



**OPENING REMARKS BY SINDISIWE CHIKUNGA, MP - MINISTER IN
THE PRESIDENCY FOR WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES AND CHAIRPERSON: G20 EMPOWERMENT OF
WOMEN WORKING GROUP (EWWG)**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE G20 EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
WORKING GROUP MINISTERIAL MEETING**

DATE: Friday, 31 October 2025

TIME: 09:00 – 09:05

VENUE: Radisson Hotel and Convention Centre, Kempton Park,
Republic of South Africa

- **Excellencies, Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegation,**
- **Representatives of the African Union, the European Union, and International Organisations,**
- **Esteemed colleagues from the OECD, ILO, UNIDO, World Bank, and the Women Empower Alliance,**
- **Representatives of Civil Society, Academia, and the Private Sector,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great excitement that I extend warm and friendly greetings to you all on behalf of our Government, our President—His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa—and all 62 million South Africans.

Exactly twelve months ago, on 11 October 2024, in the beautiful city of Brasília, we received the Chairship of the G20 Empowerment of Women Working Group from Brazil following a memorable G20 Presidency carried out under the theme: *"Building a Just World and a Sustainable Planet."*

Following its initiation under India's presidency, we embraced the institutionalization of the EWWG within the G20 as a significant step forward in our collective efforts to ensure substantive representation of **women's interests and their full participation in all areas where decisions are made and power is exercised.**

We also made a commitment to build on Brazil's commendable legacy in three critical areas:

- I. Women's economic equality, autonomy, and unpaid care work;
- II. The urgency of confronting misogyny and all forms of related violence, both in physical and virtual spaces; and

III. Addressing how climate action is undermined by the underrepresentation of women in structures of power and decision-making.

We also extend our gratitude to India for laying such a strong foundation for the world to reimagine women's empowerment and sustainable development as a comprehensive, far-reaching, people-centred, indivisible, and interlinked paradigm.

2. THE YEAR 2025 HAS BEEN BOTH SPECIAL AND CHALLENGING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Your Excellencies, the year 2025 has been special and challenging for the global movement for gender equality.

Three decades ago, women of the world travelled to Beijing—not as supplicants seeking charity, but as architects of our own liberation. The unanimous adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by 189 governments at the Fourth World Conference on Women marked a turning point in our collective history.

From that day forward, a movement was born with a clarion call: **that freedom is indivisible, that women's emancipation requires structural transformation, and that gender justice and racial justice are inseparable.**

We have come a long way, but profound **challenges remain.**

3. THEMES THAT GUIDED THE WORK OF THE EWWG UNDER OUR CHAIRSHIP

Against this backdrop, South Africa assumed the G20 Presidency under the theme “**Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability**”. The collective essence of **Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability** aligns with the values enshrined in our Constitution—the cornerstone of our constitutional democracy that not only guides our internal affairs but also shapes how we engage with the rest of the world.

This theme further underscored our commitment to making this a **G20 Presidency of the African continent**, positioning Africa’s increasingly catalytic role at the forefront of global well-being. We are deeply pleased to have had the participation of the African Union and our sister African countries throughout this working group.

In the context of the G20 Working Group for the Empowerment of Women, we proposed and received overwhelming support for the following three key priorities:

- **Key Priority 1:** Policy perspectives on the care economy—paid and unpaid care work and household responsibilities.
- **Key Priority 2:** Promoting financial inclusion of and for women.
- **Key Priority 3:** Addressing gender-based violence and femicide.

Throughout our deliberations, it became clear that these three priorities are not exclusive; they are **mutually reinforcing**.

4. PROGRESS AND TECHNICAL MEETINGS

To date, three technical meetings have been convened for the EWWG which facilitated in-depth presentations and roundtable discussions on the three identified priorities. The first meeting was held online from 17–18 February 2025; the second in-person from 6–9 May 2025 at Sun City Resorts in the North West Province; and the third in-person from 1–4 July 2025 at the Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga Province.

6. CONCLUSION

As I conclude, I am reminded of the words of our Former President, Nelson Mandela, who so profoundly stated:

"The legacy of oppression weighs heavily on women. As long as women are bound by poverty and as long as they are looked down upon, human rights will lack substance. As long as outmoded ways of thinking prevent women from making a meaningful contribution to society, progress will be slow. As long as a nation refuses to acknowledge the equal role of more than half of itself, it is doomed to failure."

I thank you.