

Programme Director
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MEC: DCSR, Hon N Mahlangu-Mabena
Honourable Members of the Executive Council
Honourable Members of the Provincial Legislature
Representatives of Political Parties
Government Officials
Organised Labour
All Women Formations
All Stakeholders

I welcome this opportunity to make inputs at this important occasion for the Province.

As we close women's month, we all have to be mindful of all the struggles that scores of people – particularly women waged against the past system.

In 1956, the country witnessed unprecedented move where one of the largest demonstrations was staged in its history.

The drive behind the 20 000 women to the Union Building was about stating a case against the carrying of passes by women.

Since then, that march has since been celebrated throughout the country this month. After handing their petition, the women sang in unison - *Wathint` abafazi, Wathint` Imbokodo*.

This is a song which even resonates with all of us even today.

To embrace women development, the country established the Progressive Women's Movement of South Africa (PWMSA).

The Movement is mainly about addressing women's concern using a single platform on issues of race, class, religion, political and social standing, amongst others.

As a result, the movement is about encouraging mass participation of women especially at grassroots level.

In line with the ruling party's ideologies, the movement advocates women's involvement and mobilisation at all corners of the country.

With this structure, gone are the days where a women's place was said to be in the kitchen – when in actual fact – women play a key role in shaping society.

Seated here all of us we are product of women. It is in that spirit that we as PWMSA will continue stand for total women emancipation in all forms – to ensure proper transformation of communities.

Women continue to be dominated by their male counterparts at various levels.

The patriarchal system they find themselves in is of a great concern. Befittingly so, the Movement is mainly applicable in this regard.

As a country, we just passed the 20 year mark into democracy.

The advent of democracy brought about freedom to the general populace, however, falling short somehow on women issues.

It is against this background that as this Movement we are here to safeguard the gains made since the birth of democracy, but most essentially to make inroads on women development.

Our continued quest for women development will be to tackle gender based violence, inequality, and discrimination.

The women's movement focuses on nothing else, but targets women from diverse quarters – to ensure that there is representativity.

This movement is another platform for marginalised women to come to the fore and exploit presented opportunities.

In keeping with the spirit of the 1956 women, we commit to continue their convictions that challenged the then system against prejudice.

As we commemorate this year's Women's Day, let us be mindful that there is still a lot that lies ahead – especially for women.

Our commitment as this Movement in the Province is to continue fighting for women at all levels.

Once again, as a Movement we want to commend programmes implemented by today's government towards women's development.

'Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo'.

I Thank You.