

### **Gender-based violence gives rise to**

- ✓ alcohol abuse as means to numb and forget the traumatic memories of gender-based violence
- ✓ suicidal ideations trying to escape from the abuse
- ✓ low self-esteem due to being powerless to defend yourself and being told that you are useless and stupid all the time.
- ✓ lack of confidence
- ✓ living in fear due to the violent nature of the relationship
- There is the culture of “ukungenwa” degrading a widow to status of being family asset with no right to choose a partner.
- Boys are raised with a mentality that says they are heroes, they don't cry and they must suppress their feelings and emulate their fathers in everything
- Families tend to be lenient to boys in terms of house rules compared to girls. E.g. Boys are allowed to stay out late whilst girls are not
- Cultures such as virginity testing, lobola seems to put more undue pressure on girls when boys don't have such.

- Boys from Initiation schools are noted to regress in terms of their behaviour and attitude. They leave homes non-smokers and drinkers, but they come back smoking and drinking
- Most gender-based violence and abuse happen at home witnessed by children
- It has been noted that teachers discourage students on certain subjects e.g. they discourage boys to take home economics, girls to take agriculture

### **Commission's Proposals**

#### **The commission proposes that:**

- Families must change their attitude and ways of raising boys so that it is the same for a girl. This will bring equality in their self-awareness and confidence
  - There must regulations from the government when these practices are performed
  - Initiation institutions must be regulated to ensure that the attitude and behaviour of boys who graduated does not deteriorate instead they become exemplary children in society.
  - There must be counselling to children especially boys who were exposed to domestic violence in order to ensure that they do not practice the same themselves.
  - There must be intense campaigns and awareness programs to share information with the general public on Lesbian, Gay and transgender communities
  - Learners must be encouraged to choose subjects without the traditional stereotype mind-set that excluded women from agriculture.



## **WOMEN AND LAND**

### **The commission noted that:**

- The latest audit on land ownership trends in the country, which look place last year, reflects that Africans constitute 79% of the population as individuals directly owning 1.2% of rural land. The land audit also shows that whites own 72% of total farm and agricultural holdings, coloureds own 15%, Indians own 5% and Africans 4%.
- Women own only 13% of farms and agricultural land, while men own 71%. The same land audit shows that erven ownership is also disproportionately controlled by men.
- The Commission for Gender Equality believes that the land ownership pattern is reflective of the conditions that prevailed during the pre-democratic era.
- The country is in a process of expropriating land without compensation, a process that must take cognisance of women in the redistribution thereof.
- There is a need to give titled deeds to owners of land thus enable them participation and stimulation of the country economy.
- There are farm evictions negatively affecting farm dwellers and farm labour tenants. This is done even by big companies
- Women are not actively involved, in their organised formations, in the land issues of our country.
- There is poor participation of woman in mining economic activities

### **Commission's Proposal:**

#### **The commission recommends that:**

- The department of Land affairs and agriculture must establish a programme focus on empowering woman in agriculture.
- The commission recommend that government must expropriate unused agricultural land and give it to woman in agriculture

- Government must assist women who wants to start co-operative and Non-Profit Organizations to enable them to participate in the agricultural sector and seize economic opportunities.
- The government must organise business training for woman to give them necessary skills to manage businesses.
- The commission calls for government to set aside budget to fund woman in agriculture and business.
- The commission calls for government to empower woman around opportunities in the mining sector and give necessary assistance to enable them to seize those opportunities
- Women have come up with the addition point that needs to be part of section 25 act. 30 percent of the land must accommodate women.

## **FINDINGS**

### **The Committee, after due deliberations, made the following findings:**

1. The Province is implementing the Nkomazi Special Economic Zone (SEZ) to create job and economic opportunities.
2. There are set-asides that government has determined with a view to stimulate entrance of women into government spending and the economy at large.
3. Women co-operatives are struggling to find business from government, at all spheres.
4. There is the cultures of "Ukwendziswa" and "ukungenwa" practiced in our society which remove a woman's rights to choice of spouse, but delegated as family decision. It perpetuates gender-based violence since it involves vulnerable woman.
5. Boys are raised with a mentality that says they are strong, heroes, they don't cry thus they must suppress their feelings and emulate their fathers in everything
6. Some families tend to be having different rules in the same household for boys and girls, evidenced by the fact that boys are allowed to stay out late whilst girls are not.
7. There are farm evictions negatively affecting farm dwellers and farm labour tenants. This is done even by big companies

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Department of Economic Development in implementing the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Nkomazi, must come up with a strategy to enable fifty percent (50%) participation of women in all the streams.
2. Department of Finance must develop and run a program to popularise set-asides that are there in our provincial government.
3. The Department of Economic Development must assist women to access government business, thus stimulate entrance of women into government spending and the economy at large.
4. The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Authorities must review modalities and principles of the cultures of “Ukwendziswa” and “ukungenwa” so that they don’t interfere with the constitutional rights of participants.
5. The Department of Social Development must develop and run programs that are aimed at sensitizing society about the danger of raising children in the traditional way of discriminating boys from girls.
6. The Office of the Premier must ensure that the current imbalance of land ownership must be corrected when land is redistributed. Women must own equal share as men.

## CONCLUSION

On behalf of the Select Committee, the chairperson wishes to thank all the Honourable Members of the Legislature, the Legislature support staff and all role players who contributed in the preparations towards the successful hosting of the 2018 Women's Parliament.

This Committee report on the 2018 Women Parliament is hereby tabled to the House with a request to adopt it with the recommendations for implementation by the respective Departments. A progress report must be tabled to the Committee by no later than 30 October 2018.



**HON JL THABETHE**  
**CHAIRPERSON: SELECT COMMITTEE ON**  
**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, PETITIONS AND MEMBERS'**  
**LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS**

20-09-2018  
**DATE**