
MEDIA STATEMENT

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

Attention: Journalists and News Editors

Pretoria, 06 April 2021

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STATEMENT BY MINISTER MAITE NKOANE-MASHABANE ON SOUTH AFRICA ON THE APPOINTMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA AS THE CHAIR OF THE BUREAU OF THE 66TH AND 67TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, wishes to congratulate South Africa on securing its Chairship of the Bureau for the 66th and 67th sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2022 and 2023. The Bureau of the Commission plays a crucial role in facilitating the preparation for, and in ensuring the successful outcome of the annual sessions of the Commission.

South Africa assumed its Chairship for the 66th and 67th session following the closing of the 65th Session of the Commission held from 15 and 26 March 2021 under the Priority theme: *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*. Review theme: *Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development* (agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session). This 65th session brought together Member States to engage for the first time about women's participation in public life as pointed out by the Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

As the Chair of the 66th and 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in 2022 South Africa will lead the Commission under the Priority theme: *Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes*. Review theme: *Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work* (agreed conclusions of the sixty-first session). In 2023 it will preside over the Commission under the Priority theme: *Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls*. Review theme: *Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls* (agreed conclusions of the sixty-second session).

In 2019, South Africa joined 12 African States to be part of the 45 Member States of the Bureau of the Commission. The Commission was established by ECOSOC resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946 with a mandate to prepare recommendations on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. The Commission is also responsible for monitoring, reviewing and appraising progress achieved and problems encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 and of the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly of 2000, at all levels, and to support gender mainstreaming. The Commission also contributes to the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development so as to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Every year, representatives of Member States, United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York for the Commission's annual session. Usually held for ten days in March, the session provides an opportunity to review progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women, identify challenges, set global standards and norms and formulate policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide. CSW provides an opportunity for policy makers, advocates, researchers and activists to network and strategize, mobilize and plan new initiatives and actions to further the cause of gender equality and women's empowerment.

South Africa will use this opportunity to champion the acceleration of gender equality following the fifth Beijing (Beijing +25) review in 2020 which revealed that despite some progress, real change has been slow, and no country can claim to have achieved gender equality almost 26 years after the adoption of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995.

This achievement will also contribute to South Africa's work as part of the Generation Equality Forum. South Africa forms part of the Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence. Action Coalitions are global, innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise governments, civil society, international organisations and the private sector to catalyse collective action to bring about real change for girls and women.

Within the context of "***leaving no one behind***" and hashtag "***what women want***", under this Chairship South Africa should ensure that the world accelerate (a) women's economic and financial empowerment and inclusion; (b) demand for equal pay and fair labour practices; (c) women's access to education and technology and skills development; (d) participation of women in the green industry; (e) equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work; (f) an end to sexual harassment and abuse and all form of violence against women and girls; (g) responsive health care services to the

needs of women and girls including sexual and reproductive health and rights; (h) equal participation of women in political life and decision-making in all areas of life; and (i) land ownership for women, as well as cultural beliefs that are prejudiced against women.

Ends

For further information contact Mr Shalen Gajadhar on 060 979 4235

Know and Share these contact details:

GBV Command Centre: 0800 428 428 / *120*7867# from any cell phone

Persons with disabilities, SMS 'help' to 31531

Women Abuse Helpline: 0800 150 150

Child line: 0800 055 555

SAPS Crime Stop: 0860 10111 / SMS Crime Line: 32211

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

Suicide Helpline: 0800 567 567

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