

**REPORT**  
ON SOUTH AFRICA'S  
COMPLIANCE WITH  
THE BEIJING PLATFORM  
FOR ACTION  
**2024**



Commission for Gender Equality

## FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) is established under Section 181 of the South African Constitution. Its mandate is articulated under Section 187 of the Constitution and the Commission for Gender Equality Act No. 39 of 1996. Section 11(h) and (i) of the CGE Act No. 39 of 1996 empowers the CGE to monitor the country's compliance with international instruments that South Africa is a state party to. The section states that the CGE must monitor compliance with international conventions, covenants, and charters acceded to or ratified by the Republic, relating to the object of the Commission, and prepare and submit reports to Parliament pertaining to any such convention, covenant, or charter relating to the object of the Commission. This mandate empowers the CGE to assess state compliance with regard to the domestication of international treaties through various mechanisms, including policy and legislative frameworks, as well as programming to obtain gender equality in the country. It is for this reason that the CGE assessed South Africa's compliance with the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) in the 2023/24 financial year.

The CGE last prepared its monitoring report on the BPA in 2015 parallel to the Beijing+20 state periodic reporting. Since then, significant developments have been made in the strengthening the advancement of the BPA. In 2020, the BPA reached 25 years since its adoption. During the celebration of this significant milestone, the UN Women, as the body responsible for overseeing the instrument brought together different stakeholders to reengineer and reimagine the economies, societies, and political systems so that they uphold human rights and achieve gender equality, leaving no one behind in the Sustainable Development Goals era. Generation Equality as an initiative to augment effective implementation towards achieving the objectives of the BPA formed Action Coalitions. These coalitions are global, innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships that are mobilizing governments, civil society, international organizations, and the private sector to:

- Catalyze collective action.
- Spark global and local conversations among generations.
- Drive increased public & private investment.
- Deliver concrete, game-changing results for girls and women.

The CGE compiled this report parallel to the Beijing +30 periodic reporting to assess progress made by South Africa in relation to the implementation of BPA and the resolutions that were adopted during the *Generation Equality: Realising women's rights for an equal future as reengineered* in 2020. The report highlights areas where the country has made positive strides, as well as areas of improvement. The CGE is grateful to the independent consultant, Advocate Boogie Khutsoane who undertook this project and prepared the report on behalf of the CGE. The CGE also expresses its gratitude to all the government departments, civil society organisations, academic institutions, and other relevant stakeholders for providing information towards the compilation of the report.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADR	Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
APP	Annual Performance Plan
ARV	Anti-retroviral therapy
AU	African Union
AYFS	Adolescent and youth-friendly services
BBBEE	Broad-based Black economic empowerment
BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
BPA	Beijing Platform for Action
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women
CET	Community Education and Training
CGE	Commission for Gender Equality
CHE	Council for Higher Education
CRV	Climate risk and vulnerability
CSE	Comprehensive sexual education
CSDA	Centre for Social Development in Africa
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CSVR	Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DEFF	Department of Environment Forestry and Fisheries
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Co-operations
DoH	Department of Health
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DSBD	Department of Small Business Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DVAW	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women
EAG	Estimated average glucose
ECD	Early childhood development
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EDVAW	Elimination of Discrimination and Violence Against Women
EEA	Employment Equity Act
EMEs	Exempted micro enterprises
ERAA	Education Research in Africa Award
EUP	Early unwanted pregnancy
GBV	Gender-based violence
GBVH	Gender-based violence and femicide
GDP	Gross domestic product
GRPBMEA	Framework on Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing
GER	Gross enrolment ratio
GFP	Gender Focal Person

GHS	General Household Survey
GL	Gender Links
GPSJS	Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey
GRP	Gender-responsive procurement
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRBA	Human rights-based approach
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
ICPD	International Conference on Population Development
IPV	Intimate partner violence
JSC	Johannesburg Stock Exchange
LCS	Living Condition Survey
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or sometimes questioning), intersex, asexual, and others
LTSM	Learning and teaching support material
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MMFR	Maternal mortality in facility ratio
NAPS	National Action Plans
NC(V)	National Certificate (Vocational)
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NDA	National Development Agency
NDoh	National Department of Health
NDP	National Development Plan
NEF	National Empowerment Fund
NER	Net enrolment ratio
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
NGM	National Gender Machinery
NGP	New Growth Path
NHRI	National human rights institutions
NSF	National Skills Fund
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSW	Office on the Status of Women
PLHIV	People living with HIV
PPFA	Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act
PSET	Public Post School EDUCATION and Training
Q1	Quarter 1
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
QSES	Qualifying Small Business Enterprises
SABSSM	South African National HIV Prevalence Incidents Behaviour and Communication Survey
SADC	Southern African Community Development
SALGA	South African Local Government Association



SALRC	South African Law Reform Commission
SANC	South African Nursing Council
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
SAWEN	South African Women Entrepreneurs Network
SBST	School-based support team
SCM	Supply chain management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SGB	School governing body
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
SMMEs	Small, medium and micro-enterprises
SMT	Senior management team
S.O	Strategic objective
SORMAA	Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act
SRHR	Sexual reproductive health and rights
SSR	Security Sector Reform
Stats SA	Statistics SA
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
SWC	SALGA Women's Commission
TB	Tuberculosis
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
TWIB	Technology for women in business
UBPL	Upper bound poverty line
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Commission of Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
VLS	Viral load suppression
WECP	Women Enterprise Coaching Programme
WEP	Women's Empowerment Principles
WGDAW	Working Group on Discrimination Against Women
WPS	Women Peace and Security
WPS NAP	Women, Peace and Security National Action Pla
WHO	World Health Organization
WOB	Women-owned businesses

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# PART 1

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) is an independent body established with other Chapter Nine institutions under Section 181 of the South African Constitution. Its mandate is articulated under Section 187<sup>1</sup> of the Constitution and the Commission for Gender Equality Act No. 39 of 1996.

Section 1(h) and (i) of the CGE Act No. 39 of 1996<sup>2</sup> mandates the CGE to monitor the country's compliance with international instruments that South Africa is a State Party to.

The section states that the CGE must “monitor compliance with international conventions, covenants and charters, acceded to or ratified by the country, relating to the object of the Commission” and “prepare and submit reports to Parliament pertaining to the respective conventions, covenants and/or charters relating to the object of the Commission”. This mandate empowers the CGE to assess State compliance with regard to enshrining the provisions of those international treaties within various mechanisms, including policy and legislative frameworks, as well as programming to promote gender equality in the country.

It is for this reason that the CGE is assessing South Africa's compliance regarding the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) in the 2023/2024 financial year.

The Fourth World Conference on Women took place in Beijing, China and was the most important of the four conferences on women held between 1975 and 1995. This conference was built on political agreements that had been reached at the previous three global conferences on women and consolidated five decades of legal advances aimed at securing the equality of women with men in law and in practice.

It is important to note that the Beijing conference specifically consolidated and built upon the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

The formulation of the Beijing Platform for Action aimed at establishing a basic group of priority actions that were to be carried out after their adoption. The main objective of the Beijing Platform for Action is the empowerment of all women.

The Beijing Platform for Action recognises the importance of the agreements reached at the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population, and Development and the World Summit for Social Development, which set out specific approaches and commitments to fostering sustainable

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<sup>1</sup> South African Constitution No. 108 of 1996

<sup>2</sup> Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) Act 39 of 1996

development and international cooperation and to strengthening the role of the United Nations to that end.<sup>3</sup>

The CGE, in line with its mandate, last prepared its monitoring report on the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) in 2015, parallel to the Beijing+20 state periodic reporting. Since then, significant developments have been noted in the strengthening and advancement of the Beijing Platform for Action Declaration agenda. It is noted that the Commission on the Status of Women's Sessions also assesses the progress of the global community regarding the implementation of BPA Strategic Objectives.

In 2020, the Beijing Platform for Action reached 25 years since its adoption, and South Africa submitted its BPA+25 country report. Among other things, during the celebration of this significant monumental milestone, UN Women, as the body responsible for overseeing the implementation of BPA, brought together various generations to reengineer and reimagine the economies, societies, and political systems to uphold human rights and achieve gender equality, leaving no one behind in the Sustainable Development Goals mantra.

Generation Equality is an initiative to promote the effective implementation of BPA to achieve the strategic objectives of the formed Action Coalitions. These coalitions were global, innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships that were mobilising governments, civil society, international organisations, and the private sector<sup>4</sup> to catalyse collective action, spark global and local conversations among generations, drive increased public-private investment, and deliver concrete, game-changing results for girls and women.

The Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action is another addition to the coalition, which will work to drive action and resources towards driving this agenda. Some of the Generation Equality Forum commitments to address include:

- Gender-based violence
- Economic justice and rights
- Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)
- Feminist action for climate justice
- Technology and innovation for gender equality
- Feminist movements and leadership.

The CGE is compiling this report in parallel with the Beijing+30 periodic report to assess the progress made by South Africa regarding the implementation of BPA. The report will cover the period from 2015, which, as mentioned, was the last CGE report on progress made by South Africa regarding the implementation of BPA.

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<sup>3</sup> UN Women. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome

<sup>4</sup> Generation Equality.org: <https://forum.generationequality.org/action-coalitions>

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **2.1. Before Beijing**

Before the Beijing Platform of Action (BPA) was developed in 1995, the issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment had long been a concern around the world.

The recognition of women's rights and the need for gender equality had roots in various movements and initiatives that date back centuries.

It is essential to understand the landscape and struggles that existed before the BPA to appreciate the significance of this landmark document.

1975: The Commission on the Status of Women called for the organisation of the first world conference on women to coincide with International Women's Year. The World Conference of the International Women's Year was subsequently held in Mexico City; 133 governments participated, while 6,000 NGO representatives attended a parallel forum, the International Women's Year Tribune. The conference defined a World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year, which offered a comprehensive set of guidelines for the advancement of women through 1985.

1980: 145 Member States gathered for the mid-decade World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women in Copenhagen. It aimed to review progress in implementing the goals of the first world conference, focusing on employment, health and education. A Programme of Action called for stronger national measures to ensure women's ownership and control of property, as well as improvements in protecting women's rights to inheritance, child custody and nationality.

1985: The World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women took place in Nairobi. The conference's mandate was to establish concrete measures to overcome obstacles to achieving the Decade's goals. Participants included 1,900 delegates from 157 Member States; a parallel NGO Forum attracted around 12,000 participants. Governments adopted the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, which outlined measures for achieving gender equality at the national level and for promoting women's participation in peace and development efforts.

SOURCE: UN Women <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support//world-conferences-on-women>

### **2.2. Beijing Conference: 1995**

The fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing (China) in 1995. The conference ratified the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and adopted it. This was an important step in developing a comprehensive international policy framework on women's human rights. The BPA was a comprehensive plan to achieve legal equality on a global scale. The Beijing Platform for Action sets goals and concrete measures across a range of issues affecting women and girls.

The significance of this Beijing Conference is that it was built on political agreements that were reached at three previous global conferences on women and consolidated the five decades of legal advances aimed at securing the equality of women and men in law and in practice.



The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action called for the removal of systematic and structural barriers that prevent women and girls from enjoying their human rights across social, economic, political, and environmental domains, as well as policy actions to achieve the vision. States concluded that the redistribution of power and resources between women and men in the public and private spheres was inextricably tied in with the broader goals of achieving equality for all, sustainability, and peaceful, inclusive, and democratic societies.<sup>5</sup>

At this conference, governments agreed that women's rights are human rights, that the eradication of poverty requires women's involvement in economic and social development, that there must be equal opportunities for women and men in sustainable development, and that peace is attainable and inextricably linked to the advancement of women.

Furthermore, the conference reaffirmed that reproductive rights rest on the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. It also includes their right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion, and violence, as expressed in human rights documents.<sup>6</sup>

It is also important to note that the transformation that took place at the Beijing Conference was the recognition of the need to shift the focus from women to the concept of gender. Member States would bear the major responsibility for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, but the United Nations system would also have a key role to play in realising the goals of the Beijing Conference. It was at that conference that the concept of 'gender mainstreaming' was coined.

This policy framework remains the most comprehensive and visionary agenda for the empowerment of women. The BPA embodies the commitment to achieve gender equality and responds to the collective effort of women and girls, providing better opportunities for them to realise women's rights and achieve gender equality.

### ***2.3. Some of the key developments that came as a result of the BPA<sup>7</sup>***

At the international level, the Beijing Platform for Action has made a major contribution to the establishment of independent expert mechanisms, such as the one on the

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<sup>5</sup> (E/CN.6/2020/3)

<sup>6</sup> Women Watch: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/human.htm>

<sup>7</sup> 25 years in review of the Beijing Platform for Action Contributions of the Platform of independent expert mechanisms on the elimination of discrimination and violence against women (EDVAW Platform) towards its implementation (E-booklet 2020). United Nations Human Rights Special Procedures

Elimination of Discrimination and Violence Against Women (EDVAW Platform) (2020), towards its implementation. EDVAW Platform and the Commission on the Status of Women: call for a human rights-based approach in the implementation of strategies for the elimination of discrimination and violence against women.

- The BPA entrusted the CEDAW Committee with monitoring its implementation by explicitly calling upon all States to report to it. A considerable number of countries ratified the CEDAW after the Beijing conference, and the adoption of the BPA affirmed the importance of full adherence to the Convention and the fulfilment of women's human rights in all areas of the Beijing Platform.
- The work of the CEDAW Committee addresses all areas of the Beijing Platform for Action. There is a correspondence between the Critical Areas of Concern on the one hand and the Convention's articles and general recommendations on the other. Apart from the crosscutting nature of some of the areas of concern, such as violence and poverty, others are dealt with in the Convention in the articles or general recommendations.
- The BPA urged States to "cooperate with and assist the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women in the performance of her mandate and furnish all information requested", as well as to keep renewing the mandate at the end of terms and, if warranted, to update and strengthen that mandate. The mandate has developed standards regarding the concept of due diligence as set out by the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, as well as other international instruments.
- By addressing the issue of violence as a form of discrimination against women, the SRVAW has contributed to standard-setting work on violence against women and the interpretation of State obligations "within the framework of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all other international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women".
- The adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325) on Women, Peace, and Security in October 2000, and its subsequent resolutions provided an additional important framework on women, peace and security related to conflict situations.
- Another important step was the establishment of another UN expert mechanism dedicated to women's rights, namely the United Nations Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls (WGDAW), set up by the UN Human Rights Council in 2010.
- The WGDAW was created because it was observed that "although human rights treaty bodies and special procedures do, to some extent, address discrimination against women within their mandates, their attention to such discrimination is not systematic. The WGDAW has a strong substantive connection to the Beijing Platform for Action. Tackling discrimination against women and girls is a key commitment of Member States, as expressed in several strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action. Furthermore, discrimination against women and girls is a crosscutting substantive issue that relates to all 12 crucial areas of concern. In

view of the broad thematic scope of its mandate, the WGDW had identified for its first six years of its mandate four thematic areas of focus, namely discrimination against women in political and public life, economic and social life, family and cultural life, and health and safety.

- The new global development agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, integrated the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as standalone SDG 5. For the first time, in its Targets 5.1 and 5.2, the focus was placed on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres. Some of the independent expert mechanisms are entrusted with monitoring and supporting the implementation of States' commitments under the global and regional women's human rights frameworks, including the Beijing Platform of Action, the 2030 Agenda, and UN and regional instruments on women's rights.

## **Generation Equality Forum**

The Generation Equality Forum<sup>8</sup> was established in 2021 and was a global gathering for gender equality convened by UN Women. The governments of Mexico and France co-hosted the forum in partnership with youth and civil society. The forum developed a Global Acceleration Plan to advance gender equality. Different stakeholders embarked on a five-tier plan to accelerate equality, leadership and opportunity for women and girls.

Some of the aims of the initiative include the following:

- To ensure that the ambitions of the BPA on women's rights are implemented and that the Sustainable Development Goals are achieved
- To expand public support for gender equality with a particular focus on catalysing the energy, activism, and ideas of young people
- To ensure accountability for commitments already made, secure transformative new commitments, enlarge, and energise global cross-sector movements for equality.

The selected themes of the Generation Equality Action Coalitions are:

- Gender-based violence
- Economic justice and rights
- Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)
- Feminist action for climate justice
- Technology and innovation for gender equality
- Feminist movements and leadership.

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<sup>8</sup> Generation Equality: <https://forum.generationequality.org/about>

## Acceleration of progress for gender equality



*"I am Generation Equality because: "Gender equality is not a women's issue but a matter of human rights."<sup>9</sup>*

*"I am Generation Equality because: "We all deserve equal opportunity. Opportunity opens up a world of possibilities for all".*

Economist Bogolo Joy Kenewendo, 33, is a former Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry in Botswana.

### Context and origin of Generation Equality

Generation Equality is the world's leading effort to unlock political will and accelerate investment and implementation of gender equality. It recognises that a bold, whole-of-society approach is needed to disrupt entrenched and rising global gender inequality, alongside intensified ambition, investment, and accountability. Convened by UN Women, the initiative aims to ensure that the bold ambitions of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action on rights are finally implemented and that progress on the Sustainable Development Goals is accelerated.

Generation Equality aims to provide a bold, holistic, and transformative solution to decades of inaction and under-investment in gender equality.

Generation Equality brings together organisations from every part of society to catalyse progress, advocate for change, and take bold actions together. These intergenerational multi-stakeholder alliances fuel Generation Equality and reflect the vision of the UN Secretary General's Our Common Agenda.

The 2021 Forum marked the beginning of a multi-year process, which focuses on commitments: building the number and quality of strong commitments and driving their implementation in line with the Global Acceleration Plan and Compact Framework.

- Accountability: Ensuring accountability and transparency for all commitments so that promises are kept.
- Collective action: Energising a multi-stakeholder ecosystem that builds political will, advocacy, and action for gender equality.

The Multi-Stakeholder Leadership Group is a group of 24 members representing all the diverse stakeholders of Generation Equality – member states, civil society, youth-led organisations, adolescent-led organisations, UN organisations, philanthropy, and the private sector – including the representation of LGBTQIA+ people, Indigenous women, and women and girls with disabilities – which guides and advises the work of Generation Equality. The Multi-Stakeholder Leadership Group's voice helps ensure accountability, sustained action, and the

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<sup>9</sup> UN Women Highlights 2020-2021

continued energy and vibrancy of Generation Equality's co-creative coalition and 'whole of society' approach.

SOURCE: Key Messages: 17 September 2023, prepared by UN Women

It must be noted that more than 25 years after the adoption of the BPA and after five reviews, there is still much that should be done to achieve the commitments of the Beijing Conference.

Despite there being achievements, it is evident that worldwide progress in realising women's human rights has neither been even nor has it been irreversible. There has been a backlash and increasingly visible attacks on women's human rights by autocratic political leaders attempting to establish their patriarchal authority.

It is notable that in the realisation of women's human rights and in the realisation of all people's right to development, there are still key structural barriers that should be recognised and actively addressed.

Typical examples of these include:<sup>10</sup>

- *The neoliberal economic order:* Insufficient attention to gender analysis has meant that women's contributions and concerns remain too often ignored in economic structures, such as financial markets and institutions, labour markets, economics as an academic discipline, economic and social infrastructure, taxation, and social security systems, as well as in families and households. Neoliberal economic policies have discriminatory impacts on women, as they tend to benefit only those with the capacity to capitalise on new market opportunities and workers classified as highly skilled. Women are most engaged in the informal sector, are less likely to have secure land rights, and are less likely than men to hold large amounts of capital.
- *Patriarchy:* This is a system of organising society through a set of rules that must be routinely enforced to strengthen the status quo and ascribe gender roles while normalising the use of power and fear in the State's relationship with its citizens. This model of patriarchy underpins development policies, political and legal systems, economic and military actions, regional agenda-setting and global policy actions, and creates societies that fail to deliver the full realisation of women's human rights. Patriarchy, as it is practised, is strengthening in its manifestation in the twenty-first century and poses a direct threat to the realisation of the commitments of the BPA and Agenda 2030.
- *Violence:* Women and girls, including those with disabilities, are at higher risk of gender-based violence, sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment, and exploitation. Women and girls with disabilities are at higher risk of gender-based violence, sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation.

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<sup>10</sup> 25-Year Review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. APWLD Regional CSO Submission

- *The climate crisis:* In relation to the provisions of the BPA from the Critical Area on Women and the Environment, as well as the more recent commitments under SDG 13 on Climate Action, it is evident that this is an area where worldwide backsliding is underway and instead of addressing the problem, the underlying issues have been allowed to fester and grow beyond control.

## **2.4. Beijing Platform of Action (BPA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>11</sup>**

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 was seen as a way of reaffirming the vision of the BPA with human rights and gender equality as core principles and the ambitious aims of eradicating poverty, reducing multiple and intersecting inequalities, addressing climate change, ending conflict, and sustaining peace. The 2030 Agenda underscores that, for development to be sustainable, its benefits must accrue equally to women and men and that women's rights will only become a reality in the broader context of efforts to protect the planet and ensure that all people may live in dignity.<sup>12</sup>

The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, LI Junhua, indicated that the *2023 Global Sustainable Development Report* highlights the significant contribution of science and evidence-based actions to counter uncertainty and address global challenges – the eradication of poverty, ending hunger, tackling climate change, reversing biodiversity loss, and reducing inequality, among others. It underscores that, together, we have the knowledge to steer change toward a better future. Science that is multidisciplinary, equitably, and inclusively produced, openly shared, widely trusted and embraced, and socially robust and relevant to society provides the foundation for the transformations the world needs.<sup>13</sup>

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN decided that the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) should, in 2020, undertake a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including an assessment of challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and its contribution towards the full realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through a gender perspective.

This global road map was agreed upon by States to achieve gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realisation of women's and girls' human rights. The

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<sup>11</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution (E/RES/2018/8)

<sup>12</sup> Report of the Secretary General (E/CN.6/2020/3)

<sup>13</sup> *Times of crisis: Times of change science for accelerating transformations to sustainable development*. Global Sustainable Development Report

approach is seen as an accelerator to the implementation of the Platform for Action and will directly contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The approach is important because the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides an additional framework for action to support gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The 2030 Agenda reaffirms the vision of the Platform for Action by both prioritising gender equality as a standalone goal and recognising it as a cross-cutting issue essential to the achievement of all other goals.

It is important to note that the 2030 Agenda dedicates a specific goal to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) with targets that resonate strongly with the BPA. It also stresses that the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is crucial. As an issue that cuts across the other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Agenda includes a series of gender-related targets addressing crucial areas of concern of the BPA, from women's poverty to women in the environment.

The Platform for Action and 2030 Agenda apply to all people. States are called on to ensure that all women and girls, regardless of their location, situation, and circumstances, enjoy their human rights. The principle of "leaving no one behind" focuses on addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality and their root causes, as well as the need to meet all goals and targets for all peoples and all segments of society. The focus on the principle draws attention to the way in which policies and laws interlock with structural, power, and political dynamics to deepen inequalities. In order to explain it further, women and girls from poor and socially marginalised groups are often among those left furthest behind because of overlaps between gender and other forms of inequality. Using the BPA and the SDGs will ensure that no one is left behind.

The need to use the two frameworks jointly is also necessary to address the rising inequalities and economic exclusion, which are a symptom of development models in which gains are not shared equitably. The level of resources and investment in institutions and implementation frameworks for gender equality remains woefully inadequate. This has led to fundamental shifts in the global gender equality landscape. Globally, there is rapid technological change, which has an impact on every aspect of economic, social, and political life, creating opportunities and risks.

South Africa has endeavoured to align the implementation of the SDGs with its domestic development agenda. This is the case regarding the alignment between the NDP and SDGs in terms of both the identified development priorities and, importantly, a strong emphasis on the crucial importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships in achieving the country's development objectives.

It is important to note that South Africa has aligned, as far as possible, the implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 with that of its National Development Plan (NDP). Since the NDP was brought into effect in 2012, it has significantly influenced South Africa's position and adaption of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs. This

alignment means that efforts to achieve the SDGs have the potential to significantly impact the achievement of the country's national priorities as expressed in the NDP and vice versa.<sup>14</sup>

Both the 12 Critical Areas of the BPA and the 17 SDGs aim to build on achievements and respond to challenges to ensure an end to discrimination against women and girls everywhere by 2030.

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<sup>14</sup> Lorren Kirsty Haywood, L. K. *The Sustainable Development Goals in South Africa: Investigating the need for multi-stakeholder partnerships*



## Reigniting the vision of Beijing to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

### Alignment of the Platform for Action critical areas of concern with the Sustainable Development Goals

<i>Report cluster</i>	<i>Critical areas of concern</i>	<i>Sustainable Development Goals</i>	<i>Cross-cutting critical areas of concern and themes from the 2030 Agenda</i>
A. Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work	F. Women and the Economy	SDG 5	I. Human rights of women L. The girl-child Human rights Leaving no one behind Universality
		SDG 8	
		SDG 10	
B. Poverty eradication, social protection and social services	A. Women and poverty	SDG 1	
	B. Education and training of women	SDG 3	
	C. Women and health	SDG 4	
C. Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes	D. Violence against women	SDG 5	
		SDG 11	
		SDG 16	
D. Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions	G. Women in power and decision-making	SDG 5	
	H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women	SDG 16	
	J. Women and the media	SDG 17	
E. Peaceful and inclusive societies	E. Women and armed conflict	SDG 5	
		SDG 16	
F. Environmental conservation, climate action and resilience-building	K. Women and the environment	SDG 2	
		SDG 12	
		SDG 13	
		SDG 14	
		SDG 15	

SOURCE: Report of the Secretary-General: Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly (E/CN.6/2020/3)

## 2.5. Gender equality and Agenda 2063

Gender equality is prioritised in Agenda 2063 as a key component of Africa's future. Aspiration 6 and Goal 17 of Agenda 2063 are most focused on achieving comprehensive gender equality to support people-driven development in Africa. Agenda 2063 emphasises two major priority areas to do this: eradicating violence and discrimination against women and girls and empowering women and girls. The short-

term plan for Agenda 2063 (2013–2023) prioritises economic rights, political participation and representation, women's and girls' empowerment, reducing levels of gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls, reducing all harmful social norms and customary practices, and eliminating barriers to quality education, health, and social services.<sup>15</sup>

TABLE 1: Three mutually reinforcing frameworks: Agenda 2063, BPFA, and SDGs

Three mutually reinforcing frameworks		
Agenda 2063	BPFA	SDGs
1) A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development 2) An integrated continent politically united and based on the ideal Pan Africanism and the Vision of Africa's Renaissance 3) An Africa of Good Governance, Democracy, respect for Human Rights Justice and Rule of Law 4) A Peaceful and Secure Africa 5) An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics 6) An Africa whose Development is people – driven, relaying on the Potential of African People particularly its Youth and Women and a Continent with well cared 7) Africa as a strong, united and a influential Global player and partner	A) Women and poverty B) Education and Training C) Women and Health D) Violence against women E) Women and armed conflict F) Women and the economy G) Women in power and decision-making H) Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women I) Human rights of women J) Women and the media K) Women and environment L) The Girl Child	1) No poverty 2) Zero hunger 3) Good health and wellbeing 4) Quality education 5) Gender equality 6) Clean water and sanitation 7) Affordable and clean water 8) Decent work and economic growth 9) Industry, innovation and infrastructure 10) Reduce inequalities 13) Climate Action 17) Peace, Justice and Strong institutions

SOURCE: Africa Regional Review Summary Report 2015-2019: Twenty-five Year Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPA)+25, UNECA and UN Women

## 2.6. BPA's areas of concern

The BPA flagged 12 key areas where urgent action was needed to ensure greater equality and opportunities for women and men, girls, and boys. It also laid out concrete ways for countries to bring about change. UN Women works with governments and partners to ensure such change is real for women and girls around the world.

The governments who adopted the BPA committed to taking strategic action in 12 crucial areas of concern, namely poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms, human rights, media, environment, and the girl child.

The 12 crucial areas of concern are summarised below.

<sup>15</sup> Stats SA. Gender Series Volume X: Gender Disparities in Access to and Use of ICT in South Africa, 2016-2022

## **A. Persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women**

This crucial area of concern is premised on the construct that feminised poverty affects access to basic universal human rights of women and exposes them to double discrimination on account of their gender and economic situation. This double discrimination is a consequence that leads to further vulnerability of women and their families, communities, and economies, which consequently suffer as a result.<sup>16</sup>

SDGs 1, 2 and 5, which were adopted in 2015, echo this Critical Area of Concern.

The strategic objectives under this area of concern include the following:

- Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty.
- Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources.
- Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions.
- Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminisation of poverty.

## **B. Inequality and inadequacies in and unequal access to education and training**

The education and training crucial area of concern seeks to establish gendered access to education at various levels. This thematic area is essential as it denotes women's access to education as one of the key elements to reach gender equality. While women and girls in the present day are far more educated than ever before, it is still important to establish the sustainability of the trend and to address existing gaps that compromise access to education. Educated women benefit entire societies and contribute to thriving economies and improved health, nutrition, and food security, as well as the education of their families. Education and training are also tools to help change harmful gender stereotypes that drive patriarchy within society.<sup>17</sup>

This area of concern is augmented by Article 10 of CEDAW and SDG 4.

The strategic objectives under this area of concern include:

- Ensure equal access to education; actions to be taken
- Eradicate illiteracy among women; actions to be taken
- Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education
- Develop non-discriminatory education and training

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<sup>16</sup> UN Women. (n.d.). 12 Critical Areas of Concern. Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw59/feature-stories#environment>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

- Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms
- Promote life-long education and training for girls and women.

### **C. Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to health care and related services**

The women and health thematic area establishes progress made in relation to health programmes that have been designed to incorporate effective and efficient sexual and reproductive healthcare services and education for women and girls. This is premised on the universal basic human rights notion that stipulates that women have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The enjoyment of this right is vital to their life and well-being and their ability to participate in all areas of public and private life.<sup>18</sup>

The women and health theme is echoed by Article 12 of CEDAW and SDG 3 and other instruments such as ICPD.

The BPA objectives under this area of concern include:

- Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable, and quality health care, information, and related services
- Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health
- Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues
- Promote research and disseminate information on women's health
- Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health.

### **D. Violence against women**

Violence against women is a crucial area of concern that seeks to establish the progress made in relation to putting mechanisms in place to curb violence against women in all countries. The provision obliges a country to implement the principles of due diligence and assess its performance in complying with the obligation to prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence as provided by the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women of 1993. The due diligence<sup>19</sup> in line with the declaration targets those acts that are perpetrated by the State or by private persons in both public and private spheres and ensures the provision of protection to victims

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<sup>18</sup> UN.org. [https://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/women\\_and\\_health\\_3003.htm](https://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/women_and_health_3003.htm)

<sup>19</sup> The due diligence standard for violence against women (VAW) is laid out in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) in Article 4(c), where States are urged to "exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons".

and legislative reform to protect women and girls from all forms of violence and guarantee prosecution of the perpetrators of such offences.

Violence against women is comprehensively provided for under CEDAW General Recommendations 19 and 35, as well as under SDG 5:

- Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women
- Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures
- Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.

#### **E. Effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation**

Armed conflicts and their effect on women are crucial areas of concern premised on the view that women are disproportionately affected by conflict situations. The bodies of women and girls are often used as a form of currency in the political economy of war and as part of tactics of terror.<sup>20</sup> This thematic area seeks to unravel how countries have progressed in preventing the effects that wars and armed conflict have on women and girls.<sup>21</sup> The thematic area is also concerned with the promotion of meaningful participation of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes.

This is also provided for by CEDAW and SDG 16:

- Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation
- Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments
- Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations
- Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace
- Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women
- Provide assistance to the women of the colonies and non-self-governing territories.

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<sup>20</sup> United Nations Secretary-General. (2017b). *Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*, UN Doc. (S/2017/249)

<sup>21</sup> UN Women. (n.d.). 12 Critical Areas of Concern. Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw59/feature-stories#environment>

## **F. Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and access to resources**

Women and the economy are a crucial area of concern that seeks to establish women's positioning within the country's economy. This is because women contribute to the GDP of the country through their work in various sectors, including businesses and farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, and as unpaid and paid care workers at home and outside the home. This thematic area seeks to establish progress by the country in promoting women's access to economic opportunities.

- Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources
- Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade
- Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women
- Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks
- Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination
- Promote harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men.

## **G. Inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels**

This gender inequality thematic area seeks to assess women's positioning in governance, power, and decision-making structures. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to take part in the government of their country. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic, and political status are essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life.<sup>22</sup>

- Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision making
- Increase women's capacity to participate in decision making and leadership.

## **H. Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women**

The thematic area seeks to assess the existing specialised mechanisms, which are designed to advance the gender equality agenda as prescribed by BPA. These specialised institutions (NGMs or specialised NHRIs legal bodies, as well as public and private institutions, among others) play an important part in informing the laws, policies, and programmes and advancing gender equality. They create robust laws

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<sup>22</sup> UN.org: [https://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/critical\\_areas\\_of\\_concern\\_30.htm](https://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/critical_areas_of_concern_30.htm)



and policies coupled with stronger mechanisms to coordinate various actors and ensure their effective enforcement and implementation can push the agenda.<sup>23</sup>

- Create or strengthen national machinery and other governmental bodies
- Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes, and projects
- Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

### **I. Lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women**

This thematic area assesses human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are the birthright of all human beings. The theme is premised on women's rights protection and promotion being the first responsibility of governments. The Platform for Action reaffirms that all human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political, and social, including the right to development, are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, as expressed in the Vienna Declaration<sup>24</sup> and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights.

- Promote and protect the human rights of women through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice
- Achieve legal literacy.

### **J. Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media**

The theme seeks to assess advances made in information technology that have facilitated a global communications network that transcends national boundaries and has an impact on public policy, private attitudes, and behaviour, especially of children and young adults. The potential exists for the media to make a far greater contribution to the advancement of women.

This thematic area therefore seeks to establish progress made in terms of the contribution of the media to the advancement of women in South Africa.

- Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication
- Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> OHCHR: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/vienna.pdf>

## **K. Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in safeguarding the environment**

Poverty and environmental degradation are closely interrelated. The Declaration links poverty and environmental degradation. In certain kinds of environmental stress, the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, leading to poverty aggravation and other imbalances. The deterioration of natural resources displaces communities, especially women, from income-generating activities while greatly adding to unremunerated work such as care work. In both urban and rural areas, environmental degradation results in negative effects on the health, well-being, and quality of life of the population, especially girls and women of all ages.

- Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels
- Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development
- Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

## **L. Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child**

This thematic area seeks to assess the developments that South Africa has put in place in compliance with the protection of the Girl Child as provided by the BPA Declaration. The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises that "States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or status".<sup>25</sup>

Strategic objectives:

- Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child
- Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls
- Promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs and potential
- Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development, and training.
- Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition
- Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work
- Eradicate violence against the girl child
- Promote the girl child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life
- Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child.

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<sup>25</sup> OHCHR: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/crc.pdf>



Since the Beijing Conference, the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action have been assessed by the UN Commission on the Status of Women each year and through a review process carried out every five years, reaffirming States' commitment to its full implementation.

## **2.7. Reviews of the BPA**

Since the 1995 Beijing Conference, reviews held by Member States every five years, facilitated by the Commission on the Status of Women, have assessed progress, identified gaps and challenges, and provided recommendations to accelerate the achievement of substantive gender equality.<sup>26</sup>

To date, five reviews have been conducted – in 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020 – with each review resulting in an outcome document in which countries pledge to continue their efforts towards achieving global commitments relating to the rights of women and girls. The outcome documents further outline priority actions for the coming five years.

The UN Secretary General's report<sup>27</sup> on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing BPA and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly covers challenges with regard to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and the part they can play in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In its resolution, the Economic and Social Council called upon all States to undertake comprehensive national-level reviews of the progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the BPA and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly. The Council encouraged the regional commissions to undertake regional reviews to feed the outcomes of intergovernmental processes at the regional level into the global review.

## **2.8. Follow-up to Beijing**

2000: The General Assembly decided to hold a 23rd special session to conduct a five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and to consider future actions and initiatives. "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development, and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" took place in New York and resulted in a political declaration and further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing commitments.

2005: A ten-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action was conducted as part of the 49th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Delegates adopted a declaration emphasising that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing

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<sup>26</sup> 25 years after Beijing: A review of the United Nations system's support for the implementation of the Platform for Action 2014-2019

<sup>27</sup> (E/CN.6/2020/3)

Declaration and Platform for Action is essential to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

2010: The 15-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action took place during the Commission's 54th session in 2010. Member States adopted a declaration that welcomed the progress made towards achieving gender equality and pledged to undertake further action to ensure the full and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

2015: The 20-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action took place during the Commission's 59th session in 2015. The session also addressed opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda. Member States adopted a political declaration that welcomed the progress made towards achieving gender equality, provided a strong basis for the full, effective, and accelerated implementation of the commitments made in Beijing, and also championed the key role of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda.

2020: The 25-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action took place during the Commission's 64th session in March 2020, which was scaled down due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Member States adopted a political declaration that welcomed progress made towards the full, effective, and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action through concerted policy action at the national, regional and global levels.

2025: The 30-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action will take place during the Commission's 69th session to be held in March 2025.

SOURCE: UN Women: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/world-conferences-on-women>

## **2.9. 25th anniversary of the BPA**

In 2020, the global community marked the 25th anniversary of the 4th World Conference on Women and the adoption of the BPA (1995). At the same time, the global community also reached a five-year milestone towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The UN and the global community agreed that 2020 should be seen as a pivotal year for the accelerated realisation of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls everywhere in the world.

### **Significance of the 25th anniversary<sup>28</sup>**

The 25th anniversary was:

- Used as a comprehensive national-level review process that involved all stakeholders. Governments were tasked with leading the reviews and mobilising civil society organisations and the private sector, including entities of the United Nations system, regional and international organisations, academia, the media, and other stakeholders. In particular, these reviews had to mobilise women and

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<sup>28</sup> Guidance note for comprehensive national-level reviews – UN Women (2018); Twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)

men of all ages around a new and renewed dialogue for change and actions to prevent and eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against all women and girls.

- Used as the occasion to bring a young generation of gender equality advocates and those who were still on the sidelines into the centre of government and society efforts. This approach was seen as an effort to join forces between government and civil society to overcome and eradicate the root causes of gender inequality and chart a path forward for genuine, substantive equality, with equal rights and equal opportunities for women and girls.
- Regarded as the opportunity to strengthen gender-responsive action and implementation of other global commitments, such as those under Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (2015), and the Paris agreement on climate change (2015), among others.

Africa's approach to the Beijing+25 Review took place in a landscape marked by the 2015 adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its related 17 SDGs, as well as the 2013 adoption of Agenda 2063 by African leaders as the blueprint for the "Africa We Want". These Agendas are seen to be mutually reinforcing and guiding the continent's aspiration for an inclusive, prosperous, and peaceful continent, and at the same time, are said to be leaving no one behind.

The overall context of the Beijing+25 review was to achieve high economic growth and address crucial challenges such as pervasive climate change, conflicts, and pushbacks on gender equality.<sup>29</sup>

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The development of this report was largely based on content analysis of information gathered in diverse ways. Content analysis is a widely used methodology that involves studying and analysing written, verbal, or visual communication. The methodology used included engaging in data collection primarily through desktop review methods and relying on evaluating secondary data as the basis for analysis and drawing recommendations. Due to the limited time presented for carrying out the assignment, it was a challenge to utilise mixed methods, including undertaking interviews with relevant stakeholders and analysing written content across the areas of concern and its objectives as highlighted by the Beijing Platform for Action.

Using this methodology was valuable because it offered a systematic and structured approach to studying and interpreting textual data. By employing content analysis techniques, it was possible to uncover valuable insights, patterns, and meanings within

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<sup>29</sup> UNECA & UN Women. Africa Regional Review Summary Report 2015-2019: Twenty-five Year Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPA)+25,

various forms of communication. The objectivity, flexibility, and scalability to provide in-depth insights made content analysis a powerful tool for researching information for this report.

#### 4. APPROACH

The integrated, human rights-based approach is at the heart of the Beijing Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda, and the human rights of women feature across the six clusters. Human rights principles, including the principles of interdependence and indivisibility of rights, as well as equality and non-discrimination, participation, and accountability, are crucial for achieving gender equality. The full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, is called for in the Beijing Platform for Action. Under the Convention, gender equality is understood as substantive rather than merely formal equality. Achieving such equality requires redressing women's socio-economic disadvantage, tackling stereotyping, stigma, and violence, and strengthening women's agency, voice, leadership, and participation. It also entails the transformation of institutions and structures that reinforce and reproduce patterns of discrimination and unequal power relations between men and women.<sup>30</sup>

It is important when analysing data for the implementation of gender equality and human rights conventions to use a human rights-based approach (HRBA). HRBA enshrines the equal rights and inherent human dignity of women and men and other purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women and the Declaration on the Right to Development, in this particular case.

HRBA is a conceptual framework that aligns with international human rights standards to promote and protect human rights in the process of human development.

It aims to address inequalities, discriminatory practices, and unequal distributions of power that hinder development progress and leave some groups marginalised and ensure women's empowerment and their full participation based on equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making processes. HRBA ensures that development plans, policies and processes are rooted in rights and obligations outlined in international law, encompassing civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights, as well as the right to development. It further ensures the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child as an inalienable, integral, and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and

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<sup>30</sup> Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2020/3)

emphasises human rights principles such as universality, indivisibility, participation, and accountability to guide development efforts focusing on enhancing the capabilities of both duty-bearers and rights-holders.

The human rights-based approach is essential to ensure that all individuals can enjoy their fundamental rights and dignity, taking into consideration the following key issues:

- Women's rights are human rights
- Non-discrimination – data will be analysed by examining disparities and inequalities in access to resources, opportunities, and outcomes across various groups based on gender, age, and race, to highlight a few. Ensuring equal participation for all individuals is essential.
- Participation and Inclusiveness – check whether marginalised groups, such as women, have their voices and experiences captured in decision-making and in the reports by the government and other stakeholders.
- Accountability – check whether there are evidence duty bearers who are accountable for respecting, protecting, and fulfilling human rights in the implementation of policies and programmes that have lived up to this principle.

The vision of Beijing was reaffirmed in 2015, when States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with human rights and gender equality as core principles and the ambitious aims of eradicating poverty, reducing multiple and intersecting inequalities, addressing climate change, ending conflict, and sustaining peace. Building on the Beijing Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda underscores that, for development to be sustainable, its benefits must accrue equally to women and men and that women's rights will only become a reality in the broader context of efforts to protect the planet and ensure that all people may live in dignity.

Since an integrated, human rights-based approach is at the heart of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda, the human rights of women feature across all six clusters that will be discussed in this report.

The full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, is repeatedly called for in the Beijing Platform for Action.

Under the Convention, gender equality is understood as substantive rather than merely formal equality. Achieving such equality requires redressing women's socio-economic disadvantage; tackling stereotyping, stigma and violence; and strengthening women's leadership and participation. It also entails the transformation of institutions and structures that reinforce and reproduce patterns of discrimination and unequal power relations between men and women.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Report of the Secretary-General: Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly (E/CN.6/2020/3)

## **Four basic principles should be met in a rights-based approach**

A rights-based approach emphasises processes equally with outcomes. Each of the four principles explicitly includes gender equality and a gender perspective that recognises that women have different roles from men and therefore different needs, priorities and specific rights.

The four principles<sup>32</sup> are:

- Ensuring broad participation in the process of decision-making by all those who are potentially affected, particularly women and poor people.
- Accountability that enables men and women rights-holders to claim their rights and ensures that the State fulfils its obligations as a duty bearer. This translates to holding governments accountable through transparency of processes and results, and widespread access to information. All citizens have a right to hold the government accountable for progress in implementing international and national commitments.
- Empowerment gives women and men the power, capacities, capabilities, and access to resources to enable them to change their own lives. This can be done through capacity building to support informed and active participation.
- Non-discrimination and specific attention to vulnerable groups. This means removing discrimination and including women, the poor and disadvantaged groups as active agents in development rather than as passive beneficiaries. The principle requires an active effort to identify those who are discriminated against, trace the causes and mechanisms that result in discrimination, and actively address them. The definition of discrimination that has to be considered is the one from CEDAW.

It is important to understand that laws that establish that women and men have equal rights provide an important basis for demanding and achieving equality in practice. Laws can be a central reference point for political and cultural struggles, driving changes in social norms and popular attitudes, as well as policy shifts. However, making women's rights real requires more than just legal reform.<sup>33</sup>

## **New approach introduced at the 25th anniversary of the BPA: UN Women Guidance Note<sup>34</sup>**

In 2020, the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was, for the first time, reviewed simultaneously with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – the 2030 Agenda.

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<sup>32</sup> UNIFEM, Making the MDGs work for all – gender-responsive rights-based approaches to the MDGs

<sup>33</sup> Progress of the world's women 2015-2016 – transforming economies, realising rights.

<sup>34</sup> UN Women. (2018). Guidance notes for comprehensive national-level reviews,

To facilitate national-level reviews, UN Women, together with the regional commissions, issued a guidance note for comprehensive national-level reviews.

