



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HONOURABLE MINISTER SINDISIWE LYDIA CHIKUNGA IN THE PRESIDENCY FOR WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Theme: *“Advancing Positive Masculinity: From Awareness to Action, From Equality in Law to Equality in Life.”*

Occasion: **G20 EWWG Ministerial Dialogue on Positive Masculinity
Held under South Africa’s G20 Presidency — “Africa’s G20, The
People’s G20”**

Date: Thursday, 30 October 2025

Time: 08h30 – 16h00 (Minister to speak at 10h00 – 10h30)

Venue: **Radisson Hotel and Convention Centre, O.R. Tambo
International, City of Ekurhuleni, Gauteng Province, Republic of
South Africa**

SECTION 1 — SALUTATIONS & OPENING

- **Programme Director, Honourable Deputy Minister Mmapaseka Steve Letsike, MP;**
- **Premier of Gauteng, Honourable Panyaza Lesufi;**
- All Ministers and Deputy Ministers present from G20 member states;

- **Former Chairperson of the African Union and Minister in the Republic of South Africa, Mme Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma**
- **Former First Ladies of the Republic of South Africa – Mme Zanele Mbeki and Mme Gugu Motlanthe;**
- **The current second lady of South Africa – Mme Humile Mashatile;**
- **Hon. Liezl Linda van der Merwe**, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, and all Members present;
- I also acknowledge our **Queens**, and the **Chair of the Queens Forum**.
- From the United Nations family — **Mr Nelson Muffuh**, UN Resident Coordinator for South Africa, and **Ms Aleta Miller**, UN Women Representative to South Africa;
- **Mr Zane Dangor**, Director-General of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation and South Africa's G20 Sherpa;
- **Advocate Joyce Maluleke**, Director-General of the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities;
- Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners; representatives of the African Union, European Union and OECD;

- All traditional leaders, faith leaders, social partners, youth delegates and civil-society representatives;
- Distinguished guests—

Good morning, and welcome to South Africa.

We meet in the **City of Ekurhuleni** — its name drawn from Xitsonga to mean *Place of Peace*. This city is no stranger to transformative dialogue. It was here, in **December 1991**, that the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, or CODESA I, brought together political parties and civic leaders to negotiate an end to apartheid and chart our democratic future. Those talks transformed our political landscape; and in that same spirit, today's dialogue calls on us to transform the **social fabric** of our societies.

It is equally fitting that we meet at the **Radisson Hotel and Convention Centre — O.R. Tambo International**, named in honour of President Oliver Reginald Tambo: teacher, lawyer, freedom fighter and diplomat whose leadership guided our path to freedom. In 1984, he reminded the world that “one of the fundamental tasks of national liberation is the liberation of the women of our country from their triple oppression — of sex, class and colour.”

It is therefore, indeed very befitting, that this G20 Ministerial Dialogue on Positive Masculinity takes place beneath his name

— here in Ekurhuleni, the *Place of Peace* and the *Place of Talks* — where history and conscience meet, as we continue that work: to ensure that freedom is not partial, equality not postponed, and justice never gendered.

SECTION 2 — SOUTH AFRICA’S G20 PRESIDENCY & EWWG PRIORITIES

Colleagues, South Africa has the honour of hosting the **first G20 on African soil — Africa’s G20, the People’s G20**. Our Presidency is anchored in three guiding principles: **Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability**.

- **Solidarity** means building an inclusive global order that acts *with* and *for* those most affected, especially across the Global South.
- **Equality** is our commitment to a just and humane future where women, youth and persons with disabilities stand at the centre of decision-making.
- **Sustainability** is our duty to meet today’s needs without harming tomorrow’s — building systems that endure, from care to climate.

Within this Presidency, the **Department in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities** has had the privilege of chairing the **Empowerment of Women Working Group (EWWG)**.

Through this chairship, we have pursued three interlinked priorities:

1. **The Care Economy** — recognising care as social and economic infrastructure that drives inclusive growth;
2. **Women's Financial Inclusion** — expanding women's access to finance, procurement and productive resources across both formal and informal sectors; and
3. **Gender-Based Violence and Positive Masculinity** — transforming social norms and power relations so that equality is lived, not only legislated.

