

**ADDRESS BY GAUTENG PREMIER DAVID MAKHURA ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT SUMMIT AND EXPO AT NASREC.**

**8 March 2017**

Programme Director, MEC Faith Mazibuko;

Ministers and MECs;

Leaders of women's organisations;

Business leaders;

Representatives of civil society;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Happy International Women's Day! Malibongwe igama lamakhosikazi! *Mangoana otshwara thipa ka bohaleng!*

Thank you for the opportunity to address this first of its kind International Women's Day Women Economic Empowerment Summit and Expo.

I want to announce that during August month we will give recognition awards to women to acknowledge excellence in business, government and civil society. Be ready and prepare for the Premier's Women's Excellence Awards in August.

Mothers, sisters and daughters of our nation, the economic emancipation and empowerment of women is the critical mission of the ANC-led administration I have the honour to lead.

I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate that as the ANC-led provincial administration, we are serious about the emancipation, especially the economic emancipation of women. This is a task that we are tackling with consistency, rigour and urgency, working together with women and their organisations.

Programme Director, out of a population of more than 13.3 million people who call Gauteng their home, more than 6.5 million are women. Women therefore will continue to remain at the epicentre of our on-going efforts to build a better Gauteng for all.

We remain steely in our determination to ensuring that women become among the major drivers and beneficiaries of our programme for radical social and economic transformation.

To us a transformed, modernised and reindustrialised Gauteng City Region must translate into a significant, qualitative improvement in the lives and conditions of the ordinary women of Gauteng.

We depart from the understanding that women's rights are human rights; that nothing must be done for women without them; that the empowerment of women is not an act of charity but a fundamental necessity of every society's development; that progress of every nation must be measured in relation to the role and place of women; and finally that the quality of every civilization must be assessed in terms of taking for the most vulnerable and weak.

We are also conscious of the significant benefits that gender equality can bring in terms of growing and diversifying our economy, alleviating poverty as well as in building stable and resilient communities. In this regard the National Development Plan Vision 2030 is instructive.

The NDP reminds us that the developmental goals we have set for ourselves can only be achieved if we draw on the energies of all our people, (and) grow an inclusive economy. Consequently, unleashing the limitless potential of women to contribute towards building our economy and society remains a strategic imperative.

We have given MEC Mazibuko the task of coordinating the women sector on behalf of our provincial government.

In our Cabinet, there are five women and five men who are MECs. We have seven women HODs out of fourteen Departments.

In the Premier's Economic Advisory Panel announced during the SOPA on 20th February 2017, nine out of sixteen panelists are women.

With regard empowering women businesses, we spend R18 billion of our R46 billion goods and services budget on 5361 women owned businesses.

All this is still not enough. Our goal is now to increase our target for both women and township enterprise from 30% to 50% by 2020.

Programme Director, this Summit is not the first occasion that we as the provincial government are engaging with the women of our province. In August of 2014, a few months after assuming office, we engaged with the women of Gauteng from all walks of life and from all sectors of our society.

We used that occasion to present to the women of Gauteng our programme for Transformation, Modernization and Reindustrialisation. We restated our commitment to ensuring that women become among the primary drivers and beneficiaries of a socially and economically inclusive Gauteng City Region that is transformed, modernised and reindustrialised.

Once again in August 2015, as part of building up to the 60th anniversary of the 1956 Women's March, we convened a dialogue with the women of our province at the iconic Women's Gaol at the Constitution Hill where we reported back on progress in the implementation of our plans and programmes.

On that occasion, we re-assured the women of Gauteng that to us the struggle for gender equality and women emancipation is not an act of charity, nor the result of a humanitarian or compassionate position, but rather a fundamental necessity, required to move our society forward in a decisive way.

We listened to the women of our province as they committed themselves to working with their government and the rest of society towards accelerating women emancipation and empowerment.

Last year as part of commemorating Women's Month as well as the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1956 women's march to the Union Building, we convened Ntirhisano focusing specifically on young women. This we did because we had heard the cries of the young women of Gauteng who indicated to us that they have specific needs, dreams and aspirations that are not necessarily attended to when we engage women broadly.

I wish to assure the young women of Gauteng that we remain committed to working with them to address their unique problems.

Programme Director as we in this Summit join the rest of the world in celebrating International Women's Day, we do so to shine the spotlight on women's achievements across the nations of the world.

