



**Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance  
Women Demand Action Now! Countdown to 2015! Yes we must!  
South Africa National Report**



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## Why the countdown to 2015? What is the protocol? What is the campaign about?

In the year 2013, one hundred years after the women's march in Bloemfontein and 57 years after the national women's march in Pretoria, South African women are saying:

*"We have one of the most progressive Constitutions in the world. We have laws that are meant to protect our rights. We have National Gender Machinery in all spheres of government. Yet, we are still treated as minors.*

*We need to review our culture, traditions and religious practices. In our marriages, there are still certain things that make us feel like minors.*

*A widow is treated as a dirty person because she is expected to wear black clothing as a sign of mourning for a time period ranging from one to two years. Sometimes she is accused of witchcraft, and she is isolated and rejected by the community including her in-laws.*

*Women are abused, raped and killed on a daily basis in South Africa. Others are forced to engage in sex to secure employment.*

*The more things change, the more they stay the same."*

The comments above come out of provincial dialogues held across South Africa during the month of August led by South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID) in collaboration with Genderlinks.

The following were the objectives of the dialogues:

- Popularise the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender Protocol which was duly signed by the Heads of States in 2008 with a commitment of reaching 28 related targets by 2015.
- Canvass for the adoption of the Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (WEGE) Bill.
- Set up theme clusters in South Africa by the end of 2013 that reciprocate that of the Regional Alliance Structure.
- Collect Protocol@work case studies in preparation for the 2014 SADC Gender Protocol summit.
- Review how far the women's movement has come since the first anti-pass march in 1913 as well as other well-known women's marches in 1955 and 1956 respectively.

By popularising SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, SAWID and Gender Links used the process to advance women's human rights in South Africa by launching a campaign titled **Women Demand Action Now: Countdown to 2015**.

## Historical background of the South African women's movement

An overview of the women's movement in South Africa goes beyond the historical women's march in 1956. For example, as early as 1913, women in Orange Free State protested against the carrying of passes. Five years later, in 1918, the Bantu Women's League of the South African Native National Congress was formed under the leadership of Charlotte Maxeke who was also instrumental in leading the 1913 anti-pass protest march.

In other provinces such as Transvaal and Natal, women participated in protests against forced removals and many other insubordinate activities such as rent and beer boycotts. All these culminated in well-known protest marches of the 50's.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1954, the African National Congress Women's Charter was adopted at the Founding Conference of the Federation of South African Women. The Preamble of the Charter read:

*"We, the women of South Africa, wives and mothers, working women and housewives, African, Indians, Europeans and Coloured, hereby declare our aim of striving for the removal of all laws, regulations, conventions and customs that discriminate against women, and that deprive us in any way of our inherent right to the advantages, responsibilities and opportunities that society offers to any one section of the population."*

The 1954 Women's Charter resolved to remove all laws and customs that treat women as minors in the home and in the society.

Thirty seven years later in February 1994, Women's Charter for Effective Equality was adopted at the National Convention convened by the Women's National Coalition. In its preamble, the Women's Charter for Effective Equality read:

*"We, women of South Africa, claim our rights. We claim full and equal participation in the creation of a non-sexist, non-racist, democratic society...Democracy and human rights, if they are to be meaningful to women, must address our historic subordination and oppression."*

Just like in 1954, the Women's Charter of 1994 resolved to fight women's subordination and oppression that had taken root under patriarchy, custom and tradition, colonialism, racism and apartheid.



## **Dawn of Democracy-Where are we now?**

Nineteen years after the advent of democracy, the following has been achieved by and for women in South Africa:

- Gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution.
- Discriminatory laws have been removed and a host of laws that protect the rights of women have been promulgated.
- The national government together with civil society motioned for the creation of the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities to focus solely on issues that affect women.
- The National Gender Machinery has been set up in all spheres of government.
- The National Gender Policy Framework is in place.
- Women make up 44 % of parliamentarians.
- Women have been appointed in key positions in all spheres of government, including being appointed as cabinet ministers in portfolios that were previously reserved for men.

The appointment of women in key decision making positions in the country is cause for celebration. It is an indication of progress in the women's movement and how far we have come as a country.

For women, however, freedom demands more than a numbers game. An increasing prevalence of violence against women as well as other forms of violation of women's human rights is a clear indication that even though Parliament and government is no longer exclusively white and male dominated, the South African society remains sexist. Women are still treated as minors; this is in spite of the Constitution and the laws that protect their rights.

During the regional SADC Gender Protocol Summit in April 2013, Former South African Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, noted in her address that

*"Even though we have made great strides in the emancipation of women, gender justice and the struggles of women remain challenging, from gender based violence, high poverty among women, exclusion of women in significant positions, the burden of disease and more. Our work is not yet done."*

## **What do South African women demand in the countdown to 2015**

### **Constitutional and Legal Rights**

The SADC Protocol provides that by 2015 SADC countries shall have reviewed, amended and repealed all discriminatory laws and specifically abolish the minority status of women. Further, the protocol also makes reference to specific legislative provisions in relation to Marriage and the rights of widows, elderly women, the girl child and women with disabilities.

