

MEDIA STATEMENT

Issued by the Department of Women, Youth & Persons with Disabilities

Attention: Journalists and News Editors

Pretoria, 03 March 2021

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SOUTH AFRICA HOSTS NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION AHEAD OF THE UPCOMING 65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane hosted a national stakeholder consultation ahead of the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65), which will take place from 15-26 March 2021. The consultation was held on 01 March 2021.

This year's CSW65 will adopt a hybrid format with most meetings taking place virtually. Representatives from Members States, UN Entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from all regions of the world are invited to attend the sessions.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

This year's priority theme for CSW65 is: *Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.*

The CSW65 Stakeholder Consultation brought together over 100 government, civil society organisations, gender activists and stakeholders representing a range of organisations with diverse areas of interest. The consultation allowed for discussions evaluating successes and failures in progressing the gender agenda in South Africa.

In her keynote address, Minister Nkoana-Mashabane contextualised the goal of women's emancipation, empowerment and development within the current global COVID-19 Pandemic. "Gender equality remains critical towards achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. We have only but nine years to reach this goal. Therefore, we must not allow this pandemic to push us back – it has already impacted the lives of women and girls. It has further exposed the fault lines of inequalities and patriarchy that continue to persist. It has exacerbated these inequalities and negative social norms for women and girls, not least of which is growing poverty and joblessness among women, and the continuing scourge of gender-based violence and femicide," said Minister Nkoana-Mashabane.

Amongst the issues raised by participants was the lack of women representation in leadership and decision-making bodies; the lack of young women representation in various labour sectors, and the need for increased funding for programmes that address national concerns like patriarchal attitudes and toxic masculinity. Participants were also vocal about the need for increased funding to NGOs working to localise the District Development Model and drive change on the ground, through community work and stakeholder participation.

Minister Nkoana-Mashabane also spoke at length about the need for 50-50 representation at local government level. "We want women leaders at this level to make a difference for the ordinary women on the ground through policy and intervention measures. In this way women's access to basic services, water, electricity, sanitation can be prioritised. We want women leaders to promote women's employment as well as opportunities to entrepreneurship and access 40% of the procurement spend," said Minister Nkoana-Mashabane.

The meeting brought to the fore the voices and experiences of women on the ground to ensure that lived experiences are always at the forefront of gender equality efforts on a global scale. This year's theme aligns closely with the outcomes of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence, which highlights economic empowerment as a key area of concern that must be addressed through systematic interventions.

Ends

For further information please contact Mr Shalen Gajadhar on 060 979 4235.

Know and Share these contact details:

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Persons with disabilities, SMS 'help' to 31531

Women Abuse Helpline: 0800 150 150

Child line: 0800 055 555

SAPS Crime Stop: 0860 10111

GBVF-related service complaints (SAPS): 0800 333 177/

complaintsnodalpoint@saps.gov.za

National AIDS Helpline: 0800 012 322

National Human Trafficking Helpline: 0800 222 777

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National Department of Health: <https://www.health.gov.za>

National Institute of Communicable Diseases: <https://www.nicd.ac.za>

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