



**Address by Cllr N B Chamane on the Occasion of the
Women's Day Celebration**

**19 August 2016 – 13h00
Umgeni Water**

- Programme Director,
- Umgeni Water management,
- Speakers in different topics,
- Stakeholders and partners,
- Umgeni Water employees,
- Distinguished guests and dignitaries,
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- All protocol observed,

Good afternoon!

Women are often referred to as the mothers of the nation. This reminds me of the popular isiZulu idiom ***wathinta abafazi wathinta imbokodo!*** which means ***you strike a woman, you strike a rock.***

The march to the Union Buildings by 20 000 South African women from different races 60 years ago against apartheid pass laws, sent a clear message that women wanted to see transformation in our country.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is very critical for us to understand where we come from as a nation, so that we get a better grasp of where we are, how far we have come and where we are going. We need to understand the significance of the struggle for women empowerment.

This month marks the height of the struggle for women liberation and signifies the contribution made by women towards the fight for freedom and democracy.

Programme Director, the empowerment of women in South Africa is about redressing the legacy of apartheid and colonialism; it's about the transformation of society, particularly the transformation of power relations between women, men, institutions and laws.

It is also about addressing gender oppression, sexism, racism and structural oppression, and creating a conducive environment for women to make a difference in society.

Twenty-two years into democracy, we have made great strides to facilitate women emancipation. Women have taken leadership roles in business, community and family life. In some homes, women are breadwinners and single parents. We have women who play significant leadership roles in society such as in community organisations, churches and government structures.

Inequality has been a challenge for a very long time. Therefore, our City is working hard towards women inclusion to the mainstream of the economy.

Programme Director, our Municipality is of the view that if women are given the opportunity and relevant training, they can emerge as powerful drivers of change and contributors to the economy.

It is for this reason that our Municipality has allocated R1.1 million towards women empowerment programmes for the 2016/17 financial year.

In the past three financial years from 2013 to 2015 alone, eThekweni Municipality has awarded over 2000 contracts to Women Owned Business Enterprises worth over R4 billion across different fields such as construction and engineering.

Programme Director, to ensure the continuity of women contributing to the economic development of eThekweni, the Women Empowerment Programme was initiated in eThekweni almost 10 years ago.

Since its inception, more than 620 women owned small, medium and micro enterprises have benefitted through training and mentorship. Some have received millions of rands worth of business opportunities resulting in the creation of hundreds of jobs. Some of these women have gone on to trade internationally while others have seen their businesses expand.

Going forward, to continue driving skills development, our City will provide three months information and communications technology training for 120 women starting from this month. This will offer computer skills lessons in order to initiate innovation and growth among businesses.

Furthermore, our City, working with strategic corporate partners will be launching a Women in Business mentorship programme this month targeting 15 women who will be provided guidance on their businesses for the next six months. I can therefore confidently say that our Municipality will continue to support and invest in women empowerment programmes and provide them with the relevant skills and support.

Women are nation builders and pillars of society. We have the ability to hold families together and we make sure that our families never go to bed on empty stomachs despite challenges that we face.

Siyabonga Mbokodo! Asiyibambe ishisa siqhubeke sakhe isizwe!

Thank you!