In South Africa, gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution and many laws that are discriminatory to women have been repealed. In addition, a host of many other laws that

protects women's human rights have been promulgated. However, implementation of such laws remains a challenge.

#### Culture and tradition

- There is tension between women's human rights and African cultural beliefs.
- Traditional courts which rule over customs and traditions are led by men.
- Women who serve in traditional courts have got no voice. There is an ongoing need for education, support and coaching/mentoring for female traditional leaders.
- Review of Traditional Courts Bill and its impact on women's human rights.
- Implementation of laws that protect women's human rights is a problem because of traditional attitudes and beliefs.
- Traditional practices and rituals such as reed dance and ukuthwala must be reviewed.
- Women who speak out against any of the discriminatory cultural and traditional practises are "punished" as a result.

#### Marriage

- Women still regarded as property especially in polygamous marriages
- A change in surname takes away a woman's identity.
- Women also enforce some of the oppressive cultural laws to other women e.g. relationship between mother and daughter in-law is not always liberating.
- Review of lobola as a commercial transaction.

#### Death

- Review of traditional customs that discriminate against widows.
- Other than property grabbing, widows are subjected to rituals and customs that affect their right to free expression and movement.
- Where does the practice of a widow sitting on a mattress during her deceased husband's funeral arrangements come from? What about the culture of wearing black?
- The rights of widows are not respected. For instance, a practice of ukungena (a woman expected to marry her deceased husband's relative) violates women's right to choose their partners.
- Establish forums for widows where women can be taught about their rights.
- Address the problem of property grabbing and improve women's understanding of inheritance and property rights.

#### Girl children

- Address the spiralling prevalence of child sexual abuse in communities.
- Girl children (especially in the rural areas) do not have equal opportunities in education.
- Young girls are forced by poverty and peer pressure to be in relationships with older men.
- Support the girl child to work initiative
- Review statutory rape: Lower the consent age from 16 to 12 years.
- Tribal courts/amakhosi must be restricted when it comes to intervening on sexual offences.

#### Women with disabilities

- The rights of disabled women are not respected especially in access to health, justice, education and employment.
- There is no comprehensive programme that is looking at addressing violence against disabled women.
- More skill centres must be built.

#### Elderly women

- Elderly women are not protected. Government must strengthen laws that protect them.
- Many elderly women live alone. This makes them vulnerable to rape and other related crimes. Government must build places of safety for elderly women.



#### Religion

- Mainstream gender in religious education.
- Who came up with the rule that the wife must join the husband's religion?

#### Access to Justice

- Information is often presented in English. Many women do not understand English.
- Enforcing legal rights is unaffordable to many women.
- Chapter 9 Institutions are not accessible in rural areas.
- Special Courts are not accessible to rural women.
- Slow processing of cases in court.

#### Legislative review

- Maintenance Act: Maintenance officers take advantage of uneducated women. Men run away from their responsibilities and some even go to an extent of quitting their jobs.
- Domestic Violence Act: Women are dependent on men for economic livelihood and they do not report abuse cases.
- Social Assistance Act: Is this not encouraging poor girls to have more children as a means to an income? What about vulnerability of young girls to HIV?

#### Miscellaneous

- Identity documents must be given for free.
- System for applying for Identity documents must be changed to eliminate long waiting periods.
- Constitution allows too many foreigners in the country.
- Child support grants – teenage mothers must be supported in financial management. Child support age must be extended to the age of 21.
- Discipline in schools.
- Curb Satanism in schools.
- Bible studies must be re-integrated back into education.
- Concern about family planning and access to abortion to girls as young as nine years old.

## Other general comments about gender conditioning and legal rights

- **The change of surname of a female in case of marriage** reaps off the females' right to **identity, dignity and respect**. This may contribute to the sense of 'ownership' by men. Once men think that they own women, their value is dependent on what the man thinks and can be replaced like any other property. For example, men can start cheating or introducing polygamy. This has a negative impact on a woman's sense of worth and self-esteem and her confidence may be destroyed. All this amounts to emotional and psychological abuse. Once the females start to fight over a male, they feel honoured. According to the law, there is no provision that stipulates that a female should change her surname, so why does it happen?
- Further, the change of surname reinforces preference for a boy child. For the legacy of the surname to continue, there must be a boy in the family. **A female person neither belongs to her father's nor her husband's surname because it can change at any given moment.**
- **The use of title discriminates against women.** The title 'Miss or Mrs' –discloses personal, private and confidential information that a person may not like to expose. It is not necessary to disclose one's marital status in public. This is unfair to females because males use one title whether married or not. This may also cause confusion in case one decides to divorce and/or remarry.
- Often, women feel pressure to get married because of the title that says a lot about their marital status. This creates an impression that being unmarried is an embarrassment. In African languages there are derogatory terms that are used for women who are not married. This creates an impression that being married is a status in the community. Single women are 'unwanted' strangers in their own homes. Male siblings and other family members may create tension for unmarried women because they perceive themselves to belong in the homestead more than women.
- **Slavery and cheap labour.** From the time a girl child is born, she is groomed to be a 'good makoti'. This is the reason the girl child is taught and forced to do all the domestic duties alone. If a girl child is not interested in doing household chores, she is labelled as lazy and parents will be quick to ask 'ingabeuyoganakuphi?' meaning who do you think will marry you when you are like this? This is unfair labour practice because nothing stops men to do all these duties. As if this is not enough, a woman is also to give birth and raise the children. Patriarchy forces women to work for and serve men because many of these domestic chores are done for men's benefit.
- Once a person is called "makoti", the expectation is that she will work like she has got a battery on her back. She is expected to be like a doormat for the in-laws. She is told that she should obey the rules and she should not answer back even when she is disrespected or undermined. This may create a sense of slavery and abuse for women in such situations. This can also have an impact on women's health. In some situations, this increases women's vulnerability to physical and emotional abuse.

