



WOMEN'S MONTH KEY MESSAGES

BRIEF:

South Africa will commemorate the National Women's Day on 9 August 2017 at Galeshewe, Kimberley in the Northern Cape under the theme: ***"The Year of OR Tambo: Women United in Moving South Africa Forward"***.

The 2017 National Women's Day celebrations pay tribute to women and their role in the liberation struggle. This year's celebration coincides with the centenary of struggle icon OR Tambo.

OR Tambo was a strong advocate for gender equality. During the Conference of the Women in Luanda in 1981, he said: "The mobilisation of women is the task, not only of women alone, or of men alone, but of all of us, men and women alike, comrades in struggle. The mobilisation of the people into active resistance and struggle for liberation demands the energies of women no less than of men."

He added: "A system based on the exploitation of man-by-man can in no way avoid the exploitation of women by the male members of society. There is therefore no way in which women in general can liberate themselves without fighting to the end the exploitation of man by man, both as a concept and as a social system."

Women's Month takes place against a backdrop of an increase in the levels of violence and brutality against women and children in our society. Since the start of the year, a number of incidents of violence and women abuse have made headlines.

This year's event also takes place against a backdrop of a poor performing economy. Invariably, women will be most affected by the economic decline and bear the brunt of its resultant negative economic and social effects.

The 2017 celebrations will build on the announcements made by President Zuma with regard to women economic emancipation; addressing issues of gender based violence and give more impetus to government and society's efforts in this regard.

This year marks the 61st anniversary of the Women's March to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956. On that day up to 20 000 women of all races, class and religious persuasions protested against the extension of Pass Laws. The march was a turning point in the role of women in the struggle for freedom and our society at large.

The national celebrations will also include the National Dialogues on Violence against Women to help combat the continued scourge of violent attacks and abuse against women. The dialogues are a platform for deepening democracy whilst ensuring safer and crime-free communities especially for women and children.

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
<i>During August we honour the women of our nation.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We celebrate Women’s Month as a tribute to women in the liberation struggle. • The women of 1956 set the tone for gender equality and empowerment in a democratic South Africa. • Through their brave actions South African women have taken their rightful place in parliament, government and civil society. • Through their sacrifices we now live in a country which recognises women as equal citizens, with equal rights and responsibilities. • The August month will also see us creating platforms to rejuvenate society’s efforts towards women’s social and economic emancipation.
<i>Together we can fight abuse against women and children.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All South Africans must act to prevent abuse and to ensure a safer society for women and children. • We can and must do more to prevent violence against women, support survivors of abuse and bring perpetrators to justice. • Through our collective efforts we can create greater awareness; reduce the number of sexual offences and attacks on women and children. • Government alone cannot eradicate this scourge and calls on all sectors to partner with it in creating safer communities. • Gender equality is one of the basic principle and foundation in our constitution.
<i>Join the dialogue to end violence against women and children.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Dialogues will bring the scourge of violence against women and children to the fore. • This is an opportunity to share personal stories and find collective solutions to end the violence and abuse in communities. • The dialogues will include public education and awareness raising. • All issues that might be the causes of or contribute to violence will be unravelled through the dialogues.
<i>Government is advancing the empowerment of women</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through our policies we are ensuring the full participation of women in the economy and driving an inclusive economy. • The promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment is central to our efforts to combat poverty and stimulate sustainable development. • Government introduced the Gender Equality Bill to accelerate the empowerment of women and attain 50/50 gender parity for the country. • Empowerment of women is everyone’s business and needs the support of government, business, labour and civil society. • Let us all work to remove the barriers which prevent women from entering and thriving in the labour market.

KEY MESSAGES	SUPPORTING STATEMENTS
<i>Gender equality is at the heart of our transformation.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The South African National Policy Framework for Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality ensures that gender equality is at the centre of our transformation process. • It assists to eradicate the legacy of apartheid and to transform the rest of society, particularly the transformation of power relations between women and men. • We are working to overcome the triple challenges of inequality, unemployment and poverty which contribute to the root causes of violence against women.
<i>South Africa has made great strides to advance women in our country.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the last 23 years of democracy great strides have been made to ensure that women enjoy the same rights as their male counterparts in education, employment, property, inheritance and justice. • It includes greater representation in politics, the judiciary, corporate boards and an overall improvements in livelihoods for women and mothers in our rural areas. • South Africa has increased the access of girls in education, particular at a primary and early childhood development level. • Legislation to create an enabling environment for women, and to improve their participation in the economy have been enacted.