

REMARKS BY KWAZULU-NATAL LEGISLATURE SPEAKER, HONOURABLE NONTEMBEKO BOYCE DURING THE WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT HELD VIRTUALLY ON THE 7TH OF AUGUST 2020

Programme Director;

KwaZulu-Natal Premier, Hon Sihle Zikalala;

KwaZulu-Natal Legislature Deputy Speaker, Hon Mluleki Ndobe;

KwaZulu-Natal Legislature Chair of Chairs, Hon Themba Mthembu;

Honourable Members;

People of KwaZulu-Natal watching us on media platforms;

I greet you during this very important day where we do not only recognise the role played by women during the liberation struggle for the freedoms we enjoy today but also looking at how we can overcome hardships faced by women today.

Programme Director allow me to recognise the Women who came before us. A distinct group of women who selflessly fought the freedom of all people of South Africa regardless of gender or race. They waged this struggle for our freedom knowing very well that if they were not lucky they would not only be imprisoned but the main price that they would ordinarily pay would be laying down their lives and those of their loved ones.

Amongst such women was Mrs Victoria Nonyamezelo Mxenge. She was a nurse and later became a lawyer who dedicated her time representing all those who were arrested for participating in the liberation struggle. True to her name "Nonyamezelo" which is loosely translated as perseverance, she endured being constantly harassed by the oppressive system until she paid with her life on 1 August 1985.

We gather here today 35 years since the assassination of Victoria Mxenge to commemorate the struggles that women go through in their daily lives as girls, as mothers, as grandmothers, as sisters, as life partners or wives.

We call upon all women to continue being ambassadors of justice and equality in our own spaces of influence and communities in memory of Mama uMxenge.

During this year's Women's Month, we must be aware that for women's rights to truly triumph, we need to have a society that advocates and believes in legitimate gender equity.

We need to be part of communities that respect the significance of solid family structure and values in building a more tolerant and developmental society. This can be achieved when we recognize and uphold equality of all regardless of race, age, gender or sexual orientation. It is a call to recognize equity and fairness and end discrimination and violence thrive.

We hope to achieve better and deeper awareness of gender issues as we participate in this month's activities as outlined by the KwaZulu-Natal Premier, Honourable Sihle Zikalala during the launch of the Women's Month last week.

These activities shall also draw courage and inspiration from the commitment taken by the women of 1956 who took it upon themselves to overturn their subjugation and humiliation. Let us actively participate in those activities, and use this month as the opportunity to start or continue our respective advocacies.

The role played by women in the history of South Africa cannot be complete until we take a journey that begins from the era of Monthatise (the female warrior), Princess Mkabayi, Princess Mantsopa, Queen Modjadji, Charlotte Maxeke and her generation through to the generation of 1956 and beyond.

This journey has to depict the leadership role that these foremothers provided in the various stages of the evolution of our society and the impact of the policies of the country in changing the quality of life of South African women.

I salute the current generation of Women who amongst them is a generation that is part of today's Parliament session representing diverse formations of women standing in for all parties that are represented in our Legislature.

My sisters, yours is a different struggle from that waged by our forbearers. Whilst they had to bring us freedom nina kumele nisigcinele isidima senkululeko. Nina ekumele nimanyene nakho ukulwisana nokungalingani okujongiswe kuthu Manina. Nini ekumele niqhube umzabalazo wamakhosikazi kwilizwe esisungula kabutsha kwakugqitha lo bhuhane. You're are the generations that must ensure tolerance of

choices of each individual. You must as Women leaders of today speak against the discrimination that maybe faced by Women who are from the LGBTIQ community.

You must be a generation that brings back public confidence to the elected leadership. This can be achieved by leading lives that are exemplary, being tolerant and accountable to the people we lead.

In his first State of the Nation Address in 1994 President Nelson Mandela cautioned the first democratically elected Parliament that:

“Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression...Our endeavours must be about the liberation of the woman, the emancipation of the man and the liberty of the child.”

Since that statement, South Africa has made significant legislative reforms, developed and implemented policies and programmes based on the Constitution (1996) encompassing the Bill of Rights which seeks to promote and protect women’s rights at home, in communities and in the workplace.

Our country is facing the deadlyCovid-19 pandemic. And as our women and children continue being vulnerable to the disease, poverty, prejudice, and violence, we see women exceptional rising up from the ashes and becoming beacons of hope in their communities.

Beyond the current pandemic that has forced us to hold our annual Women’s Parliament virtually, women must rise to construct and define the world’s geopolitics. When we move beyond this pandemic, we must lead the socio-economic trajectory and more importantly, we must fight Gender Based violence. I am certain we will triumph!

The pain that we cannot fathom is that this year’s Women’s Month comes at the time when our country is engulfed by disturbing phenomenon of unprecedented levels of violence against women and children.

We have seen just now during the lockdown women being killed and statistics of domestic violence escalating exponentially. These terrible episodes send a message to all of us that the struggle for women emancipation is not yet over. This is a continued

call to all of us as women, partnering with all progressive men, that we must continue the struggle for total emancipation of women and the girl child.

We have also noted that the Women formations continue with the initiative they started last year of identifying households that will be visited during the outreach programme. What is more pleasing is that is that the programme is fully funded by women formations. We applaud this progressive initiative and we pledge to continue supporting it partnership with them.

This will be done together with the legislature's Outreach programme which will take place in to Ugu District on the 27th of August which will see Members of the legislature and leaders of women formations distributing the much-needed tools to fight against the spread of Covid-19.

As I conclude, I would like to emphasize that we will continue to create and facilitate spaces that allow for participation of all women. We have done this in preparation for today's session by ensuring that Government, through the Premier, provides responses to the resolutions we took during the last Women's Parliament which took place in Amajuba.

The responses will enable us to measure the road travelled in addressing our issues.
As we are gathered here today our theme is "Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights for an Equal Society Now"

As women, we must work together to empower ourselves so that we can be able to enjoy the opportunities that have been brought to us by this democracy.

Wathint' Abafazi Wathint' imbokodo!

I thank you!