## Gender and Governance

The SADC Protocol provides that member states should endeavour to ensure that 50% of decision-making positions in public and private sectors are held by women. It further provides for member states to ensure that all legislative measures are accompanied by public awareness campaigns with demonstrate a vital link between equal representation and participation of women and men in decision making positions, democracy, good governance and citizen participation.

South Africa is doing well in advancing 50/50 representation. However this must not only be a voluntary practice of a specific political party. Women demand that this must be legislated.

### Legislative and policy framework

- Accelerate the process of finalisation of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Bill.
- The Department of Labour must tighten up their M & E in so far as Employment Equity reports are concerned.
- Gender Focal Points in government departments must be appointed at higher decision making levels. At the moment, they do not have the power to make any decisions.
- Deployment of officials according to their area of expertise and experience and not according to political loyalty and patronage.
- Political parties and governments still do not take gender seriously. Programmes for women are calendar driven e.g. budgets are only allocated for Women's month and 16 days of Activism. As one woman from Limpopo said: "Each one of us is working in isolation. For instance, Office on the Status of Women does not work closely with the Commission of Gender Equality and Gender Desks in government departments. During 16 days of Activism, we fight for stadiums".

### Gender, leadership and personal development

- Women lack confidence and they are subjected to criticism from men. Because of their conditioning, some women may even believe that they do not have the capacity to lead. It is recommended that women must know their strengths and weaknesses as well as accept their areas of vulnerability.
- Some are appointed because of political patronage as opposed to skills and experience.
- Others are put in positions by men who will later manipulate and control them.
- Women do not support other women.
- Sex for jobs and/or higher positions (ukuvula iskhafthini) is still a reality. Sometimes your male colleagues will send a young man to propose love to you to "tame" you.

### Internalised oppression

- Women do not support other women.
- Women oppress one another at work.
- Workplace bullying: women managers can be the biggest bullies in the workplace and this might affect the health of their subordinates adversely. It is recommended that seminars on workplace bullying should be organised.
- To accept your weakness it is a beginning of you gaining strength.

- You won't be protected from your ego, don't pretend to be strong without weakness.

#### Key Recommendations

- Gender focal points must be placed in higher ranks. Currently, they do not have decision making authority.
- There is lack of political will in implementing the 50/50 gender representation. Fast track the Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill.
- Employment Equity plans should be part of the performance contracts of Accounting Officers in public and private sector institutions.

#### Education and Training



The SADC Protocol provides that state parties shall enact laws that promote equal access to, and retention in primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational and non-formal education. South Africa has been identified to have done well in formulating laws and policies that promote the above. The challenges lie in implementation and monitoring of such policies.

A disparity between private and public schools as well as between urban and rural schools was also identified as a major challenge in ensuring that the provisions of the Protocol are met.

#### Inclusive Curriculum

- Government must ensure a gender sensitive curriculum in schools. Boys and girls must be sensitised on issues of gender equality from early childhood to tertiary education.
- Language of instruction is a challenge for learners whose first language is not English or Afrikaans. This may affect their progress and therefore their retention in the education system.

#### Legal framework

- There is tension between the rights of the child and African culture. A series of educational seminars must be organised between educators, legal practitioners, traditional/religious leaders and parents.

#### Gender and disability

- Disabled girls are often excluded from learnership programmes.
- Skills training for disabled women are not available in rural areas.
- Develop and support education and training programmes for disabled girls and women.

#### Sexual violence in schools

- Department of Education must lead a strong campaign against sexual violence in schools.

- This includes taking strong action against teachers who have sexual relationships with learners.

### Teenage Pregnancy

- Create and run a coordinated campaign between Department of Education, Department of Social Development, educators, parents and community leaders to address a spiralling prevalence of teenage pregnancy.
- Girls must be motivated to complete their studies and not focus on making babies as well as receiving child care support grants as a result.
- Coaching, mentoring and leadership development for girls will go a long way in preventing teenage pregnancy.
- In some instances, RDP houses are allocated to girls without any adult supervision and support. Community leaders must work closely with parents and municipalities to address this problem.