This guidance note clusters the BPA's 12 crucial areas of concern into six overarching dimensions that highlight its alignment with the 2030 Agenda. This approach will be applied to analyse progress, gaps, and challenges to generate lessons for the implementation of both frameworks in a mutually reinforcing manner.

The adoption of the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has presented governments with an additional challenge of aligning national policies with expansive global development goals.

Achieving the SDGs depends on partnerships between stakeholders from the government, the private sector, civil society, academic and research institutions, and international agencies. The effort that is needed here requires coherent policies and an enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels and by all actors.

The crucial role of partnerships in the agenda is emphasised further by SDG 17's exclusive focus on partnerships. SDG 17 calls for a specific focus on revitalising global partnerships for sustainable development, which should be complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources to support the achievement of the SDGs in all countries.

TABLE 2: Beijing Platform for Action 12 Concerns and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Targets

Beijing Platform for Action (12 critical areas of concern)	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (targets under SDG 5) <sup>6</sup>
A. Women and poverty	5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
B. Education and training of women	5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls
C. Women and health	5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices
D. Violence against women	5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work
E. Women and armed conflict	5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels
F. Women and the economy	5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights
G. Women in power and decision-making	5a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources
H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women	5b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology
I. Human rights of women	5c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality
J. Women and the media	
K. Women and the environment	
L. The girl-child	
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (gender-specific targets under other SDGs) <sup>7</sup>	

SOURCE: Guidance note for comprehensive national-level reviews, prepared by UN Women: Twenty-5th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)

## Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

### Gender-specific indicators (14)

5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex

5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age

5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence

5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18

5.3.2 Proportion of girls and women aged 15–49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation, by age

5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location

5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments

5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions

5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15–49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care

5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education

5.a.1 (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure

5.a.2 Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control

5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex

5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment

The six clusters are as follows:

- Inclusive development, shared prosperity, and decent work
- Poverty eradication, social protection, and social services
- Freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotypes
- Participation, accountability, and gender-responsive institutions
- Peaceful and inclusive societies
- Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation are clustered into six overarching dimensions that highlight the alignment of the two frameworks.



## PART 2

### SOUTH AFRICA'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION (BPA)

#### 5. WHY IS GENDER EQUALITY IMPORTANT?

Information from the Review of the NDP<sup>35</sup> shows that women and girls continue to suffer the negative impacts of persistent patriarchy, gender inequality, discrimination, and a pandemic of gender-based violence.

TABLE 3: Distribution of the female population by province, 2022

Province	N ('000)	Percent
WC	3 765	12,0
EC	3 363	10,7
NC	661	2,1
FS	1 543	4,9
KZN	6 103	19,5
NW	2 175	6,9
GP	7 958	25,4
MP	2 498	8,0
LP	3 252	10,4
RSA	31 319	100,0

Source: GHS 2022

Stats SA<sup>36</sup> indicates that the distribution of South Africa's female population showed notable provincial disparities.

- Gauteng had the highest proportion of women, accounting for a quarter (25.4%) of the total, followed by KwaZulu-Natal (19.5%)
- Northern Cape remained the province with the lowest female population share (2.1%)
- Regarding disaggregation by population group, 81.9% of women were Black African, 8.6% Coloured, 7.2% White, and 2.3% Indian/Asian.

Women's rights in South Africa are protected by the new Constitution, which guarantees the rights to life, dignity, privacy, and other rights. However, women still face challenges such as gender inequality, lower wages, and high rates of rape and domestic violence.<sup>12</sup> Women's

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<sup>35</sup> A review of the NDP – Advancing Implementation towards a more capable nation

<sup>36</sup> Marginalised Groups Indicator Report, 2022

rights activists and organisations have been working to address these issues and promote women's empowerment and participation in society.

## A. Some of the persisting challenges in South Africa

Gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF)	<p>South Africa still faces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Terrible levels of gender inequality</li><li>• Brutal repression of women and girls.</li></ul> <p>The current President of South Africa, President Cyril Ramaphosa, has described GBV &amp; Femicide as a pandemic. Achieving gender equality is therefore essential to combat GBV and create a safer environment for all.</p>
Empowering women in the workforce	<p>Decreased gender discrimination will lead to increased remuneration and job opportunities for women.</p>
Representation in decision-making	<p>Gender equity in decision-making positions, in both government and the private sector, is crucial.</p> <p>South Africa has seen an increase in the proportion of seats held by women in the National Assembly (from 33% in 2004 to 46% in 2019).</p>
Promoting science and education	<p>Acknowledging the role of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education for young girls and women.</p> <p>These fields serve as a foundation for development, economic empowerment, and opportunities in areas like artificial intelligence and data science.</p>
Achieving sustainable development goals	<p>None of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations can be achieved without attaining the fifth goal concerning gender equality.</p> <p>It is time to empower women and girls everywhere so that they can reach their full potential.</p>

SOURCE: Copilot

## B. Gender equality in South Africa

South Africa's definition of and goals towards achieving gender equality are guided by a vision of human rights, which incorporates acceptance of equal and inalienable rights of all women and men. This ideal is a fundamental tenet under the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.<sup>37</sup>

Gender inequalities are still deep-rooted in many societies. Women suffer from a lack of access to decent work and face occupational segregation and gender wage gaps. In many situations, they are denied access to basic education and health care

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<sup>37</sup> Act 108 of 1996

and are victims of violence and discrimination. They are under-represented in political and economic decision-making processes.

Women who work in male-dominated occupations face challenges that differ from those who work in more gender-balanced and female-dominated occupations. These challenges affect their retention and career success.

Despite several challenges in the achievement of gender equality, it is important to also take note that South Africa has several transformative and progressive policies and legislations aimed at advancing women's empowerment and gender equality.

The achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the full realisation of their human rights are essential to achieving sustained, inclusive, and equitable economic growth and sustainable development.

South Africa's approach to the HRBA ensures that human rights principles, including the principles of interdependence and indivisibility of rights, as well as equality and non-discrimination, participation, and accountability, are implemented, as these are crucial for achieving gender equality.

Oxfam South Africa<sup>38</sup> summarises some of the most pervasive challenges facing women in South Africa as follows:

- Black women continue to be the face of poverty and the people who shoulder the social burden emanating from high levels of poverty and inequality in the country.
- The sustained oppression and marginalisation of rural women, worsened by a context of resurging retribalisation of South Africa, women living under a dual legal system wherein customary practices often take precedence.
- Women are an exploited labour force: marginalised from the formal economy, paid less than men for the same work and perform minimally paid or wholly unpaid social reproductive labour.
- Gender-based violence is endemic in domestic environments, society and even in schools. This is fuelled by, among other things, pervasive sexism, patriarchal norms, attitudes and beliefs, and a culture of impunity.
- Inadequate access to essential services such as healthcare, education, water, and electricity means that women spend large amounts of their time filling the gap.
- Women constitute the highest number of those living with or shouldering the burden of HIV and AIDS.
- The rise of religious and cultural fundamentalisms.

South Africa has a wide variety of policy frameworks and legislation that promote women's economic empowerment. Such frameworks to which the country is a

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<sup>38</sup> Oxfam.org.za: <http://www.oxfam.org.za/what-we-do/programmes/womens-rights-and-gender-justice>

signatory include international and regional declarations, conventions' treaties, and protocols that advance gender equality by supporting women's empowerment. These include the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), among others.

### **C. South Africa's view of Beijing+25**

It is a fact that an entire generation has been born and grown to adulthood since the Beijing conference 25 years ago.

Investing in women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. It is acknowledged that women make enormous contributions to economies, whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees or by doing unpaid care work at home. It is only when women have their own means, when they can earn their own income, when they have assets to call their own, and when they have skills and capabilities, that they are able to fully control their destinies. There is a need to ensure that they realise the full benefit of their contributions.

It will be important to ensure that this generation achieves equality, empowerment, and emancipation.

### **D. South Africa's approach to addressing gender inequalities: The significance of the HRBA**

South Africa's human rights framework provides the highest level of normative authority:

- Human rights are the only values on which there is a global consensus. Common elements from sources such as political and economic regimes and cultural and religious traditions were brought together in the development of the international human rights framework.
- One of the central principles human rights laws established is that all human beings, women included, are equal and should not be subjected to discrimination. Once gender equality is understood as a human right, it needs no additional justification, and the legitimacy of work to advance gender equality does not depend on proving its usefulness for other purposes, such as those of development or economic growth.

The framework provides the definitive certainty of law:

- One of the common characteristics of both international human rights law and national law is that obligations (what must be done, what must not be done, and who has responsibility for these actions) are very clearly defined. By becoming a party to CEDAW, for example, a State undertakes to implement a long series of specific measures to advance gender equality. The content of these obligations is not open to alteration by individual governments or organisations.

Responds to country realities and emerging issues:

- A universal set of detailed gender equality requirements could be an obstacle rather than an asset for gender equality work if it were abstract or rigid. The challenges women face vary. The international human rights system is designed to be responsive and flexible.

## E. South African legal framework

More laws are tearing down barriers and backing women's rights. Justice depends on equal treatment of women and girls under the law.<sup>39</sup>

*"Law reform targeting women's empowerment has been associated with improved economic outcomes for women. Reforms increasing women's equality of opportunity contribute to economies that are more successful, higher female labour force participation, and better development outcomes. Attention needs to be paid to how legislation is implemented, whether legislation addresses societal norms and attitudes, and brings about behavioural change."*

*It is important to measure the impact of legal reforms on women's lives. A theory of justice, viz, redistribution, recognition, and representation, provides a useful lens with which to assess progress towards achieving gender justice.<sup>40</sup>*

Gender equality has always been a core value of the struggle for a democratic South Africa. Section 9 of the Constitution of South Africa guarantees equality before the law and freedom from discrimination for the people of South Africa.

The Bill of Rights in the Constitution enshrines the rights of all people and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom.

Various legislations and policies are based on the principle of equality as enshrined in the Constitution. The Constitution is expressed in South Africa's employment law framework, particularly the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (as amended), which provides for the expression of Section 10 (the right to dignity) and Section 9 (the right to equality).

Laws that establish that women and men have equal rights provide an important basis for demanding and achieving equality in practice. They can be a central reference point for political and cultural struggles, driving changes in social norms and popular attitudes, as well as policy shifts. This country has adopted a gender policy framework that must ensure that the process of achieving gender equality is at the centre of the

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<sup>39</sup> UN Women: [UN Women Highlights 2021–2022](#)

<sup>40</sup> Rustin, C., What gender legislative reforms have meant for women in South Africa

transformation process within all structures, institutions, policies, procedures, practices and programmes of government, civil society, and private sector.

South Africa is a signatory to several international instruments that support gender equality, promote respect for human rights, including women's rights, and support the empowerment of women. These include the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), among others.

South Africa's Constitution<sup>41</sup> provides a framework that provides guidance on how to deal with issues of non-discrimination, transformation, and gender equality. According to Section 7(2) of the Constitution, the State is compelled to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil the range of socio-economic rights as a matter of obligation – a rule of law that must be accomplished. These obligations suggest duties for the State, either to take positive action to implement the rights or to refrain from action that could limit full realisation. Furthermore, the country has made significant progress in putting in place legislation and policy frameworks for advancing gender equality, empowerment, and the protection of women against discrimination and victimisation based on gender.

South Africa is also a signatory to key international and regional protocols, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

The National Development Plan: Vision 2030 (NDP) is the blueprint for tackling South Africa's challenges and serves as a long-term vision for the country. The NDP is South Africa's lodestar for inclusive growth, prosperity, and development for all citizens in the country. The NDP is aligned to Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>42</sup>

The NDP prioritises the elimination of poverty and the reduction of inequality and unemployment through inclusive economic growth, building human capabilities to ensure that people can lead lives they value, enhancing the capacity of the State, and promoting leadership and active citizenship throughout society.

The following pieces of legislation contain key elements that can be used to protect the rights of women, promote gender equality, and facilitate women's empowerment:

- Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000
- Employment Equity Act of 1998
- Electoral Act of 1998

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<sup>41</sup> Act 108 of 1996

<sup>42</sup> South Africa's report on the implementation of agreed conclusions on 'women's empowerment and the link to Sustainable Development (2020)

- Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997
- National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide
- Framework on Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing (GRPBMEA)
- Municipal Systems Act of 2000
- Communal Land Rights Act of 2004, among others.

At the strategic policy level, the country's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (2000) established a clear vision and framework to guide the processes of developing laws, policies, procedures, and practices that would ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres, levels and structures of government, the workplace, the community and the family.

It is important to understand that making women's rights real requires more than just legal reform. The translation of equality before the law into equal outcomes is not automatic. Even where gender-equal laws have been put into place, entrenched inequalities, discriminatory social norms, harmful customary practices, as well as dominant patterns of economic development can undermine their implementation and positive impact.<sup>43</sup>

In Volume 25 of the Special Edition on *What gender legislative reforms have meant for women in South Africa*, Carmine Rustin<sup>44</sup> states that it is important to measure the impact of legal reforms on women's lives and further that a theory of justice, viz, redistribution, recognition and representation, provides a useful lens with which to assess progress towards achieving gender justice. Gender justice cannot be achieved without considering the distribution of resources, cultural redress, and political representation. Injustices in the economy can be observed in how the economy values what has been called productive and reproductive work. Reproductive work, which women overwhelmingly do, is under-paid and under-valued. There is an argument that women's responsibilities in the household and family have often hindered them from accessing opportunities or fully accessing their rights.

Rustin raises a concern that whilst women have moved into positions of leadership and paid employment in the public sphere, the responsibilities in the private sphere and tasks considered women's work in the household have not stopped nor shifted. Rustin raises a question of whether it is enough for the State to introduce legislation alone, as women, in effect, suffer when they take up these opportunities, as the care and household responsibilities are not shared equally within the household.

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<sup>43</sup> Transforming Economies, Realising rights: progress of the world's women, 2015-2016

<sup>44</sup> Rustin, C., *What gender legislative reforms have meant for women in South Africa*

## PART 3

### CLUSTERS

#### CLUSTER A: INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, SHARED PROSPERITY, AND DECENT WORK; WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY; SDG 5, SDG 8, AND SDG 10

Item	Report cluster	BPA area of concern	SDGs	cross-cutting
A	Inclusive development shared prosperity and decent work	F. Women and the economy	SDG 5 SDG 8 SDG10	I. Human rights of women L. The girl child Human rights Leaving no one behind

#### *Beijing area of concern: women and the economy*

Number	Strategic objectives
S O. F.1.	Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment and appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources
S O. F.2.	Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets, and trade
S O. F.3.	Provide business services, training and access to markets, information, and technology, particularly to low-income women
S O. F.4.	Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks
S O. F.5.	Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination
S O. F.6.	Promote harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men
Human rights of women	
S.O I.1.	Promote and protect the human rights of women through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
Girl child	
S.O L.1	Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child
S.O. L.2	Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls
SO. L.3.	Promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs
S.O. L.6.	Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work



S.O. L.8.	Promote the girl child's awareness of and participation in social, economic, and political life
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## Crucial issues raised under SDG 8

Promoting gender equality and decent work means:

- Equal opportunity and treatment for men and women in employment and occupation, and fair and just outcomes for both sexes
- The same human and workers' rights for men and women
- Equal value and fair distribution between women and men of responsibilities and opportunities, paid and unpaid work, decision making, and income.

## SGD 5 (Gender equality), SDG 8 (Decent work)

- Economic growth contributes to sustainable development by extending benefits to all people, actively reducing inequality, and avoiding harm to the environment
- For growth to be inclusive, decent work must be equally accessible to women and men. With women still less likely to participate in the labour force and more likely to take the worst jobs in it (insecure, unsafe, and poorly paid jobs), inclusive growth remains far out of reach

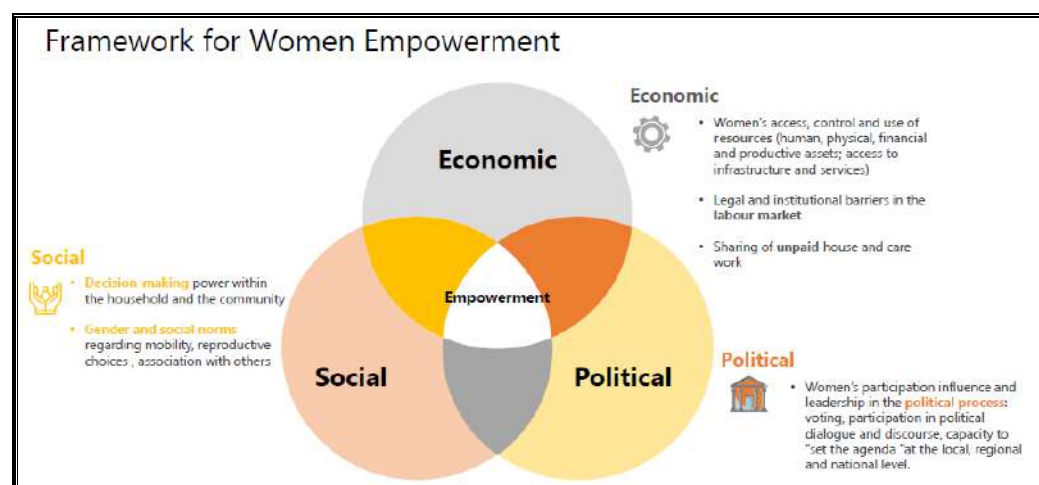
The gender wage gap:

- Many women still occupy informal, poorer-quality jobs. Patterns of occupational segregation mean some occupations remain dominated by men or women, with the latter tending to be lower in status and pay
- Partnership with the private sector, including through the Women's Empowerment Principles, helps transform business practices in support of gender equality and women's empowerment.



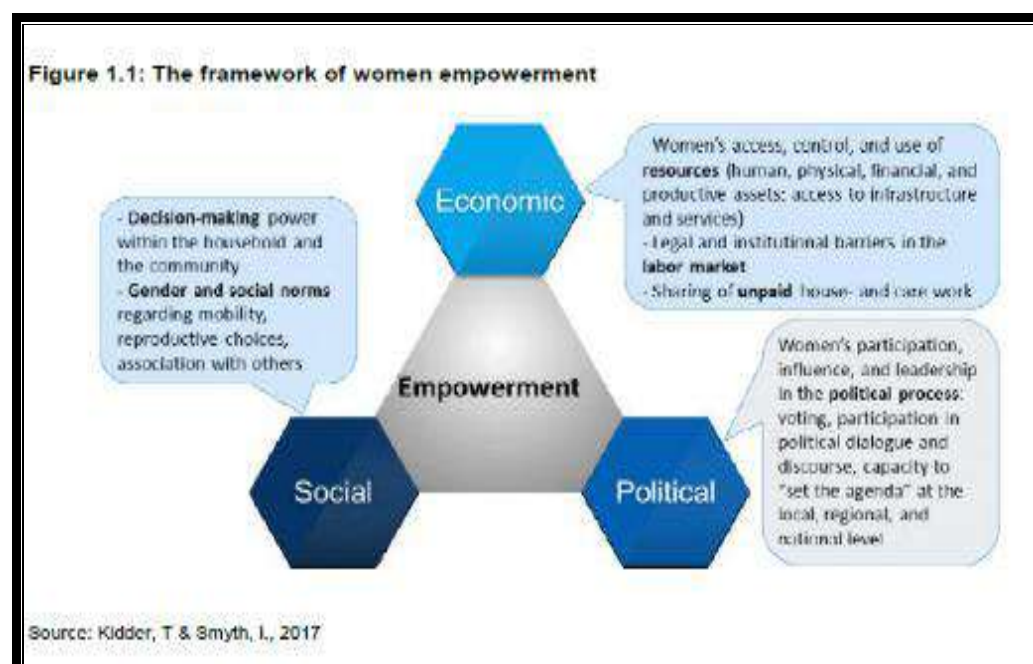
SOURCE: Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals – The Gender Snapshot 2023= UN Women

FIGURE 1: Framework for women empowerment



SOURCE: Gender Series Volume IX: Women Empowerment, 2017-2022 Stats SA

FIGURE 2: Women's economic empowerment



Policies on women's economic empowerment should focus not only on increasing their participation to boost economic growth but also on expanding public investment with a view to redistributing the burden of unpaid care and domestic work.<sup>45</sup>

### THREE TYPES OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT<sup>46</sup>

- **Economic empowerment:** This entails having control over finances and family resources, owning property, having access to markets, having employment opportunities, and being represented in positions of economic decision-making. Economic empowerment therefore enables women to have equal opportunities to enter the workforce, become financially independent, and rise to positions of economic power. Economic empowerment indicators will analyse how women fare in the labour market, their poverty status, ownership of resources and their earnings.
- **Social empowerment:** For women to be socially empowered, they must be free from discrimination, be protected from sexual and domestic violence, have access to family planning services, be more visible in public places, and see a change in the cultural norms that still view women as inferior to men. Social empowerment also includes providing women with education opportunities to better their lives. Social empowerment indicators will assess representation in decision-making positions, as well as perceptions of social gender norms.

<sup>45</sup> Report of the United Nations Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2020/3)

<sup>46</sup> Stats SA. Gender Series Volume IX: Women Empowerment 2017–2022

- Political empowerment: Political empowerment involves having the right to vote, increasing the representation of women in politics, and representation in local, provincial, and national governments. Participation in the political processes and voting enable women to support the policies and causes they believe in. Political empowerment indicators will assess the representation of women in national, provincial, and local government positions and the electoral processes.

## 6. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The South African national population estimate by Stats SA<sup>47</sup> at mid-year 2022 found the population to be 60 million people. Life expectancy at birth for 2022 was estimated at 60,0 years for men and 65,6 years for women. *The population of South Africa was estimated to be 61,525,521 as of January 2024.*

TABLE 4. Mid-year population estimates for South Africa by population group and sex, 2022

Population group	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	% of total male population	Number	% of total female population	Number	% of total population
Black African	23 985 479	81,0	25 085 330	81,0	49 070 809	81,0
Coloured	2 601 932	8,8	2 737 987	8,8	5 339 919	8,8
Indian/Asian	794 882	2,7	760 114	2,5	1 554 996	2,6
White	2 242 589	7,6	2 396 679	7,7	4 639 268	7,7
<b>Total</b>	<b>29 624 882</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>30 980 110</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>60 604 992</b>	<b>100,0</b>

*\*Due to rounding totals may not add up to 100%*

SOURCE: Stats SA Statistical Release P0302 Mid-year population estimates 2022

The table above shows the mid-year population estimates by population group and sex. The mid-year population was estimated at 60,60 million (2020):

- 51% (30,98 million) were women
- 81% (49,07 million) Black Africans were in the majority
- 4,6 million White population
- 5,3 million Coloured population
- 1,5 million Indian/Asian population

### 6.1. Women's economic empowerment in South Africa

Women make a huge contribution to economies, whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees or by doing unpaid care work at home. Investing in

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<sup>47</sup> Stats SA, Statistical Release P0302 Mid-year population estimates, 2022

women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth.<sup>48</sup>

Promoting gender equality is not just a 'women's concern' but the responsibility of all in society. It is both the right and the smart thing to do because it leads to a higher quality of life for all.

In South Africa, women still face multiple barriers to realising economic empowerment. Women face deep inequalities and discrimination in the economy, leading to poorer outcomes for women, their families, and communities. Discriminatory gender stereotypes, violence, and harassment at work, among other issues, impact women's access to resources, finance, training, and their ability to advance in the workplace. Women in informal employment and women from marginalised groups, including those in rural areas, are particularly vulnerable. These women have the most to gain in terms of economic empowerment.

South Africa is in the process of promoting the economic empowerment of women and has developed policies and frameworks that support the empowerment of women, recognising the very important role women play in achieving gender equality.

Recognition of Women's economic empowerment is important because it will ensure that they can:<sup>49</sup>

- Equally participate in and benefit from decent work and social protection
- Access markets and have control over resources, their own time, lives, and bodies
- Have an increased voice, agency, and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels, from the household to international institutions.

The economic dimension is central to women's empowerment and includes women's ability to participate in the labour market and to earn an income, as well as their ability to access and control productive and financial resources.

It is important to acknowledge that women's empowerment is embedded in the protection of women's rights, which has political and legal implications.

Achieving gender equity in positions of decision-making – both in government and in the private sector – is crucial to providing women with responsibilities for planning, making decisions, recommending policies, and coordinating empowerment efforts.

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<sup>48</sup> UN Women Africa: [https://africa.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment\\_africa](https://africa.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment_africa)

<sup>49</sup> UN Women: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures#87145>

## **A. Women's empowerment and gender equality in South Africa**

South Africa, through its implementation of the Women's Empowerment Principles, looks at the empowerment of women as a crucial aspect of achieving gender equality.

The country has the Constitution, guaranteeing the rights of women and giving them opportunities to reach their full potential. This is crucial not only for attaining gender equality but also for meeting a wide range of international development goals. Empowered women contribute to the health and productivity of their families and communities, and this creates a ripple effect that benefits everyone.

## **B. Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP)<sup>50</sup>**

South Africa is implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles. These principles are grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and a responsibility for, gender equality and women's empowerment.

According to the Women's Empowerment Principles, companies, organisations, and institutions must:

- Provide guidance to businesses on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community
- Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality
- Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination
- Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers
- Promote education, training and professional development for women
- Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women
- Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy
- Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality (see Annexure 6 for more info on the WEP).

Investing in SDG 5 is not just a moral imperative for upholding human rights but also a strategic opportunity, as this is one of the ways to ensure that women are empowered to participate in their economic development.

## **6.2 . South Africa's efforts to promote women's economic empowerment**

The empowerment of women is core to South Africa's processes of sustainable development. Leaving no one behind means addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequalities.

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<sup>50</sup> Established by UN Women and the UN Global Compact Office

President Cyril Ramaphosa has committed his administration to work towards promoting leadership of women in crucial positions in society, saying that the government was mobilising support for projects that promote increased opportunities for women through the Charlotte Maxheke initiative on economic justice and rights.

The President said: "We want to live in a society where every girl child can study what she wants to, for as long as she needs to, where she can take up occupation or pursue any career of her choice. I call on every South African to join this important struggle".<sup>51</sup>

### **President's 40% procurement pronouncement**

*The President made this public pronouncement that the government intends to allocate 40% of public procurement expenditure towards women-owned enterprises.*

According to the President, this initiative aims to empower women economically and provide them with greater access to opportunities. The pronouncement generated considerable interest and enthusiasm, particularly within the gender sector.

It is a fact that when we try to understand the meaning of public procurement, it becomes useful to define it and unpack it so that we can understand what this commitment is all about.

Public procurement is increasingly recognised as a key concept that plays a significant role in the successful management of public resources. It is seen as the sheer volume of funds channelled through government procurement and is the largest single buyer in most countries.

### **Issues related to the President's 40% procurement pronouncement**

#### ***Understanding public procurement***

According to the definition offered by Badenhorst-Weiss:<sup>52</sup>

*"Public procurement is the function whereby public sector organisations acquire goods, services and development and construction projects from suppliers in the local and international market, subject to the general principles of fairness, equitability, transparency, competitiveness, and cost-effectiveness. It includes many activities that support the service delivery of government entities, ranging from routine items to complex development and construction projects. It also directly or indirectly supports the government's social and political aims."*

In South Africa, supply chain management (SCM) is an important tool for managing public procurement.

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<sup>51</sup> President's Speech – Women's Day 2020

<sup>52</sup> Ambe, I.M. & Badenhorst-Weiss, J.A. Department Procurement Challenges in the South African Public Sector. Business Management, University of South Africa (Unisa)

There are numerous legislative frameworks that guide procurement practices.

These include the:

- Constitution
- Public Finance Management Act No. 1 of 1999
- Municipal Finance Management Act No. 56 of 2003
- Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act No. 5 of 2000
- Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act No. 53 of 2003
- Promotion of Administrative Justice Act No. 3 of 2000
- Promotion of Equality and the Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 of 2000
- Construction Industry Development Board Act No. 38 of 2000
- Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act No. 12 of 2004, among others.

Public procurement has important economic and political implications, and ensuring that the process is economical and efficient is crucial. Public procurement primarily aims to be fair, equitable, transparent, and cost-effective. Because of its importance, it can also be used at a secondary level as a problem solver. Due to the significant problems faced in South Africa, especially because of the country's inequality in the past, public procurement is of particular significance and has been granted constitutional status (Bolton, 2006)<sup>53</sup>. In this regard, there are categories of preference in the allocation of contracts, as well as the protection or advancement of persons or categories of persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.<sup>54</sup>

### **Generation equality and women's empowerment in South Africa**

South Africa is a co-leader of the Generation Equality Forum's Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights.

The President used the engagement with the women who are part of Generation Equality to articulate strong support for the jointly developed global acceleration plan, which has a catalogue of commitments to support women in the care economy, ensure decent work for women, create access to and control of productive resources including financial inclusion, and promote gender-responsive inclusive economies.

In 2021, South Africa showed a strong commitment to contribute to accelerating global efforts to achieve gender equality by 2030, especially advocating for decent work for women and gender-responsive and financially inclusive economies. This was evident when the nation celebrated Women's Month under the theme *Generation Equality*: *Realising Women's Rights for an Equal Future*. The programme was

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<sup>53</sup> Bolton, P. (2006). "Government Procurement as a Policy Tool in South Africa." *Journal of public Procurement*, 6 (3): 193-217

<sup>54</sup> Ambe, I.M. & Badenhorst-Weiss, J.A. Department Procurement Challenges in the South African Public Sector. Business Management, University of South Africa (Unisa)

supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). South Africa is also a co-leader of Generation Equality Forum's Action Coalition on Economic Justice and Rights.

The President uses engagements with such entities to articulate strong support for the jointly developed global acceleration plan, which has a catalogue of commitments to support women in the care economy, ensure decent work for women, create access to and control productive resources, including financial inclusion; and promote gender-responsive inclusive economies.

### **Efforts by women business leaders to participate in procurement programmes**

In South Africa, women business leaders, women associations, and social and economic experts, including women entrepreneurs, have had high-level dialogues to explore strategies to make the South African economy work for women and to advance gender equality in an effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

UN Women South Africa and Motseng Investment Holdings support the initiatives. It is understood that UN Women has ongoing advocacy initiatives, which are linked to its flagship Stimulating Equal Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs Programme through affirmative procurement investment and supply chain policies. The programme seeks to improve women's access to public and private procurement of goods and services and link women to the value chain of opportunities in key sectors such as agriculture, energy, and infrastructure.<sup>55</sup>

## **6.3. Assessments of the 40% procurement pronouncement by the President**

### **UN Women assessment**

For a clear understanding of what to expect when implementing a gender-responsive procurement, it will be important to look at some of the guiding principles provided by UN Women in their work on gender-responsive procurement (GRP).<sup>56</sup>

#### **Gender-responsive procurement (GRP)**

Gender-responsive procurement (GRP) is about the sustainable selection of services, goods or civil works that takes into account the impact on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM) definition of GRP is:

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<sup>55</sup> UN South Africa: <https://southafrica.un.org/en/106907-making-south-african-economy-work-women-what-will-it-take>

<sup>56</sup> UN Women. (2022). Guidance Note: Building Gender Responsive Procurement: Lessons from Research and Practice



*"The sustainable selection of services, goods or works that takes into account the impact on gender equality and women's empowerment, and actively seeks to reduce barriers to entry for women's businesses to benefit from business opportunities".*

UN Women works with governments, the private sector, civil society and women entrepreneurs in alignment with Target 8.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is about:

*"Promoting development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services".*

UN Women uses the strategy of gender-responsive procurement (GRP) to identify the challenges and barriers preventing women-owned businesses (WOBs) from accessing and fully participating in global and local value chains and comprehensive 'how-tos' that buyers can implement to increase sourcing for WOBs.

SOURCE: UN Women (2022). *Guidance Note: Building Gender Responsive Procurement: Lessons from Research and Practice*

UN Women conducted a study recently and produced a Guidance note named *"Building Gender Responsive Procurement: Lessons from Research and Practice*. The study report is dated 2022.

The intention of UN Women was to use the results of the study to develop recommendations for programming and policy development that can have a transformative impact on the material realities of women entrepreneurs, business owners and workers. The intended targets for the recommendations of the study were development actors, government, civil society, the UN, and the private sector, who are planning or implementing such GRP policies and programmes. The aim is that this knowledge will foster learning that enables GRP advocates to scale up their programmes based on evidence and practical experience. A number of countries, including Rwanda, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa, participated in that study.



SOURCE: UN Women Guidance note: *Building Gender Responsive Procurement: Lessons from Research and Practice*.

## **Summary of the findings of the UN Women's study on procurement**

According to UN Women, strategic entry points and challenges for GRP depend on four factors:

- Legal and institutional frameworks (institutions)
- Partnerships among various stakeholders (partnerships)
- Data (evidence)
- The capabilities of buyers and suppliers (capacity) in a country.

Their report is structured around those four categories.

### **a) Institutions**

Women's negative experiences with procurement processes can be due to a lack of gender responsiveness and/or deficiencies in the procurement process and system. Dominant sexist norms and behaviours limit and constrain many women's autonomy when setting up and running a business.

### **b) Partnerships**

GRP programming rests on close collaborations with many diverse stakeholders. It is recommended that close collaboration with women entrepreneurs and WOBs is necessary, sometimes focusing on WOBs with the greatest likelihood of success in procurement, including more disadvantaged WOBs. The major aim is to support and empower them to seize opportunities in GRP and consult with them to facilitate dialogue with public, private, and non-profit actors to improve women's position in procurement.

### **c) Evidence**

The UNWOMEN study covers five major angles which are :

- The mapping of women's businesses in a particular market
- The current state of participation of women's businesses in procurement
- The supply-side barriers women entrepreneurs face
- The demand-side frameworks, experiences, and contexts that shape GRP practice in countries
- Political and economic factors more broadly.

## **Capacity gaps for procurement organisations**

The absence of mechanisms for suppliers to lodge grievances can prevent women from learning why they did not get a contract and how to improve for their next bid. The conditions for access are more challenging for micro and small WOBs compared to medium WOBs.

**e) Capacity gaps in relation to buyers:** At the stage of tender calls, buying entities often fail to adapt their channels of communication, language, and wording (in

procurement documents and even support services) to make them accessible to women.

**f) Capacity gaps in relation to suppliers:** Challenges of entrepreneurship and business ownership for women. Dominant sexist norms and behaviours limit and constrain many women's autonomy when setting up and running a business. Women, especially disadvantaged women, do not know enough about how procurement works, often leaving them dependent on men for understanding.

### **Recommendations from the UN Women study**

The report synthesised 11 studies produced by UN Women on gender-responsive procurement from seven countries. The key takeaway for actors who are planning and implementing GRP interventions is that GRP can be adapted depending on several contextual factors.

Summary of the recommendations:

- Rights-based approaches: GRP actions must be anchored on human rights and workers' rights.
- Intersectional lens: Programming should be intersectional, with due account given to the interplay of structural inequalities that combine with gender (e.g., socio-economic class, caste, geography, age, ethnicity, nationality, migration, refugee status and disability).
- GRP projects should strive to empower even the most disadvantaged suppliers by ensuring that any support and capacity building provided to WOBs on procurement reaches and is tailored to diverse businesses.
- Stakeholders should recognise that not all businesses can be suppliers, and COS should have typologies that distinguish survival or sustenance enterprises, "steady state enterprises", and high-growth enterprises among WOBs.
- GRP stakeholders can also strive to make procurement work better for all small businesses.
- Partners' programming should dedicate more attention and action to developing sector-specific programming to tackle the effects of the gender segmentation of businesses by sectors. It is thus important to be aware of sectors where women suppliers are currently concentrated and enable them to move to a different stage in the value chain if they wish.
- The government should tackle corruption in procurement while simultaneously strengthening the laws on the protection of women to put a stop to financial or sexual corruption or favouritism in public procurement.
- Programming should be integrated with efforts toward sustainability and resilience with sensitivity to trends like violent conflicts, public health crises and climate change.
- Advocacy should involve actors who have actual influence over the procurement areas concerned. Strengthening the capacities of women's associations and industry associations through partnerships is helpful so they can conduct evidence-

based advocacy towards public or private buyers and procurement associations. It is also important that WOBs be mobilised and organised to demand change using public awareness campaigns as a key strategy.

- Actors for GRP should improve WOBs' access to and positioning in local, national, or international markets. For example, they can help WOBs to have better market information, focus on expanding industries (e.g., services) that are more accessible to them, enter supply chains through supplier and enterprise development, develop tailored business models, such as joint ventures, partnerships, and subcontracting; form national or regional value chains; and adopt niches.
- Actors for GRP can also help WOBs achieve the right balance between integration and autonomy in relation to the supply chain. This will be particularly important for WOBs that start with one large business (often owned by men) as their main client and for WOBs who become regular subcontractors for a major contractor to a large business (which may also be owned by men).
- Retaining independence from businesses not owned by women matters for the women involved because it is one of the criteria for businesses to keep qualifying as WOBs.

*(See Annexure 6 for more information on these UN Women recommendations)*

## **B. CGE's assessment of the 40% procurement for empowering women: 'Sink or swim'**

*The study was conducted by the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) on the challenges of implementing the government's women's economic empowerment programmes in South Africa (2020): Sink or Swim, CGE Report.<sup>57</sup>*

The CGE conducted a study in 2020 on the economic empowerment of women in South Africa.

The objectives of the study were:

- To identify some of the key government departments with a crucial role to play in promoting women's economic empowerment in South Africa
- To examine some of the programmes aimed at women's economic empowerment, with specific focus on female beneficiaries from disadvantaged and vulnerable backgrounds, especially from rural areas, townships, and informal settlements, where access to resources is severely limited
- To assess the extent to which women's economic empowerment programmes have achieved success, including the obstacles and challenges experienced.
- To establish the lessons learned from the implementation of programmes aimed at promoting women's economic empowerment.

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<sup>57</sup> Sink or Swim: The Research Report by the CGE 2020; The Challenges of Implementing Government's Women Economic Empowerment Programmes in South Africa.

The CGE selected the following programmes for their study:

- Isivande Women's Fund (run by the DTI). The fund aims to accelerate women's economic empowerment by providing more affordable, usable, and responsive finance than is currently available.
- B'avumile Skills Development Programme is a women's empowerment capacity-building initiative aimed at identifying talent in the arts and crafts, and textiles and clothing sectors. It entailed formal training to develop women's expertise in the production of marketable goods and the creation of formal enterprises in the creative industry.
- Technology for Women in Business (TWIB) Programme (initially a DTI programme, then later moved to the DSBD). TWIB was introduced to "accelerate women's economic empowerment and the development of women-owned enterprises through the recognition of technology-based business applications and systems, and to unlock constraints to enterprise innovation and growth, as well as global competitiveness".
- SEDA – Women Enterprise Coaching Programme (WECP) (falls under the SEDA, which is an agency of DSBD). The programme provides coaching for already established businesses that are owned and run by women.
- South African Women Entrepreneurs' Network (SAWEN) has a main objective to facilitate access to business resources, information, and opportunities for South African women entrepreneurs.
- The programme targeted women who engaged in informal income generation activities or operated SMMEs, or women who aspired to open businesses, particularly rural-based women-owned SMMEs.

Below is the CGE's overview and discussion of some key issues from the findings regarding the government's efforts aimed at the economic empowerment of women in South Africa.

According to the CGE:

- The problem of defining women's economic empowerment as a policy goal in the government appears less complex than it really is. A review of several government documents, including relevant legislation, appears to skirt the need for a clear and concise definition of women's economic empowerment. Only one document, the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) *2011 Status Quo Report* contained a clear and concise explanation of what women's economic empowerment entails.
- The CGE therefore assumed in this report that the DTI's view of economic empowerment would be widely adopted by other institutions, particularly those departments such as the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) that were actively pursuing and implementing women's empowerment initiatives. Furthermore, the CGE assumed that there was a lack of coherence and consistency about what women's economic empowerment entails from a policy and practice perspective.
- In the CGE's view, the implications of this for policymakers is that a lack of clarity, coherence, and consistency in the approaches of key government departments

leads to, or creates an impression of, a lack of policy coherence in government regarding the application of the principle and practice of economic empowerment for women. As a result of this, government departmental initiatives aimed at women's economic empowerment are poorly conceived and implemented.

- The lack of policy clarity and coherence in the application of the principle of women's economic empowerment was evident in some of the practical difficulties experienced in the implementation of the programmes examined in this report. This characterised the programmes that were initially pursued by the DTI and subsequently by the DSBD.
- The CGE gives an example of the existence of significant financial resources which were disbursed by the two departments (DTI & DSBD) in the form of loan financing to the programme beneficiaries (including spending on related initiatives such as coaching, business skills development sessions, distribution of sewing machines, financing of beneficiary participation in local and international business conferences, expos and shows) and assumed that such investments often appeared haphazard and inconsistent across the various programmes and geographical areas, thus failing to achieve the systemic and sectoral impact sought by these programmes.
- In the view of the CGE, the lack of policy clarity on what the application of the principle of women's economic empowerment entailed in practice was evident in the lack of clear linkages between the individual programmes and the broader strategic policy focus, not only of the DTI and DSBD but also across the government's broader strategic policy objectives on women's economic empowerment.
- The CGE found that many of the programmes were characterised by varying degrees of poor administrative management, poor record keeping, poor information dissemination and a lack of effective coordination from a central or departmental perspective. In their view, the CGE found that such women's economic empowerment initiatives were usually not accompanied by ongoing, sustained, and coherent support services for the beneficiaries, especially the business entrepreneurs, in the early and therefore vulnerable stages of their businesses.
- The Commission is of a strong view that even the definition and application of beneficiary selection criteria were, in many instances, seen as problematic in that the criteria were often seen to be as stringent as those used by traditional commercial loan financing institutions and banks.
- The CGE believes that the challenges mentioned above resulted in a variety of practical problems, such as poor relations with the beneficiaries and a lack of beneficiary understanding of the terms and conditions of their loans or financing agreements. This in turn led to poor levels of compliance with reporting and loan repayment requirements, as well as significant rates of defaulting and collapse of some of the business enterprises. Therefore, these initiatives failed to meet the stated objectives.

- In the main, the CGE has found that a significant lack of departmental human resource capacity – if not programme management skills – that characterised the implementation of these programmes in some cases – led to several key strategic problems, such as drifting away from the central stated programme objectives. For example, the TWIB Programme increasingly focused on the TWIB Award's failure to put in place clear monitoring and evaluation systems and failure to define key indicators of programme success to determine objectively when and how programme objectives had been achieved. As a result, the two departments tended to single out and highlight several individual so-called 'success stories' from some of the programmes in the absence of systemic programmatic successes.

### **CGE's recommendations**

- That the government's policy on women's economic empowerment should be clearly articulated through public policy documents of key ministries such as the DTI and DSBD. Once such clarity has been created through official policy documents, government officials and administrative and political leaders should articulate and popularise such policies through public statements and direct engagements between the government and key stakeholders in the business sector.
- Such policy clarification should entail a clear policy definition of what women's economic empowerment means in terms of policy and practice, accompanied by clear policy objectives which the government seeks to achieve, as well as clear targets, time frames, and clearly defined indicators of success.
- That the government's economic empowerment initiatives should be accompanied by effective public information dissemination programmes and initiatives targeting specific intended beneficiaries, particularly women in disadvantaged rural and urban socio-economic groups for whom such programmes would have significant positive economic consequences. Such information dissemination should focus on providing vital information crucial for the running of new business enterprises. The dissemination will ensure a clear understanding of the terms and conditions of the loan financing agreements, as well as the obligations of the entrepreneurs to honour and comply with such terms and conditions.
- That once loan financing agreements have been signed, and prior to the disbursement of funds, government departments provide intensive initial training for the new entrepreneurs. The training should focus on basic but crucial business management skills, including putting in place effective information dissemination on the terms and conditions of the loan agreements to minimise confusion and failure of compliance by the beneficiaries.
- That once initial skills training has been provided, and loans disbursed to the new beneficiaries, ongoing, consistent, sustained, and effective support should be provided to the loan recipients, particularly during the first two to three years of existence, to significantly improve prospects of success. As part of this support,

regular and effective monitoring and evaluation systems should be put in place to monitor the progress of the new entrepreneurs.

*SOURCE: The CGE's second Assessment of the President's Pronouncement – "A promise without commitment: Overview of State Compliance with President's 40% Procurement Allocation".*

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) conducted another research study: *A promise without commitment: Overview of State compliance with President's 40% procurement allocation* to assess the extent to which the President's promise would be realised. According to the CGE, a commitment by the government to gender equality through such a policy framework would be a crucial step toward empowering women in the economic sphere.

The study sought to assess the extent to which the President's promise would be turned into reality by State departments at various levels and also how the necessary preparations, planning, and allocation of resources towards this goal would be made. By reserving a significant portion of public procurement for women-owned enterprises, South Africa would create a more inclusive and equitable business environment. The study aimed to evaluate compliance with the President's commitment and determine if alternative targets were set for allocating procurement resources to WOBs.

