



**Welcoming address by Cllr Zama Sokhabase on occasion
SALGA Women Commission
04 February 2017
Olive Convention Centre, Durban**

Programme Director,
Leadership of SALGA
Councilors
Honoured guests
Officials
All political parties represented
Members of the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen
Sanibonani,

It was President Tata Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela who said (I quote) : "It is vitally important that all structures of Government, including the President himself, should understand this fully that freedom cannot be achieved unless the women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression." (close quote)

Women struggles are common and they cut across race, class including political parties. It is important for women to stand together irrespective of race and political party.

We must not allow petty political battles including intrapolitical party factional battles to divide us.

Programme Director,

It is important to acknowledge that a lot has been done and there is still more that can be achieved. The world and our country has progressed significantly, most especially in the past 22 years. We have made much progress since the coming into being of a democratic government.

Before the dawn of democracy in 1994, women in parliament accounted for a mere 2,7 percent. But under the ANC , this has changed significantly and it could have been better if all parties had adopted 50/50 policy.

Currently women ministers comprise 41% of the cabinet.

Women deputy ministers make up 47% of the total number of deputy ministers.

There is a 41% representation of women in the National Assembly.

According to UN Women, in absolute numbers, South Africa has the largest number of women ministers at 15.

Of course, the UN Women is headed by one of our very own, the former Deputy President, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

South Africa has produced a number of outstanding women leaders.

1. Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma was appointed as the first woman to chair the African Union Commission;
2. Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, a former minister, is the African Development Bank's Special Gender Envoy;
3. Professor Rashida Manjoo is the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against women, its causes and consequences;
4. and Judge Navi Pillay is the High Commissioner for Human Rights and formerly a judge in the International Criminal Court (ICC).

This is an indication of the impact that women in decision-making have in winning the trust and confidence of citizens in South Africa, on the continent and internationally.

Also Durban for the first time in history has a woman mayor and ANC region which is a biggest in the party is led by woman. It is important that we as women, support our female councilors who have been placed at such position. Our Metro, which is the only Metro in eThekweni is has a woman mayor, woman deputy mayor and woman chief with three women serving at the EXCO level.

We welcome these changes but we need this to filter down to ward level and administration.

Programme Director,

In 2015 the United Nations committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable Development Goal 5 is aimed at 'Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.'

In 46 of the world's countries women now occupy at least 30 percent of the seats in at least one chamber of the national parliament.

Among the targets for Goal 5 are:

"Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.

Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels."

Our call for a woman president is also informed by such resolution. We are not just saying we want a woman president because of gender but because we believe we have capable women to lead us. We have seen woman leading as councilors, Mayors, Premiers and Ministers therefore it is high time that we have a woman President. This is our view and we think it should be supported by women from all political parties.

Councillors,

With those few words, you are all welcome to our warm and beautiful city of Durban. Siyabonga.