### Safety in schools

- A high prevalence of violence in schools affects the culture of learning and teaching.
- School buildings and infrastructure in township and rural schools is in a state of disrepair.
- Religious and other related beliefs, such as Satanism may affect the physical and/or mental safety of learners.
- Government must provide safe transport for learners particularly those who have to walk long distances to school. Many of them are vulnerable to violent crimes that include rape.

## Employment and Economic Empowerment

The SADC Protocol provides that state parties shall, by 2015, ensure the following:

- Equal participation by women and men in policy formulation and implementation of economic policies.
- Conduct time use studies and adopt policy measures that ease the burden of the multiple roles played by women.
- Adopt policies and enact laws which ensure equal access, benefits and opportunities for women and men in entrepreneurship, taking into account the contribution of women in the formal and informal sectors.
- Review national trade and entrepreneurship policies to make them gender responsive.
- Review, amend and enact laws and policies that ensure women and men have equal access to wage employment in all sectors of the economy.
- Provide for equal pay for equal work.

It is noted that South Africa has gone a long way in establishing financial institutions that support women's businesses. However, the majority of these services are only available to a handful of women in urban areas.

Women in rural areas are involved in different forms of small businesses, often with no support from government. In addition, the legal requirements for accessing such loans are complex. Given the high levels of illiteracy amongst women, these loans are therefore not accessible to a majority of women who need such support.

The following challenges are some of the gaps and challenges facing women and girls:

#### Legal and policy framework

- Criteria for financial institutions need to be more gender sensitive.
- Major economic projects and government tenders must demonstrate significant benefit to women both as decision makers and beneficiaries of services.
- Legalise prostitution.
- Educate women about their labour rights.
- Women in trade unions are not vocal. The agenda in the labour unions is set and driven by men.
- An increasing number of women are in formal employment. However, this does not come with a change in sexual division of labour. For instance, a woman who is a Mayor still has a family to run with very little or no support from the husband or the father of the children.
- Create economic empowerment initiatives that will use women's unique skills e.g. developing craft as a viable economic empowerment project.
- Address the problem of unpaid community based work which is largely carried out by women.

#### Education

- Provide more bursaries for women to study economics, financial and business management.
- Ongoing education about Bill of Rights, Security of Tenure, Employment Equity, Basic conditions of employment, Safety and Health Act and other laws and regulations that apply to women in the workplace.
- Skills training for teenage mothers.
- Empowerment of women through personal development initiatives.
- Encourage women to study agriculture.

#### Violence in the workplace

- Address the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Address the problem of sex and sexual exploitation used to lure unemployed women for jobs.
- Address sexual violence in sectors that were predominantly male e.g. farming and mining.

### **Gender Based Violence**

The SADC Protocol makes provision for the implementation of a variety of strategies, including enacting, reviewing, reforming and enforcing laws, aimed at eliminating all forms of gender violence, and trafficking. Included in this are specific stipulations for the provisions of a comprehensive package of treatment and care services for survivors of gender violence, including the access to Post Exposure Prophylaxis and the establishment of special courts to address these cases.

It is noted that South Africa has enacted a series of laws that are meant to protect survivors of gender based violence. In addition, South Africa has a host of non-governmental and

community based organisations which provide such medical, counselling and legal support for survivors of gender based violence.

In spite of these measures, violence against women in South Africa remains high. The following has been recommended to correct the situation:

#### Training for professionals

- Gender sensitivity training for legal professionals such as magistrates and police.
- Training on violence against women as a public health concern for health workers.
- Train auxiliary social workers to intervene in cases of gender-based violence.

#### Empowerment programmes for girls and women

- Ongoing training on Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act.
- Girls must be sensitised about the reality of sexual violence from very early in their lives.
- Address the issue of poverty and its impact on women. Many end up being dependent on their abusers.
- Invest in education and career advancement for girl children.
- Address ongoing abuse and murder of lesbian women. The Justice System and government must take a tough stance on such murders.
- Establish support groups for women in churches, stokvels, women's clubs and other community based structures.



#### Working with boys and men

- Gender sensitivity training for boys and men.
- Enlist the support of other men to change the attitude and perception of the society about women.
- Prominent male leaders must be encouraged to participate in campaigns that enlist men as part of the solution to violence against women.