Our message to the G20 is clear: **gender equality is not a sidebar; it is an economic and moral imperative** that must shape every decision we take, every policy we implement, and every budget we adopt.

SECTION 3 — THE PROBLEM, PLAINLY

Colleagues, to confront gender-based violence, we must name its cause plainly: **a norms crisis that fuels a violence crisis.**

GBV is not a series of isolated incidents; it is a **system** — learned, repeated, and too often excused. Globally, the United Nations estimates that **one in three women** will experience physical or sexual violence in her lifetime. Here at home, women and girls are most often harmed by those they know and trust.

These are not random acts of brutality; they are the **visible expressions of invisible norms** — norms that equate masculinity with dominance and femininity with submission, that prize control over compassion and silence over care. Yet, as research and experience show, **violence is learned — and it can be unlearned** when men and boys are engaged directly and held accountable.

The **picture emerging from comparative studies** should alarm us all:

- **In education**, UNESCO reports that by **age seven**, boys already internalize that physical aggression is “masculine” and emotional expression is “feminine weakness.” Plan International’s 2023 global survey of 10,000 boys found that **64% believe a man should be tough** and **58% believe a real man should fight back** — beliefs that directly correlate with harassment and dating violence.
- **In sport**, 82% of female athletes across 25 countries have faced sexual harassment — 91% by male coaches, teammates, or administrators — within an industry worth over **\$500 billion**, yet still resistant to cultural reform.
- **In public service**, the Inter-Parliamentary Union reports that **82% of women parliamentarians** have endured psychological violence from male colleagues, while studies show that more than **60% of women officers in police**

forces face harassment — often by male peers or supervisors.

- **In public health**, WHO research finds that men adhering to rigid gender norms are **2.5 times more likely** to perpetrate intimate partner violence, **three times more likely** to engage in substance abuse, and **twice as likely** to die by suicide — while globally, men account for **95% of homicides, 98% of sexual assaults**, and **90% of violent crime**.

These are not isolated incidents — they are **system outputs**. **What drives this crisis** is a convergence: fragile masculinities shaped by insecurity and trauma; **patriarchy as infrastructure** — embedded in our laws, budgets, workplaces, media and digital platforms; and **reactive systems** that mobilise after harm instead of preventing it. This is **evidence that the problem is systemic, not episodic**.

Unless we intervene in **socialisation** — how boys are raised, mentored and led — the cycle will continue.

Because when **masculinity is reduced to control**, **humanity is diminished for all**.

SECTION 4 — THE SCAFFOLD WE ALREADY HAVE

Colleagues, to address this challenge, we do not begin from a vacuum. **The architecture for prevention and accountability already exists** — our task is to use it with focus and fidelity.

At the **global level**, the **UN Spotlight Initiative on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls** stands as a flagship model of coordinated action — uniting governments, civil society, and the private sector under one plan, one budget, and one accountability framework to end violence and transform norms.

At the **continental level**, the **Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa** remains our binding and moral compass — committing African states to eliminate discrimination, combat gender-based violence, and guarantee women's political, economic, and reproductive rights.

Here at home, South Africa has built a formidable national scaffold:

1. The **National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP-GBVF)** — our whole-of-society blueprint driving prevention and coordination across all sectors;
2. The **National Council on GBVF** — the statutory body ensuring oversight, delivery, and accountability;

3. The **GBVF Response Fund** — a public-private partnership mobilising resources for prevention, survivor support, and local innovation;
4. The **Men Championing Change and Transforming MENTalities** programmes — engaging men and boys in schools, faith spaces, and workplaces to model positive norms; and
5. The **Higher Health programme** — embedding prevention and psychosocial support across post-school campuses nationwide.

Together, these frameworks remind us that **prevention is not a slogan — it is a system** we must **teach, model, budget for, and enforce**, until equality becomes the standard, not the exception.