On this occasion we reiterate that nothing is more troubling and nothing keeps us awake at night than the atrocious acts of gender-based violence perpetrated against millions of women and girl children, caused mainly by the continued exclusion of women from participating in the mainstream of our economy.

As we do this, let us be reminded that we too in South Africa have made great strides since 1994 to improve the status of women in our country. As a result of deliberate interventions, by successive ANC governments, more and more women today occupy positions of influence in the public and private sectors.

According to the 2016 Global Gender Gap Report published by the World Economic Forum, South Africa ranked number 13 out of 144 countries when it came to the political empowerment of women and number 63 when it comes to women economic participation and opportunity.

We in the Gauteng City Region have also registered some progress in advancing gender equality, women empowerment and emancipation. We are however the first to admit that a lot more still needs to be done.

Our major challenge remains the availability of reliable data through which we can be able to measure the impact of our interventions on women empowerment and emancipation. However, we are intervening decisively to deal with this problem. This is particularly crucial because our government hold high the principle of evidence based decision and policy making.

Our programmes such as the Township Economy Revitalisation, Tshepo 500 000, which we are now upscaling to Tshepo One Million, are among the key interventions aimed at advancing women emancipation and empowerment.

Over the past two and half years we have created more than 108 000 employment opportunities for women through our public employment programmes and have linked 2 600 women to economic opportunities.

We currently provide almost 300 000 learners with dignity packs. Going forward, over the next two years we will reach one million girls with dignity packs so that they stay at school and complete Grade 12.

Our Gauteng City Region Academy bursaries provide 4000 students with university education, 2177 of whom are women.

In my personal capacity, I run a Trust that provide bursaries to 20 university students, 13 of whom are women. I want to urge business women to do more in assisting girls and young women to obtain skills and professional qualifications. This will ensure that they don't become victims of "Blessers" and abusers. As the saying goes, when you educate a woman you educate a nation.

Our Welfare to Work Programme, a government led intervention to move people, especially young women, out of welfare into sustainable employment is beginning to yield positive results. It now benefits 10 500 people, young women, who are now involved in productive and sustainable economic activities. We are expanding this programme to reach 20 000 young women. Grants must be reserved for the elderly, orphans and people with disabilities.

We have also created sustainable livelihoods for the urban poor by empowering 487 social cooperatives that have more than 3 000 members, most of whom are women. These women are involved in food gardening and community-based urban agriculture. They are helping in the fight against poverty and hunger.

These women cooperatives also produce school uniforms to support children in public schools and provide dignity packs to more than 4 000 of our poorest households.

Our immediate task is to ensure that these cooperatives move to the next level of development and that they are sustainable. Specifically, work has begun to link these cooperatives to opportunities in the mainstream of the Gauteng economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen, despite the progress we are making in empowering women significant challenges still lie ahead. We have already identified the exclusion of black people, women, the youth and people with disabilities as the one of the structural problems facing the Gauteng economy.

Accordingly, our interventions in the economy seek to increase substantially the number of black people, women, the youth and people with disability who play a meaningful role in the economic mainstream. This intervention constitutes part of what we mean by radical economic transformation.

We have also taken into account the findings of the 2015 Report entitled the Status of Women in the South African Economy, released by the Presidency. According to the Report women's employment tends to be more concentrated in a smaller number of economic sectors than men's, with 84% of female employment being in the services sector, exposing women relatively more to downturns in the sectors in which their employment is concentrated.

Furthermore, despite having made gains in education, women remain more likely to be employed in lower skilled occupations. Female and female headed households have on average lower access to both private and public assets than males and male headed households.

The Report also makes the observation that while poverty has declined since 1994, females remain more likely to be poor than males and that poor females tend to leave further below the poverty line than their male counterparts. It estimates that women's contribution to GDP is probably somewhere in the order of 35 to 45%. Women have a greater specialisation on unpaid work as they bear a particularly large burden of care work.

I trust that this Summit has will address itself to these and many other challenges hindering effective women participation in the economy.

Let us continue to form transformative partnerships towards genuine women empowerment and emancipation.

I wish you all a successful Summit and Expo.

*Malibongwe Igama lamakhosikazi! Wa thinta abafazi, withint'imbokodo!*

Thank you.