## Community education and support

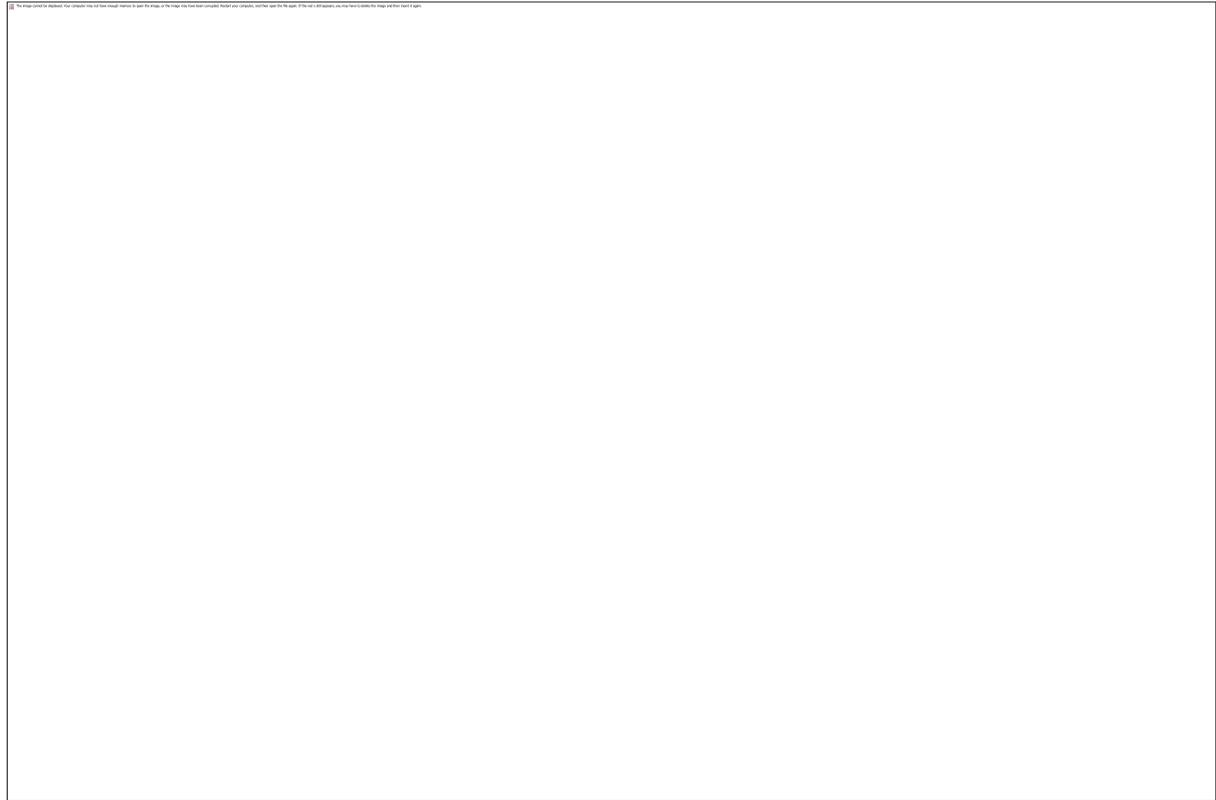
- Empower and support community based leadership development for women in CBO's and NGO's.
- Use popular community education tools such as art. Involve the whole family e.g. children, young people, women, men and elders.
- Partnership between government and civil society to address the problem of moral degeneration.
- Ongoing legal education with specific reference to Constitution and other laws that protect women's rights.
- Put the issues in the public space through the use of media.
- Address the problem of alcohol and drug abuse.
- The Department of Education must lead a campaign on sexual violence in schools.
- Institutions of higher learning need effective and firm policies on sexual violence and harassment at universities and colleges.

## Other solutions

- The Department of Justice must give tough sentences to rapists.
- Create creative women's centres in communities where they can meet and be empowered artistically and psychologically.
- The government must help in creating more centers or opportunities for women to learn about their rights.
- Improved policing in rural areas – accessible police stations and officials who are well trained.
- Improved employment opportunities for women and men particularly in rural areas.

## Case Studies

- 1) Married for 12, she has been raped several times by an uncle. Being a survivor of such violence in the past has made her strong. She does not shy away from confronting problems and challenges in her life as an adult.
- 2) The question was raised: Is it wrong for women to use sex as a vehicle for climbing the corporate ladder? A heated debate ensued. Some condemned such women as immoral, others said we should not judge other women's ways of survival because we don't know what has pushed them to go that route.
- 3) She learnt a lot from the dialogue and she feels revived about working on women's issues again. She has worked with women before and she has respect for women. She has been blessed to work with women who do not undermine other women.
- 4) She was a victim of rape, and she perceived women as cruel people on this earth. Her primary school teacher was cruel to her after the rape. Other women in the community also judged her and she ended up as a sex worker.
- 5) She was abused from the first day of marriage. Later, she went to live with her in-laws. She is now divorced from her husband and she is happy with who she is and what she has achieved in spite of the violence.
- 6) A young woman who is a social worker by profession commented that after listening to what elder women have been saying in the dialogue, she is amazed at how strong women are. Participating in the dialogue made her strong. She now knows where she stands as a woman and that she must know her rights. She also learnt that she comes first and should take care of herself. She appreciates her mother for mentoring her and asked all Mothers in the room to give support to their girls.
- 7) She has been through a lot. She has become a champion at home and in the community because people come to her for counselling and for help. Her father was good father which taught her good values. The father has cancer and she has decided not to have a car and pay for his father medical aid. She noted that women stay in situation because of feelings of vulnerability.
- 8) Married for 37 years, she salutes her mother in-law for supporting and guiding her. She encouraged her to be strong and independent and not hand over her power to her husband. Women must not put their lives on hold for the sake of their husbands.