SECTION 5 — WHAT POSITIVE MASCULINITY LOOKS LIKE

Colleagues, if we are to transform norms, we must also show what transformation looks like. Positive masculinity is not an abstract idea — it is a daily practice, visible in the choices men make and the systems that support them.

It looks like the **male teacher in early childhood education** who normalises caregiving as masculine work — showing boys that nurturing is strength.

It looks like the **coach** who enforces zero-tolerance for bullying and violent initiation practices and teaches that true strength lies in fairness, teamwork and respect.

It looks like the **university professor** who calls out sexist behaviour, balances voices in class, and mentors young women scholars with the same commitment he gives to young men.

It looks like the **police officer** who knows that community safety requires empathy, not aggression; the **judge** who delivers justice with dignity - knowing that protecting survivors is not a favour but a duty.

It looks like the **business leader** who conducts pay-gap audits and closes them; the **trade-unionist or economist** who insists that unpaid care be counted, and that equality is non-negotiable in every contract and budget.

It looks like the **public servant** who takes parental leave, because caring his children is not weakness, but strength.

It looks like the **father who shares care**, the **partner who listens**, and the **young man who intervenes** when harm is being done — proving that courage means standing up, not striking out.

And it looks like **leaders across our continent** — from classrooms to boardrooms, from fields to ministries — standing

up to say that strength and kindness are not opposites, but complements.

Because, colleagues, positive masculinity is not about policing men; it is about **freeing them** — freeing them from the narrow scripts that harm others and confine themselves. It is the bridge between **equality in law** and **equality in life**.

SECTION 6 — CALL TO ACTION & CLOSING

In attempting to achieve positive masculinity and eradicating a system that perpetuates inequality and abuse. We have a set of legacy projects we aim to drive post our chairship. South Africa is advancing three clear legacy commitments — each building the **infrastructure of prevention**.

1. First, through the **Positive Masculinity Initiative** with the GBVF Response Fund, we are redefining manhood and transforming social norms — engaging men and boys in schools, faith spaces, initiation forums, sport and workplaces.
2. Second, we are developing a **Policy and Strategy on the Care Economy** to recognise care as social and economic infrastructure — moving it from “invisible women’s work” to a resourced public good.
3. Third, we are establishing a **Disability Inclusion Nerve Centre** to strengthen data systems, inclusive education,

and technology-enabled access for persons with disabilities.

And to address **youth unemployment — a driver of fragile masculinities** — we are investing **R30 million** in the **I Am Code** initiative to equip girls and young women with digital, coding, and AI skills that connect them to the jobs and industries of the future.

We further want to propose that from today onwards, let us **adopt shared standards** (schools teach respect/consent; workplaces enforce zero tolerance with independent reporting; faith and culture commit publicly to equality), **run coordinated pilots** with clear partners, timelines and financing, and **track behaviour change** — not just awareness — using a common scoreboard (help-seeking, bystander action, case completion, pay-gap closure, men's parental-leave uptake). Let us **fund prevention alongside survivor support**, link budgets and performance agreements to these indicators, transmit today's outcomes to tomorrow's Ministerial for **EWVG adoption**, and expect leaders in government, business, labour, traditional and faith spaces to **model the change**.

Closing

In closing, Your Excellencies, Ekurhuleni — the Place of Peace — is also the place of talks that reshaped a nation. Under the

name of Oliver Reginald Tambo, let us again make history — not through resolutions, but through results.

Let us redefine power as partnership, raise boys who are free to be gentle and girls who are free to be bold, and make prevention our culture, not our exception.

As we leave here, let us not only say *down with gender-based violence, down with fragile masculinity* — let us also say *forward with positive masculinity, dignity, and equality*.

And so as I close, I invite you to experience the beauty of **South Africa — a nation where history, culture, and nature meet**. From the rhythm of Kwa Mai-Mai Market and the spirit of Soweto, to the Cradle of Humankind and the wild majesty of Kruger, our country tells one story: of resilience, creativity, and welcome.

I thank you — and may God bless you all.