

## **Men's Seminar Speaking Notes for Mayor Zandile Gumede**

**28 June 2017 – Durban**

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Programme Director,

Councillors,

City manager,

Senior Managers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sanibonani,

I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak to you on this important topic of No to women abuse. It is an important and most sensitive topic to talk about as a woman because we have experience the abuse directly or indirectly. We have experience abuse from men at work, home and in the community.

Yesterday, when we introduced a topic of a woman president we were told that we are not ready. And now that we have reintroduced it to our national agenda – our woman preferred candidate is made to feel inferior because she is simple a woman. We are now told of her x-husband, a story of Hilary and Bill Clinton is now thrown all over.

It is important that we do away with patriarchy in society. The struggle for total emancipation of women has not yet been achieved. However, the ANC government has made progress and we must appreciate that. The biggest challenge that we need to deal with is the abuse – be it emotional or physical abuse.

Programme Director,

No South African woman will disagree, that we have made great progresses in addressing the inequalities within our society especially between women and men since 1994. Prior to our first democratic elections, black women were oppressed for their gender, race and class.

The social composition of the South African society basically classified women as second class citizens.

Worst still the black women had to also endure the injustices of racial discrimination that was perpetrated by the Apartheid system.

At a high-level event on Women's Access to Justice in New York in 2012, President Jacob Zuma highlighted the hardships of women during apartheid. "Women were more likely to have less access to basic services, to earn the lowest wages or not find employment or promotions and were likely to be less treated seriously when going to law enforcement agencies or the courts for redress," he said.

Today, we look back with pride on the role women played in eradicating these inequalities. The history of South African freedom struggles reflects the active participation of women alongside their male counterparts and in some cases women themselves taking the lead.

For instance, in 1913 about 600 women led by Charlotte Maxeke marched to the Bloemfontein City Council to protest the carrying of passes by women which they felt undermined their basic human rights. Again on the 9 August 1956 more than 20 000 women marched against the discriminatory pass laws that restricted the movement of black people.

However, the fight for gender equality in South Africa remains "unfinished business" with women still lagging behind in education, literacy, employment and financial standing.

According to Statistics SA : "Women experience far higher unemployment, they experience a far lower participation rate [in the economy]." Our women die poor with nothing for their children.

This all happens in a country that has about 55 million people, 51.4 per cent are women while 48.6 per cent are men. This is the reason we believe that women should be priorities in terms of employment and economic opportunities. I still don't understand those who deny that our

economy is the hands of white males and it is monopolised. We do have a white monopoly capital and our economic structure is in the hands of men.

On a positive note, it however indicated that women are gradually advancing in the corporate environment. Since 2001 the number of female managers increased from 20 per cent to 30 per cent. However our "boardrooms are still male-dominated". The JSE is still male dominated.

Although South Africa has made great advances over the last 20 years, we need to accelerate gender transformation in our society.

Gender equality in South Africa will ensure that we advance as a society. The National Development Plan (NDP), emphasises that transformation of the economy should involve the active participation and empowerment of women.

The plan prioritises the safety and protection of women and children. Sadly, too often horrific stories of gender violence and so-called corrective rape make headlines. Women who are lesbians are subjected to rape in the name of correction. Such acts that treat women as objects do not belong in our free society. These acts undermine the gains that we have made as a country.

We fully understand that for decades men, were abused by apartheid system. They were forced to be violence rather than to be romantic. Men use violence and fear in order to rule over women in abusive communities.

Program Director,

I would like to encourage our men to change and be completely new. They must accept to be led by women in society. They must treat women with respect irrespective of the position they hold in society. They must begin to embrace women Pastors, mayors and a notion of a woman president.

Real men must men-up and accept the reality that this country will be led by a women today and tomorrow it will be led by your daughters. When you raise your daughter or a baby girl you must give her a presidential treatment because you are raising a president.

Gender Equity is the process of allocating resources, programs and decision-making fairly to both males and females. This requires ensuring that everyone has access to a full range of opportunities to achieve the social, psychological and physical benefits that come from participating and leading in sport, careers and physical activity. It does not necessarily mean making the same programs and facilities available to both males and females. Gender equity requires that girls and women be provided with a full range of activity and program choices that meet their needs, interests and experiences.