## Health

The SADC Protocol provides for the adoption and implementation of policies and programmes that address the physical, mental, emotional and social well being of women with specific targets for reducing maternal mortality ratio and ensure access to quality sexual and reproductive health services.

The following are identified as some of the challenges with respect to maternal mortality rate in South Africa:

### Medical infrastructure

- Lack of effective ambulance services in townships and rural villages. Recommendation: Provide adequate support for Municipal medical and paramedical services.
- Unaffordable and inaccessible health care services for pregnant women. Recommendation: Finalise initiatives for health care insurance for all people in South Africa.

### Personnel

- Negligence. Noted that many women give birth to stillborns not because of the baby's or mother's complications but because of negligence of staff. Women must be educated about their rights as patients. In an event that those rights are violated, women must be supported and encouraged to take appropriate legal action against health care institutions.

- Lack of empathy. Whilst it is noted that shortage of staff can put undue stress on health professionals, this cannot compromise the health and integrity of the woman who is in need of care. The Department of Health must lead a campaign on Batho Pele Principles to improve the quality of care that ordinary citizens receive.
- Lack of appropriate staff training in relation to their area of specialisation. For example, there are only a few trained advanced midwives in South Africa. With such training, this could alleviate the shortage of doctors.

#### Community Education

- Lack of education on family planning. Family planning should be part of comprehensive community education on sexuality, reproductive health and HIV.
- Lack of knowledge about the basics of reproductive health care. Together with women's organisations in the community, The Department of Health must organise campaigns to raise awareness about complications of pregnancy and childbirth.
- Ongoing community education about periodic breast examination as well as Pap Smears. The Department of Health must provide policy and direction on accessible and unaffordable access to Pap Smears for women.
- Include violence against women as a health care concern. Health workers must work with other professionals such as police, social workers and magistrates in raising awareness on social, economic and health effects of gender-based violence on women's body and mind.
- Train more community health workers. It is noted that most of these community health workers are unemployed women who are not paid for the services that they provide in the community. A stipend is recommended for such women.

#### Cultural beliefs and women's health

- Negative attitudes and condemnation for women who choose to terminate their pregnancies.
- Use of traditional herbs coupled with women's reluctance to use modern ante-natal clinics.
- Registration and further training for traditional healers. This includes traditional birth attendants.
- Older women reluctant to be examined by young nurses.
- Some women refuse blood transfusion because of religious reasons. Other refuse to either use contraceptives and/or undergo surgery in case of reproductive health complications. The Department of Health should collate research on traditional and religious beliefs/practices that impact on women's health during pregnancy and childbirth.

#### Youth sexuality health

- Provide school health services in all the schools. Nurses could work closely with Life Orientation teachers.
- Provide youth friendly clinics in communities.
- Invest in girls leadership development in schools and other community structures. Rather than wait for Taking the Girl Child to Work initiative, professional women encouraged to mentor girls on an ongoing basis.

## HIV and AIDS

The SADC Protocol covers prevention, treatment care and support in relation to HIV and AIDS.

The following have been identified as key obstacles and challenges with regard to addressing HIV in South Africa:

- Lack of information particularly for women with no formal education.
- Stigma
- Inaccessible and unaffordable health care services for the poor.
- Gender stereotypes
- Violence against women.
- Shortage of human, medical and material resources.
- Unskilled care givers
- Insensitive health workers violate patient's confidentiality.
- Crime relating to accessibility of ARV's.
- National, Provincial and Local government departments working in silos yet they are responding to the same issues in the same country. Even though there is a comprehensive HIV policy, what is lacking is an integrated and well co-ordinated response.

The following recommendations have been put forward to address some of the challenges cited above:

### Prevention

- Distribution of female condoms
- Widespread community campaigns in schools, burial societies, churches, taverns and shebeens.
- Encourage men to test and take care of their health.
- Address poverty and economic dependence of women and girls on men.
- Youth workshops on risky lifestyle with specific focus on alcohol and drug abuse.

### Treatment and care

- Ensure universal access to ARV's for women. This will also help in curbing mother to child transmission.
- Mobile clinics can be used to lack of access of health services in rural areas. .
- Establish support groups for people living with HIV.
- Department of Health to address the problem of shortage of resources and equipment. For instance, care givers are sometimes forced to work without gloves.
- Improve training and support for unpaid community based care givers who are mostly women. Unemployed men must also be encouraged to participate in the initiative. Society look down upon male caregivers; arguing that it is a woman's job. Male nurses can also be encouraged to run programmes for men in communities.
- Address stigma and discrimination against people infected with the virus. Family members must be included in such interventions.
- Train and work in close collaboration with traditional healers.
- Women often take care of themselves and they are very active in checking their status. Men, on the other hand, are often reluctant to test. When they test positive,

some of them fail to take the medication as prescribed. As a result, default and resistance to drugs is higher amongst men.