Creating jobs and reducing unemployment remain key economic and social challenges in South Africa. The government came up with a theme *Accelerating Socio-Economic Opportunities for Women's Empowerment* for the 2023 Women's Month to try and raise awareness on this subject. The theme highlighted calls for socio-economic programmes and activities across various economic sectors to create more employment opportunities for women.

Some of the key issues identified by the CGE study:

- There has been no effort to develop a clear policy and legislative framework that complies with and enforces the 2020 pronouncement.
- There is no convincing evidence found of clear efforts to turn the President's statement into concrete programmes of action.
- There is no evidence showing efforts to develop the necessary policy document or propose legislation to anchor this pronouncement.
- The current legislation (BBBEE) covers the issue of race, with gender subsumed under this category rather than being a primary selection criterion. As such, data supplied by the National Treasury on departmental and provincial spending is categorised and disaggregated based on the race category, while the data relating to gender is sub-categorised under data relating to race.
- Overall, national spending was generally low across all departments over the period under review. The stated 40% procurement target is nowhere near being achieved in terms of consistent spending on the procurement of goods and services offered by Black WOBs.
- The procurement expenditure figures for the various departments and provinces show the situation prior to the announcement, as well as after the announcement of the 40% target by the President in 2020. It is clear, based on these figures, that



the low expenditure patterns that prevailed prior to the President's announcement did not improve even after the President made the announcement. In other words, the CGE takes this lack of significant improvement in the expenditure figures across the board as an indication of a lack of effort by government departments at the national and provincial levels to meet the 40% target announced by the President.

- The levels of expenditure by departments and related entities in procuring goods and services from Black WOBs consistently amounted to only a fraction of the overall procurement expenditure during the period under review. Noticeably, at a national level, the Department of Traditional Affairs in the 2018/2019 financial year spent 46.20% on Black WOBs.
- During the period under review, the overall spending was far below what the President stated as a target.
- The same department spent 50.55% of its procurement allocation on Black WOBs in the following financial year. Spending in both financial years was above the non-legislated 40% target proposed by the President. However, this was an isolated occurrence rather than a norm.
- The drastic drop and the overall low procurement spend on Black WOBs seen in the 2020/2021 financial year in the other national departments attest to why legislation is necessary.
- In addition to such a pronouncement by the President, there is a need for legislation or concrete and clearly written policy documents.
- Much preparatory work and planning by the government and individual departmental supply-chain management processes would have to be carried out well in advance of implementation. This will also require raising awareness, education, and training, as well as capacity building of qualified staff at national and provincial levels.

The President's announcement was driven by good intentions, which is an indicator of a clear political will to support WOBs by directing significant State resources through procurement processes. However, given the lacklustre levels of spending observed in the figures provided by the National Treasury, this promise lacks concrete resources, time, and energy commitment to turn the commendable policy statement into reality.

### **CGE's recommendations**

In order to put concrete measures in place to realise the President's policy pronouncement on the 40% target allocation of State procurement resources towards WOBs, the CGE recommends the following.

- The current public procurement legislation does not sufficiently advance gender as a primary selection criterion for State procurement processes. It is a factor considered in the BBBEE legislation under the race category. Therefore, the CGE recommend that race and gender be separated and weighted equally as primary criteria for consideration and as the basis for the selection of businesses in the allocation of State procurement resources. Furthermore, the CGE recommends that a clearer and more concise policy definition of women's economic empowerment be developed as part of a draft policy document, with clearly

defined policy objectives to be achieved and clearly defined targets, time frames and indicators for success. Such a draft policy should be articulated in a manner that provides direction and guidance to all spheres of government and State entities.

- The current State procurement processes, including existing policies and legislation, should be thoroughly reviewed. Where appropriate, amendments should be made to strengthen support for promoting WOBs through State procurement processes. Such amendments should clearly state that 40% of all public procurement resources should be allocated towards supporting WOBs as part of the government's overall policy of promoting gender equality and the transformation of the country's economy.

#### **D. Assessment by Williams-Elegbe at University of Stellenbosch**

Williams-Elegbe conducted a research study<sup>58</sup> on the equity and inclusion of WOBs in public procurement in South Africa. In this study, Williams-Elegbe assessed the 40% pronouncement by the President for women's economic empowerment. Williams-Elegbe indicates that the South African government policies and programmes do not promote gender mainstreaming. Instead, they exacerbate inequalities between women and men due to a lack of focus, and prioritisation of gender issues, and inattention to understanding the needs of WOBs.

#### **Current barriers to the inclusion of women-owned businesses (WOBs) in public procurement**

Williams-Elegbe identified the following as some of the barriers:

##### ***Legal, policy, and institutional barriers***

The lack of express legal provisions on gendered procurement in the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (PPPFA) that is not related to Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) has led to a reluctance on the part of procurement officials to advance an agenda that is not expressly required by law.

- The focus on price as the main criterion for evaluating procurement contracts under the PPPFA may exclude small WOBs in practice, which may be unable to compete with larger firms that can harness economies of scale.
- There is a tension between regulatory compliance and sustainability concerns, including gender in public procurement.
- Existing gender policies in South Africa are vague and do not provide for tracking and measurement of implementation.

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<sup>58</sup> Williams-Elegbe, S. Equity and inclusion of women-owned businesses in public procurement in South Africa: Research report

- There is an absence of standardised targets for gender-based procurement, an absence of a homogeneous monitoring framework to track contracts awarded to WOBs, and a further lack of consequences for not meeting targets (Basheka, 2018<sup>59</sup>).
- 
- The opacity and ambiguities inherent in gender equality objectives and institutional resistance limit the efficacy of such policies (Mergaert, 2012<sup>60</sup>; Callerstig, 2014<sup>61</sup>).
- Gender policies, in addition, do not mandate the representation of women in all sectors of society, limiting their coherence and effectiveness. Also, interventions that address gender procurement are often sporadic and reactionary.
- The idea of gender mainstreaming in the public sector is still relatively new, with the first “gender-responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and auditing framework” developed only in October 2020. This framework aims to put women’s empowerment at the centre of public policy and resource allocation.
- Gender mainstreaming in procurement should be part of a broader approach to gender-responsive public financial management since procurement does not happen in isolation.
- There should be a prioritisation of gender issues among competing policy agendas, together with “rethinking and re-articulating policy ends and means from a gender perspective” (Jahan, 1996). A 2018 examination of the South African government’s monitoring and evaluation framework concluded that “gender is not mentioned in any meaningful manner in the policy framework” (Marock and Konstant, 2018<sup>62</sup>). Misalignment between gender policies and policies on procurement and economic development is a further factor. Many municipalities’ gender policies are vague on the inclusion of WOBs in local procurement, and where policies are clear on targets for WOBs, there is no tracking or measurement.

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<sup>59</sup> Basheka, B.C. (2018). “Inclusive Public Procurement: Opportunities, Barriers and Strategies (OBS) to Women Entrepreneurs’ Participation in Public Procurement in Uganda”. *Administratio Publica*, 26(1), 86-106.

<sup>60</sup> Mergaert, L. (2012). “The Reality of Gender Mainstreaming Implementation. The Case of the EU Research Policy”. Nijmegen: Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

<sup>61</sup> Callerstig, A. (2014). “Can public procurement be an instrument for policy learning in gender mainstreaming?” *Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration*, 18(4), 51-68.

<sup>62</sup> *Final Report: Diagnostic Study on the Gender-Responsiveness of the National Evaluation System*. inal Report: Diagnostic Study

### **Lack of transparency, fairness, and information**

Many WOBs find that transparency in procurement only offers lip service, and they rarely enjoy the benefits of a fair process.

Williams-Elegbe refers to the challenge caused by lack of transparency and says it has been related to:

- The cultural perception propagated by patriarchal thinking is that women business owners are of lesser importance, value, and agency than men (Mudau and Obadire, 2017<sup>63</sup>) and can thus be given less fair treatment.
- There is a general disregard for procurement law requirements by some municipalities and government departments.
- Lack of accountability for public sector breaches of procurement law, which creates more impunity (Munzhedzi, 2016<sup>64</sup>).

### **Lack of awareness**

- There is a stark lack of awareness about the need for gender-sensitive procurement.
- Impact of corruption.

Corruption is both a human rights issue and a gender issue.

Corruption affects the competitiveness of the procurement system and process, reduces trust in the system, undermines system integrity, and rewards malfeasance and unethical conduct. South Africa has had a long battle with procurement corruption, which is exacerbated by political impunity and loss of accountability, weak governance, weakened institutions, and a constrained financial control system.

The effect of procurement corruption on women can be seen in a number of areas. Women are more harmed by corruption as they are often perceived as easier targets in contexts where they have less socio-economic power, agency, and recourse than men. Furthermore, corruption is disadvantageous to women because of gendered influences on who is included in corrupt networks that benefit the participants. Women are often excluded from these networks, and in public procurement, they are locked out of the privileges granted by such networks (UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020<sup>65</sup>).

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<sup>63</sup> The Role of Patriarchy in Family Settings and its Implications to Girls and Women in South Africa". *Journal of Human Ecology*, 58(1-2), 67-72.

<sup>64</sup> South African Public Sector Procurement and Corruption: Inseparable twins?" *Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management*, 10(1), 1-8.

<sup>65</sup> *The Time Is Now: Addressing the Gender Dimensions of Corruption*.- Vienna 2020

## **Gaps identified**

According to Williams-Elegbe, there is a gap in the legislation that does not cater for WOBs that do not have a BBBEE scorecard and are not exempt micro enterprises (EME) or qualifying small enterprises (QSE). He believes that a WOB that has been in operation for more than a year but does not have an adequate BBBEE status level does not qualify for preferential treatment. This therefore means that South African women of all races and ethnicities as a broad category are therefore not explicitly preferred.

## **Obstacles/challenges**

The following are some of the obstacles to advocacy on the inclusion of WOBs in public procurement as identified:

### ***Knowledge and awareness***

Advocacy on gender-inclusive procurement should be integrated with advocacy on local procurement to mitigate the resistance caused by a lack of awareness and knowledge of the topic. In addition, gender-sensitive training should be an integral part of public sector education.

### ***Legislative obstacles***

The perceived lack of flexibility in South Africa's current procurement regulatory framework only limits the provision for preferential criteria. He mentioned that this is only for bidders with a stipulated broad-based Black economic empowerment (BBBEE) status level or for exempted micro-enterprises (EMEs), Qualifying small business enterprises (QSEs), contractors subcontracting at least 30% of the contract value to an EME or QSE, or an EME or QSE at least 51% owned by Black people, including Black women. There is no flexibility to apply more than 10 or 20 points out of 100 towards these preferential criteria and no possibility to grant those points to businesses that do not meet the stipulated criteria.

### ***Lack of advocates and interest***

There is a lack of interest in, and an absence of advocates for, gender-inclusive procurement.

## **Recommendations from the study**

- The South African government should create a comprehensive policy and regulations to implement gender-responsive procurement, setting out objectives and targets, including mandatory requirements for gender inclusion and also provide direction on how these targets can be met, guidance on implementation, including implementation of the President's 40% target for WOB participation.

Possible measures should include;

- Requiring subcontracts to be offered to WOBs
- Using gender as a tiebreaker between equally qualified bidders
- Reserving contracts under certain thresholds to WOBs
- Providing for direct women's economic empowerment scores, separate from the Black economic empowerment score
- Including gender as a sub-criterion when evaluating bid quality
- Requiring contract holders to take the gender perspective into account when executing commissioned tasks.

The government should incorporate an inclusive definition of WOBs covering all women, in line with the definition in the International Organization for Standardization's International Workshop Agreement.<sup>66</sup> The racial economic empowerment provisions should give further preferences to Black WOBs without excluding non-Black WOBs from the preferential framework.

The government should implement measures to address concerns about transparency, complexity, capacity, and accessibility. These should include publishing collated data on gendered procurement at departmental, local, provincial, and national levels in an accessible format. Central Supplier Database procurement information should be disaggregated by gender and searchable by public buyers for WOBs in a particular sector. Municipalities should use gender-disaggregated statistics for planning and service delivery.

Government entities should adopt a more integrated and long-term approach to the support and development of WOBs, including training for business owners and employees focused on “soft” skills, such as personal initiative training. The government should establish a one-stop shop where WOBs can obtain advice on construction, goods, and services procurement, as well as assistance to simplify the contractor registration process and help informal WOBs to become formalised. The government should develop a policy for improving WOBs' business competitiveness and providing finance to WOBs, including preferential banking terms and tax relief.

South Africa needs an advocacy and awareness campaign to promote public understanding of the benefits of gender-inclusive procurement, especially at the local level, and to drive cultural change in how the public service and private sectors think about gender-based procurement and in the way stakeholders operate.

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<sup>66</sup> IWA 34 2021.

## 6.4. Examples of other initiatives for the economic empowerment of women

### Efforts supported by UN Women – Women and technology<sup>67</sup>

The theme for International Women's Day in 2023 called for the inclusion of women in technology and innovation and to ensure that technological progress promotes gender equality.

In line with this initiative, UN Women is leveraging technology to connect buyers of goods and services with women suppliers in South Africa. The theme of *Women and Technology* was therefore used to motivate the South African population to "Buy from women!"

The appeal from UN Women was directed to those who hold the procurement purse in public and private institutions.



*A vendor at the Buy from Women event displaying handmade baskets  
Photo: UN Women South: a multi-country office*

UN Women has also created a platform which is a database of women suppliers and also provides a learning portal that is constantly developing, covering topics including branding, marketing, preparing for a tender bid, creating a business continuity plan, creating a business plan, understanding, and handling finances, legal aspects, and audit.

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<sup>67</sup> AfricaWomen.org: <https://africa.women.org/en/stories/news/2023/03/in-south-africa-un-women-is-helping-buyers-find-women-suppliers-online>

It is important to also note that through the Generation Equality Forum, South Africa not only advocated for preferential procurement for women but went on to commit to implementing a 40% public procurement policy for WOBs.

### **National Empowerment Fund (NEF)**

The National Empowerment Fund is aimed at accelerating the provision of funding to businesses owned by Black women. The NEF is seen as one of the major parts of the government's effort to support SMEs in the country. It offers a wide variety of financing products which target businesses across all industries.

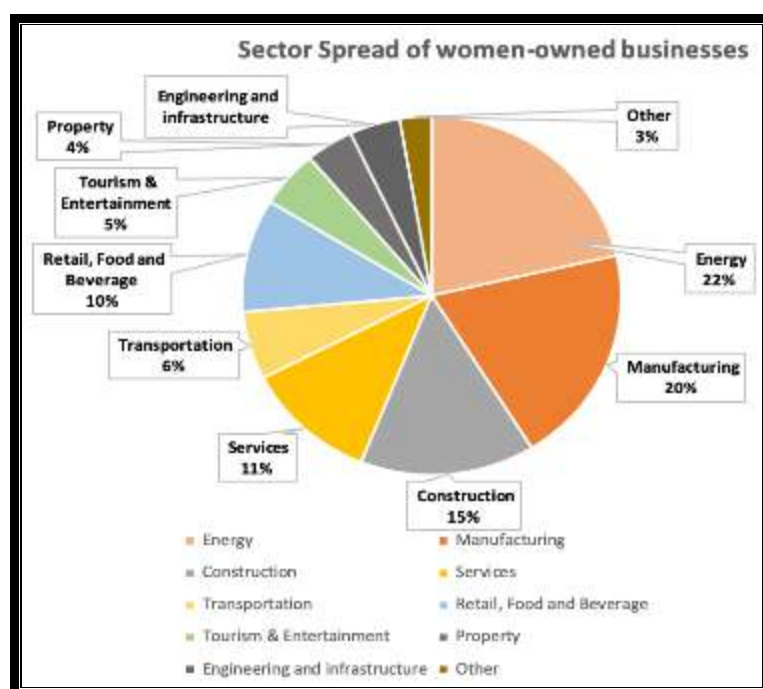
Its mandate is to grow Black economic participation by providing financial and non-financial support and to promote a culture of savings and investment among Black people.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Growing the Gender Dividend, National Empowerment Fund. Growing Black Economic Participation 2020



FIGURE 1: Sector spread of women-owned businesses (WOBs)



SOURCE: Growing the Gender Dividend – National Empowerment Fund 2020

Information from the NEF<sup>69</sup> indicates that:

- The fund is designed to facilitate and promote Black economic participation.
- Among other things, the Fund provides support to Black entrepreneurs requiring funding of concessionary loans to purchase machinery, equipment, and raw materials and to fund other working capital requirements for the manufacture and supply of healthcare products, as well as the production of priority food items in short supply including during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- The NEF indicates that over the past ten years, more than 40% of funding has been allocated to Black women entrepreneurs. As part of the determination to grow its funded portfolio of businesses that are owned and managed by Black women, the NEF will continue to work with organisations that represent women to mobilise deal flow.
- The NEF Women Empowerment Fund also makes funds available to assist Black women entrepreneurs by allocating funding in the form of a loan or debt equity to qualifying Black WOBs across all industries for start-ups, expansion, or equity acquisition purposes.

NEF funding is available for a wide range of various business ideas and opportunities, including property, financial services, energy, construction and materials, agro-processing, and manufacturing, among others.

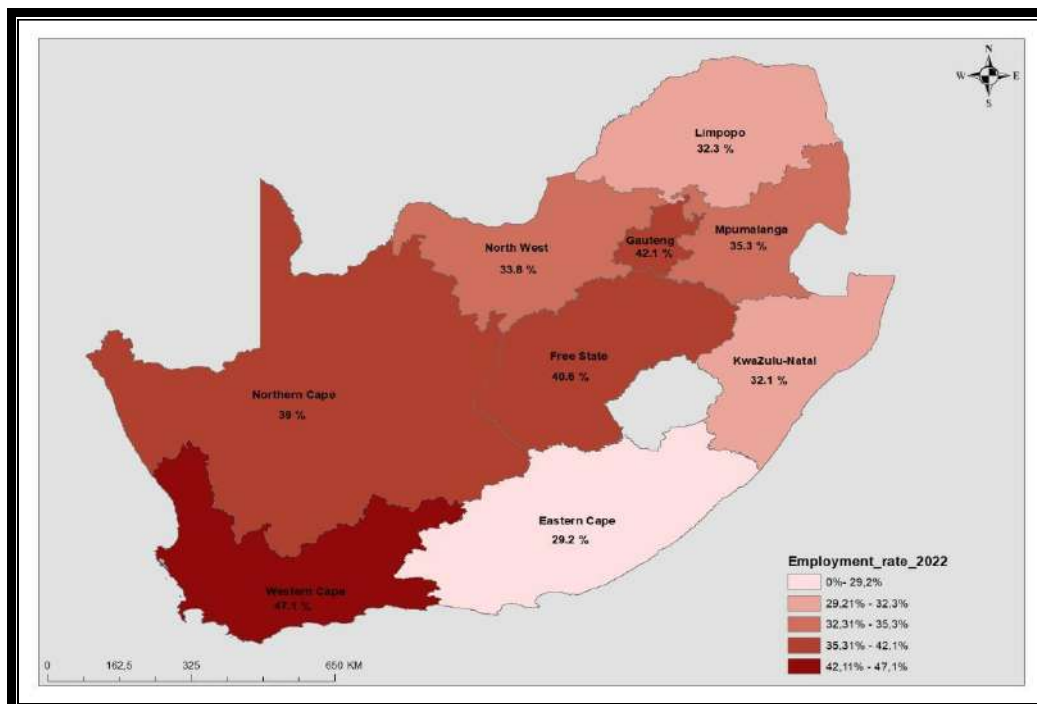
<sup>69</sup> Growing the Gender Dividend, National Empowerment Fund 2020

## 6.5. Employment in South Africa – opportunities and challenges

In South Africa, gender equality in the workplace remains an elusive goal despite little progress made over the last few decades in increasing women's labour force participation and narrowing gender gaps in wages.

It must be acknowledged that although women continue to form a large majority of the world's working poor, it is still concerning that they continue to earn less income and are more often affected by long-term unemployment than men. This is due to women's socio-economic disadvantages caused by gender-based discrimination and their double roles of being a worker and a caretaker for society.

FIGURE 3: Employment rate by province and sex, Q1: 2022



SOURCE: Stats SA – Gender Series Volume IX

According to Stats SA, the employment rate in 2022 was as follows:

- Western Cape had the highest employment rate of 47.1%, followed by Gauteng and Free State at 42.1% and 40.6%, respectively.
- The province with the lowest employment rate was Eastern Cape (29.2%), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (32.1%) and Limpopo (32.3%).

TABLE 5: Employment by sex and status in employment – South Africa

	Apr-Jun 2022	Jul-Sep 2022	Oct-Dec 2022	Jan-Mar 2023	Apr-Jun 2023	Qtr-to-qtr change	Year-on-year change	Qtr-to-qtr change	Year-on-year change
	Thousand	Thousand	Thousand	Thousand	Thousand	Thousand	Thousand	Per cent	Per cent
<b>Both sexes</b>	<b>15 562</b>	<b>15 765</b>	<b>15 934</b>	<b>16 192</b>	<b>16 346</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>1,0</b>	<b>5,0</b>
Employee	13 040	13 079	13 356	13 470	13 656	185	616	1,4	4,7
Employer	806	904	882	942	926	-15	120	-1,6	14,9
Own-account worker	1 628	1 677	1 595	1 667	1 665	-2	37	-0,1	2,3
Unpaid household member	88	106	101	114	99	-14	11	-12,6	12,9
<b>Women</b>	<b>6 920</b>	<b>6 934</b>	<b>6 980</b>	<b>7 101</b>	<b>7 160</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>0,8</b>	<b>3,5</b>
Employee	6 073	6 004	6 098	6 142	6 199	58	126	0,9	2,1
Employer	160	206	198	213	235	22	75	10,6	47,0
Own-account worker	639	658	622	688	675	-13	36	-1,9	5,6
Unpaid household member	48	66	61	59	51	-8	3	-13,6	5,5
<b>Men</b>	<b>8 642</b>	<b>8 831</b>	<b>8 955</b>	<b>9 091</b>	<b>9 186</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>1,0</b>	<b>6,3</b>
Employee	6 967	7 074	7 258	7 329	7 456	128	490	1,7	7,0
Employer	646	698	684	729	691	-38	45	-5,2	6,9
Own-account worker	989	1 019	973	979	990	11	2	1,1	0,2
Unpaid household member	40	39	40	55	49	-6	9	-11,6	21,8

SOURCE: Stats SA Quarterly Labour Force Survey: Quarter 2: 2023

It is common knowledge that women often have less access to productive resources, education, skills development and labour market opportunities than men in many societies. This is largely because of persistent social norms ascribing gender roles, which are often slow to change.

An analysis of decent work in one of the 17 Global Goals that make up the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development shows that this goal is made up of four pillars and that these pillars have become integral elements of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which are:

- Employment creation
- Social protection
- Rights at work
- Social dialogue.

## SDG 8 of the 2030 Agenda

The key aspects of decent work are put into the targets of many of the goals of SDGs.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), decent work involves:

- Opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income
- Security in the workplace and social protection for families
- Better prospects for personal development and social integration
- Freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men
- Eliminating occupational segregation, discriminatory social norms, and gender; stereotypes, violence and sexual harassment

- Supporting the transition from informal to formal work in all sectors
- Ensuring equal pay for work of equal value
- Protecting women against discrimination and abuse and ensuring their safety in the world of work
- Promoting the right to organise and bargain collectively to advance
- Ensuring equal access for women to decent work and quality jobs in all sectors, including in the context of a just transition of the workforce.

As acknowledged globally, gender inequality in the workplace significantly impacts decent work and economic growth. When women face discrimination at the workplace, harassment, lower wages, and fewer opportunities for career advancement, they find themselves prevented from reaching their full potential. The effect of this is that they encounter limitations in economic productivity.

Basic standards and rights of employees in the workplace form an integral part of the Decent Work Agenda.

Stats SA<sup>70</sup> acknowledges that equal opportunity and equal treatment in the labour market are at the core of decent work in South Africa.

Women still face additional challenges that hinder them from accessing employment.

It is also a fact that even when women are employed, appointments to decision-making positions and jobs in certain sectors or of certain characteristics remain elusive to most of them.

Information from Stats SA further indicates the following facts in the Quarterly Labour Force Survey of the second quarter of 2021:

- The South African labour market is more favourable to men than it is to women.
- Men are more likely to be in paid employment than women, regardless of race.
- Women are more likely than men to be doing unpaid work.
- The proportion of men in employment is higher than that of women.
- More men than women are participating in the labour market as the labour force participation rate of men is higher than that of women.
- The unemployment rate among men is lower than among women.
- The rate of unemployment among women was 36.8% in the second quarter of 2021 compared to 32.4% among men, according to the official definition of unemployment.
- The unemployment rate among Black African women was 41.0% during this period compared to 8.2% among White women.
- 22.4% among Indian/Asian women and 29.9% among Coloured women.

The existing inequalities in the employment sector should be addressed, and employers must take cognisance of the current legislative framework to address this

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<sup>70</sup> Stats SA: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=14606>

problem. For example, the issue of women accessing senior positions at work can be resolved by ensuring that employers resort to gender mainstreaming processes in terms of which the human resource policies reflect gender equality principles that will challenge the inequalities that still exist in institutions.

TABLE 6: Levels of unemployment and unemployment rate by sex and age; Q1:2017 and Q1:2022

Age group	2017			2022		
	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes
	N('000)	N('000)	N('000)	N('000)	N('000)	N('000)
15–24 yrs	784	770	1 554	884	744	1 628
25–34 yrs	1 182	1 201	2 383	1 580	1 458	3 038
35–44 yrs	708	693	1 401	984	974	1 958
45–54 yrs	360	293	653	560	452	1 012
55–64 yrs	108	68	176	116	77	193
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 141</b>	<b>3 026</b>	<b>6 167</b>	<b>4 124</b>	<b>3 705</b>	<b>7 829</b>
<b>%</b>						
15–24 yrs	50,7	58,4	54,3	61,3	67,4	63,9
25–34 yrs	29,3	36,4	32,5	39,8	45,0	42,1
35–44 yrs	20,4	23,8	22,0	26,5	32,9	29,4
45–54 yrs	16,9	16,0	16,5	22,3	21,1	21,8
55–64 yrs	11,8	8,9	10,5	13,6	10,6	12,2
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,0</b>	<b>29,8</b>	<b>27,7</b>	<b>33,0</b>	<b>36,4</b>	<b>34,5</b>

SOURCE: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

Statistics show that South Africa continues to grapple with persistently high levels of unemployment, with the burden of joblessness being carried by women and young people.

Information from Stats SA<sup>71</sup> shows:

- That the official unemployment rate in Q2:2023 was 32.6%, which shows a decline of 0,3 of a percentage point from the 32.9% recorded in Q1:2023.
- Unemployment numbers for women remained higher than the national average, with 35.7% of South African women in the labour force being without work and actively looking for work.
- The burden of unemployment was more pronounced for women as the unemployment rate for men indicated a continued decline of 0,7 of a percentage point and 2,6 percentage points year-on-year.

<sup>64</sup> Stats SA: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=14606>"<https://www.statssa.gov.za>

- Black African women fared even worse, with an unemployment rate of 39.8% in Q2:2023, which was higher than the national average and other population groups.

Notably, when women are employed, they are more likely to work in low-paying jobs in vulnerable conditions, and there is a slow improvement forecast for the future (ILO, 2017).

According to the ILO, 'vulnerable employment is a combination of 'own account work' and 'contributing family work' or unpaid household member, both defined as employment statuses that are associated with 'low levels of development and high levels of poverty. More women than men work as unpaid household members, and women are less likely to be employers.

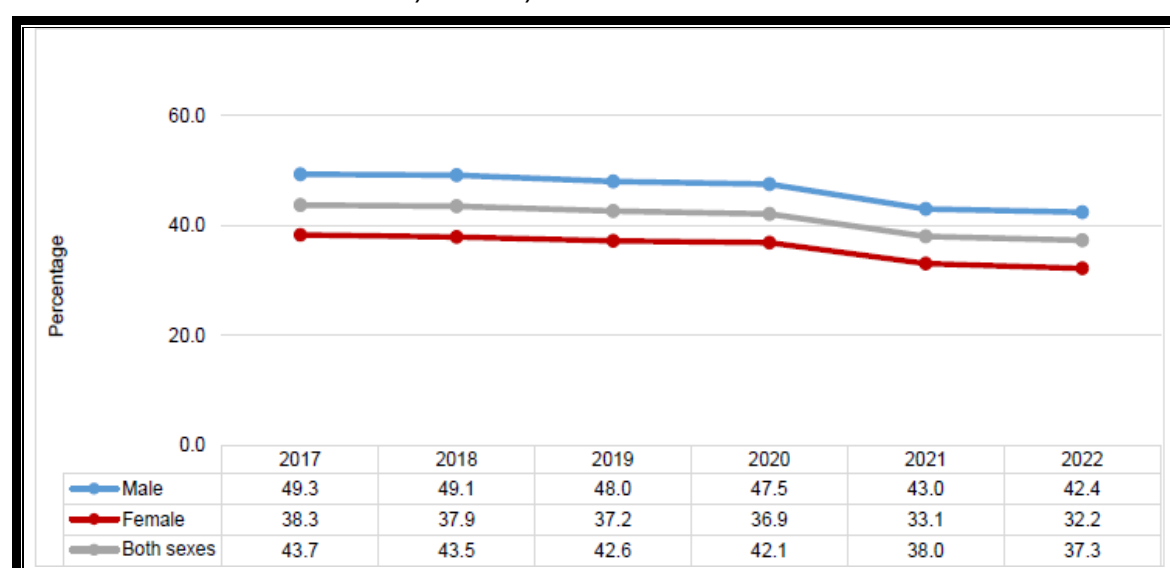
In Q2:2023, only 3.3% of women were employers compared to 7.5% of men.

- The table above illustrates that between 2017 and 2022, levels of unemployment increased by 1,6 million.
- The number of unemployed men increased proportionately by 983,000, which was greater than the increase recorded for women at 679,000.
- Overall unemployment rates grew by 6,8 percentage points from 27.7% in 2017 to 34.5% in 2022.

## A. Trends in the unemployment rate

An increasing working-age population provides employment and economic growth opportunities while simultaneously creating challenges for job creation and absorption of new entrants, which has been the case in South Africa with soaring unemployment levels.

FIGURE 4: Economic inactivity rate by sex, Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022

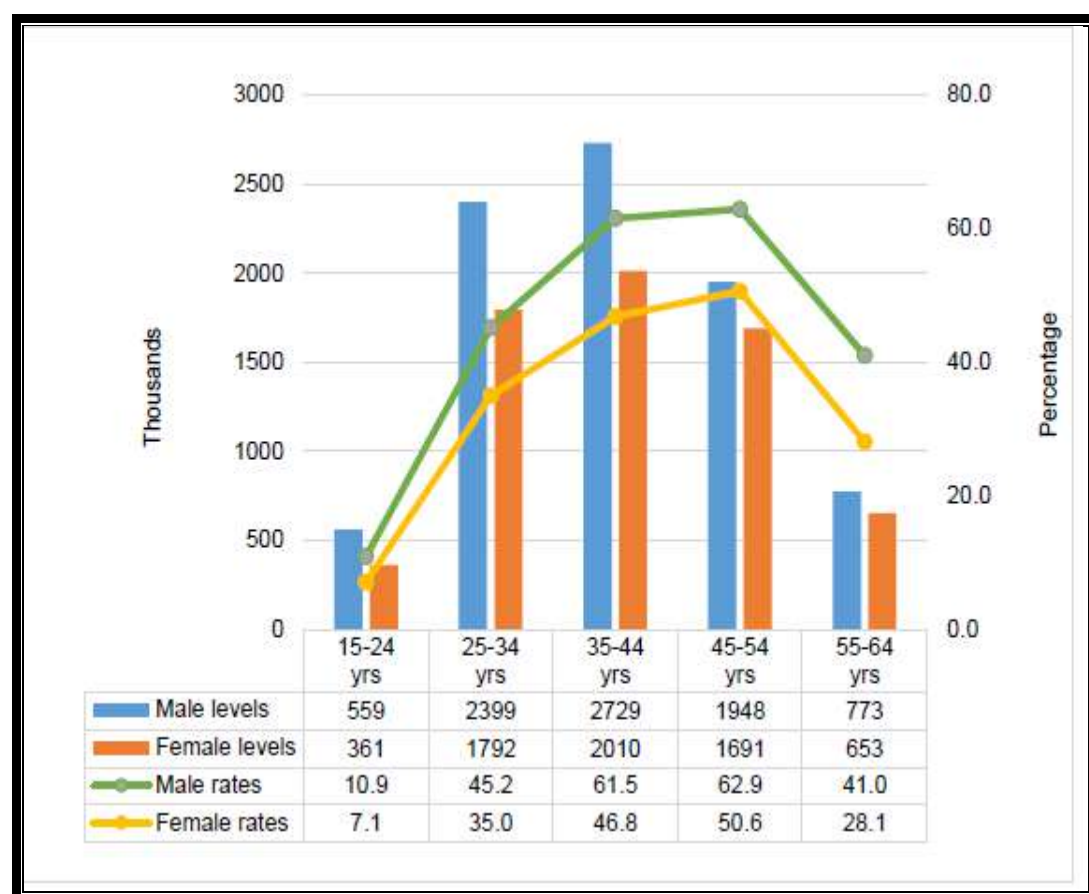


SOURCE: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

The table above shows a trend analysis of employment rates in South Africa between 2017 and 2022.

- Nationally, employment rates gradually declined from 43.7% in 2017 to 37.3% in 2022.
- Men's employment rates were generally higher than women.
- The gender parity ratio in employment widened from 0,77 in 2017 to 0,75 in 2022, indicating that more men were employed than women.

FIGURE 4: Employment rate in relation to levels of employment by sex and age group: Q1:2022



SOURCE: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

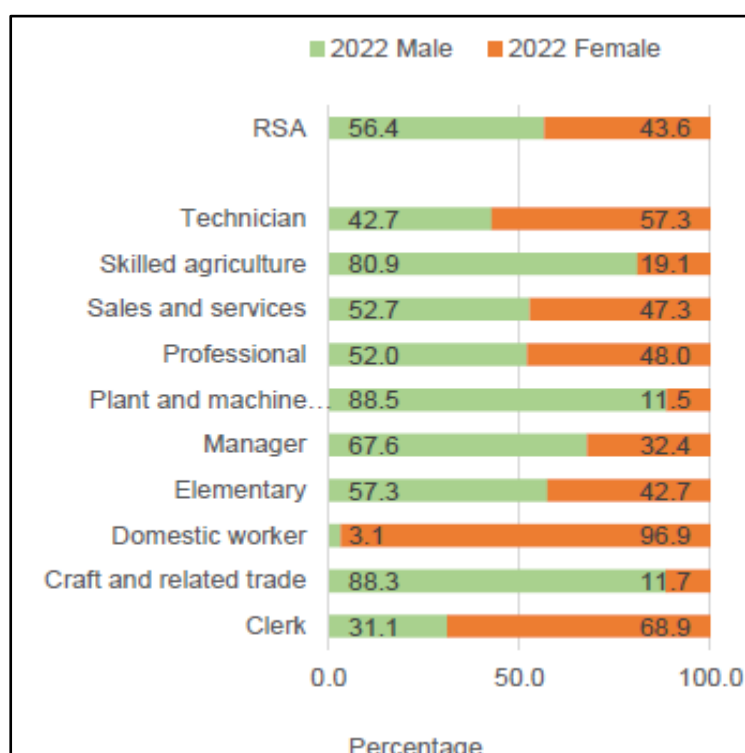
The above figure illustrates the employment rates in relation to levels of employment for men and women classified by age group.

The figures show that since 2017, the employment rate for men has been consistently higher than that of women. However, trends in the employment rate for men and women follow a similar pattern. The employment rate for women peaked at 35–44 years and men at 45–54, and gradually declined thereafter.

The information below shows the distribution of women and men among various forms of employment sectors.



FIGURE 5: Percentage share in employment by sex and occupation, Q1: 2022



SOURCE: QLFS Q1: 2017 and Q1: 2022.

- Women do access formal employment; however, gender stereotypes and cultural norms often limit them to certain positions, which tend to be lower paid than men.
- The figure above shows the percentage distribution of occupational categories of men and women for 2022.
- Working for households as domestic workers was a more common occupation among women than men.
- The second most common occupation for employed women is working as a clerk; more than two-thirds of women reported to be in this occupation.

## B. Domestic workers

The country's labour laws govern domestic worker employment relationships. The sector's employment relationships are governed by Sectoral Determination No. 7. The Sectoral Determination for the Domestic Worker falls under the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 (BCEA). The Determination guides aspects relating to employment relationships, such as leave and remuneration, among others.

South Africa introduced new rules relating to compensation for injuries or diseases stemming from a place of work for domestic workers and their employers. The new changes have broadened the original Act and offered more relief for domestic workers. The new law grants domestic workers the status of formal employees and provides them with traditional workplace benefits.



For example, in terms of the new Act:

- The Compensation Fund now accepts claims from domestic workers and their dependents for injuries or deaths resulting from work-related accidents.
- Rehabilitation for those falling victim to an occupational injury or disease will now have access to the Compensation Fund.
- In terms of the new law, an employer of a domestic worker is required to provide facilities, services and benefits aimed at rehabilitating employees who are suffering from occupational injuries or diseases to return to work to reduce disability resulting from their injuries or diseases.
- Employers are also required to report or submit claims for any incident that occurred before the Act became active.
- The “main employer” of a domestic worker is held accountable for any workplace injuries sustained by the employee.
- Employers and employees of domestic workers will be required to contribute to the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

### **C. Some of the challenges faced by women in the labour market in South Africa**

#### **a. Gender pay gap**

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the gender pay gap is defined as the difference between men's and women's earnings. The principle of equal pay for work of equal value is widely endorsed and is also included under SDG 8 in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Some factors that impact the narrowing of the gender pay gap are women's rising educational attainment and continuous participation in employment, which equips them with more work experience.

The ILO<sup>72</sup> states that when women do participate in the labour market, they tend to have more limited access than men to high-quality employment opportunities. One reason for this is the unequal distribution of hours of unpaid work in the household because women perform most of the household chores and most unpaid care work, both for the household in general and for elderly members and children in particular.

As a result, time-use surveys show that, when unpaid and paid work are included, women work longer hours than men. This disproportionate burden of unpaid household work has a negative impact on women's labour market participation, particularly in places where access to childcare or family-friendly workplace policies is lacking.

It is a fact that employment status is not evenly distributed between women and men: men are more likely than women to become entrepreneurs; more women than men are classified as unpaid family workers; and often – though not everywhere – more

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women than men are involved in informal work. Women also tend to work a lower average number of hours than men.

### **Why women earn less: Gender pay gap and labour-market inequalities in South Africa: A study by UN Women**

*The gender pay gap and labour market:* The gender pay gap is a broader reflection of the work-related and economic inequality of women, including their lack of economic independence, lack of decision-making power both in the household (e.g., spending decisions) and in society (e.g., managerial decisions), and experience of violence.

The gap is more frequently connected with higher levels of poverty and inequality among women.<sup>73</sup>

- The gap between what men and women earn is an important indicator of both *equality* and *equity*. If men and women get equal pay for equal work, it is likely that society values both genders equally. On the other hand, a large gender pay gap is a signal that society is not equal and fair.
- Many women spend their days doing unpaid care work.
- If women earn less than men do, they are less able to accumulate wealth, provide for their families, and look after themselves in retirement. This is intensified if a woman is the primary provider for a household, which may include children, unemployed adults, the elderly, and other extended family members.

According to UN Women, the gender pay gap is a broader reflection of the work-related and economic inequality of women in the labour market, including their lack of economic independence, lack of decision-making power both in the household (e.g. spending decisions) and in society (e.g. managerial decisions) and experience of violence.

Understanding the gender pay gap and its determinants would support awareness-raising among employees, employers, and policymakers, lead to actions for the mitigation of economic inequalities, support women in realising their productive potential, and ultimately support growth.

It is important to note that closing the gender pay gap and addressing other labour-market inequalities is important for improving women's socio-economic position and achieving social justice.

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<sup>66</sup> Bosch, A. Women at Work. University of Stellenbosch Business School: A guide for the already converted. USB Research Chair.

UN Women conducted a study<sup>74</sup> with the objective of presenting an overview of the adjusted gender pay gap and labour market inequalities in South Africa. The South African study was part of a larger 2023 UN Women study in which a number of other African countries participated. The main aim of the study was “*understanding the gender pay gap and its determinants*”.

According to UN Women, this study contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for gender equality within SDG 5 and for decent work and economic growth within SDG 8.

UN Women stresses that SDG 5 considers inequality more broadly than simply in terms of the gender pay gap: its ambition is to achieve gender equality in the labour market (e.g. equal access to jobs and top decision-making roles), in education (e.g. achieving gender parity in education), in access to health and an array of other target areas, with the aims of reducing gender-based violence and discrimination and empowering women and girls. SDG 8 also seeks to promote the collection and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data on other labour-market indicators, including employment, unemployment, informal employment and rates of those not in education, employment or training.

Information from the UN Women study provides as follows:

- South Africa is an upper-middle-income country with a population of 59 million (as of 2022).
- Women's pay being lower than men's during their working years also results in benefits being lower, including women's incomes from social security, pensions, and life insurance.
- The adverse effects of shorter working hours and low-paid jobs, typically associated more with women than with men, are reflected in lower pension levels, lower seniority premiums and lower levels of other coverage related to employment contributory schemes.
- Addressing the gender pay gap would contribute to poverty reduction and reduce inequality.
- Women's families are likely to benefit when the share of household income that women control increases; for instance, women tend to invest more in their children's nutrition, health, education, and housing with increased income.
- Overall, women's lower earnings can lead to a reduction in bargaining power, less independence, and lifetime income inequality between genders, which contributes to maintaining the lower status of women in society and ultimately contributes to lower rates of GDP and GDP growth.
- Closing the gender pay gap and addressing other labour-market inequalities is important for improving women's socio-economic position and achieving social justice for more than half of the world's population.
- The gender pay gap and other labour-market inequalities are complex issues influenced by various factors, such as occupational segregation, differences in

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<sup>74</sup> Why women earn less: Gender pay gap and labour-market inequalities in East and Southern Africa.

education and care responsibilities, discrimination, and societal norms. Addressing these issues, therefore, requires a comprehensive approach that involves multiple stakeholders, including governments, employers, civil society organisations and individuals.

UN Women policy recommendations to South Africa on the wage gap:

- a) The South African government could strengthen existing legislation to ensure that women and men are entitled to equal remuneration for work of equal value. This includes effectively enforcing measures such as transparency in the recruitment process, for example, by disallowing the collection of personal information (e.g., marital status) while hiring:
- b) Prohibiting pay discrimination based on gender and promoting pay equity by making pay scales publicly available in the public service and private sectors.
- c) Employers could also promote transparency in pay structures within organisations, ensuring that salary ranges, pay scales and benefits are clearly defined and communicated.
- d) Accessible and responsive complaint mechanisms could also be put in place so that violations of the law or company policies and any discrimination can be reported.
- e) Social protection policies, such as minimum wage legislation and social security benefits, can be effective if they consider the specific needs and vulnerabilities faced by women in the labour market. For instance, since its inception, the minimum wage law in South Africa has been effective in addressing pay differences for earners in the lowest deciles of the earnings distribution.
- f) There are some concerns that minimum wage laws exacerbate unemployment, particularly for the young, and this remains an active area of research. More research is required in the South African context to understand the effects of minimum wage legislation.
- g) Government and employers can also support the reintegration of women into the labour force after periods of absence, for example, after maternity leave. Reintegration policies may include training programmes, upskilling opportunities, and support for continuing education, enabling women to update their skills and stay competitive in the job market. This would reduce occupational segregation, wherein women are under-represented in high-paying and competitive jobs and minimise the negative impact of career breaks.
- h) Policies that support work-life balance, such as flexible working arrangements, setting an upper limit to the number of working hours in the week, parental leave (where both parents are encouraged to take time off), and affordable and good-quality childcare, care for persons with disabilities and elderly care, can encourage women to fully participate in the labour market. This would help to reduce the gender pay gap while also ensuring that household and caregiving responsibilities can be redistributed more equitably between men and women.

UN Women stresses the following factors as being significant for achieving gender pay equality and addressing labour-market inequalities, as this requires a multifaceted approach involving various stakeholders across the economy.

- Better data on the pay distribution, collected at frequent intervals, would enable a better understanding of the gender pay gap in the region and inform work to advocate for policies to address it.
- Public policy efforts to tackle the “explained” part of the gender pay gap could prioritise enhancing educational opportunities for women and girls, promoting women’s participation in high-paying and traditionally “masculine” occupations and sectors, supporting women’s labour force reintegration after career breaks and providing a robust social protection system.
- To tackle the “unexplained” part of the gender pay gap requires regulating the private sector to ensure that equal compensation and equal opportunities are provided to women and introducing interventions to break down gendered cultural norms.
- Policies to recognise, reduce and redistribute women’s and girls’ unpaid care work responsibilities would complement all policy efforts to reduce the gender pay gap.

