



**STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA AT THE GLOBAL LEADERS' MEETING ON
GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: A COMMITMENT TO
ACTION: HOSTED BY H.E PRESIDENT XI JINPING OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
CHINA AND UN WOMEN**

27 September 2015

South Africa welcomes the holding of the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and thanks His Excellency, President Xi Jinping and the UNWomen for hosting this important meeting.

South Africa signed and ratified the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995 and has participated in the several reviews, the Beijing +5; Beijing +10; Beijing +15 and Beijing +20. Participating in the reviews gave South Africa an opportunity to review its progress towards women's empowerment and gender equality and to develop the trajectory to close the identified gaps.

South Africa is vigorously traversing the journey towards the achievement of gender parity in all areas of life by 2030 as a game changer that will turn the tide for the next generation, and ensure that we end poverty and hunger in all its forms everywhere and promote healthy lives and wellbeing for all at all life stages. We have developed laws and policies that compel both Public and Private Sectors to work towards the achievement of the gender equality goals and targets in the post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, the AU Agenda 2063 and our National Development Plan, 2030. Therefore, South Africa will for the next five years, focus on the following areas in order to promote women empowerment and gender equality:

1. EQUAL REPRESENTATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Section 9 of the Constitution protects the rights of all persons to equal protection and benefit of the law, and to freedom from unfair discrimination on the basis of among others, gender, sex, pregnancy and marital status. In order to give effect to this clause, a comprehensive legal framework has been developed, which includes: *The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 4 of 2000; Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998; Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995; Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 11 of 2002; Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, 5 of 2000; Home Loan and Mortgage Disclosure Act, 63 of 2000.*

We commit that in the next five years, we will enforce the implementation of the **Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 4 of 2000** and the **Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998** by all sectors of society in order to promote equality between women and men in order to reach parity by 2030 as required by the AU Agenda 2063.

- **Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998;**

In 2014, the Employment Equity Act was amended to ensure that affirmative action measures are implemented to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups which includes women, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce. The Employment Equity Act provides for equal representation of women (50/50), including on race.

Therefore in the next five years, we will monitor and evaluate compliance with the Employment Equity Act by all sectors and use the courts to enforce compliance where there is deliberate failure to comply with it.

- ***Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000***
(PEPUDA)

PEPUDA gives effect to section 9 of the Constitution and provides for the promotion of women empowerment and gender equality. It makes affirmative action mandatory. It provides a framework for eliminating unfair discrimination and the promotion of equality beyond employment matters. The Act also provides for enforcement mechanisms which include Equality Courts and Alternative Forums. The Act applies to all employment issues that are excluded from the Employment Equity Act. This includes contract work and the Judiciary.

Therefore we commit that in the next five years we will enforce PEPUDA to achieve equal parity in all sectors of our society by 2030.

- **Equal pay for equal worth of work**

South Africa is among the few countries in the world that have legislated gender parity in the workplace. Now our focus is “Equal pay for equal worth of work.” We believe that Equal pay for equal worth of work is not only a moral and human rights imperative, but a pre-condition for the achievement of sustainable development, economic growth and equality in the country. As a result we have published a Draft Code of Good Practice on Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value, in the Government Gazette for public consultation.

Therefore we commit that in the next five years we will develop mechanisms to enforce both public and private sectors to implement the Code of Good Practice on equal pay for work of equal value. We will also ensure that women’s unpaid labour is valued and their contribution is recognised officially. We will also educate the public to know and claim their rights.

- **Affirmative Procurement**

We commit to develop mechanisms for making both public and private sectors’ procurement which amounts to trillions, work for women. We will develop measures and mechanisms to enforce affirmative procurement for women.

- **Financial inclusion for Women**

Financial inclusion for Women forms part of the local, Continental and global collective action to reach universal financial access by 2020. Therefore in the next five years South Africa will be advancing financial inclusion for women in order to socially and economically empowerment women.

- **Gender Responsive Budgeting**

We commit to develop a Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting Framework that will guide, and provide norms and standards to all national, provincial and local governments to mainstream women's empowerment in financial allocation and expenditure.

2. WOMEN AND HEALTH

- **Reduction of HIV and AIDS**

South Africa has made significant gains in reducing HIV related deaths. Working towards a generation free of HIV, with particular reference to girls and young women, is a priority that is receiving our attention. Therefore we commit that in the five years we will focus on an important element towards achieving an HIV free generation

3. ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- **National Dialogues on Violence Against Women**

The next five years will see us going from one district municipality to the next convening national dialogues on Violence against Women. The aim of the national dialogues will be to discuss the causes of violence against women and appropriate solutions. We will also develop measures to change communities' attitudes and shift their mind-sets in order to eradicate violence against women and to promote gender equality.

- ***“#356 Days Campaign on No Violence Against Women”*** and the ***“#CountMeIn”***.

South Africa launched ***#356 Days Campaign on No Violence Against Women*** and the ***#CountMeIn***, media tools to engage communities, in particular men and boys to be counted-in to contribute to ending violence against women and children. This Campaign is aligned to the UN Women He4She Campaign which is intended to mobilize men to be agents of change in ending the persistent inequality and violence faced by women and girls. In the next five years we will be partnering sectors of society to ensure that we maximise the use of social media to change attitudes and mind-sets in order to end violence against women and to promote gender equality.