- In some cases men do test and when they find out that they are positive, they either disappear or take treatment in secret without informing their partners.
- Involvement of male nurses in the treatment and support of men living with HIV.
- Community education of involving men should target churches, workplace, taverns and sheebens, and many other places where men gather.
- Men who are unable to take care of themselves put further burden of care on her female relatives.
- In certain cases, women also keep their status private because of fear of abuse.
- Sometimes the attitude of the nurses borders on being emotionally abusive to the patient. For example, it is not uncommon for people who are positive to be shouted at in the presence of others.

### Support

- Community Health Workers must be trained, upgraded and accredited. Currently, they work as volunteers for a long time. If they do not have Matric certificate, they end up not achieving anything.
- Some orphans and vulnerable children end up not being help to get anywhere because of not having necessary qualifications and ID books. Government must extend and support care centres within communities.
- One of the pressing needs is poverty and malnutrition. Government must provide support groups with food and skills to be able to help themselves e.g. community vegetable gardens, arts and crafts, cooking skills etc.
- Parenting support groups are a priority. Raising children in contemporary society is a challenge for many mothers.

### Peace Building and Conflict Resolution

The SADC Protocol provides for the equal representation of women in conflict resolution and peace building processes as well as the integration of a gender perspective in the resolution of conflict in the region.

It is noted that South Africa has done well in putting women in key positions. The National Commissioner of Police, Riah Phiyega is a woman. So is the Minister of Defence, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Ncquakula and Public Protector, Advocate Thuli Madonsela. Beyond South African borders, the Chairperson of African Union, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini is a South African woman who is a leader of note.

In spite of these achievements, the dialogues revealed the following challenges:

- This is a male dominated sector and very intimidating to a majority of women. Even during CODESA, primary negotiators were men and women's contribution was not acknowledged.
- The role of women in peace building is not clear. Even though women are natural peace builders, their motives may be diametrically opposed to those of their male colleagues. For the latter, peace might mean something different from women's perception of what peace means. There is a need for more dialogue on the role of women in peace building other than just being couriers of weapons and carers of those who are injured.

- In some situations, war is a profitable business venture for some men. Thus, an intervention or efforts of peace building will have to take that into consideration. Men who benefit from war will not negotiate in the same way as women who want nothing to do with war in their communities.
- There is no clear policy that outlines peace building and conflict resolution from a gender perspective. Women who are part of peacekeeping missions may therefore end up endorsing what men do.
- The War Industry is a corrupt industry. Strong women are needed to crack a whip on corruption in this sector. This can, however, become life threatening.
- Lack of accountability. Men's summits agree on resolutions which they neither implement nor follow up.



## Recommendations

- **In the home:** Peace starts in the home. This message can be generated as part of 16 days of Activism. Women and men must respect each other so that children may learn from their parents and apply that respect when they are grown up.
- **In the street:** Women must become more involved in street committees. Further, women can organise themselves into groups that protect other women during situations of violence in the home.
- **Schools:** Women must become engaged with school activities and participate in School Governing Bodies. From such a position, women can address violence in schools with specific reference to sexual violence.
- **Public sector:** More women should be appointed in top positions in government departments, but they must have the qualifications to be appointed. "When you educate a woman, you educate the country."

- **SADC:** 50/50 in leadership positions in peace building and conflict resolution in the region. However, women must be given support through appropriate workshops, training and policies that will introduce a specific gender perspective to the sector.

## Media, Information and Communication

The SADC Protocol makes provision for gender to be mainstreamed in all information, communication and media policies and laws.

It calls for women's equal representation in all areas and at all levels of media work and for women and men to be given equal voice through the media.

The Protocol calls for increasing programmes for, by and about women and the challenging of gender stereotypes in the media.

It is noted that South Africa has increased visibility of women in the media with some who are appointed as editors and sub-editors. What is clear though is that the overall agenda of the media is driven by media owners. For this reason, it is recommended that women must be supported and encouraged to play a significant role in media ownership.

The following are highlighted as some of the key challenges in the media:

- The depiction of women in advertising is a major concern. This ranges from the motor industry to music to beauty products and many other retail products and outlets. A woman's body is depicted as a commodity that is for sale. Underlying all that is the message that sex sells. There is a need for in-depth research on women and advertising and agencies must be lobbied to refrain from using current gender stereotypes and roles. For instance, many advertisements about cleaning the house or caring for the children use women. None of them use a father or husband. This reinforces the stereotype that housework and childcare is an exclusive female occupation.
- The notion that women are gold diggers is expressed in many of the stories that are written about women. In addition, there is a subtle message in the way that women are profiled. Even though it may be hidden, there is a common underlying message that tends to assume that a successful woman slept her way to the top or if she wants to make it, she must be willing to sleep her way to the top.
- Social networks take advantage of young women, or poor women or unemployed women who are struggling with self esteem because of lack of income. This contributes to a rise in human trafficking.
- Bias in reporting on crimes about women. For instance, in reporting about rape, there is no corresponding strong condemnation of the act. Instead, the report could insinuate that a woman asked for rape.
- Sexist reporting: Women depicted as an appendage of a husband or boyfriend as if she has got no identity of her own.
- Cultural activities like reed dance, if combined with modern media networks, limit the power of women to the power of their body.