TABLE 7: Women’s and men’s shares in wage employment by sector, occupation and formality status

	Men (%)	Women (%)
Sector		
Agriculture	8.5	4.7
Mining and quarrying	5.0	1.1
Manufacturing	13.3	7.8
Electricity	1.4	0.7
Construction	11.2	2.4
Wholesale and retail trade	15.8	16.6
Transport; storage and communication	8.4	2.4
Financial intermediation; insurance; real estate	16.3	13.9
Community; social and personal services	15.7	33.0
Private households	4.2	17.5
Other	0.0	0.1
Occupation		
Managers	6.8	4.1
Professionals	4.2	6.2
Technicians and associate professionals	6.8	10.4
Clerical support workers	5.9	17.9
Services and sales workers	16.7	17.2
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fish workers	0.4	0.1
Craft and related trades workers	16.5	2.8
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	15.3	2.5
Domestic workers	0.7	17.2
Elementary occupations	26.7	21.6
Formality status		
Formal	76.5	75.1
Informal	23.5	24.9

SOURCE: Why women earn less – gender pay gap and labour-market inequalities in South Africa: UN Women

## 6.6. Economic empowerment for rural women in South Africa

State Parties should ensure that macroeconomic policies, including trade, fiscal and investment policies, as well bilateral and multilateral agreements, are responsive to the needs of rural women and strengthen the productive and investing capacities of small-scale production by women.

State Parties should address the negative and differential impacts of economic policies, including agricultural and general trade liberalisation, privatisation and the commodification of land, water and natural resources, on the lives of rural women and the fulfilment of their rights.

Similarly, development partners should also ensure that their development assistance policies focus on the specific needs of rural women.

To eliminate discrimination against rural women in economic and social life, State Parties should:

(a) Ensure that rural women engaged in unpaid work or in the informal sector have access to non-contributory social protection in line with General Recommendation No. 16 (1991) on unpaid women workers in rural and urban family enterprises and that those employed in the formal sector have access to contributory social security benefits in their own right, irrespective of their marital status.

(b) Adopt gender-responsive social protection floors to ensure that all rural women have access to essential healthcare, childcare facilities and income security, in line with Article 14, Paragraphs 2(b) and (h), and Social Protection Floors Recommendation No. 202 of 2012 of the International Labour Organization.

SOURCE: CEDAW General Recommendation 34

### **Comments from the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) (2018) on the challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls**

In 2018, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) adopted the "agreed conclusions" of the Commission at its sixty-second session<sup>75</sup> and reached a strong consensus on ways and means of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.<sup>76</sup>

These conclusions set out steps necessary to overcome persistent inequalities, discrimination and barriers faced by women and girls living in rural areas and put forth concrete measures to lift all rural women and girls out of poverty and to ensure the realisation of their rights, well-being, and resilience.

The CSW reaffirmed that its reviews of the BPA and the outcomes of relevant major United Nations conferences and summits and the follow-up to those conferences and summits have laid a solid foundation for sustainable development and that the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action will make a crucial contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for

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<sup>75</sup> (E/2018/27)

<sup>76</sup> (E/2018/27)

Sustainable Development and to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas.

The 62nd CSW recognised and acknowledged that rural women's equal economic rights, economic empowerment and independence are essential to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and that rural women and girls often face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Furthermore, it recognised that progress in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, in particular in rural areas, and the realisation of their human rights has been held back due to:

- a) The persistence of historical and structural unequal power relations between women and men
- b) Poverty
- c) Inequalities and disadvantages in access to, ownership of and control over resources
- d) Growing gaps in equality of opportunity
- e) Limited access to universal healthcare services
- f) Secondary and post-secondary education
- g) Gender-based violence
- h) Discriminatory laws and policies
- i) Negative social norms and gender stereotypes
- j) The unequal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work.

In addition, the CSW listed the following as challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.

- a) Progress in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, in particular in rural areas, and the realisation of their human rights have been held back due to the persistence of historical and structural unequal power relations between women and men, poverty, inequalities and disadvantages in access to, ownership of and control over resources, growing gaps in equality of opportunity and limited access to universal healthcare services and secondary and post-secondary education, gender-based violence, discriminatory laws and policies, negative social norms and gender stereotypes, and the unequal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work. It stresses the urgency of eliminating those structural barriers to realise gender equality and empower rural women and girls.
- b) Rural women and girls often face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalisation.
- c) Poverty is a serious impediment to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those living in rural areas, and thus the feminisation of poverty persists. Therefore, the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.
- d) Rural women face limited or lack of access to economic resources and opportunities, decent work, social protection, quality education, public health, healthcare services, justice, sustainable and time-and-labour-saving infrastructure and technology, land, water and sanitation and other resources, as well as to

financial services, credit extension services and agricultural inputs, and limited financial inclusion.

- e) The CSW stressed the urgency of eliminating those structural barriers to realise gender equality and empower rural women and girls.

## **B) CSVr study on the empowerment of women living in rural areas in South Africa**

The CSVr's study<sup>77</sup> on the empowerment of rural women and found that women in rural areas continue to face serious constraints and challenges in engaging in economic activities. This is said to be because of gender-based discrimination and social norms, disproportionate involvement in unpaid work, and unequal access to education, healthcare, property and financial and other services.

The study indicates that women in rural communities continue to grapple with inequalities, such as poor access to basic amenities, employment opportunities, and quality education and further that poverty and the environment continue to affect them negatively.

According to the CSVr study, there are a number of initiatives by the South African government that are seen to be addressing the challenges of rural women in South Africa.

The study lists the following initiatives and comments of the CSVr on these initiatives.

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<sup>77</sup> Lived realities: Empowerment gaps and opportunities for women living in rural communities in South Africa



South African government initiative	Comments on key features for women's empowerment
Social grants	Safety net for poor men, women and children. The grants are not enough to cover all basic needs. It is necessary to equip women with knowledge and skills that help them acquire more resources.
Universal access to primary healthcare	Aims to provide children and pregnant mothers with access to state hospitals and clinics. Inadequate number of healthcare facilities as well as transport to access the facilities.
Affirmative action	A policy aimed at taking active steps to increase the representation of disadvantaged groups of people, especially women, in educational institutions and workplaces. Although designed to address disadvantaged women's inability to be appointed, it has had little effect on rural women.
Victim Empowerment Programme	Seeks to make the justice system more responsive to the needs of women and children across rural and urban landscapes. However, access to victim empowerment services in poor communities and rural areas remains inequitable.
Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)	Designed to assist adults with basic education and training to enable them to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. It does not cater to rural women's needs since no programmes are designed to suit the circumstances surrounding them.
BBBEE Programme	Aims to reduce poverty among disadvantaged black people, especially women, youth and people with disabilities. Critics argue that BEE has created a clique of rich black South Africans at the expense of the more deserving poor.
Department of Women, Youth, Children and People with Disabilities	Established in June 2009 to ensure that disadvantaged and often marginalised groups of society have better access to development opportunities. It is still in its infancy stage and it is too early to objectively judge its effectiveness.
Township and rural economy	A dedicated fund that supports businesses in rural areas and townships. The businesses are in various sectors, including property (shopping malls), petroleum (petrol stations) and tourism. By 2020, the fund had disbursed over R2.1 billion to support entities in rural and township economies. More than 50% of support has gone to women-owned businesses. <sup>9</sup>

SOURCE: *Lived realities: Empowerment gaps and opportunities for women living in rural communities in South Africa*

Other initiatives highlighted in the CSVr study are:

- The Bavumile Skills Development Programme women is for who want to pursue their own businesses by offering them 20 days of training in sewing, knitting, weaving and craft (DTI, 2011).
- The Isivande Women's Fund aims to enhance socio-economic development in rural, peri-urban, and township areas by empowering Black women, especially by providing financial assistance. The fund supports small, medium, and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) with women ownership of more than 50% of the ordinary share capital and more than 30% in management positions.

- The South African Women Entrepreneurs Network (SAWEN) has the primary objective of facilitating access to business resources, information and opportunities for South African women entrepreneurs who engage in informal income-generating activities and/or operate an SMME or aspire to open businesses, particularly rural-based women-owned SMMEs.

The study lists the following as some of the factors which they say hinder the empowerment of women in rural areas:

- High levels of illiteracy regarding information and communication technologies (ICT).
- Lack of awareness of initiatives aimed at women's empowerment in their communities prevents women from engaging in development initiatives. Communication about such initiatives is via emails and social media, and accessing these platforms requires access to a mobile telephone or other electronic gadgets.
- Many people in rural areas do not know where to obtain information relating to recruitment.
- Difficulties in accessing formal employment is experienced particularly by younger women who have a higher unemployment rate (57%) than men (49%).<sup>18</sup> As a result, most women work in the informal sector. Due to a lack of job opportunities and cultural barriers to land ownership, rural women are the main victims of this situation.
- Restrictive socio-cultural norms include unpaid care work, unequal sharing of care work, and other domestic responsibilities that limit women's opportunities for taking advantage of rural development initiatives and job creation programmes.
- Effects of South Africa's very strong patriarchal culture, particularly in rural areas.
- Exclusion of women from community decision-making and development initiatives in rural areas and as a result women are unaware of empowerment programmes in place in their communities.

### **Recommendations from the CVSR study**

To the government:

- Raise awareness of women's human rights and opportunities
- Mainstream women's involvement in decision-making
- Integrate gender equality principles into climate action.

Recommendations to NGOs and the private sector:

- Transform norms around unpaid care work
- Women's empowerment through NGOs.

Addressing the specific challenges identified in this study requires the following efforts to empower women and girls in rural areas:

<b>Rural women as agents of transformative change</b>	Enhancing participation and representation of rural women in decision-making will significantly reduce poverty and enhance food security and climate resilience. Women understand the nutritional and cultural needs of their families and communities. They are thus better able to identify the challenges and solutions needed to improve their lives and those of their families and communities.
<b>Decent work and social protection</b>	The government should ensure and expand equal access to employment opportunities and decent work in the agricultural and non-farm sectors. It needs to facilitate the transition from the informal to the formal sector, including promoting and empowering women's economic opportunities in micro-enterprises, small enterprises, sustainable social enterprises and cooperatives.
<b>Gender-based violence</b>	Strengthen measures in place to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against rural women and girls, including harmful practices.
<b>Unpaid care work, infrastructure and service delivery</b>	Unpaid care work needs to be valued and made visible to policymakers to attract political attention and investment in rural areas. Measures are also needed to improve access to health facilities, education, training and other support services.
<b>Investments in infrastructure, new technologies</b>	Increase investment in infrastructure, essential services, new technologies and productive capacity in rural areas to reduce unpaid care work and improve sustainable livelihoods for rural women.
<b>Women as actors in climate change adaptation</b>	Recognise and support women as actors in climate change adaptation, mitigation, disaster risk reduction and resilience strategies (protection of water, food, fuel energy, and livelihoods).
<b>Technology</b>	Making technology and skills accessible to women improves their quality of life by allowing them to communicate with midwives, send and receive money via mobile phones, and open a bank account.

## 6.7. COVID-19 pandemic implications

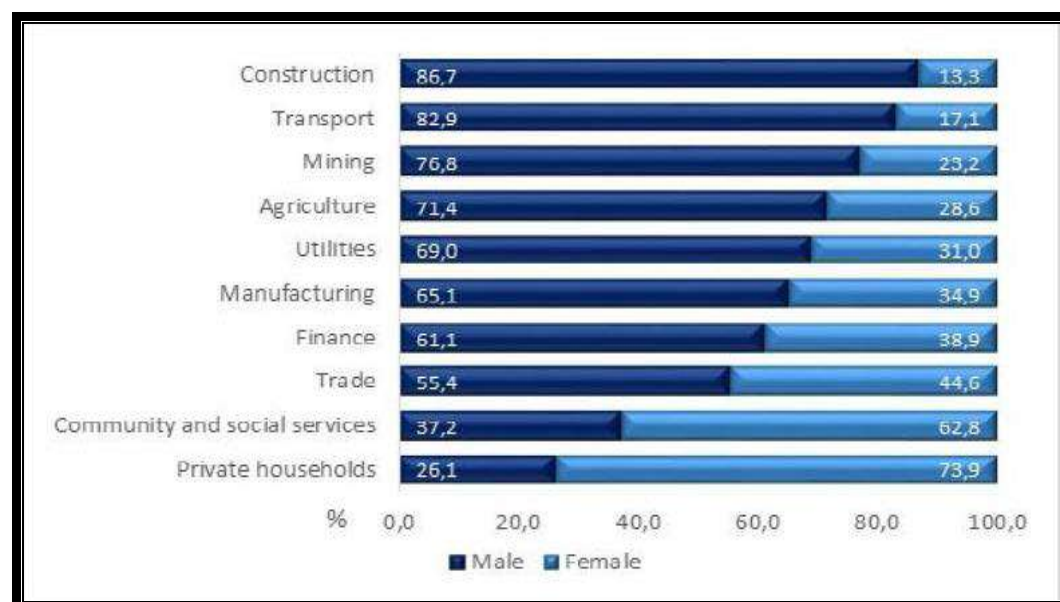
In 2020, the government announced a national lockdown that brought about a shutdown of the economy, which in turn resulted in a shock in the labour market and a big change in the way people went about doing their work. This was as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The lockdown resulted in some people having to work from their usual places of work or working from home, some not even continuing to receive salaries during the lockdown, some receiving full or reduced salaries, some not even knowing whether they would be returning to the same jobs/businesses after the lockdown, and some thought they might lose their jobs or that their businesses would close in the foreseeable future.

According to Stats SA, of the 14,9 million persons who were employed in Q2: 2021, almost four out of five persons (82.7%) were expected by the companies/organisations

to work during the national lockdown. Domestic workers and plant and machine operators were the least likely to work from home at 0.6% and 1.6%, respectively.

FIGURE 6: Percentage distribution of those who worked during lockdown by industry and sex, Q2: 2021



SOURCE: Stats SA Q2 Report

- There were 12.4 million persons who were expected to work by their companies and did some work during the national lockdown in Q2: 2021.
- These were predominantly men in most industries, except in the community and social services and private household industries, where the majority were women.
- Four out of five people employed within the construction industry who worked during the lockdown were men.

#### SUMMARY OF THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 – ECONOMY<sup>78</sup>

- Social grants remained a vital safety net, particularly in the poorest provinces.
- The rollout of the special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant in 2020 played a central role in protecting individuals and households against the loss of income during this period.
- Grants were the second most important source of income (51.0%) for households after salaries (59.4%) and the main source of income for about one-fifth (24.4%) of households nationally.
- A larger percentage of households received grants compared to salaries as a source of income in the Free State (60.0% versus 53.2%), Eastern Cape (63.7% versus 46.2%), Limpopo (65.7% versus 49.7%) and Mpumalanga (66.2% versus 50.9%).
- Grants were the most important source of income for households in Eastern Cape (42.0%) and Limpopo (35.2%).
- Due to the high uptake of the R350 per month grant, the percentage of individuals who accessed grants increased to 35.7% in 2021, while the percentage of households that received at least one grant increased to 50.6% in 2021.

<sup>78</sup> Stats SA. (2020). General Household Survey (GHS) 2021 (media release June)

- Nationally, 5.8% of individuals accessed the COVID-19 SRD grants in 2021. Individual access to the SRD grant was notably higher in metros at 25.2%.

## **6.8. Key issues on women's economic empowerment in South Africa**

### **On the positive side**

The 40% Procurement pronouncement:

- Including more WOBs in public procurement processes is a positive initiative, and this can empower more women and benefit the country's economy. Therefore, the President's pronouncement in this regard is commendable and must be congratulated.
- Efforts such as NEF to fund WOBs must be applauded.
- The involvement of WOBs in dialogues with the government on economic empowerment must be applauded.

The gender<sup>79</sup> wage gap:

- South Africa has a robust legislative framework to support pay equality, and both listed and unlisted companies are expected to pay fairly, responsibly, and transparently.
- The Employment Equity Act enforces the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the Act is implemented and enforced.
- The King IV Codes infer that companies do a gender pay audit, adjust remuneration policy, and provide implementation plans for changes. Enforcement is necessary.
- The JSE Listing Requirements mandate companies to table their remuneration policy and implementation report at their annual general meetings. Shareholders have a right to vote against a remuneration policy. Investor activists should report against the policy or implementation report if gender equality is not guaranteed or made explicit.

Domestic workers:

- Improved new minimum for domestic workers, including cleaners, childminders, gardeners, drivers and any other workers in private households, as well as farm workers, to R27.58 per hour, which is an increase of 2.5 percentage points above the average rate of inflation, that was 6% in 2023
- The Compensation Fund accepts claims from domestic workers and their dependents for injuries or deaths resulting from work-related accidents.

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<sup>79</sup> The gender pay gap: a guide for the already converted: Anita Bosch USB Research Chair: Women at Work, University of Stellenbosch Business School,

Economic empowerment of rural women:

- Rural women play a crucial role in maintaining and improving rural livelihoods and strengthening rural communities.
- Rural women play a crucial role in the economy and food production and do a lot of unpaid care work. Their involvement in agriculture is very important and must be supported.

### **Gaps/challenges/obstacles**

- The assessments by the CGE, UN Women, and Williams-Elegbe have raised crucial issues that need to be followed up on and implemented.
- These include a lack of commitment from the government side regarding developing laws and policies/legislation to direct and ensure proper enforcement and implementation of the 40% procurement pronouncement.
- Lack of understanding from the WOB regarding the procurement processes and legislation that regulates procurement from the government's side makes it difficult for the WOB to comply with the legal requirements for procurement.
- The 40% procurement principle seems to only affect the government. There seems to be no commitment from the private sector.
- There is a lack of participation of SMMEs in the procurement processes.
- The gender wage gap requires legislation and policies to be put in place, followed by a commitment to implementation and thereafter enforcement. There must be consequence management for employers who do not abide by the laws.
- The idea of gender mainstreaming in the public sector is still misunderstood and poorly implemented.

### **Rural women**

- The negative effects of patriarchy still prescribe the roles that rural women play.
- High levels of illiteracy in information and communication technologies (ICT).
- Lack of awareness of initiatives aimed at women's empowerment in their communities:
- Difficulties in accessing formal employment.
- Restrictive socio-cultural norms: Unpaid care work, unequal sharing of care
- Exclusion of women in community decision-making and development initiatives

### **Recommendations**

- Efforts must be made to implement recommendations from the assessments by CGE, UN Women and Williams-Elegbe.
- WOB must understand how the country's procurement laws and processes operate.
- It will take a concerted effort from all South Africans, including via governmental laws and policies and the private sector to ensure that women are paid fairly.



- Businesses must enforce existing legislation to do the right thing regarding the economic empowerment of women and simplify the procurement processes.
- Business leaders such as directors and managers all have a role to play in creating workplaces that support and encourage women to develop their full potential – and close the gender pay gap.
- The government should strengthen existing legislation to ensure that women and men are entitled to equal remuneration for work of equal value, including effectively enforcing measures such as transparency in the recruitment process, for example, by disallowing the collection of personal information (marital status, among others) while hiring, prohibiting pay discrimination based on gender and promoting pay equity by making pay scales publicly available in the public service and private sectors.
  - a) The Department of Labour should find ways of engaging more with the domestic workers' unions for awareness raising and empowerment regarding changes in the laws and policies that affect the workers.
  - b) Employers can also promote transparency in pay structures within organisations, ensuring that salary ranges, pay scales and benefits are clearly defined and communicated.
  - c) Accessible and responsive complaint mechanisms should also be put in place so that violations of the law or company policies and any discrimination can be reported.
  - d) The government must raise awareness of women's human rights and opportunities, especially in the rural areas.
  - e) Elderly women in rural areas must be assisted with the unpaid care work that they spend a lot of their time doing.
  - f) The government must address the high levels of illiteracy among rural women and embark on technology/ICT literacy education.
  - g) There must be efforts to improve rural women access to formal employment, particularly younger women.
  - h) It is crucial to address the issues of exclusion of women in community decision-making and development initiatives.
  - i) Efforts must be made to address unrecognised time use and unpaid care work done by women.

## CLUSTER B: POVERTY ERADICATION, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Cluster	BPA	SDG	BPA strategic objectives	CEDAW	CEDAW GR
Poverty					
B. Poverty eradication, social protection and social services	A. Women and poverty B. Education and training of women C. Women and health	SDG 1 SDG 3 SDG 4 SDG 5	<b>SO . A.1.</b> Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty  <b>S.O. A.2.</b> Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure	Art.10 Art 12 Art. 14	GR 36; 21

			<p>women's equal rights and access to economic resources</p> <p><b>S.O. A.3.</b> Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions</p> <p><b>S.O. A.4.</b> Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminisation of poverty</p>		
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## 7. POVERTY

### 7.1. Poverty and the right to development

Poverty is a complex human condition characterised by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security, and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living.

The right to development is a framework in which such a perspective becomes a human rights concern. It establishes that systemic denials of control over resources and distribution of the benefits of development are human rights violations insofar as they negatively affect the capacity, choices, and power of those living in vulnerable and disadvantaged conditions.<sup>80</sup> The right to development as an “umbrella right” focuses on a fair distribution of the benefits of development and popular participation.

Efforts to eradicate poverty and address persistent inequality mean ensuring that development measures aimed at improving the fulfilment of rights and access to services have a crucial and transformative impact, which in turn would foster structural improvements.

FIGURE 5: Poverty eradication



<sup>80</sup> Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (2001). Poverty and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/C.12/2001/10), para. 8.



## **7.2. 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**

The theme for the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)(2024) was *Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective*.

At its 68th session, the CSW discussed poverty under the main theme of the session, which was "Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective".

The Commission emphasised the reinforcing relationship between achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as well as the full, effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, the Commission acknowledged that achieving gender equality requires the empowerment of all women and girls, including women's full, equal, effective and meaningful participation and decision-making in addressing poverty. Including women in decision making strengthens institutions and infuses financial actions with a gender perspective and is essential for achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, enhancing inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productivity, and ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions everywhere. Inclusivity ensures the well-being of all. The Commission recognised that women and girls play a vital role as agents of change for sustainable development.

The Commission also indicated that progress in achieving gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls, and the full enjoyment of their human rights has been held back due to the persistence of poverty. Further, the Commission acknowledged that the Beijing Platform for Action identifies that poverty affecting women and girls is directly related to, among other things:

- Absence of economic opportunities and autonomy
- Lack of access to economic resources, including credit, land ownership and inheritance
- Lack of access to quality education and support services
- Limited participation in the decision-making process is due to systematic failures that may lead to exclusion and discrimination.<sup>81</sup>

This background is an important reminder that economic independence is central to women's well-being and the enjoyment of human rights, amplifying their voices within and beyond their families and giving them the option to exit abusive relationships.

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<sup>81</sup> CSW68 Agreed Conclusions 2024

Increasing women's access to resources, whether through paid work, asset ownership, or social protection transfers, is crucial and will go a long way in addressing poverty.

One of South Africa's overriding concerns is reducing poverty and inequality in its development policies and programmes.

### **7.3. Poverty in South Africa**

South Africa continues to face the challenges of high levels of poverty and inequality despite notable gains since the dawn of democracy.

The National Development Plan (NDP) prioritises reducing inequality as one of its key objectives for tackling South Africa's significantly high inequality challenges. One of the NDP targets is to reduce income inequality (measured by the Gini coefficient) from 0,70 to 0,60 by 2030.

*The world's poorest have faced extraordinarily difficult years. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented reversals in poverty reduction.*

*If the more pessimistic scenario plays out, 2022 could be the second-worst year in terms of progress made in reducing extreme poverty this century – behind only 2020, when there was an increase in global poverty.*

#### **Facts about poverty in South Africa – Stats SA<sup>82</sup>**

The Living Conditions Survey (LCS) is part of Stats SA's household survey programme and provides detailed information on households' living circumstances, as well as their income and expenditure patterns.

Approximately half (49.2%) of the adult population were living below the upper-bound poverty line (UBPL). According to 2014/2015 survey, there were 35,1 million adults (aged 18 years and older) in South Africa in 2015.

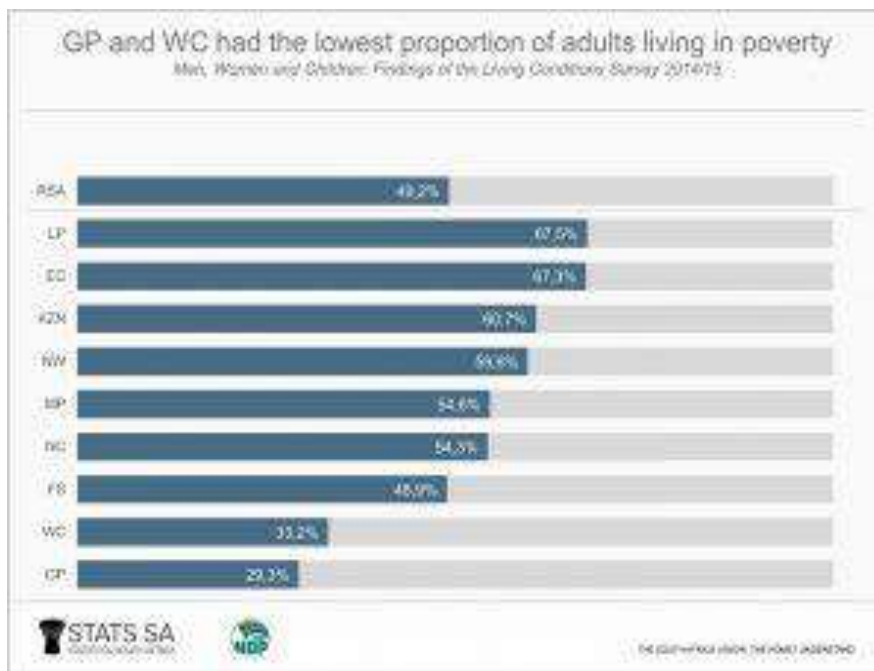
Adult men and women experienced poverty at 46.1% and 52.0%, respectively. Adult women experienced higher levels of poverty when compared to men, regardless of the poverty line used.

Gauteng and the Western Cape had the lowest proportion of adults living in poverty. The provinces with the highest headcount of adult poverty are Limpopo (67.5%), Eastern Cape (67.3%), KwaZulu-Natal (60.7%) and North West (59.6%). For these four provinces, significantly more than half of their population was living in poverty. Gauteng and Western Cape had the lowest proportion of adults living in poverty at 29.3% and 33.2%, respectively.

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<sup>82</sup> Stats SA. Living Conditions Survey 2014/2015: Five facts about poverty in South Africa (statssa.gov.za)

FIGURE 7: Proportion of adults living in poverty per province



SOURCE: Stats SA<sup>83</sup> Living Conditions Survey 2014/2015

## 7.4. Poverty in South Africa

### A. South Africa's 5th CEDAW report

According to South Africa's 5th Report to the CEDAW Committee,<sup>84</sup> poverty patterns in South Africa continue to be gendered. The report states that female-headed households are consistently more likely to be poor, more likely to have low incomes, more likely to be dependent on social grants, and less likely to have employed members.

The report further states that:

- More than half (51.4%) of female-headed households are poor compared to 29.5% of male-headed households. Some 44.3% of female-headed households were without a single employed member compared to 23.5% of male-headed households.
- Child-inclusive female-headed households are much more likely to experience hunger and food insecurity than other households.
- In the past, women were unable to access the same economic resources and opportunities as men. The resulting inequality was, and still is, intensified by additional race-based discrimination and growing inequality in the country.

<sup>83</sup> Stats SA: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/data.1.jpg>

<sup>84</sup> South Africa's 5th Periodic Report on the implementation of the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) for the period 2009-2014

- Women are over-represented in informal job markets, low-skilled, low-paying jobs, and the wage gap between men's and women's earnings persists, particularly in low and semi-skilled occupations.
- There is a continuous division of labour between women and men, where women's roles are largely confined to reproductive, care and community roles. Women's roles are under-rated in economic terms, and their work is demoted to domestic and unpaid.
- Because of their longer life expectancy, elderly women are more vulnerable to poverty and food insecurity, quite often compounded by being primary caregivers to grandchildren.
- Women's living conditions and quality of life are directly affected by the basic services their households receive. In addition to being responsible for securing basic needs (such as fetching water and firewood), women are often primary caregivers to more than just their own children in families. This role is compounded by increasing numbers of child orphans and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

**Review report<sup>85</sup> produced by the National Development Agency (NDA), the Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA) and the University of Johannesburg UJ)**

The review found the following:

- That poverty, inequality and social exclusion have received global attention in the post-2015 development agenda. Despite significant progress in poverty reduction in many parts of the world, social and economic inequalities persist, and vulnerable groups continue to confront barriers that prevent them from fully participating in economic, social and political life.
- That South Africa has sought to address poverty and inequality with a wide range of initiatives.
- That the 'social wage' has been used as a redistributive mechanism of the government budget deliberately aimed at improving the lives of the poor and reducing their cost of living. This has been achieved through several interventions, including:
  - free primary healthcare
  - no-fee-paying schools
  - old age and child support grants
  - housing, and free basic services (water, electricity, and sanitation) to poor households, among others.

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<sup>85</sup> Poverty, inequality and social exclusion in South Africa: a systematic assessment of key policies, strategies and flagship programmes – Submitted to the National Development Agency by the Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA), University of Johannesburg – 31 October 2019

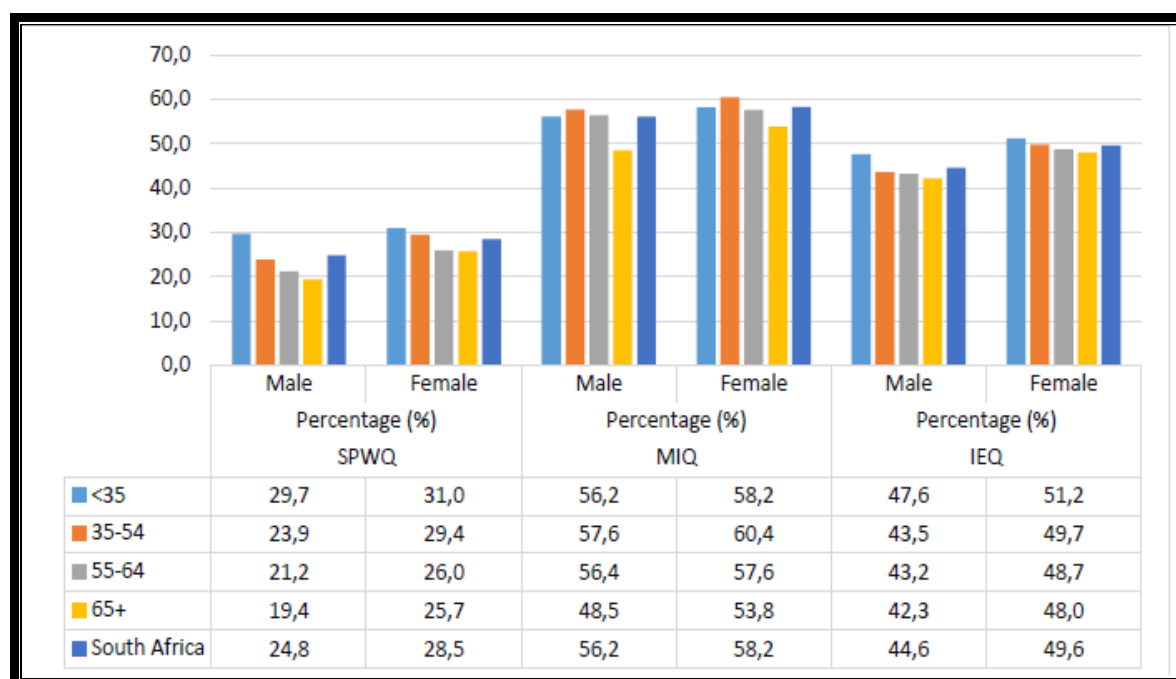
- That although these policy frameworks have resulted in notable gains in poverty reduction, the country continues to face the challenge of high poverty, high inequality, and high unemployment.
- That income inequality levels are among the highest in the world.
- That South Africa has made progress in reducing poverty over the past two decades, but high inequality acts as a brake on poverty reduction, and poverty rates remain high.
- That In the past five years, poverty has increased, and over half the population are poor (Stats SA, 2017).
- That Child poverty rates are disproportionately high.
- That in 2014, the top 10% of the population received two-thirds of the national income, while the top 1% received 20% of the national income (Alvaredo et al., 2018).

Regarding inequality issues, the report indicates that:

- Despite policies that have led to improvements in income poverty, South Africa has become a more unequal society after 1994 rather than a more equal one.
- Wealth inequality is even greater than income inequality. Analysis of wealth inequality between 2008 and 2015 found that the top 10% of households had 71% of the wealth, and the bottom 60% had 7% of net wealth (World Bank, 2018; Mbewe and Woolard, 2016).
- South Africa is also characterised by extreme wage inequality. The number of workers with highly skilled jobs is low, while a large proportion of the working population is employed in very low-paid jobs. For instance, top-end jobs earn nearly five times the average wage for low-skill jobs yet represent less than 20% of the total working population. Wage inequality increased significantly between 1995 and 2014.

## 7.5. Subjective poverty levels in South Africa

FIGURE 8: Poverty incidence of households by subjective poverty indicator and age and sex of the household head



SOURCE: Subjective Poverty in SA: Findings from the General Household Survey 2019 (Report 03-10-25)

The figure above depicts the incidence of subjective poverty in male-headed and female-headed households according to their age cohort.

- Across all the poverty measures and age groups, female-headed households consistently reported the highest incidence of poor households compared to their male counterparts.
- Furthermore, the figure shows a pattern of decreasing poverty incidence in older age groups, particularly since poverty prevalence appears to decrease higher on the age cohort hierarchy. This finding was true for households headed by both sexes.

In 2022,<sup>86</sup> there were more female-headed households without an employed household member compared to male-headed households (43.2% and 24.5%, respectively).

- Among the employed, a small proportion of women were employed, and Gauteng had the highest proportion of male employers in the country.
- The female labour force participation rates were reportedly higher in Gauteng, Western Cape and Free State compared to other provinces.

<sup>86</sup> Stats SA: Marginalised Group Indicator 2022

- The analysis of persons who were employed or ran a business, even if it was only for an hour in the reference period, showed that 68.7% were in the formal sector, 18.8% in the informal sector, 6.9% in private households and 5.5% in agriculture.
- Analysis by age group showed that women aged 15–34 years were mostly unemployed, with a 49.3% unemployment rate compared to the 35–64 age group.

## **7.6. Gender inequalities in poverty in South Africa**

Information from the review report on Poverty, inequality, and social exclusion in South Africa<sup>87</sup> indicates that women make up a large percentage of the poor, particularly in rural areas (Stats SA, 2018). According to this report, the proportion of women living below the poverty line is consistently higher than for men and has remained so in times of decreased and increased poverty (Stats SA, 2017). Furthermore, it has been found that poverty is consistently higher among individuals living in female-headed households compared to those living in male-headed households.

Stats SA<sup>88</sup> has shown that in 2015, the poverty headcount among female-headed households was 51.2% compared to 31.4% among male-headed households. It is also indicated that gender disparities are still predominant in South Africa's labour market, with unemployment at 29.5 for women and 26.1 for men.

### **A. Women and poverty**

According to the Living Conditions Survey 2014/2015, approximately 40.0% of South Africans were living below the UBPL.

- The poverty gap (the distance away from the poverty line) and severity of poverty measures were larger for female-headed households compared to households headed by men.
- The proportion of women living below the UBPL was 16,9 percentage points more than that of households headed by men (49.9% versus 33.0%). This was true for almost six out of every ten households headed by men (59.3%) compared to over seven out of every ten households headed by women (74.8%) in traditional areas.

Poor households headed by women had better access to housing and electricity but not to water, sanitation and refuse removal services.

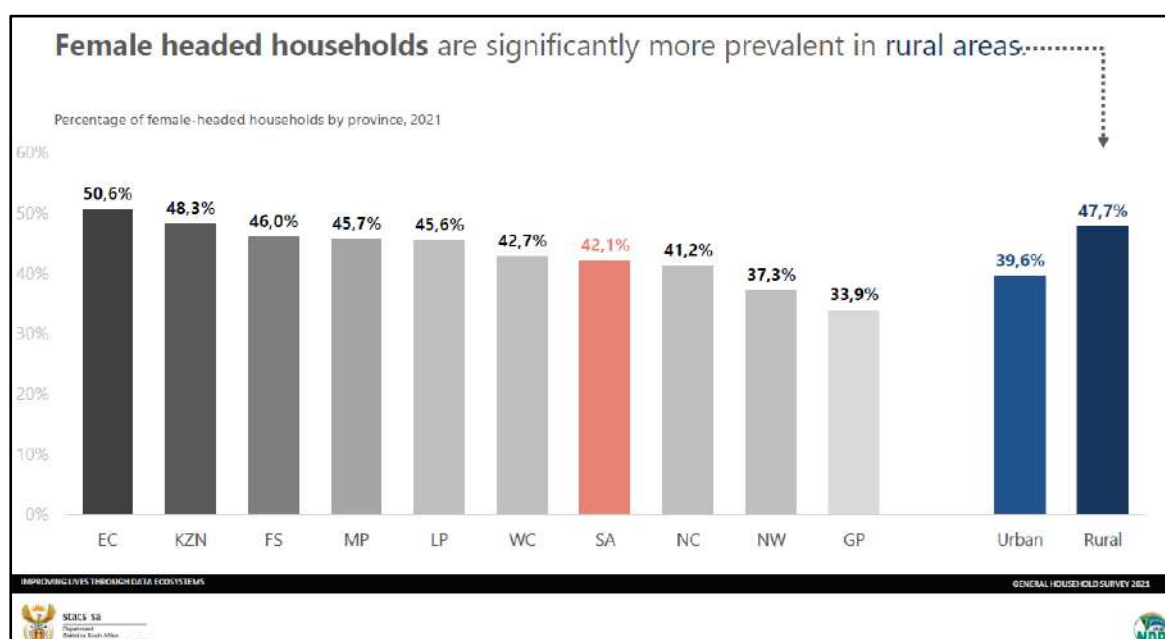
- About 91.4% of poor male-headed households were connected to electricity, compared to 95.2% of poor female-headed households. For poor female-headed households, 69.6% had full access to water compared to 71.7% of poor male-headed households.

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<sup>87</sup> NDA, CSDA & UJ. Review report on poverty, inequality and social exclusion in South Africa

<sup>88</sup> Stats SA (2019)

FIGURE 9: Percentage of female-headed households by province, 2021

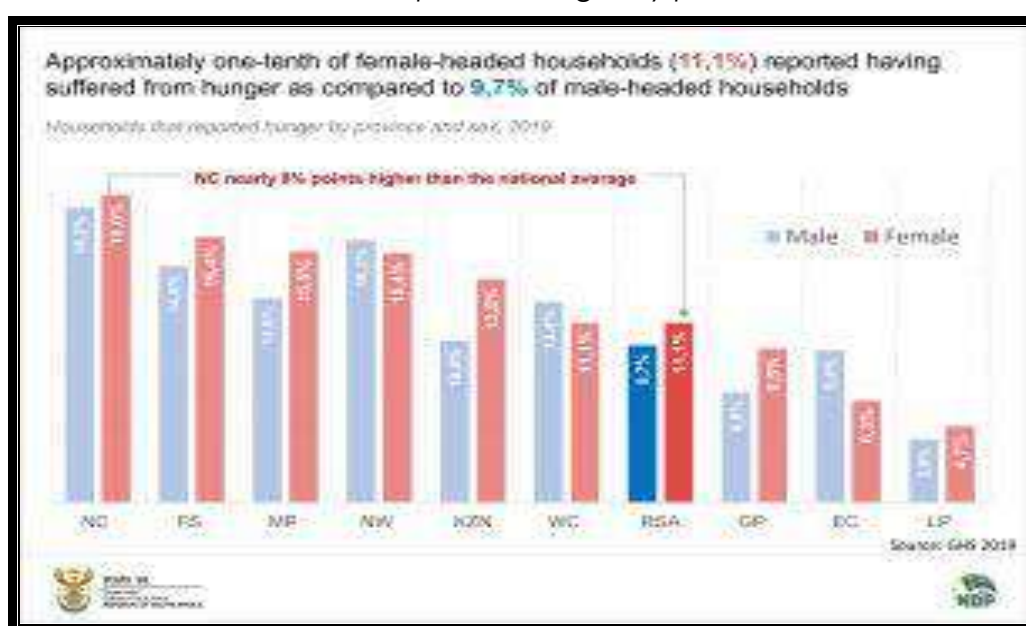


SOURCE: Stats SA General Household Survey 2021

## B) Empowering women is key to reducing poverty and food insecurity.

Gender equality is regarded as an important determinant of food security. However, in 2019, approximately one-tenth of female-headed households (11.1%) reported having suffered from hunger compared to 9.7% of male-headed households. It is important to note that poverty and food insecurity are central to women being vulnerable and that there is a strong correlation between hunger and gender inequalities. The Marginalised Groups Indicator 2019 report shows that, on average, 40.6% of female-headed households were without an employed household member.

FIGURE 10: Household that reported hunger by province and sex, 2019



SOURCE: General Household Survey 2018

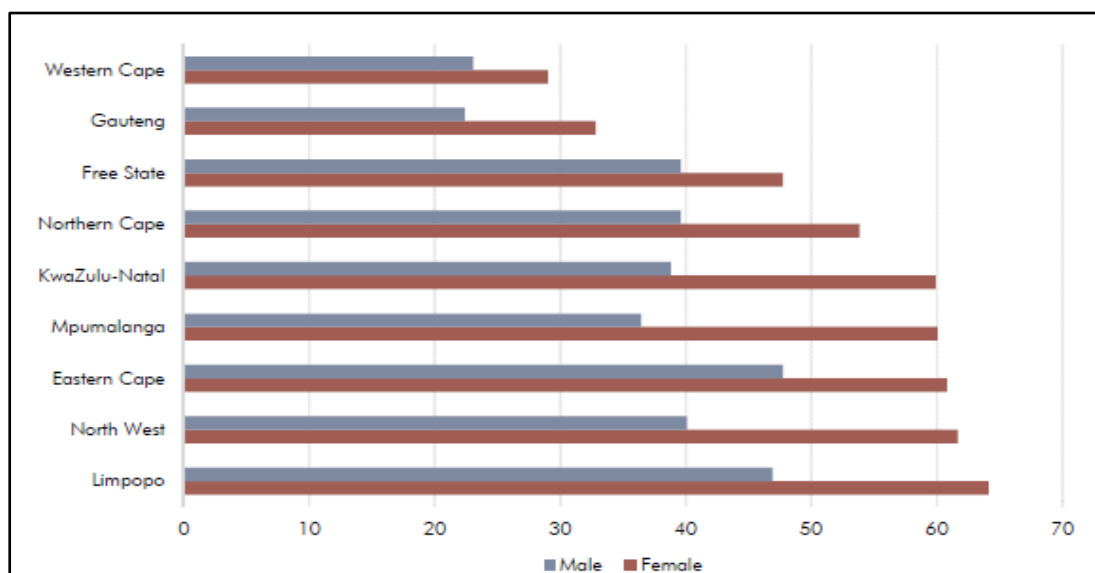


### C) Female-headed households

Female-headed households mostly feel the experience of poverty.

- According to the Living Conditions Survey 2014/2015, approximately 40.0% of South Africans were living below the upper bound poverty line (UBPL).
- The poverty gap (the distance away from the poverty line) and severity of poverty measures were larger for female-headed households compared to households headed by men.
- The proportion of women living below the UBPL was 16,9 percentage points more than that of households headed by men (49.9% versus 33.0%).
- Households living under the UBPL in traditional areas were almost six out of every ten households headed by men (59.3%) compared to over seven out of every ten households headed by women (74.8%).

FIGURE 11: Poverty incidence of households by province and sex of household head (UBPL), 2015



SOURCE: Men, Women and Children Findings of the Living Conditions Survey 2014/2015

The figure above illustrates the incidence of poverty by province and sex of the household head.

- Across all provinces, female-headed households were more likely to be poor than male-headed households.
- More than six out of every ten (64.1%) households headed by women in Limpopo were living below the UBPL compared to less than five out of ten male-headed households (46.9%).
- Furthermore, female-headed households in North West (61.6%), Eastern Cape (60.8%) and Mpumalanga (60.0%) were poor compared to 40.1%, 47.7% and 36.4% for male-headed households in those provinces, respectively.
- Gauteng (32.8%) and Western Cape (29.0%) had the lowest levels of incidence of poverty among male-headed households relative to female-headed households;

- Female-headed households have access to lower levels of per capita household income or are over-represented at the lower end of the income distribution.
- Regarding income poverty, more specifically, several studies have demonstrated that poverty levels for female-headed households are significantly higher than for male-headed households.
- Female-headed households may be more vulnerable to poverty in South Africa because they tend to be larger, support more children, are based in rural areas, and contain fewer working-age adults, and also because female heads are more likely to be unemployed and earn lower wages than their male counterparts.

