



SAWID/GENDER LINKS SADC GENDER PROTOCOL ALLIANCE PROVINCIAL DIALOGUES 2013

WOMEN DEMAND ACTION NOW!



We, the women of South Africa, from all walks of life and political persuasions, representing the diversity and geographic spread of our country, both urban and rural, took part in discussions in nine provinces during Women's Month in August 2013. We hereby express our wish to infuse the remaining two years until the targets of the **SADC Protocol on Gender and Development** are due to be met and seven years of the **African Decade on Women** with meaningful impact in the affairs of our country and our continent. We declare our intention to inspire the development agenda of South Africa, including Vision 2030, with the textures, rhythms and patterns of women's perspectives and experiences.

Gains

Women's Charter: We recall the collaborative gains of our mothers and sisters whom in 1954, with the drafting of the Women's Charter, and again in 1994, with the proclamation of the Women's Charter for Effective Equality, outlined the legislative, political, social, educational and societal changes necessary to end women's minority status.

The Constitution and gender machinery: We acknowledge and applaud the accomplishment of many of the goals that women fought for, including the move

to a non-sexist, non-racial and democratic political dispensation, the removal of discriminatory laws and the establishment of a National Gender Machinery that has evolved into a Ministry for Women, Children and Persons with Disability, with a dedicated budget and a mandate for oversight and implementation of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Legal framework: We laud the solid legal framework that has been put into place to begin to address the injustices perpetrated against our people during apartheid and colonialism, but caution that the skeleton of good intentions needs to be fleshed out through consistent implementation and effective monitoring and evaluation.

Demands

The family: The systematic dismantling of the family during our apartheid past is one of the greatest injustices perpetrated against men, women and children. We urge that immediate attention and budgets be allocated to eradicate the lingering legacy of migrant labour, influx control, and racism. We further demand that programmes of national healing and reconciliation be created at every level, to promote reconciliation between all people and to ensure collective national healing and social cohesion. Budgets and training courses need to be made available as a matter of urgency to stem the tide of inadequate parenting, teenage pregnancies, disengaged fathers and family dissolution, and to create structures to strengthen and monitor the attainment of a basket of basic goods and services for a dignified family life.

Custom, culture and tradition: Despite our progressive Constitution, women remain forever minors under patriarchy, custom and tradition. This minority status of women, exemplified in the treatment of widows, some inheritance rights and patriarchal customs like *ukuthwala* and *ukungena*, create obstacles to women's holistic development. We demand that, in accordance with the Constitution, women's rights never be compromised by any custom, tradition or practise.

Religion: All religions, while promoting equality in their value system, also promote patriarchal norms in many of their practices, and have remained silent on the violation of women's rights. We demand that religious leaders speak out in support of women's rights, and that all religions practise what they preach.

Gender violence: Incest, rape, gang-rape and the depraved level of violence against women and children in South Africa are indications of dire fault-lines in our society. The sexualisation of young girls and the fact that women of all ages are constantly preyed upon by men and pressurised into exchanging sex for jobs and positions is cause for great concern. This diminishes women's power and individual agency. These flagrant human rights violations continue with impunity and with inadequate political, social and financial response. We demand an end to gender violence NOW!

Decision-making: Unequal decision-making and patriarchal customs still prevent many women from benefitting from the advantages, responsibilities and opportunities that a mature and democratic society should offer to its people. Women demand shared responsibility and shared decision-making, in all areas of decision-making including the home, the private sector, the political sphere, the media, and the judiciary. We demand the adoption of the **Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill**, and the translation of this into legislated quotas for the forthcoming 2014 elections that should see South Africa close all gender gaps in political decision-making, and proceed to close this gap in all other areas of decision-making as well.

Education: Women demand that their perspectives and experiences be embedded in curriculums, development and policy-making, and that women be empowered to participate in designing and implementing sustainable and grassroots skills development programmes to meet their needs and the needs of their country, continent and planet.

Developing human capital: The well-being of all the people of our land, including their physical and mental health, their access to quality and relevant education, skills training and personal development, and the health of the family unit, should be the major consideration of all our policies, programmes and interventions. We demand that 15% of the proposed R827 billion national infrastructure budget for the next three years be made available for human capital development, to mine the treasures of human potential and possibility.

Early childhood development: We demand that the primary responsibility that women have for maintaining the household and the community be recognised in the private and public sector through publicly funded and quality Early Childcare Development programmes and child care to allow the active participation of women in society and in our economy.

Economic justice: The reigning economic system creates growing inequality, and apports unearned profit and undeserved benefit to a small minority, while the majority of inhabitants of our country languish in poverty, underdevelopment and inequality. This especially affects women who constitute the majority of the poor, the dispossessed and the unemployed. We demand that the world be developed equally; that human development be prioritised and that the basic needs of individuals for meaningful and dignified work be met. We demand an end to poverty through individual and family development, early childhood development, adequate nutrition and food security. We demand that the unpaid and often invisible contributions of women to the economy be recognised, accounted for and professionalised.

Social services: In accordance with Article Six of the Women's Charter for Effective Equality, women demand affordable, development-orientated social services that reach the home, and which includes emotional counselling, family counselling, and attending to special needs of the disabled, the elderly, single parents and rural women.

Service delivery: Almost twenty years after we achieved democracy and moved away from a colonial and apartheid past that severely compromised human dignity and development, South Africa is still bedevilled by racism, unequal growth, a lack of healing and reconciliation, political patronage and cadre-deployment. Lack of implementation, inadequate service delivery, lack of appropriate, life-enhancing skills, lack of meaningful employment, wasteful duplication and bureaucratic inertia hamper development efforts. We demand gender-responsive delivery of services, including access to water, electricity, sanitation and waste removal.

Climate justice: The world's economy, using today's technologies, is already exceeding several of the earth's "planetary boundaries". Many key ecosystems essential for human and societal wellbeing are being threatened or destroyed. Climate change is everywhere present in rising global temperatures, extreme weather events and the acidification of the oceans, and threatens the food security and survival of both urban and rural populations. The women of South Africa demand gender-responsive approaches to sustainable development, including being trained in alternative and green technologies.

The women's movement: We seek to build and strengthen the women's movement and to advocate a common women's agenda for sustainable development, productive self-reliance and meaningful peace amongst nations, in our communities and in our homes.

The post-2015 SADC and Global Agenda: We seek to gather and embed women's and Africa's unique contributions to the global development agenda through enhanced cooperation and coordination between people, organisations and government structures.. We call on our governments to redouble their efforts to achieve the 28 targets of the SADC Gender Protocol by 2015, and to lead global debates for a post 2015 agenda that prioritises voice, choice and agency for all the women of the world.

Malibongwe!

Yes we can achieve gender equality!

Yes we must end gender violence!



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