## Recommendations

- Equal representation in ownership of, and decision making in the media.

- Gender sensitivity training for media personnel. Women's stories are reported negatively; they are either depicted as men's appendages or described only in terms of their physical characteristics and not their intellect or leadership capacity.
- Gender awareness campaign within the entertainment industry such as film, music, and television. Very often, women in these industries are used as sex objects.
- The role that men play in social ills is often overlooked when reporting about topics such as teenage pregnancy and prostitution. Just like in the bible, the woman is the one who is crucified.
- Women discriminate against other women in the media industry. Ongoing gender training workshops for women is critical.
- Media to report on the image of women beyond the domestic arena.
- Utilise media to inspire young girls with stories that are relevant for their growth and personal development.
- SAWID to appoint a media officer to report on women issues.
- Gender media watchdog to collect stories about women politicians, successful

## Climate Change

- Introduce air pollution reduction mechanism. Adapt to natural energy resources e.g. solar panels.
- Introduce indigenous ways of generating and conserving energy. Rural women can be put in the forefront of such an initiative.
- Encourage community food gardens.
- Create bursaries for young women to study in fields that are related to climate change.
- Develop an integrated transport system.
- Involve more women in agriculture.
- Floods, women are affected because they are the one at home that have take care and protect their children and houses.
- Water is a challenge. Women must be involved in water committees particularly in the rural areas.
- Electricity is also a challenge. Women must be involved in the development of new energy both as creators and consumers.
- Plant more trees.
- Women supported in starting co-operatives that teach people about climate change as well as provide services that reduce it e.g. Recycling.

## Implementation

The SADC Protocol makes provision for gender sensitive budgets and resource allocation; oversight of the Protocol by a Committee of gender ministers; development of national action plans based on the Protocol; and the collection of baseline data for monitoring and evaluation.

The Protocol requires that Member states submit comprehensive reports to the Secretariat every two years indicating progress achieved in the implementation of the provisions.

It is noted that even though South Africa has a strong Legal Framework that was put in place to ensure that Gender is part of governance, budgeting, planning, monitoring and evaluation, implementation is limited to programmes that are run by different arms of the

Gender Machinery with very little resources and co-ordination. The following are the questions that were raised during National dialogues:

- The National Gender Machinery is failing in implementing the Gender Policy Framework.
- Within government, attention to gender equality is calendar driven. Resources are allocated for events and not programmes. As one woman in Limpopo said: "After August, we wait for 16 days of Activism. At that time, we will be fighting for stadiums. The right hand has got no idea what the left hand is doing. We all work in silos."
- Other than lack of resources, implementation of gender equality policies and programmes is hampered by cultural and religious beliefs that discriminate against women.

### **Provincial uniqueness:**

#### **Limpopo: Disability**

Limpopo was the only province that sent a very strong delegation of disabled women to the dialogue.

The following were some of the concerns that were raised about disabled women and girls:

- Exclusion in most programmes e.g. learnerships, bursaries, business opportunities.
- Societal myths- disabled women are looked down upon because some of them are unable to bear children, or get married or be part of formal employment. As a result, they are cast as incomplete human beings.
- Projects that are introduced to them by government are not led by disabled people. After implementation, there is usually no follow up.
- Disabled women's views do not count in community meetings or dialogues.
- Deduction of social development money
- Children with disability are not considered for grants
- Lack of employment equity within the municipality despite relevant qualifications
- Disabled women are not looking for hand-outs. They want to be helped so that they can help themselves.
- Public transport, e.g, taxis are not user friendly. Government must formulate a law that will make public transport accessible to disabled people.
- Community awareness campaigns should include the both abled and disabled people.
- Provide for interpretation within health facilities to aid communication
- Disabled women have different reproductive health needs and these are not catered for in clinics and hospitals. Department of Health must provide direction by way of research, law and policy.
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#### **Eastern Cape-Army veterans**

**NM to write something on this**

## Where do we go from here?

From as early as 1954, the Women's Charter resolved to struggle against laws and customs that discriminate against women. In 2013, discriminatory laws have been removed. Yet, traditional beliefs, customs and practices that discriminate against women remain.

In all the provinces, women in government and civil society have resolved to work together to use the outcome of provincial meetings to revive the agenda for gender equality as South Africa prepares itself for elections in 2014. This, they believe, will also ensure that the demands of the SADC Gender Protocol will be met in 2015.

*"We must start mobilising from the bottom again. Pre-1994, we did a series of workshops on the ground. The idea was so sensitise women about issues that affect them. Many women ended up in local government as councillors. But the process is not sustained."*

*"Now, men put us in high positions so that they can manipulate us. Even in tenders, men take women to get a good score but when they get a tender, the women do not benefit."*

*"Women are also not confident. We need coaching and leadership courses so that we can stop pulling each other down. We must remember that political leaders come and go. By playing the game by men's rules, we continue to perpetrate patriarchy."*