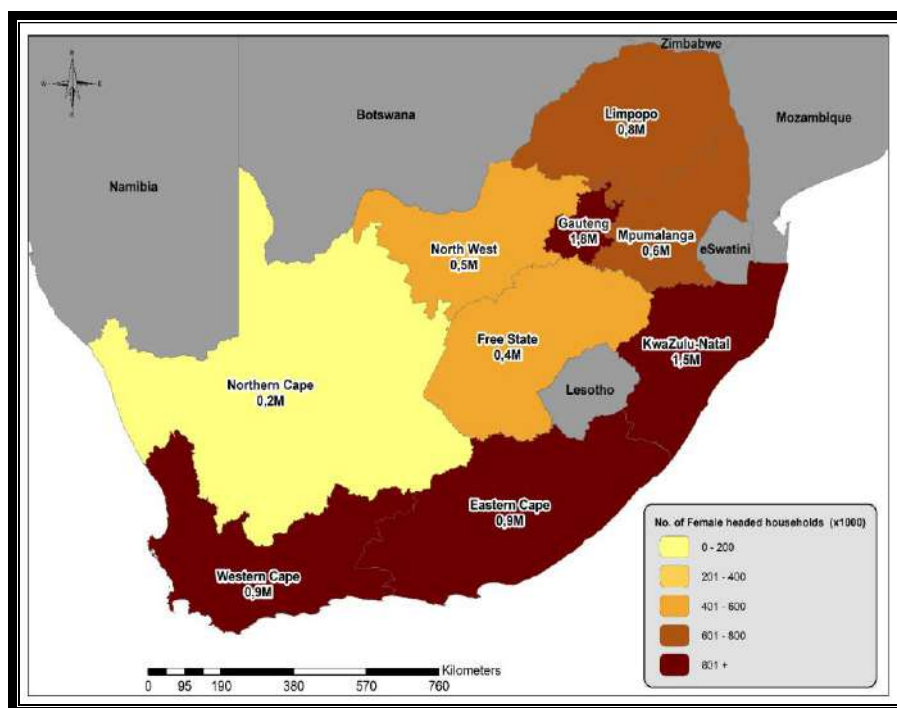
#### **D) Male-headed households**

Male-headed households were more likely to be living in informal dwellings and other dwellings than female-headed households. Meanwhile, female-headed households were more likely to be living in traditional housing.

- There was a notable difference when poverty was taken into account. Approximately 71.0% of poor female-headed households resided in formal dwellings compared to about 66.5% of their male counterparts. In addition, poorer female-headed households resided in traditional dwellings compared to men (17.5% versus 12.7%).
- Fewer poor female-headed households lived in informal (11.4%) and other (0.2%) dwellings compared to poor male-headed households (20.3% and 0.6%, respectively).

## 7.7. Comparison between male and female-headed households (2021)

FIGURE 12: Characteristics of households: Female-headed households by province, 2021



SOURCE: Gender Series Volume IX: Women Empowerment, 2017–2022

Stats SA, in their Gender Series Report,<sup>89</sup> indicate that:

- In 2021, there were 18 million households in South Africa, and women headed 7,6 million (42.1%).
- Gauteng had the largest share of female-headed households, with an estimated 1,8 million female-headed households (33.9%).
- KwaZulu-Natal had the second largest amount of female-headed households, with an estimated 1,5 million households (48.3%).
- Northern Cape remained the province with the lowest share of female-headed households at 149,670 (41.2%).

### A) Comparison in terms of the 2022 statistics

- Nationally, 42.2% of households were headed by women, with Eastern Cape and Limpopo having the highest proportion at 49.6% and 47.1%, respectively.
- Regarding household composition, the majority of men (45.2%) headed nuclear households, while on the other hand, women (46.5%) headed extended households.

<sup>89</sup> Gender Series Volume IX: Women Empowerment 2017–2022

- There were significant gender differences in household compositions. Among men, only 49.5% lived in single-generation households, while 44.0% of female-headed households lived in double-generation households.
- In 2022, there were more female-headed households without an employed household member compared to male-headed households (43.2% and 24.5%, respectively).
- Among the employed, a small proportion of women were employers, and Gauteng had the highest proportion of male employers in the country.

TABLE 8: Distribution of the female population-by-population group, 2022

Population group	N ('000)		Percent
	Female	Total	Female
Black African	6 604	15 222	43,4
Coloured	562	1 258	44,7
Indian/ Asian	130	436	29,7
White	496	1 556	31,9
Total	7 791	18 472	42,2

Source: GHS 2022

TABLE 9: Distribution of male-headed and female-headed households by province, sex and household composition, 2022

Province and sex		N ('000)	Percent					Total
		Total	Single	Nuclear	Extended	Complex	Unspecified	
WC	Male	1 237	16,4	62,1	19,7	1,9	..	100,0
	Female	842	20,1	38,8	36,1	4,7	0,3	100,0
	Both	2 079	17,9	52,7	26,3	3	0,1	100,0
EC	Male	878	33,6	37,1	27,9	1,4	..	100,0
	Female	863	19,3	25,8	52,8	2,1	..	100,0
	Both	1 741	26,5	31,5	40,2	1,7	..	100,0
NC	Male	202	27,7	44,6	25,4	2,3	..	100,0
	Female	170	13,4	37,1	49	0,5	..	100,0
	Both	371	21,2	41,2	36,2	1,5	..	100,0
FS	Male	532	26,8	47,5	22,9	2,6	0,2	100,0
	Female	442	17,4	32,7	47,2	2	0,7	100,0
	Both	974	22,5	40,8	33,9	2,3	0,5	100,0
KZN	Male	1 738	34,7	36,1	27,9	1,2	0,2	100,0
	Female	1 462	17	25,8	54,5	2,4	0,3	100,0
	Both	3 200	26,6	31,4	40	1,7	0,2	100,0
NW	Male	779	42,6	34,4	20,6	2,4	..	100,0
	Female	570	16,5	33,6	48,6	1,3	..	100,0
	Both	1 349	31,6	34,1	32,4	1,9	..	100,0
GP	Male	3 612	28	51,3	18,9	1,6	0,2	100,0
	Female	1 972	20,8	38,2	38,3	2,5	0,2	100,0
	Both	5 583	25,5	46,7	25,7	1,9	0,2	100,0
MP	Male	789	30,9	40,9	26,8	1	0,4	100,0
	Female	656	11,7	34	52,2	2,1	..	100,0
	Both	1 445	22,2	37,7	38,3	1,5	0,2	100,0
LP	Male	914	38,2	34,3	27	0,4	0,2	100,0
	Female	814	15,7	34,4	49,3	0,4	0,2	100,0
	Both	1 729	27,6	34,4	37,5	0,4	0,2	100,0
RSA	Male	10 681	30,3	45,2	22,9	1,5	0,1	100,0
	Female	7 791	17,9	33,1	46,5	2,2	0,2	100,0
	Both	18 472	25,1	40,1	32,9	1,8	0,2	100,0

Source: GHS 2022  
 \*Only households headed by a person of age 15 years or older are included

## 7.8. Examples of government's initiatives to address poverty in South Africa

### A) New Growth Path (NGP) framework

In 2010, the government released a policy known as the New Growth Path (NGP) framework with the aim of enhancing growth and employment creation equity. The framework was aimed at identifying strategies that would enable the country to grow in a more inclusive and equitable way.

The NGP framework was meant to identify investments in key areas, such as energy, transport, water, housing and communication.

The national government provided the broad framework within which local government was supposed to implement the NGP policy and had undertaken to

make the necessary resources available. However, there have been concerns regarding the implementation of this policy. Meyer<sup>90</sup> analysed whether the NGP policy is implementable at the local government level and the key points of the analysis are presented below. The analysis included an investigation into comparative case studies on national growth in Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) countries. The other intended outcome of the analysis was to provide guidelines from the investigation.

## **B) Analysis and critique of the New Growth Path (NGP): Key issues**

*The following opinions and views come from some of those who analysed the NGP:*

- The NGP is said to be contradictory and does not provide sufficient detail on the implementation of the policy. There is an opinion that the NGP policy is a vision rather than a plan and that it has no specific implementable steps.
- It is uncertain which national government department is overseeing the NGP.
- As far as job creation is concerned, it is alleged that the NGP focuses too much on government intervention rather than on creating an enabling economic condition for successful private sector initiatives.
- The target of creating five million jobs by 2020 was seen to be over-ambitious and unattainable, especially because the local economic growth rate was slow to achieve this target.
- The major obstacles preventing sustained development in South Africa were the lack of institutional capacity, the poor relationship between government and communities, and a lack of coordinated intervention strategies.
- Political leadership also needed to be improved.
- The issue of *decent jobs* versus *mass jobs* requires more intense debate.
- In South Africa, jobs were seen to be available for skilled workers but not for the more numerous unskilled workers.
- The NGP policy has come under criticism because of its heavy reliance on the government to implement the policy.
- All three spheres of government, especially local government, have relatively poor capacity and skill levels.
- The lack of strong links with the private sector is also a key factor that requires policy improvements.

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<sup>90</sup> Meyer, D. Can the policy be applied in the local government sphere? Department of Public Management, University of the North West

### **C) Recommendation from the New Growth Path (NGP) analysis**

- Aspects that should be strengthened in the NGP policy include considering international trends on job creation and employment.
- Throughout the world, growth is taking place without corresponding jobs.
- More temporary contract jobs are available.
- Highly skilled people will find jobs, but the unskilled will struggle to find employment because technology is replacing people.
- Low-paying jobs which do not qualify as decent jobs could perhaps be subsidised.
- SMMEs and entrepreneurs should be the drivers of the economy.
- South Africa should introduce training for potential entrepreneurs. The country currently has a low entrepreneurial focus of only 8% of the population.
- Labour laws have a major impact on the willingness of the private sector to appoint permanent workers. This negativity affects job creation.
- Skills development, focusing on the skills required for a specific area, is sorely needed.
- The agricultural sector in South Africa should play a much more prominent role in job creation and the provision of opportunities to the poor.
- Farming should become a viable and growing sector again. Food production, agro-processing and demand-driven production all have a role to play.
- As integral to agricultural development, rural development and land reform are also of key importance.

### **7.9. Social grants in South Africa**

Social grants refer to:

- Old Age Grant (OAG)
- War Veteran's Grant (WVG)
- Disability Grant (DG)
- Grant in Aid (GIA)
- Child Support Grant (CSG)
- Foster Child Grant (FCG)
- Care Dependency Grant (CDG).

<i>Social assistance is an income transfer in the form of grants provided by the government.</i>
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Social grants are associated with positive effects on poverty and inequality. South Africa is said to have one of the largest cash transfer programmes in Africa. About a third of the population are beneficiaries of social grants for children, older persons, and persons with disabilities. Social grants provide income that helps people to survive the short-term economic hardship of unemployment. In the long term, new opportunities must be created to return people to work.

Research shows that South Africa has one of the world's most expansive social grant systems and that 47% of the population relies on a monthly grant. Of these, 18 million

are permanent beneficiaries, and about 10 million receive a temporary Social Relief of Distress Grant, which was introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic for working-age adults who do not receive formal social protection, such as unemployment insurance and for those engaged in informal work.<sup>91</sup> Most of the grants are child support grants paid to a child's primary caregiver based on a means test.

The percentages of people receiving grants 2003-2022:<sup>92</sup>

- The percentage of individuals who benefited from social grants steadily increased from 12.8% in 2003 to approximately 31% between 2017 and 2019 before increasing sharply to 37% in 2022.
- The percentage of households that received at least one grant increased to a high of 52.4% in 2020 (during the first year of COVID-19 when the SRD grant was introduced) before declining to 49.5% in 2022.

The provincial distribution of individuals and households that benefited from social grants in 2022:

- Grant beneficiaries were most common in Limpopo (49.1%) and Eastern Cape (48.4%) and least widespread in Western Cape (23.9%) and Gauteng (24.9%).
- Households that received at least one type of social grant were most common in Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape (both 62.3%), Limpopo (61.6%), and least common in Western Cape (36.3%) and Gauteng (36.6%)
- The Special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant of R350 per month was introduced in 2020 in an attempt to offset the impact of the pandemic. Since then, the percentage of individuals in the age group 18–59 years who received the grant has increased from 5.3% in 2020 to 8.7% in 2022.
- The highest uptake was observed in Limpopo (15.0%) and Mpumalanga (14.7%), while the grants were least common in the Western Cape (1.8%) and Northern Cape (5.0%).
- Some 25.9% of all individuals and 38.7% of all households in metropolitan areas received various types of social grants (compared to 37.0% of individuals and 49.5% of households nationally).
- Individual grant receipt was highest in Buffalo City (37.7%) and Mangaung (35.8%) and lowest in Cape Town (21.9%) and Johannesburg (23.8%).
- The receipt of one or more social grants was most common for households in Mangaung (56.9%) and Buffalo City (55.6%) and least common in Cape Town (33.9%) and Johannesburg (35.1%).

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<sup>91</sup> The Conversation: <https://theconversation.com/47-of-south-africans-rely-on-social-grants-study-reveals-how-they-use-them-to-generate-more-income-203691>

<sup>92</sup> Stats SA: General Household Survey 2022

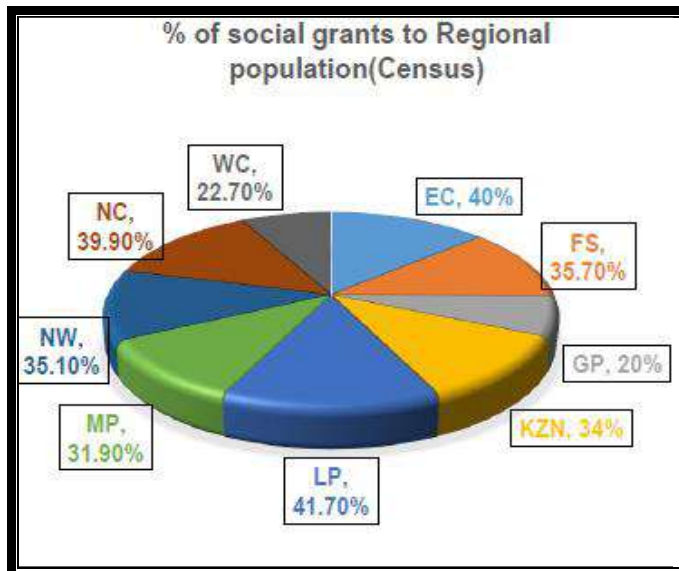


### 7.10. South African Social Security Agency (SASSA)

SASSA administers social assistance in terms of the Social Assistance Act No.13 of 2004. This includes the payment of social grants: Old Age, Disability, Child Support, Foster Child, Care Dependency Grants, and the Grant in Aid. (All social grants are means-tested, and the exclusion levels can be sourced from Regulation No. 46459.)<sup>93</sup>

In addition to social grants, SASSA also administers Social Relief of Distress payments in cases of disasters (to individuals who do not receive their social grant payments, individuals disabled for six months or less, death of the breadwinner, the breadwinner is admitted to an institution for less than a month, or the individual did not receive maintenance from a person legally entitled to pay maintenance). SASSA also assists beneficiaries with deductions directly from social grants and payments for funeral policies.<sup>94</sup>

FIGURE 13: Percentage share of social grants by region



SOURCE: Twelfth Statistical Report 2023/2024: Social Assistance: Department of Monitoring and Evaluation

<sup>93</sup> Published in May 2022

<sup>94</sup> Department of Monitoring and Evaluation. Twelfth Statistical Report 2023/2024: Social Assistance Period: March 2024.

TABLE 6: The number of social grants per grant type per Region: November 2023

Region	Care Dependency Grant	Child Support Grant	Disability Grant	Foster Care Grant	Grant-In-Aid	Old Age Grant	War Veteran's Grant	Total
Eastern Cape	24 386	1 962 400	173 080	46 450	51 359	620 258	1	2 877 934
Free State	9 814	712 185	76 361	20 652	17 230	226 477		1 062 719
Gauteng	23 621	2 048 212	127 482	41 765	19 695	755 029	2	3 015 806
KwaZulu-Natal	40 952	3 009 343	219 595	37 967	102 839	782 097	2	4 192 795
Limpopo	18 280	2 005 189	102 260	38 064	64 495	518 183		2 746 471
Mpumalanga	12 565	1 207 425	81 906	19 033	30 976	287 874		1 639 779
North West	10 817	917 122	62 520	24 197	23 223	295 582	1	1 333 462
Northern Cape	6 082	336 339	56 119	9 636	36 338	98 086	1	542 601
Unspecified		2	1			2		5
Western Cape	17 764	1 042 226	163 089	34 143	28 125	407 017	3	1 692 367
<b>Total</b>	<b>164 281</b>	<b>13 240 443</b>	<b>1 062 413</b>	<b>271 907</b>	<b>374 280</b>	<b>3 990 605</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19 103 939</b>

SOURCE: SASSA Fact Sheet: Issue No. 11 of 2023, 30 November 2023.

The information above is a statistical summary of social grants in the nine provinces of South Africa as of 30 November 2023: Eastern Cape (EC), Free State (FS), Gauteng (GP), KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), Limpopo (LP), Mpumalanga (MP), North West (NW), Northern Cape (NC), and Western Cape.

TABLE 10: Number of beneficiaries (caregivers) by age category and gender per grant March 2024

Beneficiary Age Grouping	March 2024											
	CDG			CSG			FCG			Total		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Invalid DOB	1		1	33		33	3		3	37	0	37
(16 - 17 Years)				109	1	110				109	1	110
(17 - 18 Years)	2		2	764	5	769				766	5	771
(18 - 19 Years)	38	3	41	20 622	83	20 705	4	1	5	20 664	87	20 751
(19 - 20 Years)	186	5	191	52 250	331	52 581	34	7	41	52 470	343	52 813
(20 - 25 Years)	3 542	74	3 616	669 744	6 083	675 827	1 834	414	2 248	675 120	6 571	681 691
(25 - 30 Years)	13 273	205	13 478	1 234 946	13 841	1 248 787	6 856	1 217	8 073	1 255 075	15 263	1 270 338
(30 - 35 Years)	26 181	426	26 607	1 411 842	21 321	1 433 163	10 831	1 361	12 192	1 448 954	23 108	1 471 962
(35 - 40 Years)	31 543	751	32 294	1 260 139	29 080	1 289 219	12 079	1 180	13 259	1 303 761	31 011	1 334 772
(40 - 45 Years)	26 455	1 071	27 526	946 855	31 130	978 045	12 494	1 061	13 555	985 804	33 322	1 019 126
(45 - 50 Years)	18 588	957	19 545	618 710	26 998	645 708	13 854	980	14 834	651 152	28 935	680 087
(50 - 55 Years)	11 889	830	12 728	388 807	21 198	410 005	18 049	992	19 041	418 755	23 020	441 775
(55 - 60 Years)	7 078	563	7 641	233 167	14 239	247 406	22 589	964	23 553	262 834	15 766	278 600
(60 - 65 Years)	4 748	389	5 137	163 829	11 181	175 010	25 028	1 080	26 108	193 605	12 650	206 255
(65 - 70 Years)	3 240	253	3 493	115 867	8 425	124 292	20 240	1 095	21 335	138 347	9 773	148 120
(70 - 75 Years)	1 970	149	2 119	75 292	5 585	80 877	13 607	1 039	14 646	90 869	6 773	97 642
(75 - 80 Years)	884	70	954	36 853	2 731	39 584	6 901	550	7 451	44 638	3 351	47 989
(80 - 85 Years)	396	19	415	18 940	1 355	20 295	3 502	263	3 765	22 836	1 637	24 475
(85 - 90 Years)	143	10	153	6 446	413	6 859	1 145	89	1 234	7 734	512	8 246
(90 - 95 Years)	53	3	56	2 597	145	2 742	494	29	523	3 544	177	3 721
(95 - 100 Years)	12		12	688	25	713	98	5	103	796	30	826
(> 100 Years)	4	1	5	216	14	230	35		35	255	15	270
<b>Total</b>	<b>150 236</b>	<b>5 779</b>	<b>156 015</b>	<b>7 259 116</b>	<b>194 244</b>	<b>7 453 360</b>	<b>169 677</b>	<b>12 327</b>	<b>182 004</b>	<b>7 579 829</b>	<b>212 350</b>	<b>7 791 379</b>

As at the end of March 2024, there were 2.7% of the recipients of social grants being male.

SOURCE: Twelfth Statistical Report 2023/2024: Social Assistance; Department of Monitoring and Evaluation

## **7.11 How grant money is sometimes used to generate income**

### **Social grants, livelihoods and poverty responses of social grant beneficiaries in South Africa (the types of livelihood activities of grant beneficiaries)<sup>95</sup>**

Information is from a research brief which was based on the synthesis of findings from three qualitative studies that were conducted by students working with the Centre for Social Development in Africa and the Department of Anthropology and Development Studies at the University of Johannesburg.

#### **A) Livelihood diversification: A mix of strategies**

People with small or micro enterprises have indicated that they have multiple livelihood strategies to supplement their income. For them, grants provide regularity of income, which gives people more agency to diversify their livelihoods.

#### **B) Investing in future livelihoods**

Some beneficiaries report that they use their grants to invest in future livelihood strategies. This predominantly involved investing in a child's education or even supporting children with their job searches. This is a form of long-term investment from which grant beneficiaries hope to benefit in the future.

a) Monies are used to grow and sustain businesses:

- i) Grants act as seed money: Some grant recipients who engaged in income-generating livelihood activities typically used their grants as seed money to establish and initiate small businesses. This seed money is typically used to buy stock and equipment, as well as to rent business space in which to start micro-enterprises. Many supplement the grant money with money from other sources, including informal lenders.
- ii) Grants help to grow and sustain businesses: Some beneficiaries used grants once-off or on a continual basis to grow and sustain their business. The grants are used to cover start-up costs, as a cash injection to expand their existing operations, or to buy new equipment. Again, the grant money is often supplemented with other sources of capital, such as rental income.

b) Grants assist with cash flow:

- i) Many grant recipients who engaged in livelihood activities struggle to maintain stable cash flow throughout the month and use their grants to manage during periods of fluctuating income. Beneficiaries reported that households with multiple income streams were more financially stable.

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<sup>95</sup> National Research Foundation & Department of Science and Technology. Social Grants, Livelihoods and Poverty Responses of Social Grant Beneficiaries in South Africa – Research brief by CSDA, University of Johannesburg

### **C) Grants support consumption smoothing when running micro-enterprises**

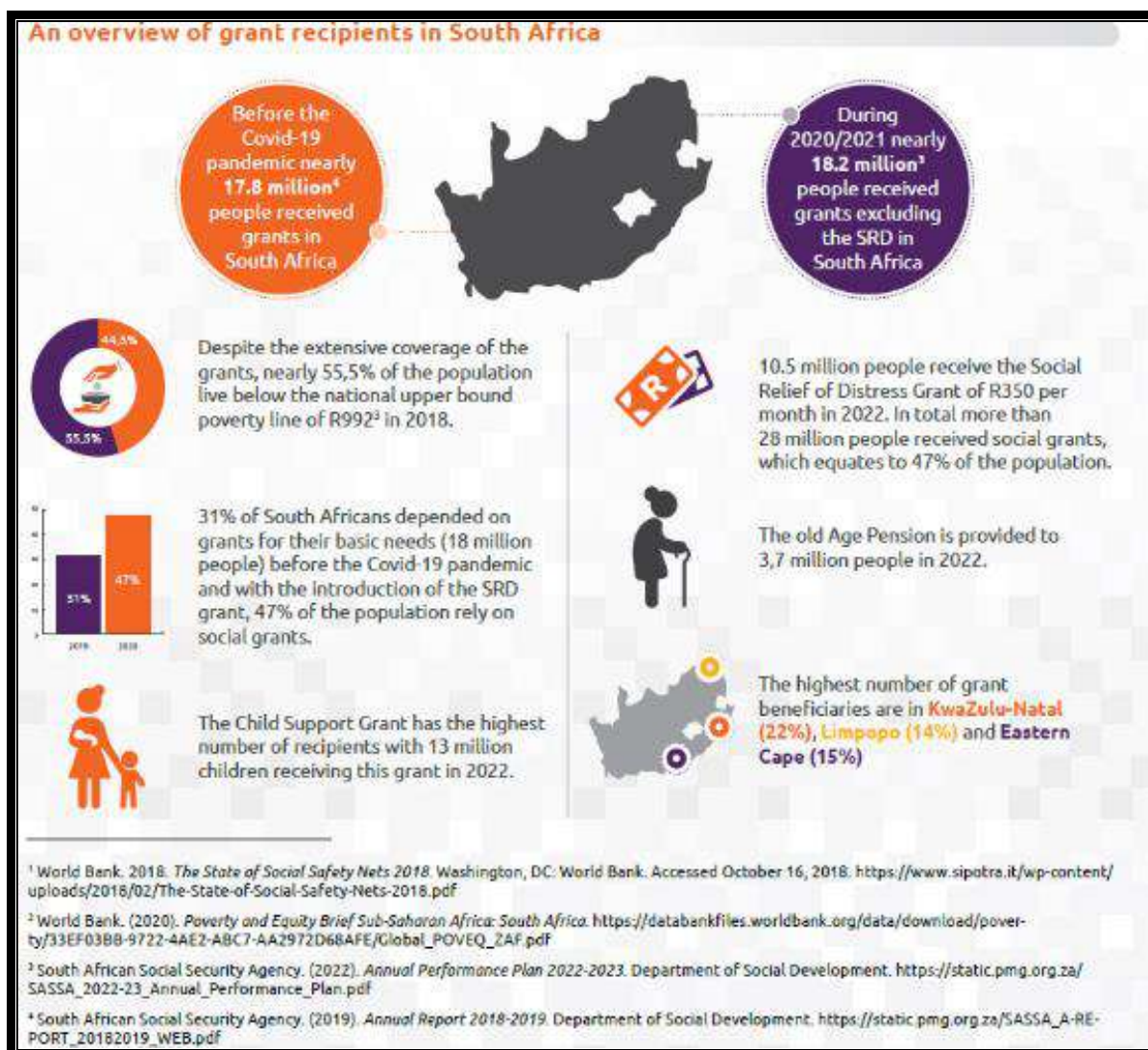
Many people who run micro-enterprises struggle to maintain a stable level of income throughout the month, and this compromises their ability to cover their basic consumption needs. Some grant recipients use grant monies for household expenses. By smoothing over their consumption during periods of low-income generation, some indicate that they are able to ring-fence their business capital and profits to grow their business.

### **D) investing grant money**

Grant recipients reported saving a portion of their grants, primarily through local stokvels or savings schemes. By setting aside a small amount, grant recipients indicated they aimed to build savings that in time could be reinvested into their businesses or to use during an emergency or may be used to buy stock when cash flow is limited. Some used the money to introduce new products.

### **E) Support services accessed for business activities**

The crafters who were part of the crafters cooperative in KwaZulu-Natal accessed support through the Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust (an NGO) and its income-generating arm Woza Moya. Women in this community used the skills development and training offered by the NGO to enhance their livelihood activities, and their children attended the school run by the NGO.



SOURCE: Social grants, livelihoods and poverty responses of social grant beneficiaries in South Africa

## 7.12. National social protection strategies from a gender perspective

Social protection has become an increasingly important part of the social development agenda. According to UN Women,<sup>96</sup> comprehensive social protection systems can contribute to poverty eradication and reduced inequalities, stimulate productive activity and economic growth and create resilience in the face of multiple and recurrent crises – particularly if they work in tandem with other social and labour market policies.

Regarding the social protection mechanisms provided in South Africa, there is insufficient information regarding the country's efforts to address the gender gaps that still exist in the government's approach to gender equality within such mechanisms.

<sup>96</sup> UN Women. Putting gender equality at the centre of social protection strategies in sub-Saharan Africa: How far have we come? UN Women Policy Brief No. 4

Research shows that social protection coverage remains low and is plagued by significant gender gaps. Furthermore, gender-responsive social protection systems provide coverage across the life course, including social assistance mechanisms.

UN Women has analysed the extent to and ways in which countries can integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into their social protection efforts to build national social protection systems. UN Women developed a set of indicators spanning four key dimensions to assess the extent to which gender considerations had been considered in national social protection strategies.

*TABLE 11: This UN Women-developed checklist provides guidance regarding the issues to be taken into consideration when developing strategies for social protection*

<b>Key issues to close the gender gap</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Overarching framework	Alignment of the national strategy with international standards, stakeholder participation in its drafting
Recognition of gendered risks and vulnerabilities:	Whether the strategies recognise gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities, as well as structural gender inequalities.
Measures to address gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities	focus on the extent to which the strategies propose specific measures to address the gender-specific risks and inequalities identified
Monitoring and accountability:	Look at both the actors that were involved in the development of the strategy and the mechanisms created to monitor its implementation.

### **A) Identified gaps and omissions, as well as promising practices of gender mainstreaming in social protection**

The assessment of the social assistance mechanisms conducted by UN Women<sup>97</sup> identified the following gaps:

#### ***Gender-specific life course risks and vulnerabilities – a strong focus on maternal health***

The extent to which national social protection strategies in South Africa recognise and address gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities across the life course acknowledges that the gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities are heavily centred on maternal health, with the national priority to be placed on reducing maternal mortality, which, despite significant progress made, remains high. Research on access to antenatal care found that additional policies to address women's economic insecurity are

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<sup>97</sup> Putting gender equality at the centre of social protection strategies in sub-Saharan Africa

needed to enable women to bridge the gap between service availability and service affordability. Maternity-related economic insecurity (e.g., loss of income before and/or after childbirth) is specifically acknowledged.

### ***Structural gender inequalities – some recognition, limited action***

*Women still lack equal access to economic resources.* Women of working age still face persistent inequalities and discrimination in paid employment, *including* lower employment rates, lower earnings, higher rates of informality and lower access to productive resources, lesser access to and control over resources, exposure to gender-based violence, and disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work. To work for women, social protection strategies must recognise these inequalities and aim to address them in and through social protection policies and programmes.

### ***Unpaid care and domestic work***

Women and girls do a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work. Women have been at the forefront of caring for the ill and minding children unable to attend school or daycare, often hampered by inadequate access to water, sanitation and hygiene. Harnessing social protection to address the 'care crisis' that the pandemic has both revealed and deepened is an urgent priority. However, there is still a serious challenge to anchoring this issue more firmly in the social protection discourse and practice.

### ***Violence against women and girls***

Women who have been subjected to physical or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner require gender-responsive social protection systems that can and must address this issue.

### ***Participation, monitoring, and accountability – room for improvement***

The limited recognition of structural gender inequalities and the gap between recognition and action to address them suggest a need for greater monitoring, participation, and accountability at all stages of the policy cycle.

The participation of gender equality mechanisms may influence the extent to which gender-specific inequalities and risks are not only recognised but also addressed. Gender equality mechanisms, women's rights organisations and other gender experts must be adequately resourced to translate their participation into policy influence.

A rights-based approach to social protection also requires robust accountability mechanisms, including participatory monitoring and evaluation frameworks and grievance and redress mechanisms. Gender data and analysis should inform not only the design and implementation of social protection strategies and programmes but also be used to monitor and evaluate their performance and outcomes. The use of sex-disaggregated data should be included in the monitoring and evaluation frameworks.



UN Women shares the following recommendations to address the gender gap in the social security mechanisms:

- Involve national gender equality mechanisms, women's rights organisations and other gender experts, as well as trade unions and organisations of informal workers, in the development of national social protection strategies.
- Deliberately integrate a gender and life course perspective into risk and vulnerability assessments so that strategies cover maternity alongside other important gendered risks and vulnerabilities.
- Strengthen the capacity of social protection stakeholders to both identify and address gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities through specific social protection measures.
- Recognise and promote public investments in the care economy as a key part of social protection systems that can support economic development by enabling job creation, expanding women's employment opportunities, and supporting the capabilities of children and care-dependent adults.
- Strengthen coordination between social protection systems and VAWG services, including training for frontline implementers of social protection on how to identify and refer survivors, drawing on the expertise of national gender equality mechanisms and women's organisations.
- Generate pathways and support for women's rights, workers' rights and other rights-based civil society organisations to shape social protection policies and systems, including through participatory monitoring and evaluation.
- Strengthen the collection and use of gender and social protection data, including sex-disaggregated data on coverage and benefit levels, as well as qualitative data that capture the intended and unintended impacts of policies and programmes on women and girls.
- Conduct further research to identify the barriers and bottlenecks for translating the recognition of gender-specific risks into gender-responsive social protection strategies, policies, and programmes.

### **7.13. Some of the review studies and discussions about poverty in South Africa**

*A Poverty and Inequality Dialogue was held on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020 in collaboration with the Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg.*

The following reviews will be discussed below:

- Development Plan – advancing implementation towards a more capable nation
- Tackling poverty and inequality in South Africa
- South Africa's integrated approach to addressing poverty, inequality and exclusion – dialogue report November 2020.



## **A) Review of the National Development Plan– advancing implementation towards a more capable nation**

The National Development Plan: Vision 2030 (NDP) is regarded as South Africa's long-term plan for achieving inclusive growth, prosperity, and improvements in the quality of life for the country's citizens.

A review of the NDP was done in 2020. The main aim of this review was to examine the progress made in the implementation of the plan's crucial targets since the NDP was adopted in 2012. It was of great importance to consider the efforts undertaken to achieve those gains, assess gaps, and recommend the courses for improvement. The review report highlights that progress towards achieving the NDP's main goals has been slow compared to what was expected. This resulted in the need for a review and a deep assessment to understand this poor performance.

### ***Gender issues focus***

According to the NDP Vision 2030, the promotion of the transformation of the socio-economic lives of women and the advancement of women's equality was among the key issues to be addressed.

These included:

- Actively supporting the role of women as leaders in all sectors of society
- Ensuring that the transformation of the economy should involve the active participation and empowerment of women
- Addressing social, cultural, religious and educational barriers to women entering the job market.

The review report acknowledges that since the launch of the National Development Plan in 2012, there has been some progress in women's political participation and the conditions that shape and influence women's emancipation. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that the human development of women continues to intersect with social, economic, political and cultural factors in multiple ways.

The review also revealed that:

- Despite the significant progress in advancing women's rights, women and girls continue to suffer the negative impacts of persistent patriarchy, gender inequality, discrimination and a pandemic of gender-based violence.
- The Poverty Trends Report (Stats SA, 2017) and other research reflect that Black African women are disproportionately affected by poverty. Black African women, children (17 years and younger), people from rural areas, and those with no education suffer the most.
- The findings from the research show that in 2015, a higher proportion of women (41.7%) were living below the lower bound poverty line compared to men (38.2%).
- Women's poverty levels are higher than the national or country level. Individuals living in female-headed households and also continue to account for shares in poverty that are larger than their shares in the population.

- A household headed by a woman has a 48% probability of being poor compared to a 28% probability for a household headed by a man. Violence against women remains a major problem in South Africa.
- A KPMG (2014) study found that more than half of all women had experienced gender-based violence at some point in their lives. Bodily integrity and sexual and reproductive health rights are protected and ought to be upheld.

The review also found that despite measures being put in place to deal with poverty, the country still lacks a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy. There is therefore a need to consolidate the existing programmes impacting poverty into a deliberate anti-poverty strategy.

There is a belief that the integration of various initiatives (such as social wages integrated into a social protection system) can help to reduce poverty as well as the need for employment.

Focus areas that contributed towards reducing poverty, inequality, and unemployment were as follows:

- Reducing poverty through improved coverage and quality of basic service provision, including improved provision of basic service infrastructure.
- Improving the supply and choice of housing and accommodation options, including access to well-located land.
- Reducing Inequality through improving the quality of the physical environment within which people live and work, including improving access to social infrastructure, economic opportunities, and creating safer, more liveable, and integrated living environments.
- Reducing unemployment by increasing access to opportunity and ensuring that people live in well-located areas and can access work or business opportunities.
- To supplement social protection, the government, in partnership with the private sector, must continue to create and support poverty-reducing job opportunities and programmes such as the Expanded Public Works Programmes and Community Works Programmes, as well as the promotion and support of SMMEs, including improving access to skill-enhancing education and training.
- Filling the gaps in coverage in the social protection system for those who are without food and income support.

## **B) Tackling poverty and inequality in South Africa**

Researchers at the Centre for Social Development in Africa undertook a review<sup>98</sup> titled *South African policies go some way to tackling poverty and inequality: But more*

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<sup>98</sup> The Conversation: <https://theconversation.com/south-african-policies-go-some-way-to-tackling-poverty-and-inequality-but-more-is-needed-151696>

is needed (published January 14, 2021) to find out how South Africa's laws, policies, and strategy documents intend to tackle poverty and inequality.

The research question that guided the study was: *Do the country's laws, policies and strategy documents show exactly how poverty, inequality and social exclusion will be tackled?*

The review report mentions that South Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world and that more than 50% of the population lives in poverty. Despite notable gains in poverty reduction since apartheid, poverty levels have remained consistently highest among women, Black South Africans, persons with disabilities, and those living in rural areas.

This review found that:

- i) A small amount (10%) of legislative documents and more than half of all policy and strategy documents mentioned poverty, inequality, social exclusion, gender, race, disability and spatial disparities at least once.
- ii) The social protection sector showed the highest average number of references to poverty (58) and inequality (70) in its documents.
- iii) The public service sector showed the lowest number of references.
- iv) There are many more references in policy and strategy documents than in legislative documents. This review reveals that more references do not mean deeper engagement with these issues. In some cases, the issues are not critically analysed.
- v) References to poverty, inequality and social exclusion must be explained within a framework of how they affect each law and policy. The analysis should include strategic interventions.
- vi) References to gender and spatial disparities are most common when addressing social exclusion. However, references to population groups, persons with disabilities and youth not in education or training are inconsistent across the board.

## **Gaps**

Some of the gaps identified in the reviews included the following:

- i) The gap between policy and practice indicates that more should be done to include poverty, inequality and social exclusion in all policy making.
- ii) Recognition of poverty, inequality and social exclusion cannot be limited to policy and strategy documents. Poverty recognition must be reflected in legislative documents because laws are binding.
- iii) Policy-making institutions must take ownership of the national mandate. Each government department must develop solutions. They cannot simply rely on the National Development Plan to reduce poverty and inequality.

The following recommendations came from the review:

- Government departments should develop a toolkit based on shared good practice. This would help to translate documents into action.

- Documents must be grounded in data, analysis and strategic responses. Drafters must consider trade-offs and holistic approaches. Drafters must also make strategic use of flagship programmes and participatory processes.
- Future Medium Term Strategic Framework documents must be based on goal-setting guidelines for poverty, inequality and social exclusion. This will achieve greater consistency in targets and indicators.

### **C) South Africa's integrated approach to addressing poverty, inequality and exclusion – dialogue report November 2020**

In 2020, the Centre for Social Development in Africa at the University of Johannesburg organised a dialogue with the theme *Poverty and Inequality for Social Development in Africa*. The main focus of the discussions was “*towards measuring the SDG 1 (End poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality) in South Africa*” with the aim of discussing and summarising existing evidence about the state of poverty, inequality and social exclusion in South Africa at the time.

The NDA commissioned the CSDA to conduct a research study on poverty, inequality and social exclusion in South Africa. The core focus of the study was to outline how poverty and inequality are integrated into the country's policies, strategies and flagship programmes.

The main aims of the study were to:

- Put evidence together about poverty, inequality and social exclusion (with particular attention to gender, race, disability status and spatial dimensions) in South Africa.
- Assess whether poverty, inequality and social exclusion are mainstreamed across laws, policies, strategies and flagship programmes in the various sectors of the economy.

### **Study conclusions and recommendations**

Reviewing the continuum of the legislation to policy and strategy:

- If recognition of poverty and inequality is limited within policy and strategic documents, there may be challenges regarding compliance and enforcement.
- Greater ownership within sectors of pathways to poverty and inequality reduction as it is essential that each policy-making institution across social, economic, environmental and administrative sectors takes custodianship of the national mandate. Sectors should not simply rely on the NDP to identify and address sectoral linkages regarding poverty, inequality, and exclusion but also seek to go beyond it by applying both sectoral expertise and social developmental evidence to identify specific pathways to poverty reduction.
- Development of a toolkit for a systematic approach to mainstreaming poverty, inequality and social exclusion policy by using good practice that emerges from the various spheres.

- Target setting using baseline data is recommended for inclusion in a future compilation of MTSF documents, and that a set of guidelines for target-setting is established that can move towards greater consistency and harmonisation of targets in the overall vision. The guidelines should provide a selection of sub-outcomes, indicators for each sub-outcome, and impact indicators.

#### **7.14. Poverty, inequality, and unemployment**

The review report<sup>99</sup> produced by the National Development Agency (NDA), Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA), and University of Johannesburg UJ) found the following:

- That poverty, inequality and social exclusion have received global attention in the post-2015 development agenda. Despite significant progress in poverty reduction in many parts of the world, social and economic inequalities persist, and vulnerable groups continue to confront barriers that prevent these vulnerable groups from fully participating in economic, social and political life.
- That South Africa has sought to address poverty and inequality with a wide range of initiatives.
- That the 'social wage' has been used as a redistributive mechanism of the government budget deliberately aimed at improving the lives of the poor and reducing their cost of living. This has been achieved through several interventions, including:
  - free primary healthcare
  - no-fee-paying schools
  - old age and child support grants
  - housing, and free basic services (water, electricity and sanitation) to poor households, among others.
- That although these policy frameworks have resulted in notable gains in poverty reduction, the country continues to face the challenge of high poverty, high inequality and high unemployment.
- That income inequality levels are among the highest in the world.
- That South Africa has made progress in reducing poverty over the past two decades, but high inequality acts as a brake on poverty reduction, and poverty rates remain high.
- That in the past five years, poverty has increased, and over half the population are poor (Stats SA, 2017).
- That child poverty rates are disproportionately high.

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<sup>99</sup> NDA. (2019). Poverty, inequality and social exclusion in South Africa: A systematic assessment of key policies, strategies and flagship programmes – submitted to the National Development Agency by the Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA), University of Johannesburg (31 October 2019)

Regarding inequality issues, the report indicates that:

- Despite policies that have led to improvements in income poverty, South Africa has become a more unequal society after 1994 rather than a more equal one.
- Wealth inequality is even greater than income inequality. Analysis of wealth inequality between 2008 and 2015 found that the top 10% of households had 71% of the wealth, and the bottom 60% had 7% of net wealth (World Bank, 2018, Mbewe and Woolard, 2016).
- South Africa is also characterised by extreme wage inequality. The number of workers with highly skilled jobs is low, while a large proportion of the working population is employed in very low-paid jobs. For instance, top-end jobs earn nearly five times the average wage for low-skill jobs yet represent less than 20% of the total working population. Wage inequality increased significantly between 1995 and 2014.

### **7.15. Key issues in poverty eradication in South Africa and recommendations**

#### **Challenges/gaps/obstacles**

##### **A) Poverty**

- South Africa has made progress in reducing poverty over the past two decades, but high inequality acts as a brake on poverty reduction, and poverty rates remain high.
- If recognition of poverty and inequality is limited to the policy and strategic documents only, there may be challenges with compliance and enforcement if such policies are not translated into action.

##### **B) Gender gaps in the social security systems**

- Lack of strategies aligned with international standards.
- Lack of stakeholder participation in the drafting of strategies, such as those meant for social security grants.
- Insufficient recognition of gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities, as well as structural gender inequalities by social security strategies.
- Investigate the actors involved in strategy development and the mechanisms created to monitor strategy implementation (monitoring and accountability).

##### **C) Recommendations**

##### **General recommendations**

- Implementation and enforcement of the existing poverty and inequality policies are essential and should not be limited to their existence on paper.

- Each policy-making institution (across social, economic, environmental and administrative sectors) should take custodianship of the national mandate and not simply rely on the NDP to identify and address sectoral linkages with poverty, inequality, and exclusion. Each policy-making institution should seek to apply both sectoral expertise and social developmental evidence to identify specific pathways to poverty reduction.
- There is a need to develop a toolkit for a systematic approach to mainstreaming poverty, inequality and social exclusion policy, using good practice that emerges from the various spheres.
- Baseline data should be used in target settings for future compilations of MTSF documents. A set of guidelines for target setting should be established to move towards greater consistency and harmonisation of targets in the selection of sub-outcomes, indicators for each sub-outcome, and impact indicators.

### ***UN Women's recommendations regarding social security policies***

- Involve national gender equality mechanisms, women's rights organisations and other gender experts, as well as trade unions and organisations of informal workers, in the development of national social protection strategies.
- Strengthen the capacity of social protection stakeholders to both identify and address gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities through specific social protection measures.
- Recognise and promote public investments in the care economy as a key part of social protection systems that can support economic development by enabling job creation, expanding women's employment opportunities, and supporting the capabilities of children and care-dependent adults.
- Strengthen coordination between social protection systems and services that focus on violence against women and girls regarding how to identify and refer survivors, drawing on the expertise of national gender equality mechanisms and women's organisations.
- Generate pathways and support for women's rights, workers' rights and other rights-based civil society organisations to shape social protection policies and systems, including through participatory monitoring and evaluation.
- Strengthen the collection and use of gender and social protection data, including sex-disaggregated data on coverage and benefit levels, as well as qualitative data that capture the intended and unintended impacts of policies and programmes on women and girls.
- Conduct further research to identify the barriers and bottlenecks for translating recognition of gender-specific risks into gender-responsive social protection strategies, policies and programmes.

## 8. EDUCATION

CLUSTER	BPA	SDG	BPA STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	CEDAW	CEDAW GR
BPA	Women, Education and Training B	4	S.O. B.1. Ensure equal access to education S.O. B.2. Eradicate illiteracy among women S.O. B.3. Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education S.O.B.4. Develop non-discriminatory education and training S.O. B.5. Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms S.O. Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women	10	GR 36
S.O. I.1.		Promote and protect the human rights of women through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women			
GIRL CHILD					
S.O. L.1		Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child			
S.O. L.2		Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls			
S.O. L.3.		Promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs			
S.O. L.4.		Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training			

### Gender equality and education

*Realising gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the goals and targets.*

*The achievement of full human potential and sustainable development is not possible if half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities.*

*Women and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources and political participation, as well as equal opportunities to men and boys for employment, leadership and decision-making at all levels.*

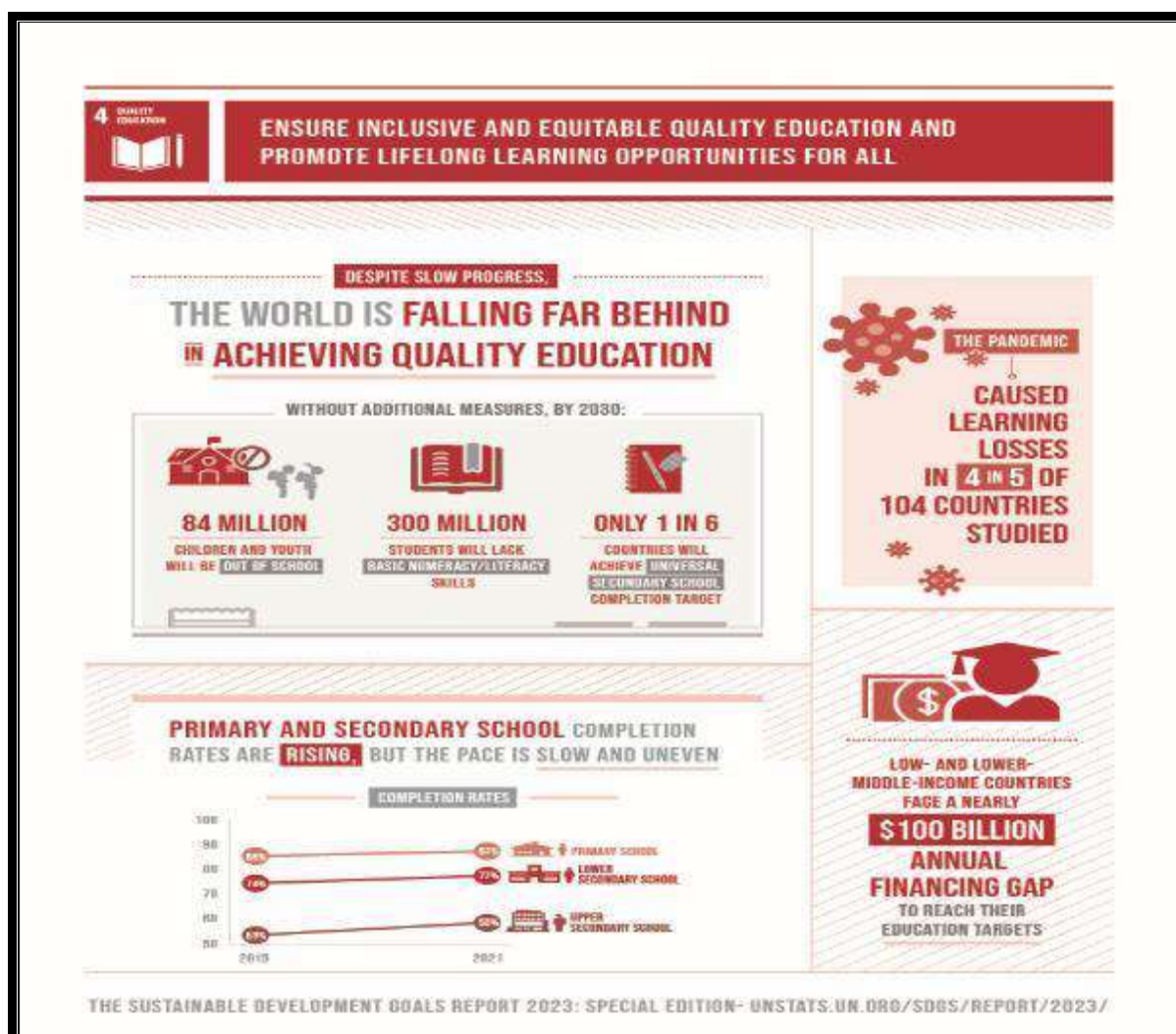
*It is important that all sectors work towards a significant increase in investments to close the gender gap and strengthen support for institutions in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global, regional and national levels.*



All forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls must be eliminated, including through the engagement of men and boys.

The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the agenda is crucial.

SOURCE: UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report: Gender Review 2018<sup>100</sup>



SOURCE: UN Women

## BASIC EDUCATION

Education has a vital role in empowering women, safeguarding children from exploitative and hazardous labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights

<sup>100</sup> UNESCO. Global Education Monitoring Report Gender Review 2018: Meeting our commitments to gender equality in education. UNESCO Digital Library

and democracy, protecting the environment, and controlling population growth. Increasingly, education is recognised as one of the best financial investments that States can make.

Education is a basic human right that works to raise men and women out of poverty, level inequalities, and ensure sustainable development. The objective and goal of education is to promote learning, provide knowledge and develop skills, subsequently translating to higher quality of living. A range of policy and regulatory changes has improved access for all children to education at primary and secondary levels.

The interrelated and essential features of the right to education:

- Availability – functioning educational institutions and programmes must be sufficiently available; there must be buildings, proper sanitation facilities for both sexes, safe drinking water, trained teachers, and teaching materials, among resources
- Accessibility – educational institutions and programmes must be accessible to everyone without discrimination. Accessibility has three overlapping dimensions:
  - Non-discrimination – education must be accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable groups,
  - Physical accessibility – education must be within safe physical reach, either by attendance at some reasonably convenient geographic location.
  - Economic accessibility – education must be affordable to all. State Parties are required to introduce free secondary and higher education.
- Acceptability – the form and substance of education, including curricula and teaching methods, must be acceptable.
- Adaptability – education has to be flexible so it can adapt to the needs of changing societies and communities and respond to the needs of students within their diverse social and cultural settings.<sup>101</sup>

### **8.1. Right to education**

Education plays a pivotal, transformative, and empowering role in promoting human rights values and is recognised as the pathway to gender equality and the empowerment of women.<sup>102</sup> It is also an essential tool for personal development and the development of an empowered workforce and citizenry that can contribute to civic responsibility and national development.

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<sup>101</sup> General Comment No. 13 (21st Session, 1999). The Right to Education, Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ( E/C.12/1999/10), 8 December 1999

<sup>102</sup> Karam, A. (2013). Education as the pathway towards gender equality, *UN Chronicle*, 1(4).

As a human right, education enhances the enjoyment of other human rights and freedoms, yields significant development benefits, facilitates gender equality, and promotes peace. It also reduces poverty, boosts economic growth, and increases income, increases the chances of having a healthy life, reduces child marriage and maternal deaths, and provides individuals with the tools to combat diseases.<sup>103</sup>

The right to education has also been classified as an economic right, a social right, and a cultural right. It is also a civil right and a political right since it is also central to the full and effective realisation of those rights. In this respect, the right to education epitomises the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights. The need to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning is a priority of SDG 4 of the SDGs.

The CEDAW Committee states that two crucial education targets to be met are ensuring that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education, leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes, and eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations.<sup>104</sup>

It is therefore important to recognise that:

- Primary education is compulsory
- Neither parents, nor guardians, nor the State are entitled to treat as optional the decision as to whether the child should have access to primary education
- The prohibition of gender discrimination in access to education, required in terms of international agreements, is further underscored by this requirement
- The education offered must be adequate in quality, relevant to the child and must promote the realisation of the child's other rights
- It has to be free of charge.

Primary education must be made available without charge to the child, parents or guardians. Fees imposed by the government, the local authorities or the school, and other direct costs constitute disincentives to the enjoyment of the right and may jeopardise its realisation.<sup>105</sup>

The CEDAW Committee continue to emphasise that, to achieve gender equality, all aspects of the education system, laws and policies, educational content, pedagogies

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<sup>103</sup> CEDAW General Recommendation No. 36 of 2017 (CEDAW/C/GC/36)

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> (E/C.12/1999/4-ECOSOC), Substantive Issues arising in the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

and learning environments should be gender-sensitive, responsive to the needs of girls and women, and transformative for all.<sup>106</sup>

## **8.2. Education in South Africa**

### **Overview of the education system (EAG 2023)<sup>107</sup>**

In South Africa, 46% of 15–19-year-olds are enrolled in general upper secondary education. A further 32% are enrolled in lower secondary programmes and 5% in tertiary programmes. This compares to an OECD average of 37% enrolled in general upper secondary programmes, 12% in lower secondary programmes and 12% in tertiary programmes.

Although an upper secondary qualification is often the minimum attainment needed for successful labour-market participation, 50% of 25–34-year-olds in South Africa have not attained an upper secondary qualification higher than the OECD average (14%).

In 2021, the government in South Africa spent USD 3578 per full-time equivalent student on public institutions (below the OECD average of USD 11 560) in primary to tertiary education. Total government expenditure on education amounted to 17% of total government expenditure on all services in 2021, compared to 10% on average across the OECD.

SOURCE: OECD

### **Situation of young children in South Africa – Early Childhood Development (ECD) in South Africa**

#### **South Africa's 2030 Strategy for early childhood development (ECD) programmes**

The Department of Basic Education has developed a strategy to address issues of early childhood development.

In the National Development Plan 2030, the government committed to two important goals, which are universal access to early childhood development (ECD) programmes by 2030 and two years of quality preschool.

Furthermore, the NDP also aims to achieve the following targets by 2030:

- Ensure that all children receive at least two years of pre-school education
- Attain a 90% literacy rate in Grades 3, 6, and 9, with 50% or more achieving proficiency in literacy, mathematics, and science
- Increase the completion rate of 12 years of schooling or vocational education to between 80% and 90%, with at least 80% passing exit exams successfully.
- Eliminate infrastructure deficiencies in schools by 2016, ensuring that all schools meet minimum standards.

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<sup>106</sup> CEDAW General Recommendation No. 36 of 2017 (CEDAW/C/GC/36)

<sup>107</sup> OECD: <https://www.gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?plotter=h5&primaryCountry=ZAF&treshold=5&topic=EO>

In 2022, the South African government took a significant step towards strengthening the national ECD ecosystem by transferring responsibility for all ECD functions to the Department of Basic Education (DBE). This has provided an important opportunity to review and enhance South Africa's approach to supporting the holistic development of young children.

As part of this process, the DBE is working with partners across government, civil society and the private sector to develop and implement comprehensive ECD policies, programmes and initiatives.

Key focus areas include expanding access to ECD programmes, particularly in underserved communities; strengthening the quality of ECD services through practitioner training and support; developing infrastructure and resource norms and standards; and promoting integrated service delivery across health, nutrition, social protection and parenting support.<sup>108</sup>

The government has also developed the 2030 Strategy for ECD Programmes with the purpose of providing a road map towards reaching goals that they have set and providing the basis for a new social compact between all ECD role players so that effort and resources are aligned behind a common strategy.<sup>109</sup>

This strategy is informed by the Department of Basic Education's six social justice principles, each of which has been defined to carry a specific meaning and purpose for ECD and includes:

- **Access:** Ensure rapid ECD programme expansion (new facilities and workforce) towards universal access by 2030
- **Redress:** Ensure that historically disadvantaged population groups are prioritised
- **Equity:** Ensure that ECD access and quality do not depend on a child's background or location
- **Quality:** Ensure a strong focus on quality and that regulatory standards and requirements reflect the known mediators of positive child outcomes
- **Inclusivity:** Ensure that every child's unique ability and need are accommodated in ECD programme provisioning
- **Efficiency:** Ensure that plans for quality access are realistic in a constrained fiscus and strategically leverage resources already in the system.

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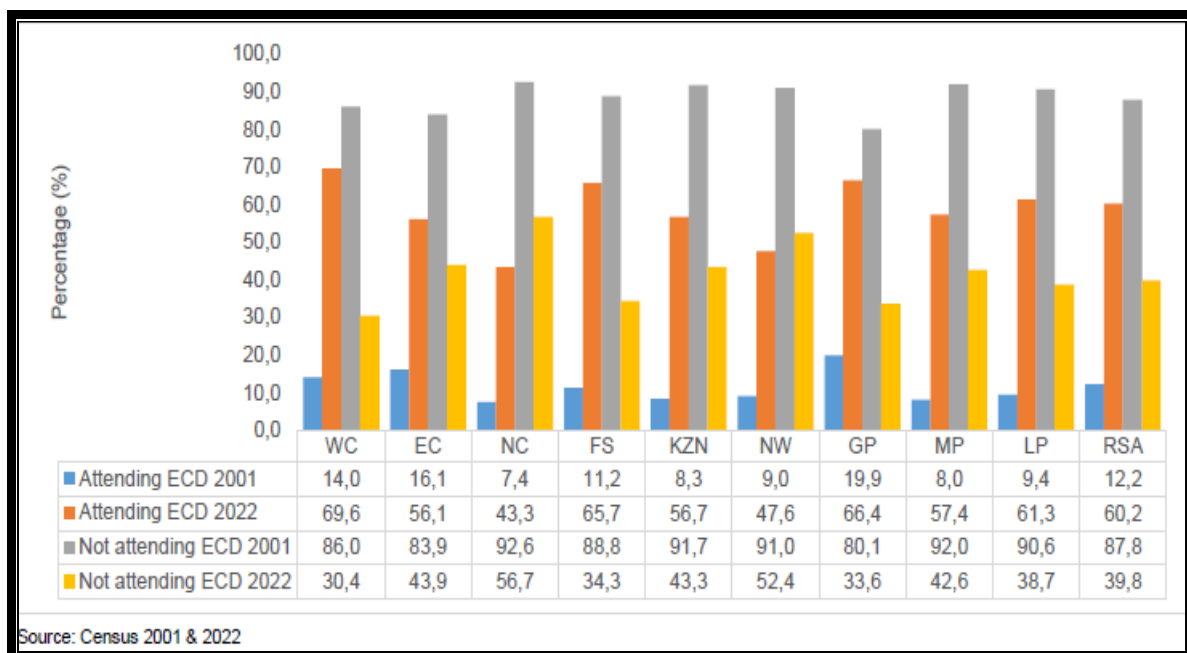
<sup>108</sup> Government of South Africa: <https://www.education.gov.za/programme/ECD.aspx>

<sup>109</sup> South Africa's 2030 Strategy for Early Childhood Development Programmes: Every Child Matters



Source: South Africa's 2030 strategy for early childhood development programmes

FIGURE 14: Percentage of children aged 0–4 who attended early childhood development programmes by province



SOURCE: Census 2001–2022

According to the above graph, it appears that:

- In 2001, nearly 87.8% of children aged 0–4 did not attend any educational institutions, indicating a significant gap in attendance.
- There were notable differences in attendance rates across provinces, with Northern Cape and Mpumalanga having lower attendance rates (7.4% and 8.0%, respectively) compared to the national average and other provinces.

- However, by 2022, there was a noticeable improvement, with 60.2% of children aged 0–4 attending early childhood learning centres. This represents a substantial increase relative to the attendance rates in 2001.
- Western Cape and Gauteng stood out with the highest percentage of children attending such facilities, with rates of 69.6% and 66.4%, respectively.

These figures suggest progress in providing access to early childhood education, though disparities across provinces persist.

### **A) School attendance**

There were approximately 15,3 million learners at school in 2022. The largest percentage of these learners attended schools in KwaZulu-Natal (21.6%) and Gauteng (21.5%).

- Learners most reported poor performance (24.2%), no money for fees (22.4%) and other reasons (15%) as the main reasons for not attending an educational institution.
- Approximately one-fifth of individuals aged 7-18 years have indicated either completed school (10.8%) or disability and illness (10.4%) as the main reasons for not attending school.
- Although 5.9% of individuals left their studies because of family commitments (i.e., getting married, minding children and pregnancy), it more commonly applied to women (12.1%) than men (0.2%).

### **B) Information from the General Household Survey 2022**

According to Stats SA:

- Almost one-third (31.8%) of individuals aged five years and older attended an educational institution.
- Nationally, 86.8% of these individuals attended primary or secondary schools, while a further 5.8% attended tertiary institutions.
- Only 2.1% of individuals attended Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.



TABLE 12: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years old attending educational institutions by province

Population group	Sex	1996		2001		2011		2022	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Black African	Male	4 752 378	49,1	5 730 661	49,9	5 911 667	50,7	6 300 135	50,2
	Female	4 927 545	50,9	5 762 457	50,1	5 755 231	49,3	6 240 167	49,8
	Total	9 679 923	100,0	11 493 118	100,0	11 666 898	100,0	12 540 302	100,0
Coloured	Male	459 493	50,1	512 652	49,9	538 554	50,2	523 722	49,9
	Female	458 029	49,9	513 790	50,1	535 058	49,8	526 623	50,1
	Total	917 523	100,0	1 026 442	100,0	1 073 612	100,0	1 050 345	100,0
Indian or Asian	Male	139 274	50,6	139 674	50,4	130 198	50,4	137 007	51,3
	Female	136 225	49,4	137 730	49,6	127 989	49,6	130 089	48,7
	Total	275 498	100,0	277 404	100,0	258 186	100,0	267 096	100,0
White	Male	451 381	51,1	474 183	50,9	408 712	51,2	325 797	50,9
	Female	431 726	48,9	456 746	49,1	390 182	48,8	313 754	49,1
	Total	883 107	100,0	930 929	100,0	798 894	100,0	639 551	100,0
Other	Male	49 258	49,4	*	*	20 499	50,7	16 087	51,4
	Female	49 833	50,6	*	*	19 871	49,3	15 184	48,6
	Total	99 091	100,0	*	*	40 371	100,0	31 271	100,0
South Africa	Male	5 851 784	49,4	6 857 170	50,0	7 009 630	50,7	7 302 748	50,3
	Female	6 003 358	50,6	6 870 723	50,0	6 828 332	49,3	7 225 818	49,7
	Total	11 855 142	100,0	13 727 893	100,0	13 837 961	100,0	14 528 566	100,0

Source: Census1996-2022

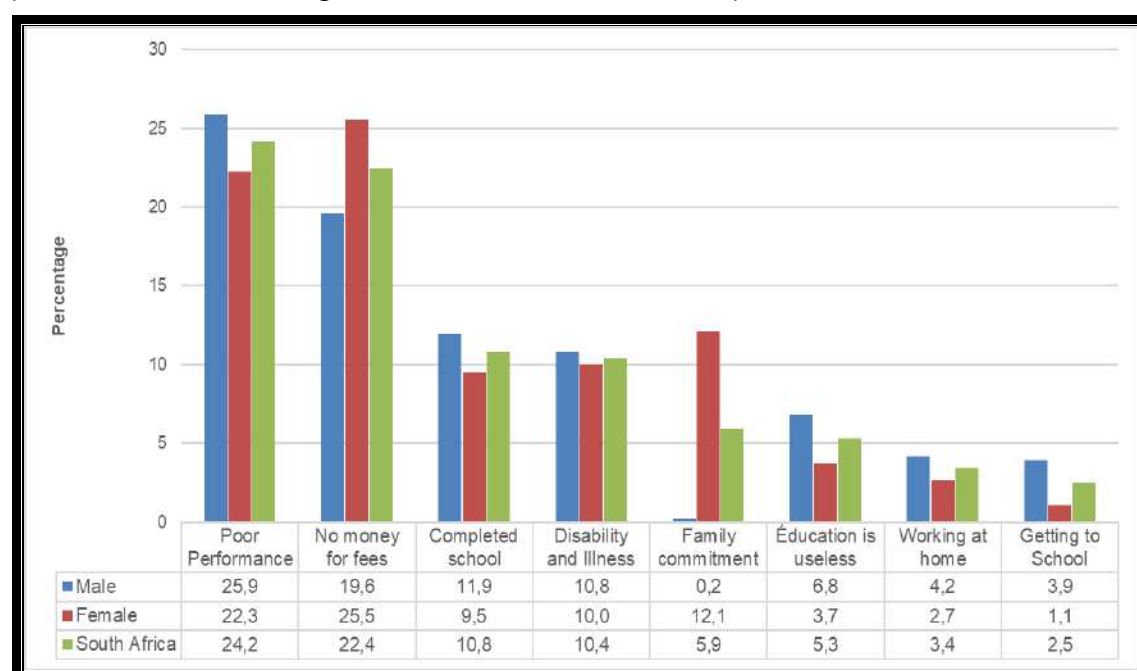
SOURCE: Census 2001–2022<sup>110</sup>

- The table above indicates that nationally, the percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years old attending school remained stable during the period from 2001 to 2022. However, provincially, the highest school attendance rates in 2022 were observed in Eastern Cape (93.8%), Limpopo (93.6%), and North West (93.4%), while the lowest attendance rates were observed in Western Cape (87.4%) and Gauteng (86.5%).
- There are relatively few institutions of higher education across the country, and these institutions tend to be clustered in specific provinces.
- Nationally, the percentage of individuals attending tertiary educational institutions increased from 1.2% in 2001 to 3.3% in 2022.
- This suggests a gradual expansion in access to tertiary education opportunities over the specified period.

<sup>110</sup> Census 2022: A profile of education enrolment, attainment and progression in South Africa (Report 03-01-81)



FIGURE 13: Percentage distribution of main reasons given by individuals aged 7 to 18 years for not attending an educational institution by sex, 2022



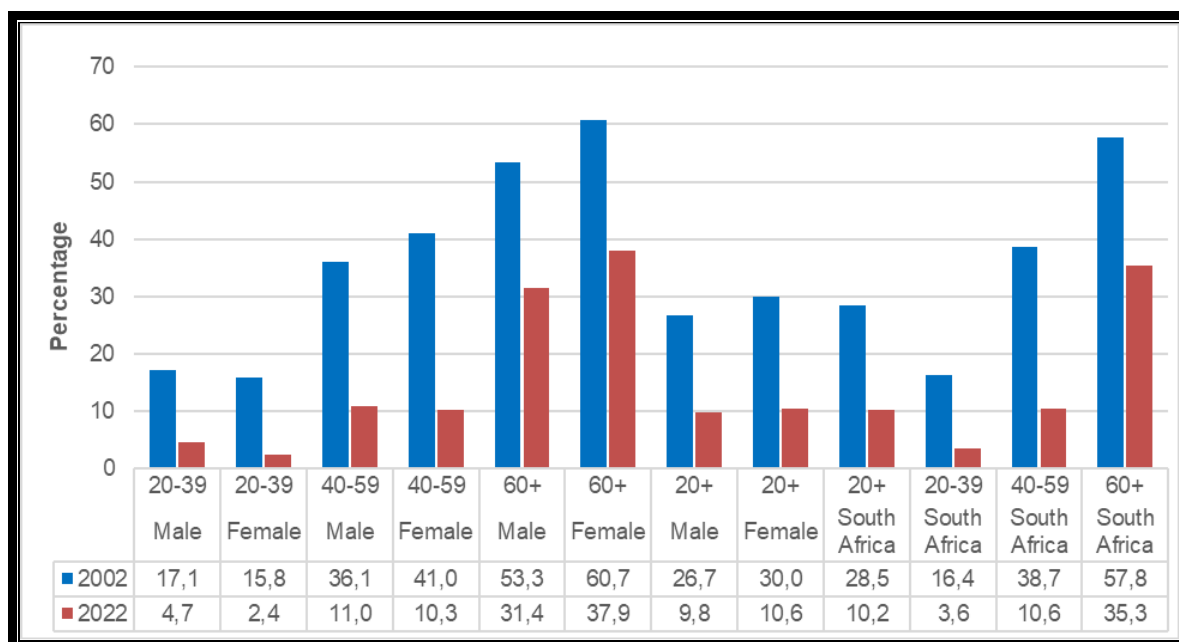
SOURCE: General Household Survey 2022

### C) Functional literacy

Literacy rates can be used as a key social indicator of development. Although a simple definition of literacy is the ability to read and write in at least one language, the simplicity of this measure is complicated by the need to know what is read and written, and for what purpose, and also how well it is done.

Stats SA explains that because it is so difficult to measure literacy, the General Household Survey has historically measured adult literacy rates based on an individual's functional literacy (e.g., whether they have completed at least Grade 7). This measure is closely related to educational attainment, as described above, and it is presented in the figure below.

FIGURE 14: Percentage distribution of individuals aged 20 years and older with no formal education or highest level of education less than Grade 7 (functional illiteracy) by sex and age group, 2002 and 2022



SOURCE: General Household Survey 2022

According to the figure shown above:

- The percentage of individuals over the age of 20 years who could be regarded as functionally illiterate (who have either received no schooling or who have not completed Grade 7 yet) has declined from 28.5% in 2002 to 10.2% in 2022.
- Individuals over the age of 60 years have consistently remained most likely to be functionally illiterate, followed by individuals in the age groups 40–59 and 20–39.
- Improved access to schooling has led to a significant decline in the percentage of functionally illiterate individuals in the 20–39 age group.
- Between 2002 and 2022, the prevalence of functional illiteracy in the age group 20–39 years declined noticeably for men (17.1% to 4.7%) and women (15.8% to 2.4%).
- Apart from women in the age group 20–39, women remain more likely to be functionally illiterate across all age groups.
- The difference between men and women has, however, declined significantly over time.
- Although a higher percentage of women than men over the age of 60 years were functionally illiterate in 2022 (37.9% compared to 31.4%), the difference has declined in each successive age group to the point that, in 2022, a smaller percentage of women in the age group 20–39 were functionally illiterate than their male peers (2.4% compared to 4.7%).

### **8.3. Gender equality in education**

UNESCO<sup>111</sup> indicates that governments have political and legal obligations to plan and implement education policy. They are responsible both for protecting the right to gender equality in education and for providing gender-equitable education services.

UNESCO<sup>112</sup> further states that school-based comprehensive sexuality education programmes equip children and young people with empowering knowledge, skills, and attitudes. International guidelines and standards, along with emerging evidence about factors influencing programme effectiveness, increasingly stress the value of a comprehensive approach centred on gender and human rights (Ketting and Winkelmann, 2013).

Schools are responsible for addressing school-related violence and providing comprehensive health education. Teachers should follow professional norms regarding appropriate disciplinary practices and provide unbiased instruction. Students must behave in a non-violent, inclusive way.

#### **A) UNESCO's vision: Education 2030**

The STASSA report<sup>113</sup> refers to the vision of the UNESCO Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action as being to transform lives through education by recognising the important role of education as a main driver of development and in achieving the other proposed SDGs.

This vision is fully captured in SDG 4, namely to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.

It is also important to look at the commitments encapsulated by Education For All, which are based on a set of priorities and strategies.

#### **Education 2030 goals**

- Goal 1: Expanding and improving access to education – by providing 12 years of free, publicly funded, equitable quality primary and secondary education.
- Goal 2: Inclusion and equity in and through education – by addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalisation, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes.

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<sup>111</sup> UNESCO. Global education monitoring report gender review 2018: Meeting our commitments to gender equality in education. [UNESCO Digital Library](#)

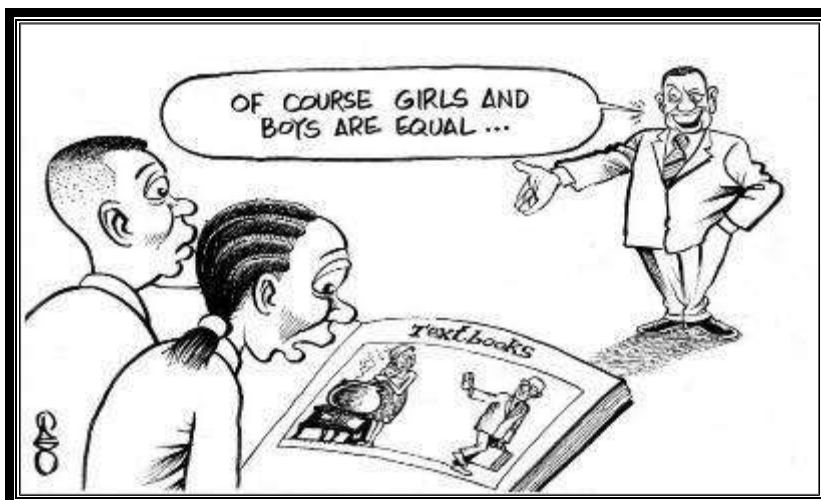
<sup>112</sup> UNESCO. *Gender equality through school: providing a safe and inclusive learning environment*. Retrieved from <http://gem-report-2017.unesco.org/en/chapter/gender-accountability-through-school>

<sup>113</sup> Stats SA. Gender Series Volume VI Education and Gender 2009-2018

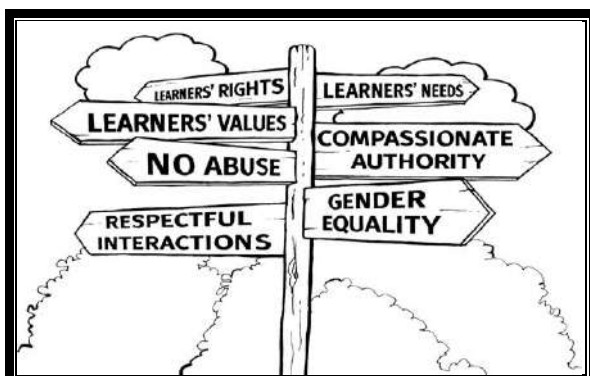
- Goal 3: Ensuring gender equality in achieving the right to education for all – by committing to supporting gender-sensitive policies, planning and learning environments.
- Goal 4: Committing to quality education and to improving learning outcomes – by strengthening inputs, processes and evaluation of outcomes and appropriate mechanisms to measure progress.
- Goal 5: Promoting quality lifelong learning opportunities for all, in all settings and at all levels of education.
- Goal 6: Developing more inclusive, responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children, youth and adults.

UNESCO emphasises that:

- Gender equality in education requires unbiased curricula and textbooks.
- To facilitate gender-responsive instruction, curricula and textbooks should be free from gender bias and promote equality in gender relations.
- How students perceive themselves and how they project their role in society is shaped to some extent by what they experience at school, including by how they are represented in textbooks.



SOURCE: UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2018



SOURCE: *Creating a gender-responsive school for young children: A practical guide for school leaders in South Africa*

*Gender stereotypes or 'rules' begin in childhood and can affect children's Sense of self from a young age. Through their interactions with others and their environment, young children receive messages about what society expects from them and what they can and cannot do.*

*SOURCE: Creating a gender-responsive school for young children: A practical guide for school leaders in South Africa*

*"It is stated that sexual violence happens frequently in many schools in South Africa, but crimes are rarely investigated and prosecution rates are low" (Human Rights Watch, 2016).*

## **B) CEDAW and gender equality in education**

The CEDAW Committee indicates that there are certain factors which disproportionately prevent girls and women from claiming and enjoying their basic human right to education.

Such factors include:

- Barriers to access for girls and women from disadvantaged and marginalised groups, exacerbated by poverty and economic crises
- Gender stereotyping in curricula, textbooks and teaching processes
- Violence against girls and women in and out of school
- Structural and ideological restrictions to girls' and women's engagement in male-dominated academic and vocational fields.

The Committee further emphasises that rights within education extend beyond numerical equality and are aimed at promoting substantive gender equality in education. Rights are concerned with equality of treatment and opportunity, as well as the nature of gender relations between female and male students and teachers in educational settings.

The equality dimension is particularly important, given that society shapes and reproduces gender-based inequalities through social institutions, and educational institutions are crucial players in that regard. Instead of challenging entrenched discriminatory gender norms and practices, in many societies, gender stereotypes are reinforced through schooling, and it maintains the gender order of society, expressed through the reproduction of the female/male and subordination/domination hierarchies and the reproductive/productive and private/public dichotomies.

Rights through education define the ways in which schooling shapes rights and gender equality in aspects of life outside the sphere of education. The absence of such a right is particularly evident when education, which should be transformational, fails to significantly advance the position of women in the social, cultural, political and economic fields, thereby denying girls' and women's full enjoyment of rights in those arenas. A central concern is whether certification carries the same value and social

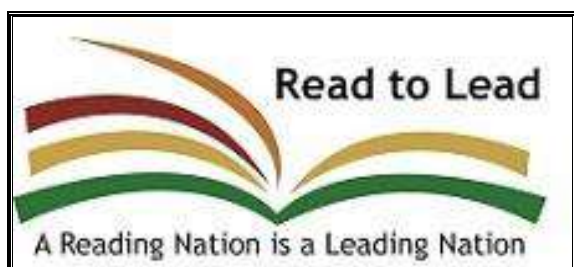
currency for women as for men. Global trends show that, in many instances, even where the educational attainment of men is lower than that of women, men occupy better positions in those arenas.

### **C) South African Constitution**

Access to quality education is a basic human right enshrined in Section 29 of the South African Constitution,<sup>114</sup> which states that everyone has the right to basic quality education, including adult basic education, and to further education, which the State, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible. The Constitution also imposes a positive obligation on the State to promote and provide education by putting in place and maintaining an education system that is responsive to the needs of the country.

This is further supported by the overarching South African Schools Act (1996) and the Employment of Educators Act (1998) as key contributors to *facilitating access and gender equality in schools*. The Act further emphasises the right to education for all and therefore outlaws the perpetuation of gender inequalities in schools.

### **8. 4. Department of Basic Education (DBE)**



SOURCE: Government of South Africa: <https://www.education.gov.za>

The mandate of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) is to monitor the standard of the provision, delivery and performance of education annually or at other specified intervals across South Africa, with the objective of assessing compliance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the national education policy.<sup>115</sup>

The DBE derives its mandate from:

- National Education Policy Act of 1996
- South African Schools Act of 1996
- Employment of Educators Act of 1998

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<sup>114</sup> Government of South Africa. Constitution. <http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/a108-96.pdf>

<sup>115</sup> Government of South Africa. Education: <http://www.gov.za/about-sa/education>

- Basic Education Laws Amendment Act No. 15 of 2011.

Overall attendance – basic education:

- Approximately 14,5 million individuals aged 5–24 years attended school in 2022
- 50.3% were men, and 49.7% were women, according to Stats SA's Census 2022
- Attendance was almost consistently evenly distributed by gender except among 17–20-year-olds, where fewer women were likely to attend. However, more women compared to men attended school among the 21–24-year-olds.

## **25-year review of progress in the basic education sector<sup>116</sup>**

The DBE, along with other government departments, marked the 25th anniversary of the advent of democracy and was requested by the Cabinet to conduct a review of progress with service delivery at each historical epoch of South Africa's democracy.

Government departments reviewed the achievements, challenges experienced, and actions taken to address these challenges since 1994.

Specifically, the review aimed to assess the extent to which:

- The government is on track towards achieving the priorities set out in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030
- Non-state actors, social partners, civil society, labour, the private sector and other non-state actors have contributed towards accelerated progress towards achieving the goals set out in the NDP
- Specific constraints and obstacles have impeded progress towards the set objectives and targets, and the extent to which this has occurred
- Effective strategies have been developed to address identified constraints and obstacles.

Among other things, the review looked at *Equity in educational outcomes*. It was also important to look at issues of access to education.

The following are some of the findings of the review:

- According to the report, access to schooling has improved consistently since 1994. However, some gaps were identified in school participation rates between children with disabilities and those without disabilities.
- Another important equity dimension that was considered was gender. The report states that whilst much work still has to be done to address numerous forms of violence and barriers to educational success that affect women in particular, many of the standard indicators of gender parity with regard to educational outcomes now favour girls in South Africa. An observation of substantially higher

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<sup>116</sup> Trends in educational outcomes Compiled by the Department of Basic Education: Directorate: Research Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation (October 2019)

literacy scores among girls across the grades was made in 2016. For example, female learners outperformed boys by the equivalent of a grade level of learning on average nationally.

- Boys were more likely to repeat grades than girls and more likely to drop out of school prior to Grade 12. The result of this is that there were considerably more female-NSC passes annually than male-NSC passes in 2017. For example, 217,387 women passed matric compared to 184,048 men.
- The report quotes research done by Van Broekhuizen and Spaul (2017), which demonstrates how the female advantage compounds further along the academic path to where 66% more women complete a bachelor's degree at university than men.

The Statistician-General of Stats SA<sup>117</sup> reports that:

- Attendance of early childhood development programmes for children aged 0–4 has seen a remarkable increase from 12.2% in 2001 to 60.2% in 2022.
- Western Cape and Gauteng showed the highest percentages of children attending such facilities in 2022, at 69.6% and 66.4%, respectively.
- Over two decades, the gender gap in gross enrolment ratio (GER) for tertiary education widened to 10 percentage points.
- Net enrolment ratios (NER) varied considerably by sex in primary and tertiary education.
- In 2022, primary school education recorded the highest overall NER (80.0%), with girls lagging behind boys by 3,1 percentage points (78.5% for girls and 81.6% for boys).
- The gender gap narrowed at the secondary school level to 0,6 percentage points but widened notably at the tertiary level, with women having higher NER levels (30.3%) compared to men (20.9%).
- Indian/Asian and White learners were more likely to enrol than other population groups at each level according to official age guidelines.
- Despite significant progress over the past two decades, universal completion of secondary education remains elusive.
- Among individuals aged 25 years and older, the attainment of at least secondary education increased from 21.5% in 1996 to 48.1% in 2022.
- Notably, the Black African population saw substantial gains, with the percentage of individuals aged 25 and older with only primary education or less declining from around 57.9% in 1996 to 22.2% in 2022.
- Secondary education achievement among Black Africans more than tripled from 9.4% in 1996 to 34.7% in 2022.
- The gender gap in tertiary education achievement nearly closed by 2022, with the percentage of women surpassing that of men (8.6% in 1996 to 12.3% in 2022 for men and 6.7% in 1996 to 13.1% for women).
- Disparities in educational attainment between more urbanised regions and others persisted from 1996 to 2022, with Western Cape and Gauteng leading in the percentage of graduates with tertiary education.
- Although significant strides have been made regarding access to and achievement of education, much remains to be done to address gross inequities for persons with disabilities.
- The percentage of individuals with disabilities who completed secondary education increased by nearly 18 percentage points, from 5.8% in 1996 to 23.7% in 2022.

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<sup>117</sup> Stats SA. Census 2022 – A profile of education enrolment, attainment and progression in South Africa



- Similarly, the percentage of individuals with disabilities who achieved tertiary education increased by almost ten percentage points, from 2.6% in 1996 to 12.1% in 2022.
- However, the achievement gap remained wide between individuals with and without disabilities, with approximately 34.1% and 19.5%, respectively, having only primary education or less.
- Analysis of progression ratios revealed significant inequalities among population groups in the transition from secondary education to the completion of a bachelor's degree.
- Coloured and Black African students had the lowest proportions of completion of bachelor's degrees after secondary education.
- In 2022, the attainment of bachelor's degrees for these population groups resembled that of the White population in the 1960s.

## **8.5. Inequality and inadequacies in and unequal access to education**

*"SDG 4 seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."*

### **A) Learner retention and school dropout**

Since the dawn of democracy, South Africa's implementation of Section 29 of the Constitution<sup>118</sup> has shown great improvements from a previously disaggregated, discriminatory system to one that is inclusive, with more children enrolled in schools. The School's Act<sup>119</sup> further imposes a period of compulsory education for children aged 7 to 15.

- Stats SA noted that in 2021, the number of children out of school in South Africa increased by 222,952 children (+30.1%) compared to the previous year, 2020. Therefore, 2021 was a significant increase in the number of children out of school, noting that this was during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Girls were most affected. In 2022, there were 13,419,971 learners in ordinary public and independent schools in South Africa, with more male (6,782,935) than female (6,637,036 – 49.5%) learners.
- The lowest percentage of female learners in ordinary schools nationally was in Grades 4 (47.9%), and the highest percentage was in Grades 11 and 12 (53.4% and 56.3%, respectively).
- Over 12 years of schooling, girls start at a lower rate than boys, but retention is higher than that of boys, resulting in a higher completion rate for girls (56.3%) compared to the global rate of 45%.

The trend continues at the higher education level, with more young women attaining higher education qualifications than men. 17% of 25–34-year-old women had a tertiary qualification in 2020 compared to 13% of their male peers.

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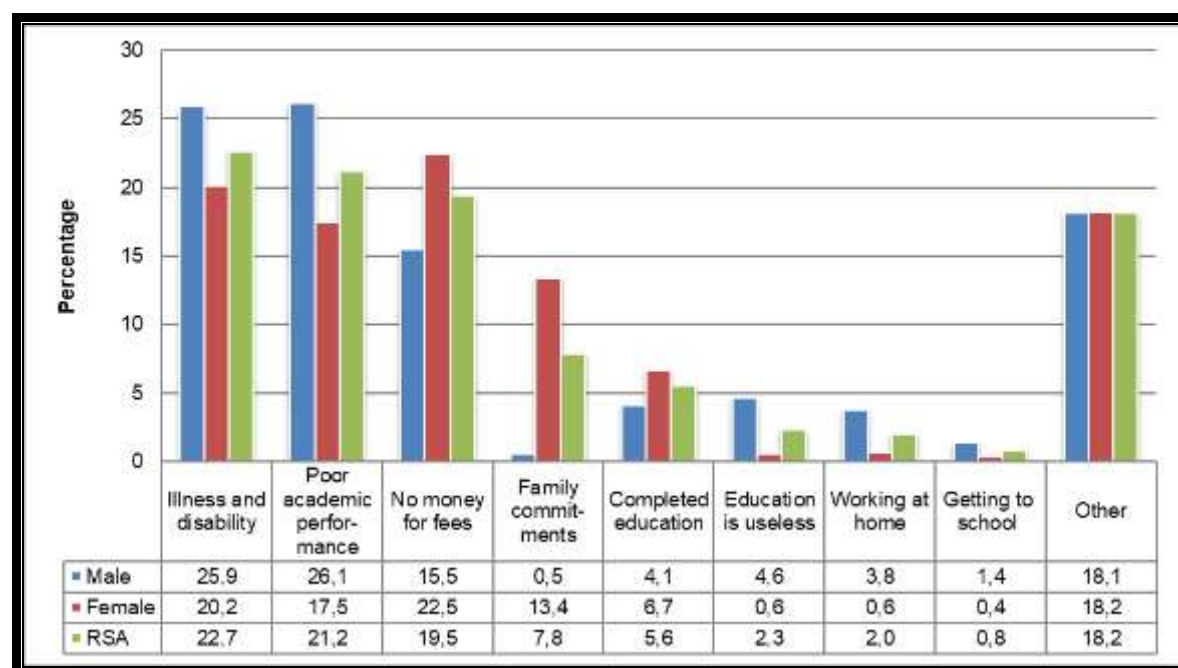
<sup>118</sup> South African Constitution Act No. 108 of 1996

<sup>119</sup> South African Schools Act 84 of 1996

In spite of their educational attainment, the recent figures from the General Household Survey (GHS) 2021 show a higher unemployment rate for women than men.

The figure below is the percentage distribution of the *main reasons* given by individuals aged 7 to 18 years for not attending an educational institution by sex.

FIGURE 15: Percentage distribution of main reasons given by individuals aged 7 to 18 years for not attending an educational institution in 2021



SOURCE: General Household Survey, 2021)

According to the information in Figure 17:

- No money for fees and family commitments (i.e., getting married, minding children and pregnancy) seemed to affect girl learners more than boy learners. This is a sign of existing traditional stereotypes where boys are prioritised over girls when family resources are constrained.
- Learners most reported illness and disability (22.7%), poor academic performance (21.2%) and a lack of money for fees (19.5%) as the main reasons for not attending an educational institution.
- Although 7.8% of individuals left their studies because of family commitments (i.e., getting married, minding children and pregnancy), it is noticeable that a high percentage of women were much more likely to offer these as reasons than men (13.4% compared to 0.5%). Approximately 2.3% of individuals reported that education was useless. Men (4.6%) were more likely to share this sentiment than women (0.6%) in this instance.

## **B) Challenges still experienced by girl learners in school**

In spite of the progress made in enrolling and keeping girls in school, gender norms still play a role in family decisions on girls' access to education. Identity markers<sup>120</sup> that often intersect with gender (i.e., culture, race, social class, disability, sexual orientation, and geographical location often determine girls' experiences of gender). These markers further interact to produce inequalities between girls themselves. This can be seen in the way a Black middle-class female girl in an urban setting experiences gender issues, which is likely to be different from that of a poor Black girl in a deep rural area, e.g., North West. Similarly, a White middle-class girl's experience of gender is likely to be different from that of a middle-class Indian, Coloured, or Black girl. Factors such as culture and race affect how girls view themselves and how their teachers view them.<sup>121</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic, poor economies, and extreme climate changes (recent floods and drought) tend to have affected girl learners in the majority, exacerbating the challenge of school dropout for girls in many instances and resulting in poor academic outcomes, poverty, household chores, GBV and child pregnancies, and child trafficking, among others.

South Africa requires ongoing monitoring of the implementation of existing gender equality legislation, as well as creating robust systems that will hold during disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic. Such systems should be able to predict, track and sustain gains made in advancing girls' education while dealing with unexpected challenges.

While some education targets were clearly defined when the NDP began implementation, others remained less specific.

### **NDP and education**

The NDP aims to achieve the following targets by 2030:

- Ensure that all children receive at least two years of pre-school education.
- Attain a 90% literacy rate in Grades 3, 6, and 9, with 50% or more achieving proficiency in literacy, mathematics, and science.
- Increase the completion rate of 12 years of schooling or vocational education to between 80% and 90%, with at least 80% passing exit exams successfully.
- Eliminate infrastructure deficiencies in schools by 2016, ensuring that all schools meet minimum standards.
- Expand the college system, aiming for a participation rate of 25% to accommodate approximately 1,25 million enrolments.

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<sup>120</sup> Rarieya, J., Sanger, N., & Moolman, B. (2014). *Gender inequalities in education in South Africa*,

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

- Provide one million learning opportunities through Community Education And Training Centres (CETs).

Information from Stats SA shows that there were approximately 15,3 million learners at school in 2022. Participation in educational institutions was virtually universal (97.0%) by the age of 15 years (the last compulsory school age). Approximately two-thirds (66.3%) of learners were still in school by the age of 18, which usually represents the age at which learners exit Grade 12. A notable percentage of learners, however, remained in primary and secondary schools long after they should have exited those institutions.

Almost one-quarter (23.4%) of 20-year-olds were, for instance, still attending school. While the percentage of learners who have achieved Grade 12 has been increasing, the survey shows that the percentage of individuals who attended post-school education has remained relatively low for youth aged 19 to 22 years of age.

## **8.6. Initiative by government – some of the policies developed**

### **Sexual abuse in schools**

Information from the DBE shows that the department has released a handbook for learners on how to prevent sexual abuse in public schools, titled *Speak Out – Youth Report Sexual Abuse*. The purpose of the handbook is to equip learners with knowledge and understanding of sexual harassment and sexual violence, its implications, ways to protect themselves from perpetrators, and where to report. The handbook also provides contact details of useful national and provincial organisations that can assist.

The department has also developed the Protocol for the Management and Reporting of Sexual Abuse and Harassment in Schools.

- The protocol has been developed to equip the DBE with the guidelines to manage and effectively report all incidences of sexual abuse and harassment as mandated by the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment (SORMAA) Act 32 of 2007.
- The protocol further provides a guide to the management and reporting of sexual abuse and harassment, ensuring an appropriate and timely response to cases of sexual abuse and harassment perpetrated against learners.
- It responds to the need for a standardised response to allegations by learners of incidents of sexual abuse and harassment, whether they are perpetrated by fellow learners, educators or other persons.

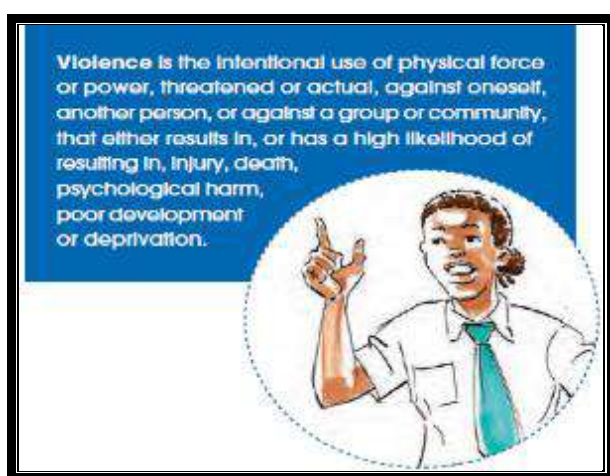
This protocol provides a guide to the management and reporting of sexual abuse, ensuring an appropriate and timely response to cases of sexual abuse and harassment perpetrated against learners and school staff. It responds to the need for a standardised response to allegations by learners and school staff of incidents of

sexual abuse and harassment, whether they are perpetrated by learners, educators or by other persons and covers anyone employed at a South African school.

### **Prevent Violence Programme in schools**

The Prevent Violence Programme in schools encourages learners to take the lead in working to end the problem of violence in schools. The programme's emphasis is on "violence as a human rights issue" because it threatens the rights of learners. The programme also emphasises the responsibility of learners to defend and protect human rights that are threatened by violence at school.

The programme deals with various kinds of violence that learners often experience, such as corporal punishment, bullying and especially GBV.



SOURCE: *Prevent Violence in Schools (DBE)*

### **Teenage pregnancy in schools**

#### ***Prevention and management of learner pregnancy in schools***

One of the widely recognised contributing factors to the high dropout rate of girl children from the education system relates to teenage pregnancy. In addition to this, there are other barriers that teenage mothers encounter when they are reintegrated back into the school system.

The Department of Education acknowledges that teenage pregnancy is among the major concerns that pose a serious threat to young girls in public schools, and it undermines the department's efforts to ensure that girl children remain in school to contribute towards a quality life for all, free of poverty.

The rate of learner pregnancy in South Africa has become a major challenge for national development and the basic education system. It affects the lives of thousands of young people, often limiting their personal growth, their pursuit of

rewarding careers and their ambitions, with an incalculable impact on South Africa's socio-economic landscape.<sup>122</sup>

It has been noticed that the existence of safe-sex programmes, which are being included in the school curriculum through the Life Orientation course, does not help much as the school governing bodies ultimately affect, either positively or negatively, the way in which teenage pregnancy incidents are managed. Some teenage mothers are still subjected to harsh treatment, harassment and discrimination by fellow learners, teachers and community members.

In a rights-based society, young girls who fall pregnant should not be denied access to education, and this is entrenched in law in South Africa through the Constitution of South Africa and in the Schools Act of 1996.

It is a notable fact that teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence hinder progress in the schooling of young girls in South Africa. From the empowerment perspective, one finds that issues related to teenage pregnancy significantly impact the empowerment of women, especially young women, as well as young girls. As such, the Department of Basic Education has taken an active role in seeking to understand and effectively address the challenge of teenage pregnancy, as it impacts significantly on learners.

Even though young girls are allowed to attend school while pregnant, other challenges, such as financial and family support and, discrimination and victimisation from society, still hinder them from progressing to higher levels of education.

Early pregnancy and motherhood create a greater risk in terms of maternal complications, resulting in low survival rates of babies and forcing many girls to prematurely take on adult roles for which they are not emotionally or physically prepared.

*South Africa recorded increased rates of teenage pregnancies between 2018 and 2019 and also during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is seen as being partly due to the difficulty of accessing contraceptives, which was greater during the COVID-19 lockdown. Information from Stats SA indicates that in 2019, almost 6% of girls between 14-19 years of age were at various stages of pregnancy within 12 months.*

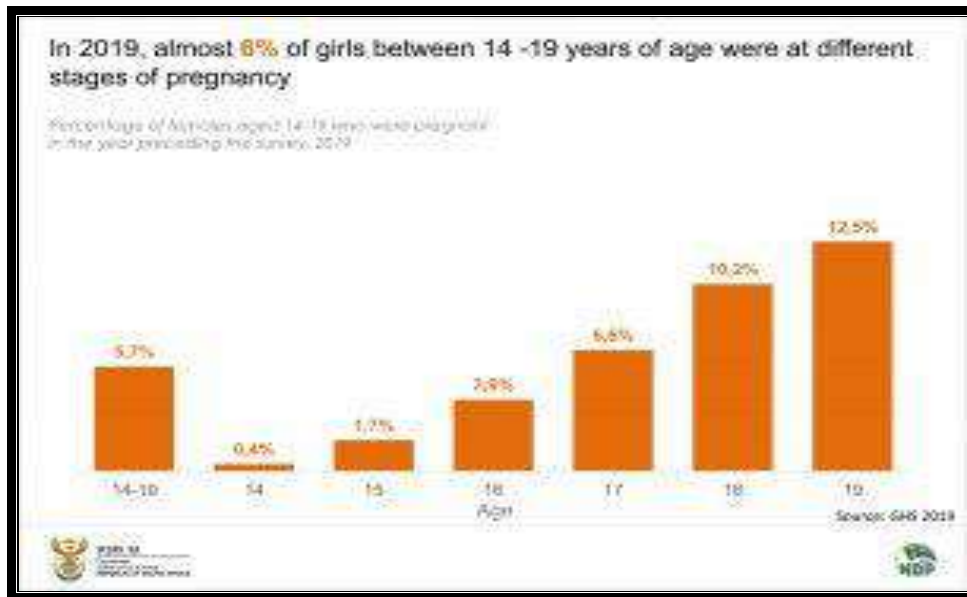
*Information from Stats SA<sup>123</sup> shows that in 2020, the number of teenage mothers was 33,899, and the mothers were aged 17 years and younger. Over 600 children aged 10-13 years (including late birth registrations) gave birth. Of these, 499 gave birth in 2020.*

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<sup>122</sup> Department of Basic Education policy on the prevention and management of learner pregnancy in schools

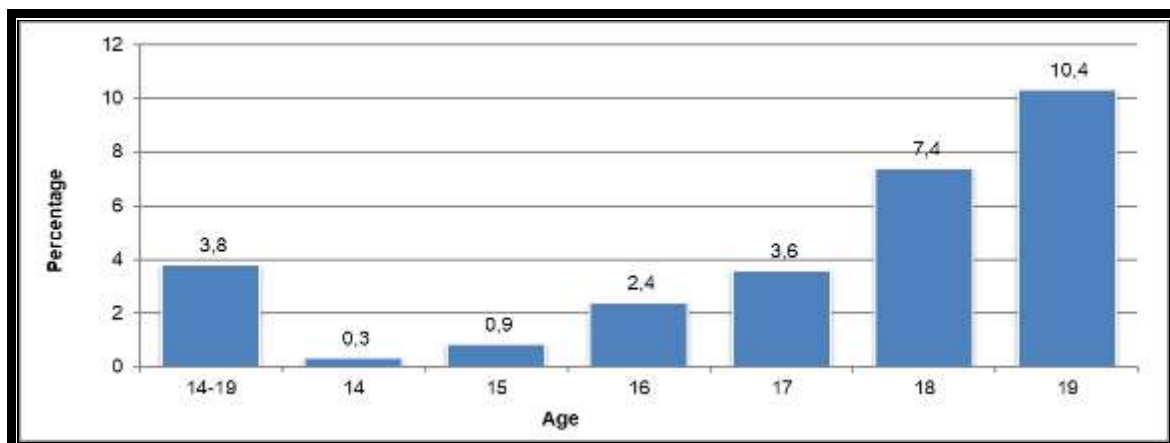
<sup>123</sup> Stats SA: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=14902>

FIGURE 16: Percentage of women aged 14-19 who were pregnant in the year preceding the survey, 2019



SOURCE: General Household Survey, 2018

FIGURE 17: Percentage distribution of women aged 14–19 who were pregnant during the year preceding the survey, 2022



SOURCE: General Household Survey 2022

The above figure shows that 2.7% of women in the age group 14–19 years were at various stages of pregnancy during the 12 months before the survey. According to the Department of Health (DoH), more than 132,000 girls aged 10-19 years fell victim to early and unintended pregnancies (EUP) during 2020/2021.

### ***Policy on the prevention and management of learner pregnancy in schools***

The DBE has developed a policy<sup>124</sup> with the objective of providing an enabling and supportive environment that ensures that schools are safe, free of stigma and provide a non-discriminatory environment for pregnant learners, guaranteeing them the right to education during their pregnancy and, following childbirth, facilitating their re-entry into schools.

#### ***Goal of the policy***

The goal of the policy is to reduce the incidence of learner pregnancy through the provision of quality comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and access to adolescent and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. It seeks to promote the constitutional right of learners to basic education by ensuring they are not excluded from school as a result of pregnancy and childbirth and to provide a supportive environment for them to continue and complete their basic education.

This goal is supported by the following specification of four objectives to be achieved:

- To provide SRH services, including access to effective contraceptive technologies in association with social sector partners, to enable learners to make informed choices, avoid unintended pregnancies or, as necessary, obtain abortions.
- To ensure the return and retention of learners, following childbirth, into an appropriate grade in their schools.
- To facilitate access for pregnant learners to ante-natal care through collaboration with social sector partners and NGOs.
- To ensure that schools provide a stigma-free, non-discriminatory and non-judgemental environment for pregnant learners and those with babies to support their physical and psychological health and dignity.

#### ***School support and flexibility***

- There is a commitment from the DBE that schools in the basic education system will assist learners in continuing their education during and after pregnancy and will take all reasonable steps to facilitate this. Retention of these learners will be managed in accordance with other DBE policies, which may be reviewed to align them with this Policy.
- Principals will encourage learners to continue with their education before and after the delivery of the baby and will provide appropriate educational support where possible. The school will accept and be flexible in dealing with these absences, provided the learner does not take off a disproportionate amount of time. In this event, the school principal will seek a meeting with the learner and/or her parents, guardians, or caregivers to agree on a leave of absence. There is a commitment that at all times, the school, its principal, school management team, school

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<sup>124</sup> Department of Basic Education policy on the prevention and management of learner pregnancy in schools



governing body, school-based support team, and educators will be supportive and sympathetic in each case.

The department has continued to recognise the importance of reducing gender biases and stereotypes and supporting gender equality in education.

### ***Creating a gender-responsive school for young children***<sup>125</sup>

In an effort to raise awareness about gender equality in schools, the DBE has developed the guide *Creating a Gender-Responsive School for Young Children*.

The guide emphasises the DBE's commitment to gender equality. According to the guide, the DBE recognises the importance of reducing gender biases and stereotypes and supporting gender equality in education. The DBE has established the following structures:

- The Ministerial Task Team on Evaluation of Textbooks and Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) ensures that gender discrimination and bias are not in the prescribed text for learners. Gender stereotypes are avoided in all texts, graphics, and language and are thus suitable for all learners.
- The Directorate: Social Cohesion and Equity in Education oversees social cohesion, nation building and gender empowerment in schools, where the gender equity sub-directorate coordinates and monitors gender empowerment and equity issues in schools.
- The Protocol for the Management and Reporting of Sexual Abuse and Harassment in Schools aims at standardising how schools must respond to reports of sexual abuse and harassment in schools.
- The introduction of a Life Skills Programme in primary schools that deals with gender issues such as gender violence, teenage pregnancy, and discrimination, among other concerns, is considered a key contributor to minimising gender inequalities in schools. The programme aims to promote personal development, self-esteem, and self-confidence among learners.

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<sup>125</sup> Creating a gender-responsive school for young children: A practical guide for school leaders in South Africa



SOURCE: Creating a gender-responsive school for young children

Gender stereotypes or 'rules' begin in childhood and can affect children's sense of self from a young age. Through their interactions with others and their environment, young children receive messages about what Society expects from them and what they can and cannot do.

SOURCE: Creating a gender-responsive school for young children: A practical guide for school leaders in South Africa

"It is stated that sexual violence happens frequently in many schools in South Africa, but crimes are rarely investigated, and prosecution rates are low" (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

TABLE 13: Programmes targeting the empowerment of women

Programme	Function
Bursary Programme	To promote women's empowerment by offering them financial assistance to further their studies to obtain relevant qualifications and knowledge to advance their careers
Internship and Learnership Programme	Gives young women an opportunity to gain workplace experience and professional empowerment to be employable in future
Skills Development and Training Programme	To provide all women with the necessary skills to assist the department in achieving its strategic objectives
Employee Health and Wellness Programme	To assist employees to deal effectively with problems that prevent them from functioning optimally in the workplace
HIV/AIDS and TB Management Programme	Aimed at supporting women who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and TB
Mentoring and Coaching Programme	This is aimed at ensuring that women with less experience are supported, mentored and coached by their supervisors and peers

Reasonable job accommodation	Provided to women with young children, victims of GBV and at the time of bereavement
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SOURCE: Gender-based programmes as implemented in the basic education sector: A presentation to the Parliament, Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

## 8.7. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)

Education in STEM subjects lays the foundation for children to think critically and be literate in the language of the future. STEM education is important for the literacy of the next generation, is important in preparing for evolving industries and careers, and will definitely be important in changing the trajectory of underprivileged communities.

UNESCO emphasises education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) to address the issue of girls and women being under-represented in these fields both in school and in the job market.

This is because too many girls and women are held back by bias, social norms and expectations influencing the education they receive and the subjects they study.

Furthermore, the greatest gaps are in engineering and ICT, where young women make up only 25% of students in these fields in a considerable number of countries.

Researchers have shown that curriculum reform incorporating STEM is urgently needed to address the many inequities today. Furthermore, research also shows that preparing young people for a future of complex challenges such as globalisation, digitalisation, or climate change requires high-quality STEM education.

STEM education is a crucial key to Africa's future. Not only will it help young people secure jobs in the future, but it will also build resilience, foster integrity and creativity, encourage teamwork, adaptation, and technology use, as well as teach problem solving. South Africa Flying Labs will continue promoting STEM education and drones for social-good projects nationally.

It is understood that skills such as creative problem solving, the ability to innovate, and crucial thinking are increasingly important for openly embracing change and conscientiously shaping the future. Therefore, the need to promote the inclusion of STEM subjects in the education curriculum can never be overemphasised.

Today's high school graduates are not leaving school with adequate STEM literacy to transition into available jobs in these industries. By exposing more students to STEM subjects earlier, students will engage more with science, math, and technology and enrol with higher STEM literacy. Exposure to STEM in schools will increase the number of students who will pursue related careers. To generate a more employable workforce, young people are better off studying science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subjects.

It is therefore important to understand that teaching STEM from primary to secondary school, equally irrespective of social class, is necessary for the future of South Africans.

Across social groups, there is a discrepancy in the consistency and quality of STEM education. From increasing literacy in STEM subjects, there will be an increase in the skilled workforce for the rising career opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and maths.<sup>126</sup>

### **UJ launched a STEM education initiative for high schools<sup>127</sup>**

It is stated that on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2024, the University of Johannesburg (UJ) launched a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) initiative in partnership with the Department of Basic Education (DBE). It is understood that the initiative will bolster expertise among science educators and empower high school learners.

#### **Engineering News article**

This UJ initiative will employ a multifaceted strategy that includes teacher development workshops and on-site school visits nationwide. It will also start with chemistry and the UJ Department of Chemical Sciences.

Executive Dean of the UJ Faculty of Science Prof Annah Moteetee elaborated that the initiative's key role is to equip learners from historically disadvantaged backgrounds with essential practical experience, which is crucial for higher education success. She further mentioned that "prioritising mentorship and curriculum support across all levels is crucial and that the initiative focuses on laying the foundational skills necessary for pursuing STEM fields, fostering inclusivity and unlocking untapped potential,".

There is an acknowledgement that the strategy involves expanding the project to guarantee its sustainability in provinces where schools are identified. The UJ intends to establish training centres tailored for teachers and subject specialists.

Regarding the possible impact of STEM Education on the future of underprivileged communities, it is clear that it will improve the lives of many because the majority of South Africa's workforce comes from the townships and rural areas, and these are seemingly "unemployable" residents who do in fact impact the country's economy.

Problem-solving, critical thinking, basic arithmetic, science principles, and a foundational use of computers and applications will set underprivileged individuals up for success. Students entering post-secondary or a new job with confidence in STEM, such as basic computer skills, will help them to keep up with expectations. Empowering learners from underprivileged communities in South Africa is a big step towards upliftment from the cycle of poverty, crime, and unemployment. Improving STEM literacy through access, resources, and quality education will improve students' exposure to subjects that will grant them greater chances of employment.

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<sup>126</sup> Same Foundation: <http://www.samefoundation.org.za/stem-education-science-technology-engineering-maths-for-south-african-underprivileged-schools/>

<sup>127</sup> Engineering News: <https://www.engineeringnewss.co.za/articl/uj-launches-stem-education-initiative-for-high-schools-2024-02-16>

## HIGHER EDUCATION

### 8.8. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

*Realising the right to education confronts many challenges.*

#### **Special Rapporteur on the right to education – UNHCR**

The Special Rapporteur<sup>128</sup> on the right to education mentions that since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, States have reiterated in numerous instruments that:

*“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.”*

The Special Rapporteur discusses the right to education under the following headings:

- a) *Education as a public common good:* The States have recognised their primary responsibility for the provision of education as a public good, including their central role as custodians of the efficient, equitable and effective management and financing of public education that is accessible to all.
- b) *Need to reinforce implementation, accountability and monitoring processes:* Guidance tools for States and other stakeholders must be made available, including through technical assistance and strong monitoring mechanisms. International monitoring of the right to education, which remains poor, must be reinforced to inform policy plans and reform efforts.
- c) *Highly diverse issues to be addressed:* These issues include discrimination in access to education, including for children with disabilities; respect for cultural rights and diversity, including minority language instruction; child protection in relation to harassment, early-age and forced marriage, labour, exploitation and abduction; curriculum-related issues; arbitrary restrictions on academic freedom, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly of learners and educational staff; comprehensive sexual education, education on LGBTQIA+ rights, and gender studies.
- d) Content of the right to education
- e) Aims of education:
  - i) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, as well as racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

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<sup>128</sup> Farida Shaheed, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education 2023 (A/HRC/53/27)

- ii) The right to education must empower people to reach their fullest potential, not only as individuals but also as members of communities and societies, through meaningful social, cultural, economic, and political participation.
- iii) In addition, the new social contract for education must aim to unite us around collective endeavours and provide the knowledge, science, and innovation needed to shape sustainable futures for all and be anchored in social, economic, and environmental justice. It must redress past injustices while preparing us for environmental, technological, and social changes on the horizon.

### **8.9. EDUCATION 2030 INCHEON DECLARATION: TOWARDS INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL (ADOPTED IN 2015)**

- The Incheon Declaration was adopted on 21 May 2015 at the World Education Forum (WEF 2015) held in Incheon, Republic of Korea.
- The Incheon Declaration constitutes the commitment of the education community to Education 2030 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognising the important role of education as a main driver of development.
- The Framework for Action outlines how to translate the commitment made in Incheon into practice at the country/national, regional, and global levels.
- The Education 2030 Agenda comprises SDG 4 (Education), the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration, and the Education 2030 Framework for Action.
- The Incheon Declaration represents the firm commitment of states and the global education community to a single, renewed education agenda based on SDG 4. The Framework for Action outlines a roadmap for the effective implementation of the Incheon Declaration.
- The Framework for Action aims to mobilise all countries and partners around SDG 4 (Education) and its targets. It proposes ways of implementing, coordinating, financing, and monitoring Education 2030 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- The Framework for Action also proposes indicative strategies that countries may wish to draw upon in developing contextualised plans and strategies, taking into account the national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.

#### **A) Principles of the Incheon Declaration's Framework for Action**

The principles informing this Framework for Action are drawn from international instruments and agreements.

The principles include:

- *Education is a fundamental human right and an enabling right.* To fulfil this right, countries must ensure universal, equal access to inclusive and equitable quality education and learning, which should be free and compulsory, leaving no one

behind. Education shall aim at the full development of the human personality and promote mutual understanding, tolerance, friendship and peace.

- *Education is a public good and the State is its duty bearer.* Education is a shared societal endeavour, which implies an inclusive process of public policy formulation and implementation. Civil society, teachers and educators, the private sector, communities, families, youth and children all have important roles in realising the right to quality education. The role of the State is essential in setting and regulating standards and norms.
- *Gender equality is inextricably linked to the right to education for all.* Achieving gender equality requires a rights-based approach that ensures that girls and boys, women and men, not only gain access to and complete education cycles but are empowered equally in and through education.

## **B) CEDAW General Recommendation No. 36 of 2017**

The CEDAW Committee states that, as a human right, education enhances the enjoyment of other human rights and freedoms, yields significant development benefits, facilitates gender equality and promotes peace. It also reduces poverty, boosts economic growth and increases income, increases the chances of having a healthy life, reduces child marriage and maternal deaths, and provides individuals with the tools to combat diseases.

The CEDAW Committee further explains that education that empowers girls and women equips them with the capacity to claim and exercise broader socio-economic, cultural, and political rights on an equal basis with boys and men in their societies. To achieve gender equality, all aspects of the education system, laws and policies, educational content, pedagogies and learning environments should be gender-sensitive, responsive to the needs of girls and women and transformative for all.<sup>129</sup>

The CEDAW Committee looks at education as being grounded in a human rights framework, which is focused on three dimensions.

The three dimensions are:

- The right of access to education
- The rights within education
- The instrumentalisation of education for the enjoyment of all human rights through education.

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<sup>129</sup> CEDAW General Recommendation No. 36 of 2017 on the Right of Girls and Women to Education

## 8.10. HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Education plays a pivotal, transformative and empowering role in promoting human rights values. It is also an essential tool for personal development and for the development of an empowered workforce and citizenry that can contribute to civic responsibility and national development. It is therefore crucial that we recognise education as the pathway to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Equal access to good quality education requires addressing wide-ranging and persistent inequalities in society. It should also include a stronger focus on how various forms of inequality intersect to produce unequal outcomes for marginalised and vulnerable groups. South African higher education catalyses positive change and empowers individuals to shape a brighter future for themselves and their communities. It is vital for social justice, economic growth, global competitiveness, and the overall well-being of the nation.

The Statistician-General of Stats SA<sup>130</sup> shared the following highlights:

- Over two decades, the gender gap in gross enrolment ratio (GER) for tertiary education widened to ten percentage points. Net enrolment ratios (NER) varied considerably by sex in primary and tertiary education.
- In 2022, primary school education recorded the highest overall NER (80.0%), with girls lagging behind boys by 3.1 percentage points (78.5% for girls and 81.6% for boys).
- The gender gap narrowed at the secondary school level to 0,6 percentage points but widened notably at the tertiary level, with women having higher NER levels (30.3%) compared to men (20.9%).
- Additionally, Indian/Asian and White learners were more likely to enrol at each level according to official age guidelines than other population groups.
- Despite significant progress over the past two decades, universal completion of secondary education remains elusive.
- Among individuals aged 25 years and older, the attainment of at least secondary education increased from 21.5% in 1996 to 48.1% in 2022.
- Secondary education achievement among Black Africans more than tripled from 9.4% in 1996 to 34.7% in 2022.
- The gender gap in tertiary education achievement nearly closed by 2022, with the percentage of women surpassing that of men (8.6% in 1996 to 12.3% in 2022 for men and 6.7% in 1996 to 13.1% for women).
- Disparities in educational attainment between more urbanised regions and other regions persisted from 1996 to 2022, with Western Cape and Gauteng leading in the percentage of graduates with tertiary education.

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<sup>130</sup> Census 2022. Profile of education enrolment, attainment and progression in South Africa.



### **8.11. AIMS OF THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP) ON EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The NDP aims to achieve the following targets by 2030:<sup>131</sup>

- Ensure that all children receive at least two years of pre-school education
- Attain a 90% literacy rate in Grades 3, 6, and 9, with 50% or more achieving proficiency in literacy, mathematics, and science
- Increase the completion rate of 12 years of schooling or vocational education to between 80 and 90%, with at least 80% passing exit exams successfully
- Expand the college system, aiming for a participation rate of 25% to accommodate approximately 1,25 million enrolments
- Provide one million learning opportunities through Community Education And Training Centres (CETs)
- Improve the throughput rate to 80% by 2030
- Produce 30,000 artisans annually
- Increase university enrolment by at least 70% by 2030, reaching approximately 1,62 million from 950,000 in 2010
- Boost the number of students eligible for math and science-based degrees to 450,000 by 2030
- Increase the percentage of doctorate-qualified staff in higher education from 34% to over 75% by 2030
- Produce over 100 doctoral graduates per million annually by 2030, up from 1,420 in 2010
- Enhance science, technology, and innovation outputs by increasing research and development spending and encouraging industry participation.

South Africa has always grappled with the challenge of integrating its previously marginalised and oppressed majority into a new educational system despite having made substantial strides in education reforms, including the establishment of no-fee schools, school nutrition programmes, improved access to scholar transport, implementation of the child support grant, and introduction of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) among others.

These factors have had a significantly positive impact on enrolment, particularly among previously disadvantaged groups.<sup>132</sup>

Some facts highlighted by the Statistician General:

- The gender gap narrowed at the secondary school level to 0,6 percentage points but widened notably at the tertiary level, with women having higher NER levels (30.3%) compared to men (20.9%).

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<sup>131</sup> A profile of education enrolment, attainment and progression in South Africa (Report 03-01-81) (2022).

<sup>132</sup> Maluleke, R, Statistician-General of South Africa

- The gender gap in tertiary education achievement will be nearly closed by 2022, with the percentage of women surpassing that of men (8.6% in 1996 to 12.3% in 2022 for men and 6.7% in 1996 to 13.1% for women).
- The percentage of individuals with disabilities who completed secondary education increased by nearly 18 percentage points, from 5.8% in 1996 to 23.7% in 2022.

## **Statistics on post-school education and training in South Africa: 2021 (released in March 2023)**

The Department of Higher Education and Training released the information and statistics below.<sup>133</sup>

### ***Post-school education and training institutions***

In 2021, the post-school education and training system had 342 institutions:

- 26 public higher education institutions
- 124 private higher education institutions
- 50 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges
- 133 registered private colleges and
- 9 Community Education and Training (CET) colleges

### ***Enrolment in post-school education and training institutions***

- In 2021, almost 1.3 million students enrolled in public and private HEIs
- The majority of students in public HEIs enrolled through the contact mode (683,885 or 64.0%), while 384,161 or 36.0% enrolled through the distance mode of learning
- Enrolment in TVET colleges reached 589,083 in 2021
- There were 143,031 students enrolled in CET colleges in 2021
- The NDP target for enrolment in this sector is one million students by 2030
- Students enrolled in private colleges numbered 85,787 in 2021, and this figure represents enrolment in 100 out of 133 private colleges registered with the department in 2021.

### ***Public and private higher education institution graduates***

- There were 233,257 graduates in public HEIs in 2021. The majority of graduates were in the Science, Engineering and Technology (28.9% or 67,422), followed by business and management (27.9% or 64,971), other humanities (25.6% or 59,801) and education (17.6% or 41,063) fields of study.
- A large number of students obtained undergraduate degrees (100,199 or 43.0%), followed by undergraduate certificates and diplomas (63,725 or 27.3%), and postgraduate below master's level (32,226 or 13.8%).
- The number of graduates with doctoral degrees was 3,574 in 2021, and this was 0.6% (22) higher compared with 2020 (3,552).

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<sup>133</sup> Statistics on post-school education and training in South Africa 2021 (released March 2023)

- Graduates from private HEIs reached 54,551 in 2021, an increase of 15.9% (7,466) when compared to 47,085 in 2020.
- The majority of students graduated with a bachelor's degree 360-credits (27.2% or 14,845), followed by a higher certificate (26.0% or 14,161), and a diploma 360-credits (15.4% or 8,394). In comparison, fewer students completed a postgraduate diploma (8.4% or 4,607), an honours degree (4.4% or 2,406), and a postgraduate certificate (3.7% or 2,035). Only 43 (0.1%) of students obtained a doctoral degree.

### ***TVET colleges' completion rates***

- A total of 47,750 students completed N3, N6 and NC(V) Level 4 in TVET colleges in 2021, which are key exit levels in this sector. This translated to the following completion rates: 46.7% for N3, 62.8% for N6 and 50.4% for NC(V) Level 4.
- Completion for N3 Engineering Studies was higher for male students (4,168) than for 3,523 female students who completed the same level.
- The majority of female students completed N6 and NC(V) Level 4 programmes (21,548 and 8,719, respectively) compared to male students (7,137 and 2,655, respectively).
- The completion rate for N6 Business Studies was higher (26 644), translating to a 66.3% completion rate, while 2 041 students completed N6 Engineering Studies, resulting in a completion rate of 37.2%.

### ***Private colleges' completion rates***

- in 2021, 9,848 students completed the key exit levels in the sector: N3, N6 and NC(V) Level 4. This translated to the following completion rates: 52.1% for N3, 61.8% for N6 and 27.3% for NC(V) Level 4.
- Male students (2,328) who completed N3 Engineering Studies were higher than female students (1,540) who completed the same level. Compared to TVET colleges, private colleges had a slightly higher gender gap for completion of N3 Engineering Studies.
- The majority of female students completed N6 (4,194) compared to 1,750 male students who completed the same part-qualification.
- The completion for N6 Business Studies was 4,631, translating to a 65.6% completion rate, which is higher than the 1,313 students who completed N6 Engineering Studies with a completion rate of 51.2%.

### ***CET colleges' completion rates***

- A total of 25,780 students completed the GETC: ABET Level 4 qualification in 2021, resulting in a completion rate of 61.1%.
- Three colleges recorded higher completion rates than the national average, with the highest rates observed in KwaZulu-Natal (73.7%), Limpopo (66.9%) and Mpumalanga (63.7%) CET colleges

### **Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) supported learning programmes**

- There were 130,264 learners registered for SETA-supported learning programmes during the 2021/2022 financial year, which was 9.9% (11,723) lower than registrations recorded in the 2020/2021 financial year (118,541).
- More than half of the learners registered for learnerships (55.2% or 71,921), followed by skills programmes (37.4% or 46,546), while fewer learners were registered for internships (7.4% or 9,598).

The total number of certifications for SETA-supported learning programmes during the 2021/2022 financial year was 94,715, which was 25.3% (32,010) lower as compared with the 2020/2021 financial year (126,725).

- The majority of certifications were in skills programmes (49.6% or 46,944), followed closely by learnerships (46.6% or 44,164), while a smaller proportion was for internships (3.8% or 3,607).
- During the 2021/2022 financial year, 14 379 entered artisanal learning programmes, of which 83.3% (11,974) were in the Special Infrastructure Projects (SIPs) scarce skills category.

A total of 19,536 learners completed their artisanal learning programmes during the 2021/2022 financial year, of which 85.0% (16,597) of them were in the SIPs scarce skills (i.e. occupations that are part of the official list of artisan occupations as per Schedule 2 Gazette 35625, 31 August 2012).

## **8.12. FUNDING FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION**

### **Skills Development Levy Fund**

- During the 2021/2022 financial year, the skills levy system disbursed R19.0 billion, and a larger proportion was disbursed to the SETAs (R15.2 billion), while the National Skills Fund (NSF) received R3.8 billion.
- Nearly R2.0 billion of the R15.2 billion SETA allocation was spent on administrative costs, while R3.8 billion was paid back to levy-paying firms in the form of mandatory grants.

### **ii) National Skills Fund**

- In the 2021/2022 financial year, the NSF supported 272 skills development projects, which was a decrease of 10.5% (32) from the 304 projects supported during the previous financial year (2020/2021).
- The number of beneficiaries reached 81,532 in the 2021/2022 financial year compared to 34,994 in the 2020/2021 financial year, representing a 133.0% (46 538) increase between the two financial years.
- During the 2021/2022 financial year, the NSF disbursed more than R3.3 billion on skills development interventions, and this was R1.6 billion higher compared to the R1.6 billion disbursed in the 2020/2021 financial year.

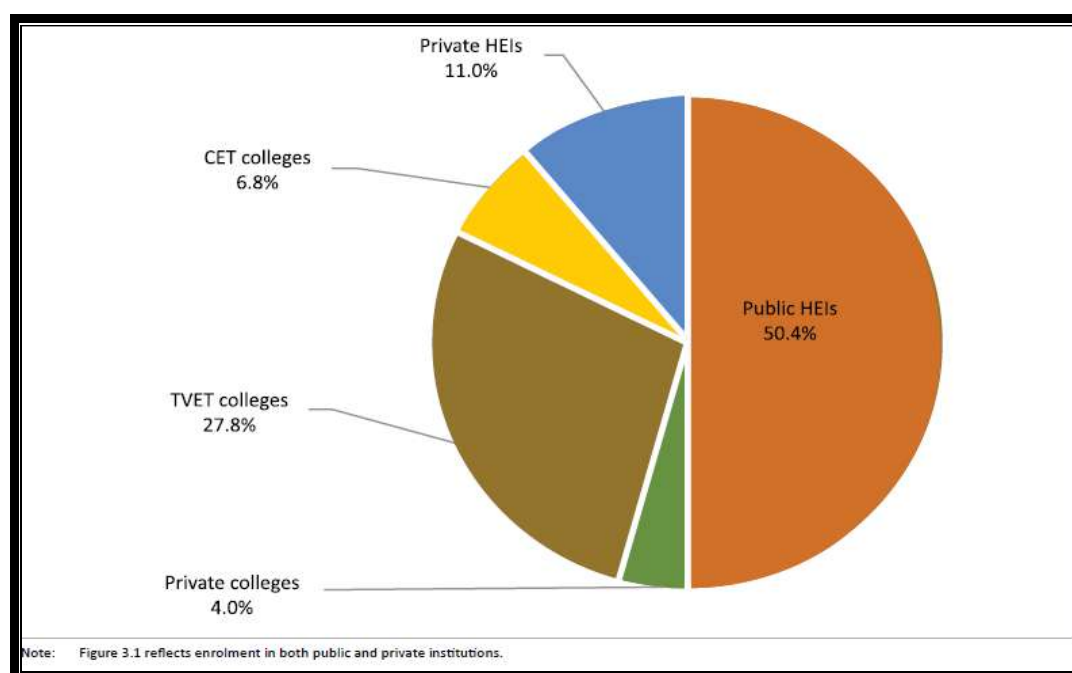
- Over half of the NSF funds in the 2021/2022 financial year were spent on bursaries (53.4% or R1.7 billion), followed by other national priorities (22.3% or R748.3 million), while 20.4% (R686.3 million) was allocated to TVET colleges.

### **lii) Funding of key post-school education and training institutions**

- The total funding allocated to public HEIs, TVET colleges and CET colleges during the 2021/2022 financial year was R56.6 billion, 0.4% (R216.6 million) lower compared to allocation in the 2020/2021 financial year (R56.8 billion).
- Of the R56.6 billion allocated during the 2021/2022 financial year, a larger proportion of transfers, subsidies and operational costs was for public HEIs (76.1% or R43.0 billion), while TVET and CET colleges were allocated 20.1% (R11.4 billion) and 3.8% (R2.1 billion), respectively.

## **8.13. DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT ENROLMENT**

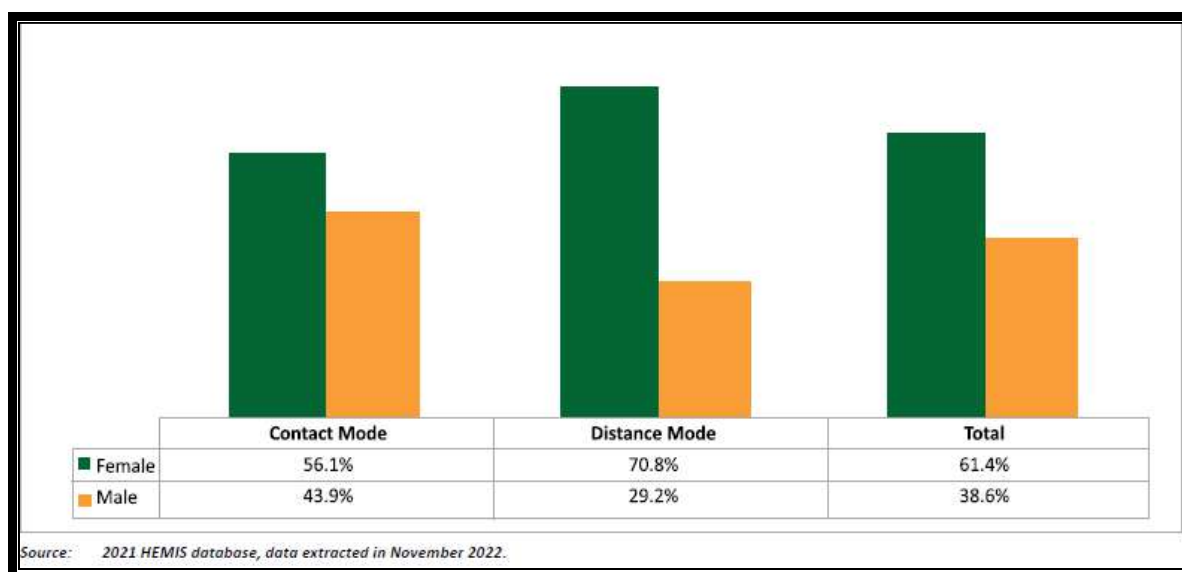
*FIGURE 18: Percentage distribution of student enrolments in post-school education and training institutions, 2021*



SOURCE: Statistics on post-school education and training in South Africa: 2021

More than half of the students enrolled in 2021 were in public HEIs (50.4%), followed by TVET colleges (27.8%) and private HEIs (11.0%). The CET and private colleges experienced a lower enrolment intake (6.8% and 4.0%, respectively).

FIGURE 19: Proportion of student enrolment in public HEIs by attendance mode and gender, 2021



- In 2021, female students made up 61.4% of all students enrolled in public HEIs, compared to 38.6% of male students.
- Female students predominated in both the contact and distance learning modes (56.1% and 70.8%, respectively).
- The greatest gender disparity was observed in distance learning, where seven out of ten students (70.8%) were female students compared to 29.2% of male students.

FIGURE 20: Number of students enrolled in public HEIs by attendance mode, population group and gender, 2021

Population group	Contact			Distance			Total			
	Female	Male	Unspecified	Female	Male	Unspecified	Female	Male	Unspecified	Total
African	297 812	233 630	79	226 525	91 198	2	524 337	324 828	81	849 246
Coloured	24 897	15 741	21	13 483	5 170	1	38 380	20 911	22	59 313
Indian/Asian	13 783	11 119	7	9 697	4 305	0	23 480	15 424	7	38 911
White	42 222	35 073	65	20 806	10 816	0	63 028	45 889	65	108 982
Unspecified	4 818	4 604	14	1 384	772	2	6 202	5 376	16	11 594
Total	383 532	300 167	186	271 895	112 261	5	655 427	412 428	191	1 068 046

Source: 2021 HEMIS database, data extracted in November 2022.

- Africans accounted for nearly 80% of students enrolled in public HEIs in 2021 (79.5% or 849,246),
- In every population group, there were more female students enrolled than male students. The Black African population group had the highest gender disparity, with 199,509 more female students enrolled than male students, and the Indian/Asian population group had the smallest gender gap (8,056 more female students than male students).

- The majority of the students enrolled in the contact and distant learning modes were female Black African students.
- The highest gender gap was found in the distance mode of learning, where 135,327 more African female students enrolled than male students, while the smallest gender gap was found among Indian/Asian students enrolled through contact mode, where there were 2,664 more female students than male students.

FIGURE 21: Number of graduates from public HEIs by gender, field of study and qualification type, 2021

Qualification type	Female					Male					Unspecified gender	Total number of graduates
	SET	Business and Management	Education	Other Humanities	Total	SET	Business and Management	Education	Other Humanities	Total		
Undergraduate Certificates and Diplomas	8 579	17 214	5 138	11 209	42 140	7 830	8 157	784	4 814	21 584	1	63 725
Undergraduate Degree	16 872	10 280	16 409	20 478	64 039	14 457	7 218	5 623	8 838	36 136	24	100 199
Advanced Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Education	1 524	4 478	5 382	1 410	12 794	1 338	2 292	2 567	743	6 940	3	19 737
Postgraduate below Master's Level	4 844	6 899	2 938	5 897	20 579	3 566	5 003	1 085	1 976	11 629	18	32 226
Master's Degrees	3 497	1 495	504	2 150	7 646	3 116	1 503	249	1 281	6 148	2	13 796
Doctoral Degrees	814	168	206	456	1 643	974	261	173	523	1 930	1	3 574
<b>Total</b>	<b>36 130</b>	<b>40 534</b>	<b>30 577</b>	<b>41 599</b>	<b>148 841</b>	<b>31 279</b>	<b>24 433</b>	<b>10 481</b>	<b>18 174</b>	<b>84 367</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>233 257</b>

Source: 2021 HEMIS database, data extracted in November 2022.  
Note: The total number of graduates includes 49 students who did not specify their gender.

- According to the table above, in 2021, almost two-thirds of the graduates were women (3.8% or 148,841), while 36.2% (84,367) were men.
- The number of female graduates was higher in almost all qualification types (except doctoral degrees), with the largest gender disparities observed for undergraduate degrees (27,903) and undergraduate certificates and diplomas (20,556).
- Male graduates for doctoral degrees outnumbered female graduates by 287. However, a sizable portion of both male and female graduates obtained their doctoral degrees in the Science, Engineering and Technology field of study (974 and 814, respectively).
- In every field of study, more women than men graduated, with notable differences in Education Studies and other humanities, where 20,096 and 23,425 more women than men completed their degrees.
- It should also be noted that almost three-quarters of graduates in Education Studies were women (30,577 of the overall total of 41,058), and almost 70% of the other humanities graduates were also women (41,599 out of the overall total of 59,773).

- The number of female graduates in the senior education and training (SET) field of study was 4,851, higher than the number of male graduates.

FIGURE 22: Enrolment cycle count of students in TVET colleges for the NC(V) programmes by qualification level and gender, 2021

Qualification	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
NC(V) Level 2	41 729	19 750	61 479	67.9%	32.1%
NC(V) Level 3	29 694	13 019	42 713	69.5%	30.5%
NC(V) Level 4	26 814	10 762	37 576	71.4%	28.6%
Total	98 237	43 531	141 768	69.3%	30.7%

Source: TVETMIS 2021, data extracted in February 2023.  
Note: NC(V) refers to the National Certificate (Vocational) Levels 2-4.

- In 2021, there were 141,768 students enrolled in NC(V), with the majority of students enrolled in NC(V) Level 2 (43.4% or 61,479), and enrolment was lower for higher NC(V) levels.
- Women dominated NC(V) enrolment (69.3% or 98,237), while men made up 30.7% (43,531) of total enrolment.
- The proportion of women enrolled in NC(V) Level 4 was significantly higher (71.4%) than the proportion of men (28.6%). A significant gender disparity was observed in NC(V) Level 2, with 21,979 more women enrolling than men.

FIGURE 23: Enrolment cycle count of students in TVET colleges by NC(V) programmes and gender, 2021

Programme	NC(V) Level 2		NC(V) Level 3		NC(V) Level 4		NC(V) Level 2-4		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Total
1. Civil Engineering and Building Construction	2 792	2 109	1 687	1 223	1 331	996	5 810	4 328	10 138
2. Drawing Office Practice	39	46	12	22	10	20	61	88	149
3. Education and Development	1 294	91	1 083	99	982	67	3 359	257	3 616
4. Electrical Infrastructure and Construction	4 688	3 721	2 584	1 900	2 409	1 643	9 681	7 264	16 945
5. Engineering and Related Design	3 519	4 497	2 550	3 197	1 848	2 351	7 917	10 045	17 962
6. Finance, Economics and Accounting	2 671	721	1 885	529	1 751	434	6 307	1 684	7 991
7. Hospitality	3 121	635	2 395	456	2 401	515	7 917	1 606	9 523
8. Information Technology and Computer Science	2 126	1 595	1 297	1 059	1 046	812	4 469	3 466	7 935
9. Management	1 988	647	1 500	490	1 206	374	4 694	1 511	6 205
10. Marketing	1 766	706	1 245	419	1 144	421	4 155	1 546	5 701
11. Mechatronics	165	184	132	130	142	102	439	416	855
12. Office Administration	9 771	1 847	8 093	1 439	7 778	1 189	25 642	4 475	30 117
13. Primary Agriculture	1 464	647	904	407	939	427	3 307	1 481	4 788
14. Primary Health	484	44	271	10	277	20	1 032	74	1 106
15. Process Plant Operations	201	79	138	37	208	45	547	161	708
16. Safety in Society	1 376	615	910	429	964	428	3 250	1 472	4 722
17. Tourism	2 976	946	2 126	707	1 668	567	6 770	2 220	8 990
18. Transport and Logistics	1 288	620	882	466	710	351	2 880	1 437	4 317
Total	41 729	19 750	29 694	13 019	26 814	10 762	98 237	43 531	141 768

Source: TVETMIS 2021, data extracted in February 2023.  
Note: NC(V) refers to the National Certificate (Vocational) Levels 2-4 with 19 programmes.



- One in every five students (21.2% or 30,117) enrolled for NC(V) in Office Administration, followed by Engineering and Related Design (12.7% or 17,962) and Electrical Infrastructure and Construction (12.0% or 16,945).
- The number of women outnumbered men in almost all programmes (except in the Engineering and Related Design and Drawing Office Practice Programme).
- A higher proportion of female students enrolled in Office Administration (26.1% or 25,642), followed by Electrical Infrastructure and Construction (9.9% or 9,681), Engineering and Related Design (8.1% or 7,917) and Hospitality (8.1% or 7,917).
- Many men, on the other hand, enrolled mainly in Engineering and Related Design (23.1% or 10,045),
- Electrical Infrastructure and Construction (16.7% or 7,264), Office Administration (10.3% or 4,475) and Civil Engineering and Building Construction (9.9% or 4,328).
- The greatest gender disparity was observed in Office Administration, where 21,167 more women enrolled than men. On the other hand, 2,128 more men than women enrolled in Engineering and Related Design.
- It should also be noted that enrolment of women in Primary Health and Education and Development was 14 and 13 times higher than enrolment of men.

#### **8.14. SOME OF THE INITIATIVES BY GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS**

##### **A) Dealing with gender-based violence (GBV) in tertiary institutions**

"Condemnation of gender-based violence needs to be constant and consistent, and perpetrators need to be prosecuted. It requires that we address societal issues of patriarchy, economic relations and changing the way of thinking about gender relations. Preconceived notions of how women and men should behave must be addressed as no person has the right to treat anyone as inferior or to harm them in any way."

SOURCE: Dr BE Nzimande, MP: Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, 27 July 2020

##### **Gender-based violence in South African universities: an institutional challenge**

Information from the Council on Higher Education Document<sup>134</sup>



<sup>134</sup> Gender-based violence in South African universities: an institutional challenge – Quality Matters – The CHE Research Study No. 10 (Nov 2019)

*"GBV is a display of power, and because of that, it is as widespread as it is unpredictable. As the source of power, culture, religion, economics, age, gender, sexuality, space, community, as well as education, or a lack thereof, legitimise GBV in one way or another."*

*GBV is often downplayed or dismissed as a non-issue through the (often misinterpreted) understandings and framings of religion, culture and tradition. African cultural practices, such as ukuthwala (virginity testing) and lobola (bride price) are often cited as traditions which promote the ownership, control, and subjugation of women (Ludsin & Vetten 2005; Kheswa & Hoho 2014).*

*Socialisation into practices of male authority and female submissiveness are as pervasive in the Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), as they are in other faiths and traditions. Moreover, religious traditions are inextricably intertwined with cultural norms, often making it hard to differentiate between what is religious and what is cultural.*

*GBV is not a problem limited to victims and perpetrators. It is, rather, a scourge that undermines everyone's safety and well-being.*

SOURCE: CHE (2019, November) Quality Matters No. 10.

### **Information on the prevalence of GBV in institutions – CHE report<sup>135</sup>**

The Council for Higher Education (CHE) was prompted to conduct research on the incidents of GBV in institutions of higher learning around that period in 2019.

According to the CHE, the 2019 academic year experienced some high-profile incidents of GBV reportedly perpetrated within the spaces of higher education institutions in South Africa or within their vicinity, and these incidents became national headline news.

In their report, the CHE indicates that:

- a) "South Africa has witnessed increasing incidents of gender-based violence reportedly perpetrated within and around campuses of higher education institutions. The gender-based violence incidents that became local and/or national news are a tiny fraction of all such incidents in the country, as the majority are not reported for various reasons. This makes it difficult to acquire a full picture of the prevalence of gender-based violence in the country.
- b) Despite being one of the most common forms of human rights violations not only in South Africa but in other countries as well, gender-based violence has not attracted as much research interest as other forms of abuse of human rights. The result is that there is poor understanding of, and insight into this phenomenon which, in turn, constrain efforts to develop effective interventions to abate and eliminate gender-based violence".

The aims of their study were to:

- Explore and explain GBV as a serious challenge on university campuses in South Africa

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

- Provide an international perspective of GBV in higher education institutions with a view towards confirming that it is a global phenomenon, although its forms, intensity and prevalence patterns vary from country to country
- Explore the possible causal factors of GBV, as well as the serious challenge posed by the under-reporting of incidents of GBV
- Argue that the sexual harassment policies of most institutions are not a substitute for having policies that directly address GBV
- Propose for the adoption of an integrated framework for preventing GBV on university campuses in South Africa.

The study by the CHE indicates that the outrage over GBV around university campuses is a result of a few 'high profile' incidents that have been reported in the media and that the cases in the local and/or national news are just a small fraction of the incidents of GBV on and around university campuses in the country.

The CHE states that incidents of GBV are generally under-reported and further that the majority of incidents, particularly those in which LGBTQIA+ people are victims, either go unreported or, when reported, are not followed up and investigated.

According to the CHE, one of the reasons for under-reporting is that the victims are uncertain about where to go to report, whom to approach and what processes to follow, and this amounts to a lack of clarity about institutional procedures.

Another challenge is that universities, in particular, often display the tendency to downplay the magnitude of the prevalence of GBV on their campuses because they are driven by concerns of public image and status and not wanting to commit the institutions to providing the necessary responses.<sup>136</sup>

According to the CHE, *"Institutions are therefore contributing to the concealment of the actual scale of the prevalence of GBV on their campuses. This practice makes the institutions concerned complicit in the perpetuation of GBV"*.

A summary of the findings of the study:

- a) Most universities have introduced policies and grievance procedures to deal with sexual harassment. However, the CHE strongly believes that although sexual harassment may normally be the precursor to GBV, the reality is that policies on sexual harassment may only partially address GBV. The CHE raises a concern that there is an emphasis on sexual harassment without demonstrating a clear awareness of the inherent complexities within the social constructions of violence or gender.
- b) The sexual offences, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual violence policies for a number of universities neither unpack what is understood by GBV nor mention LGBTQIA+ students or staff. Therefore, students and staff might understand

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<sup>136</sup> Chauke, D. et al. (2015); Gouws & Kritzing (2007).

the consequences of sexual harassment because they are articulated in the sexual harassment policies of institutions, but they do not have the same understanding of the gravity and consequences of GBV because the institutional policies do not address GBV directly.

- c) In the few institutions where there are policies that address GBV directly, such policies are often not updated to ensure alignment with current legislation, regional and international conventions and protocols, as well as best practices. Many universities also lack the necessary support structures to address and respond to cases of GBV.
- d) The CHE found it ironic that a significant proportion of reported cases of GBV take place in institutions that are supposed to inculcate the ethos of respect for human rights, intellectual discourses, and resolution of conflicts through civil means. According to CHE, this is indicative of some underlying challenges in the curricula, institutional cultures and the management and governance of the universities.
- e) The extent to which institutional and hierarchical structures are representative of the types of diversity encountered in the rest of the university says something about how the university understands itself as a diverse and inclusive space.

### **Recommendations**

- i) The solution is not to condemn higher education but to transform it so that it can be focused on promoting social justice and human rights.
- ii) The task of universities is to recognise the seriousness of GBV as a human rights violation and to reconceptualise their policies, particularly those that relate to GBV, in line with issues and discourses of human rights and social justice.
- iii) Universities should recognise that issues of violence – whether gender-based or otherwise – do not unfold in isolation. GBV is an institutional problem and affects all who are a part of the institution. This recognition demands a critical reflection and interrogation of existing structures, hierarchies, and systems throughout the academe that may give rise to gender biases, discrimination, and exclusion.
- iv) GBV must become an important area of research and discourse in higher education,
- v) Institutional cultures and systems are created and sustained by individuals who serve in certain crucial positions. If these positions are all occupied by the same kind of individuals, then institutions cannot fully take cognisance of the immense diversity within them.
- vi) If GBV is to be prevented, then spaces and contexts must be reconceptualised and reconfigured so that certain regimes of truth are disrupted and stifled.
- vii) Students should be facilitated and mediated into educational spaces and programmes that challenge deeply embedded inequalities and social norms. The students should challenge patriarchal control and power that tolerates and encourages violence against those who are perceived to be weak.
- viii) Management staff at universities should review their policies and ensure that there are policies that seek to address GBV directly. Security personnel on

campuses should be conscientised about GBV and be trained to support victims while reporting incidents and while making the perpetrators accountable.

## **B) Policy framework to address gender-based violence in the post-school education and training system**

*"The Policy Framework to Address Gender-based Violence in the Post-School Education and Training System is the Department of Higher Education and Training's response to the multi-sectoral policy and programming framework provided by the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (2020)."*

GBV (which disproportionately affects women and girls) is systemic and deeply entrenched in institutions, cultures and traditions in South Africa. GBV is increasing at an alarming rate in and around South African public post-school education and training (PSET) institutions. South African public universities were affected by students' protests against rape culture in 2016. [Rape is a severe manifestation of GBV].<sup>137</sup>

The Department of Higher Education and Training has developed a policy framework that serves as a guide to the entire PSET system. The framework addresses GBV occurrence in institutions, compels the creation of awareness programmes to prevent the occurrence of GBV, and supports survivors. The policy framework is composed of measures that involve the strengthening of the application of national legislation through improved collaboration between PSET institutions, civil society, and sister departments. It addresses safety and security and contains monitoring and reporting mechanisms. It is understood that the Department of Higher Education and Training has therefore developed this policy framework that will serve as a guide to the entire PSET system. In addition, it will also compel the creation of awareness programmes to prevent the occurrence of GBV and to support survivors.

This policy framework is composed of measures that involve strengthening the application of national legislation through improved collaboration between PSET institutions, civil society, and sister departments. This policy framework also addresses safety and security and contains monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

This policy framework fully endorses the measures of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) as well as Article 4 of the African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) and further emphasises South Africa's commitment to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including that SDG 5 addresses gender equality as one of its targets is the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

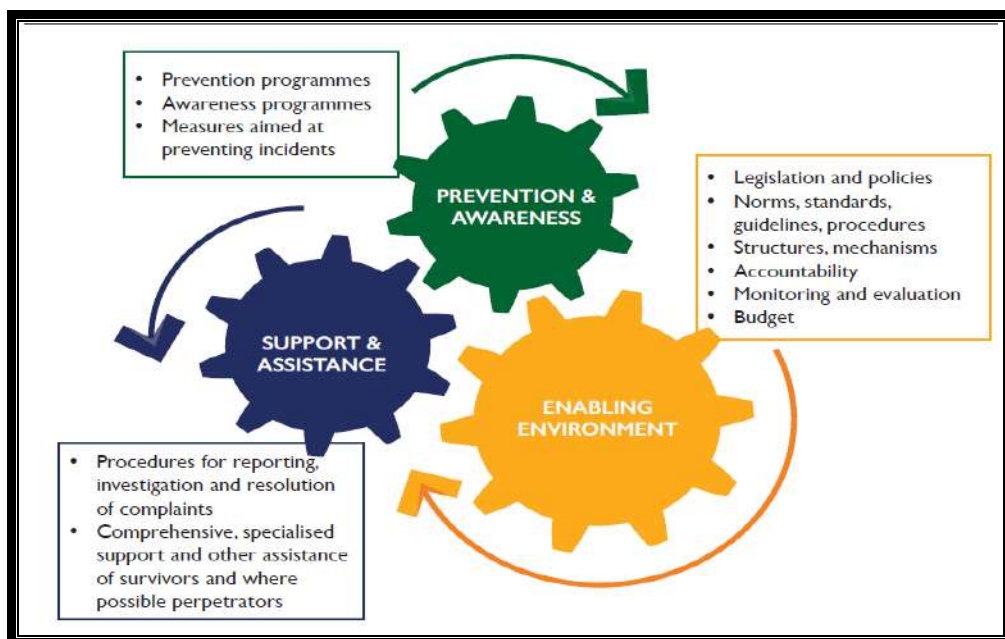
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<sup>137</sup> CHE. Policy Framework to address Gender-Based Violence in the Post-School Education and Training System

### Goals of the policy framework

- To create an enabling environment to inform, prevent, support and monitor GBV in PSET institutions
- To create national structures and mechanisms intended to support PSET institutions' implementation of GBV policies
- To ensure effective implementation of policy and programmes through attention to budgeting, monitoring, reporting and evaluation and create a system of accountability
- To promote the safety of all students and staff by putting in place comprehensive awareness and prevention programmes intended to raise awareness of policies and services addressing GBV, as well as other measures aimed at preventing incidents of GBV in the PSET system
- To put supportive, efficient and reparative assistance procedures in place for complainants/survivors. These include to establish just and specialised procedures for the reporting, investigation and resolution of complaints
- To provide comprehensive, specialised support and other assistance to survivors and, where possible, perpetrators of GBV.

FIGURE 24: Goals of the policy framework



SOURCE: Policy framework to address gender-based violence in the post-school education and training system (2020)

### 8.15. #FEESMUSTFALL MOVEMENT

The #FeesMustFall Movement was a student-led protest movement that rocked the country as students demanded a complete transformation of the education system. South African students were calling for the reduction of fees in tertiary institutions.

The #FeesMustFall Movement sparked heated debates on fee increases in universities.

Other demands by students included the decolonisation of the educational system, a transformation of universities to address racial and gender inequalities in terms of staff composition, as well as insourcing of general workers.

The movement aimed to stop increases in student fees and to increase government funding for universities. The campaign was led by Black students who mainly fell into the “missing middle” category – students who did not receive full state subsidy, as their parents were considered middle-class, but who, in reality, could not afford to be at university.

Some negatives and positives arose from the fees must fall activities. An article from the My Courses Portal<sup>138</sup> summarises the outcome of the activities of the #FeesMustFall Movement as follows:

- The #FeesMustFall Movement successfully halted proposed fee increases for universities, providing immediate relief to students and addressing the financial hardships they faced. The achievement provided immediate relief to students, ensuring that they would not face additional financial burdens.
- The movement sparked discussions on decolonising the curriculum, institutional culture, and student support services. This led to policy changes and initiatives aimed at promoting inclusivity and addressing historical inequalities in higher education. By raising awareness and advocating for change, students pushed for a more inclusive and equitable education system.
- A revised financial aid system was demanded by the #FeesMustFall Movement. The movement shed light on the challenges faced by students from marginalised backgrounds, resulting in the revision of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to accommodate the “missing middle” students who did not qualify for full State subsidies.
- The empowerment of student activism was demonstrated by the #FeesMustFall Movement, as well as the power of other student mobilisations and activism. Future generations are being led to voice their concerns and demand change. The movement highlighted the importance of unity, strategic planning, and non-violent methods in achieving meaningful outcomes.
- The #FeesMustFall Movement shaped the education discourse and ignited a national conversation about the accessibility and transformation of education in South Africa. It compelled universities and policymakers to confront systemic inequalities and prompted tangible changes in policies and practices, leaving a lasting impact on higher education and civil society.

Following the protests, the South African government established a national bursary programme benefiting both poor and working-class students. The budget for these bursaries increased significantly, providing financial assistance to those in need.

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<sup>138</sup> MyCourses.co. za: [https://mycourses.co.za/was-fees-must-fall-a-success-in-addressing-students/#google\\_vignette](https://mycourses.co.za/was-fees-must-fall-a-success-in-addressing-students/#google_vignette)



SOURCE: Getty Images: [www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/students-from-the-tshwane-university-of-technologys-news-photo/610514182?et](http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/students-from-the-tshwane-university-of-technologys-news-photo/610514182?et)<sup>139</sup>

### Key lessons that can be learned from the fees must fall student protests

"An analysis of the #FeesMustFall Movement at South African universities."<sup>140</sup>

From the research that was conducted<sup>141</sup> on the #FeesMustFall Movement protests, the following lessons were identified for learning:

- The university management should be more open to discussion without getting court interdicts at the first sign of student protests. It appears that universities tend to use courts as the first point of call to justify summoning the police to maintain law and order within university premises.
- The university management should be more tolerant in their dealings with the students and understand the political dynamics and power struggles associated with these student structures, which at times can make it difficult for negotiations to take place.
- As centres of academic excellence, universities should provide leadership and a template for communities around issues of transformation, equality, and equity.
- The university management should be committed to issues of transformation rather than merely paying it lip service, including the insourcing of general workers (which has already started in some universities), curriculum change and the recruitment of senior Black academics.

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<sup>139</sup> Getty Images: <http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/students-from-the-tshwane-university-of-technologys-news-photo/610514182?et>

<sup>140</sup> #Hashtag: An analysis of the #FeesMustFall Movement at South African universities

<sup>141</sup> #FeesMustFall Movement: [http://www.academia.edu/31837026/An\\_analysis\\_of\\_the\\_FeesMustFall\\_Movement\\_at\\_South\\_African\\_Universities](http://www.academia.edu/31837026/An_analysis_of_the_FeesMustFall_Movement_at_South_African_Universities)



- The student protest leaders should know about their responsibilities and duties when organising protests within the university, including the responsibility to manage protesting students so that they do not turn violent, even in the face of provocation. It is important that protests are used as a means of communication, especially when university management is not prepared to engage with students in a fair and transparent manner.
  - Student leaders also should be more reflective about the feasibility of their demands and approach negotiations with an open mind.
  - It is important for student leaders and all those involved to reflect on their own practices of exclusion and marginalisation of others, such as female student leaders and gender non-conforming people, as well as on their use of violence to communicate their messages.
  - Peace and reconciliation initiatives should be explored to repair relations after the student protests in universities. It appears that some universities have been highly polarised since the protests. Genuine dialogues between university management, staff, and students should be held to ensure that existing hostilities are resolved.
  - The police should know that the right to protest forms a cornerstone of South Africa's constitutional democracy. It is important that police manage protests without the use of force. It has been proven in this report and in other studies (Alexander, 2010; Von Holdt et al., 2011) on this topic that this creates cycles of violence when protesters retaliate. Police should apply certain basic principles of public policing, including containment, holding the line, facilitation, and negotiation. These principles have been found to be effective in de-escalating and managing protests, as well as in maintaining public order.
  - The government should be more proactive in dealing with the issue of funding higher education. Currently, there is a view that the funding support provided by the government is not enough to meet the financial needs of poor Black students.
  - The media should reflect on its reporting of protests in general. It appears that the media largely focuses on violent incidents without telling the whole story about the sources and grievances of the protesters. It is important that peaceful protests are also covered in the media, as it seems that nonviolent protests are not given the same coverage as those that are violent.
- 8.16. Summary of the effects of COVID-19 on education

*"COVID-19 has created unprecedented disruption to education systems. One of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic was the reduced time in teaching and learning, resulting in substantial learning losses across subjects and grades. To mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on learning and teaching, the Department of Basic Education adopted a multiyear curriculum recovery approach.*

*The recovery curriculum was designed to accommodate the negative impact of COVID-19 and is therefore an interim deviation from the original curriculum and a transitional arrangement until the policy amendment processes are completed."*

SOURCE: Department of Basic Education<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> National Curriculum Statement: <https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/NationalCurriculumStatementsGradesR-12/2023ATPs.aspx>

## **Stats SA General Household Survey, 2021<sup>143</sup>**

Stats SA released its social and household service delivery statistics, tracking the progress of development in South Africa and identifying persistent service delivery gaps caused by COVID-19.

- Data showed that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic still linger on early childhood development and school attendance.
- COVID-19 has changed the nature of childcare arrangements. The percentage of children aged 0–4 years that remained at home with a parent, guardian, other adults, or children increased from 57.8% in 2019 to 64.6% in 2021.
- During the same time, the percentage of children that attended Grade R, pre-school, nursery school, crèche, and edu-care centres decreased from 36.8% in 2019 to 28.5% in 2021.
- COVID-19 also negatively affected school attendance as the percentage of children aged five who did not attend an educational institution increased from 10.9% in 2019 to 37.7% in 2020 before dropping off to 19.4% in 2021.
- A similar pattern was observed for children aged six (3.5% in 2019, increasing to 11.8% in 2020 before declining to 5.9% by 2021).
- Although participation (enrolment) in education was still relatively high, data shows that a slightly higher percentage of children in older age groups were not attending school compared to 2019.
- The percentage of individuals aged 20 years and older who did not have any education decreased from 11.4% in 2002 to 3.2% in 2021, while those with at least a Grade 12 qualification increased from 30.5% to 50.5% over the same period. Inter-generational functional literacy has also increased markedly.
- While 35.8% of South Africans over the age of 60 years did not complete at least a Grade 7 qualification, this figure dropped to only 3.2% for those aged 20–39 years of age.

### **Closure and reopening of schools during COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted traditional schooling in 2020. The government was compelled to adopt measures to reduce close contact between individuals. Many schools were fully closed, and the situation improved considerably in 2021, with the situation returning to 'normal' in 2022. In South Africa, the pandemic strongly disrupted national examinations in upper secondary education, particularly during the 2020 school year.

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<sup>143</sup> General Household Survey (GHS) 2021 (media release 23 June 2022)

## **8.17. Key issues on women and education and training in South Africa**

### **Challenges still facing the education system in South Africa**

The school (learning) environment in South Africa is sometimes faced with hostilities, violence and riots, which have impeded proper learning.

High dropout rates due to teenage pregnancy before completing Grade 12 can have serious and lasting effects on individuals and society and can result in:

- **Limited career opportunities:** Individuals who drop out of school often face limited job prospects. Without a high school diploma or equivalent, they may be restricted to low-paying jobs with little room for advancement.
- **Lower earnings:** Dropouts typically earn less than their peers who complete their education. This income disparity can persist throughout their lives.
- **Higher unemployment rates:** Lack of education makes it harder to find stable employment, leading to higher unemployment rates among dropouts.
- **Health disparities:** Educational attainment is closely linked to health outcomes. Dropouts are more likely to experience health issues due to limited access to healthcare and unhealthy lifestyle choices.
- **Increased reliance on social services:** Dropouts may rely on welfare programmes and other social services, which can strain public resources.
- **Higher crime rates:** Lack of education is associated with higher involvement in criminal activities. Dropouts may face legal issues and incarceration.
- **Generational impact:** The effects of dropout can extend to future generations. Children of dropouts are more likely to face similar challenges.
- **Economic impact:** Societies with high dropout rates experience reduced economic productivity and growth.
- **Loss of potential:** Every dropout represents unrealised potential – talents and contributions that could benefit society.

### **Challenges regarding GBV in universities**

The significant proportion of reported cases of GBV which take place in institutions is a cause for concern, especially since these institutions are supposed to inculcate the ethos of respect for human rights. This, according to CHE, is indicative of some underlying challenges in the curricula, institutional cultures and the management and governance of the universities. The issues of diversity and inclusivity remain a challenge.

### **Recommendations**

- Education is a powerful tool for personal growth and societal progress. Therefore, efforts to reduce dropout rates should focus on improving educational quality, addressing socio-economic disparities, and providing support to struggling students.

- Transformation of higher education is necessary, so it should be focused on promoting social justice and human rights.

### Recommendations regarding GBV

- Universities are encouraged to recognise the seriousness of GBV as a human rights violation and to reconceptualise their policies, particularly those that relate to GBV, in line with issues and discourses of human rights and social justice.
- Universities should recognise that issues of violence are an institutional problem that affects all who are a part of the institution.
- GBV must become an important area of research and discourse in higher education. Institutional cultures and systems are created and sustained by individuals who serve in certain crucial positions.
- Students should be facilitated and mediated into educational spaces and programmes that challenge deeply embedded inequalities and social norms. The students should challenge patriarchal control and power that tolerates and encourages violence against those who are perceived to be weak.
- Management staff at universities should review their policies and ensure that there are policies that seek to address GBV directly. Security personnel on campuses should be conscientised about GBV and be trained to support victims while reporting incidents and while making the perpetrators accountable.

## 9. HEALTH

Cluster	BPA	SDG	BPA strategic objectives	CEDAW	CEDAW Gr
B	WOMEN AND HEALTH	SDG 3	<p>S.O. C.1. Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality healthcare, information and related</p> <p>S.O. C.2. Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health</p> <p>S.O. C.3. Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues</p> <p>S.O. C.4. Promote research and disseminate information on women's health</p> <p>S.O. C.5. Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health</p>	Art. 12	GR 24
HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN					
S.O I.1.			Promote and protect the human rights of women through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women		

GIRL CHILD	
S.O. L.1	Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child
S.O. L.2	Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls
S.O. L.3.	Promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs
S.O. L.5.	Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition

## 9.1. WOMEN AND HEALTH

### CEDAW Committee general recommendations<sup>144</sup>

State Parties should:

- Implement a comprehensive national strategy to promote women's health throughout their lifespan. This will include interventions aimed at both the prevention and treatment of diseases and conditions affecting women, as well as responding to violence against women. The interventions will ensure universal access for all women to a full range of high-quality and affordable healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services.
- Allocate adequate budgetary resources, human resources and administrative resources to ensure that women's health receives a share of the overall health budget comparable with that of men's health, taking into account their different health needs.
- In particular:
  - Place a gender perspective at the centre of all policies and programmes affecting women's health and involve women in the planning, implementation and monitoring of such policies and programmes and in the provision of health services to women
  - Ensure the removal of all barriers to women's access to health services, education and information, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health, and, in particular, allocate resources for programmes directed at adolescents for the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS
  - Prioritise the prevention of unwanted pregnancy through family planning and sex education and reduce maternal mortality rates through safe motherhood services and prenatal assistance. When possible, legislation criminalising abortion should be amended to withdraw punitive measures imposed on women who undergo abortion

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<sup>144</sup> CEDAW General Recommendation 24.

- Monitor the provision of health services to women by public, non-governmental and private organisations to ensure equal access and quality of care
- Require all health services to be consistent with the human rights of women, including the rights to autonomy, privacy, confidentiality, informed consent and choice
- Ensure that the training curricula of health workers include comprehensive, mandatory, gender-sensitive courses on women's health and human rights, in particular gender-based violence.



SOURCE: World Health Organization. (2018). Some rights reserved. This work is available under the CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO licence.

WHO COUNTRY COOPERATION STRATEGIC AGENDA (2016–2020)	
Strategic Priorities	Main Focus Areas for WHO Cooperation
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1</b> Strengthening national efforts towards the attainment of Universal Health Coverage (UHC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the phased institutionalization of the NHI and specifically advance the National Health Insurance Fund</li> <li>• Support the optimal distribution and effective utilization of the health workforce</li> <li>• Strengthen the national regulatory authority (NRA) to ensure access to safe quality medical products and food</li> </ul>
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2</b> Contribute towards reduction of the burden of communicable diseases, especially HIV, TB, STIs, hepatitis and vaccine-preventable diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen capacity for scaling-up prevention, treatment and care for HIV, STIs and Hepatitis, including measures to promote adherence and prevent drug resistance</li> <li>• Strengthen the prevention and treatment of TB, including M/XDR-TB to reduce the incidence, prevalence, and case fatality rates</li> <li>• Promoting access to existing and new immunization products to reduce vaccine-preventable diseases</li> </ul>
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:</b> Support the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, mental health disorders, violence and injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the development and implementation of policies, strategies and regulations to combat tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, violence and injuries, and other risk factors</li> <li>• Support improved management of the four main noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), namely cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases, in order to reduce morbidity and mortality</li> <li>• Guide and support the preparation and implementation of multi-sectoral, population-wide programmes to promote mental health and prevent mental and behavioural disorders</li> </ul>
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4:</b> Support South Africa in meeting its global health obligations while contributing to international health and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the implementation of International Health Regulations (2005)</li> <li>• Support progress towards disease elimination and eradication</li> <li>• Support the reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality in order to meet the SDGs and other international Commitments</li> </ul>

SOURCE WHO: Country Cooperation Strategy

## 9.2. Right to health

### Availability

Functioning public health and healthcare facilities, goods, and services, as well as programmes, must be available in sufficient quantity from the State Parties. They will include the underlying determinants of health such as safe and potable drinking water

and adequate sanitation facilities, hospitals, clinics, and other health-related buildings, trained medical and professional personnel receiving domestically competitive salaries, and essential drugs, as defined by the WHO Action Programme on Essential Drugs.

## **Accessibility**

Health facilities, goods and services have to be accessible to everyone without discrimination, within the jurisdiction of the State Parties.

Accessibility has four overlapping dimensions:

- *Non-discrimination*: Health facilities, goods, and services must be accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable or marginalised sections of the population, by law and in fact.
- *Physical accessibility*: Health facilities, goods and services must be within safe physical reach for all sections of the population, especially vulnerable or marginalised groups. Accessibility also implies that medical services and underlying determinants of health are within safe physical reach, including in rural areas. Accessibility further includes adequate access to buildings for persons with disabilities.
- *Economic accessibility (affordability)*: Health facilities, goods and services must be affordable for all. Payment for healthcare services, as well as services related to the underlying determinants of health, has to be based on the principle of equity, ensuring that these services, whether privately or publicly provided, are affordable for all, including socially disadvantaged groups. Equity demands that poorer households should not be disproportionately burdened with health expenses compared to richer households.
- *Information accessibility*: Accessibility includes the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas concerning health issues.

## **Acceptability**

All health facilities, goods and services must be respectful of medical ethics and culturally appropriate (i.e., respectful of the culture of individuals, minorities, peoples and communities, as well as sensitive to gender and life-cycle requirements).

## **Quality**

In addition to being culturally acceptable, health facilities, goods, and services must also be scientifically and medically appropriate and of good quality. This requires skilled medical personnel, scientifically approved and unexpired drugs and hospital equipment, safe and potable water, and adequate sanitation, among other requirements.

## **Core content of the right to health**

In General Comment No. 3, the CEDAW Committee confirms that State Parties have a core obligation to ensure the satisfaction of, at the very least, minimum essential levels of each of the rights enunciated in the Covenant<sup>145</sup>, including essential primary healthcare.

These include:

- To ensure the right of access to health facilities, goods, and services on a non-discriminatory basis, especially for vulnerable or marginalised groups
- To ensure access to the minimum essential food, which is nutritionally adequate and safe, to ensure freedom from hunger for everyone
- To ensure access to basic shelter, housing and sanitation, and an adequate supply of safe and potable water
- To provide essential drugs, as from time to time defined under the WHO Action Programme on Essential Drugs
- To ensure equitable distribution of all health facilities, goods, and services
- To adopt and implement a national public health strategy and plan of action

The following are underlying determinants of the right to health:

- Access to safe and potable water and adequate sanitation
- An adequate supply of safe food, nutrition, and housing
- Healthy occupational and environmental conditions
- Access to health-related education and information (including on sexual and reproductive health)
- Participation of the population in all health-related decision-making at the community, national and international levels.

*The right to health and health duties in the Constitution of South Africa (1996) Chapter II, Section 27: Health care, food, water, and social security:*

“(1) Everyone has the right to have access to:

- Healthcare services, including reproductive healthcare
- Sufficient food and water.

(2) The State must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights.

(3) No one may be refused emergency medical treatment.”

## **9.2. Right to health and gender equality in South Africa**

The right to healthcare is enshrined in South Africa's Constitution. The public health sector dominates South Africa's health system. The National Development Plan 2030

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<sup>145</sup>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights



has several health priorities that have guided the National Health Strategic Plan 2015-2020, which aims to achieve a long and healthy life for all South Africans.

The foundation of the public health system is composed of primary care facilities, which are mainly clinics and community health centres that are the first line of access to formal healthcare services. Patients are free to choose their providers in the public sector, and they often access the closest facility. This inadvertently forces central or tertiary hospitals to provide all types of health services, including primary care. Private provision of care mainly involves private hospitals and highly specialised services to which access is limited by affordability.

The National Development Plan 2030 seeks to implement a national health insurance system that reduces the relative cost of private medical care and is bolstered by greater human capacity and better systems in the public health sector.

Even though the South African government has put in place several transformative policies and legislations aimed at advancing women's empowerment and gender equality, women still face adverse health outcomes such as poor neonatal and maternal experiences, sexually transmitted infections, termination of pregnancies, gender-based violence, leading to health complications and other unfavourable socio-demographic outcomes.<sup>146</sup>

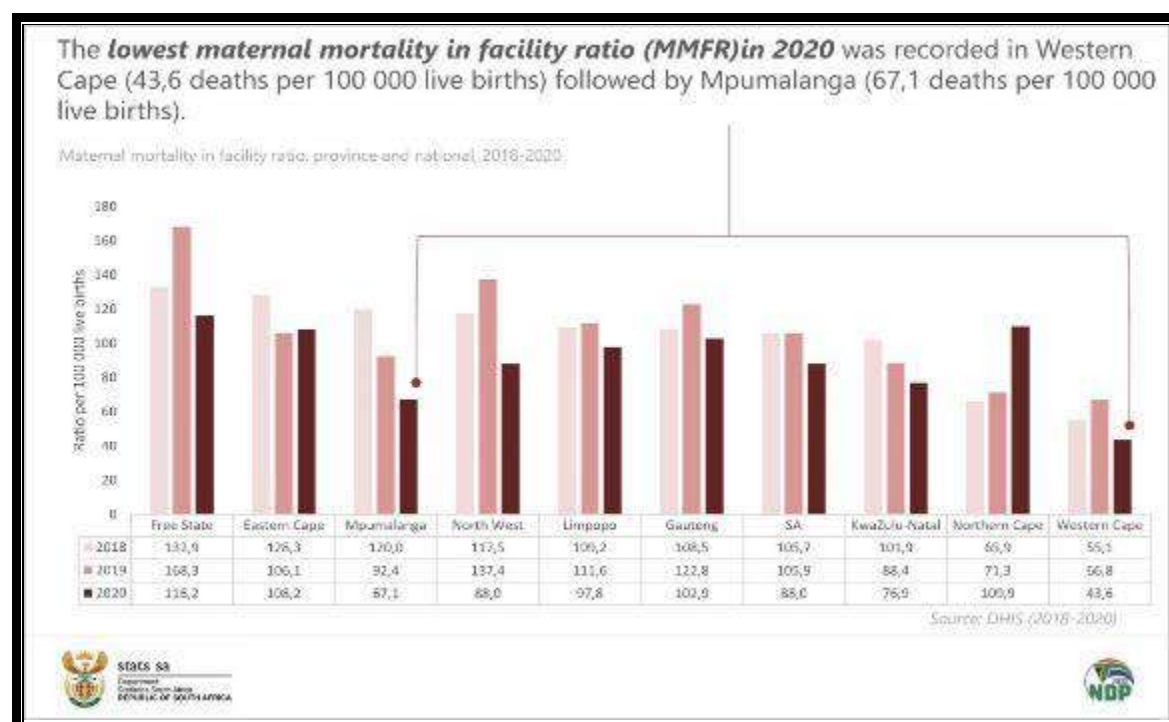
Stats SA<sup>147</sup> emphasises that despite the many frameworks, strategies, and policies put forward to address health concerns, especially those affecting women – empirical evidence suggests that South Africa still has to strengthen its efforts to realise its commitments and targets in promoting women's health.

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<sup>146</sup> Stats SA (2015); United Nations (2015)

<sup>147</sup> The status of women's health in South Africa: Evidence from selected indicators

FIGURE 25: Lowest maternal mortality in facility ratio (MMFR) in 2020



SOURCE: Stats SA: [www.statssa.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/MMFR.jpg](http://www.statssa.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/MMFR.jpg)

Stats SA reported in 2020 that indicators suggest that there is an improvement in the quality of life of women over the years. However, women are still faced with adverse health outcomes such as sexually transmitted infections, gender-based violence and others, leading to health complications and other unfavourable socio-demographic outcomes.

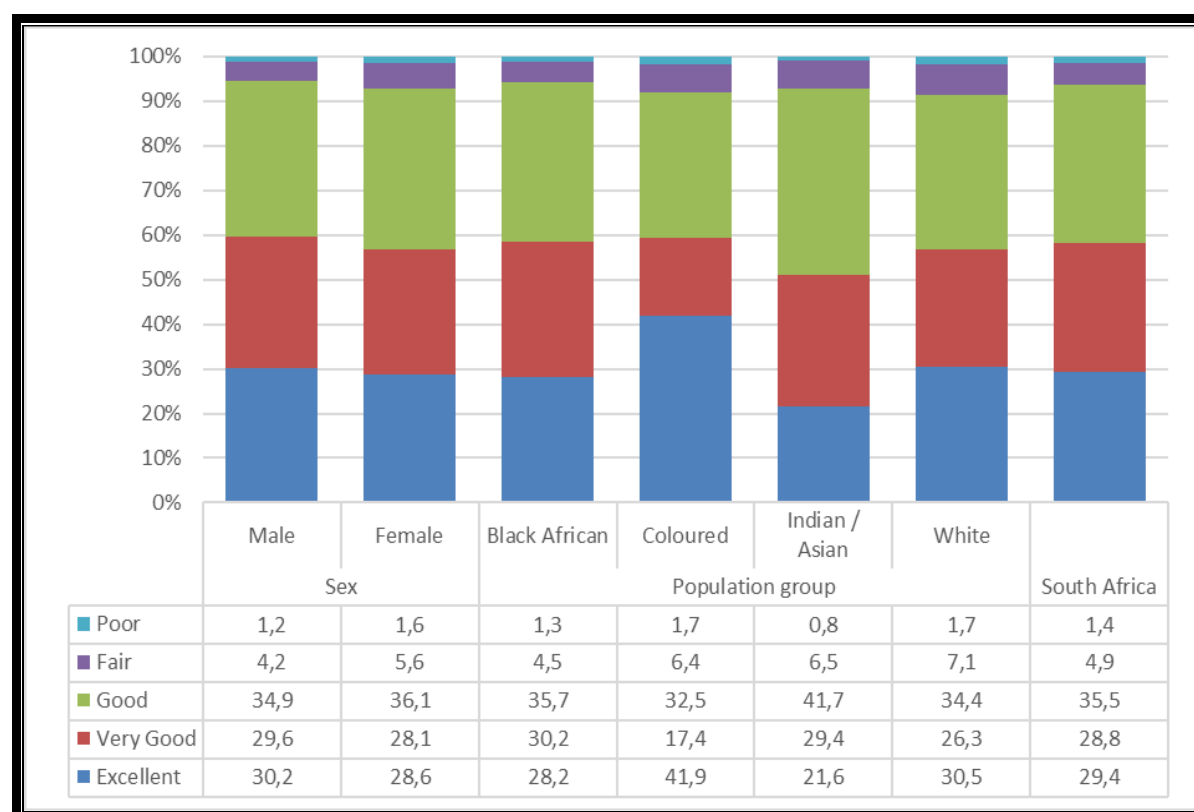
The report *The Status of Women's Health in South Africa: Evidence from selected indicators* by Stats SA used multiple data sources both inside and outside of Stats SA. The report states that there has been progress with regard to maternal mortality in facility ratio (MMFR). Nationally, the ratio decreased from 105,9 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2019 to 88,0 in 2020, indicating that South Africa is experiencing a decrease in MMFR. The MMFR refers to death occurring during pregnancy, childbirth, and the puerperium of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of pregnancy and irrespective of the cause of death (obstetric and non-obstetric) per 100,000 live births in a facility.

It is an important measure of human and social development that reveals women's overall status, access to health care and the responsiveness of the healthcare system to their needs.

The lowest MMFR in 2020 was recorded in the Western Cape (43,6 deaths per 100,000 live births), followed by Mpumalanga (67,1 deaths per 100,000 live births). The Eastern Cape and Northern Cape provinces showed an increase in MMFR between 2019 and 2020. All other provinces showed decreasing patterns, which is also reflected in the national pattern.

The General Household Survey asked persons to assess their own health based on their own definition of health. The figure below shows that more than nine-tenths (93.7%) of South Africans perceived their health to be good, very good or excellent. A slightly higher percentage of men (30.2%) than women (28.6%) rated their health as excellent. The percentage of persons with excellent health was the highest among Coloured people (41.9%) and lowest for Indians/Asians (21.6%).

FIGURE 26: Percentage distribution of self-reported health status of individuals by sex and population group, 2022



The type of healthcare facility consulted by household members is influenced by factors such as households' proximity to facilities, as well as personal preferences based on factors such as affordability and the perceived quality of services. The table presents the type of healthcare facility that households generally visit first when household members fall ill or have accidents.

### National Department of Health Annual Report 2022/2023

According to the Minister of Health, inequity remains the biggest challenge to the health system, and it threatens the sustainability of healthcare for everyone in the country.<sup>148</sup>

<sup>148</sup> National Department of Health Annual Report 2022/2023

Over the coming years, a series of reforms will be implemented to achieve an integrated national healthcare delivery system that makes all resources available to everyone.

*Whilst South Africa is the least deprived country in Africa, its margins of inequalities are ranked highest in the world. Approximately 88% of the population depend on the government for their health needs and are more likely to experience poorer health outcomes, including reduced life expectancy, because of their socio-economic conditions.*

*SOURCE: Dr S Dhlomo, MP: Deputy Minister of Health*

## **Women, maternal and reproductive health sub-programme**

This sub-programme develops and monitors policies and guidelines, sets norms and standards for maternal and women's health services, and monitors the implementation of these services.

### **9.3. Health-related challenges that women in South Africa continue to face**

#### **A. Maternal and neonatal health**

According to the WHO, a positive maternal experience ensures that babies reach their full potential for health. Therefore, maternal health during pregnancy, childbirth and the post-natal period should be considered as part of promoting the best possible outcomes for women.

According to Stats SA,<sup>149</sup> South Africa has made noticeable reductions in maternal and neonatal mortality.

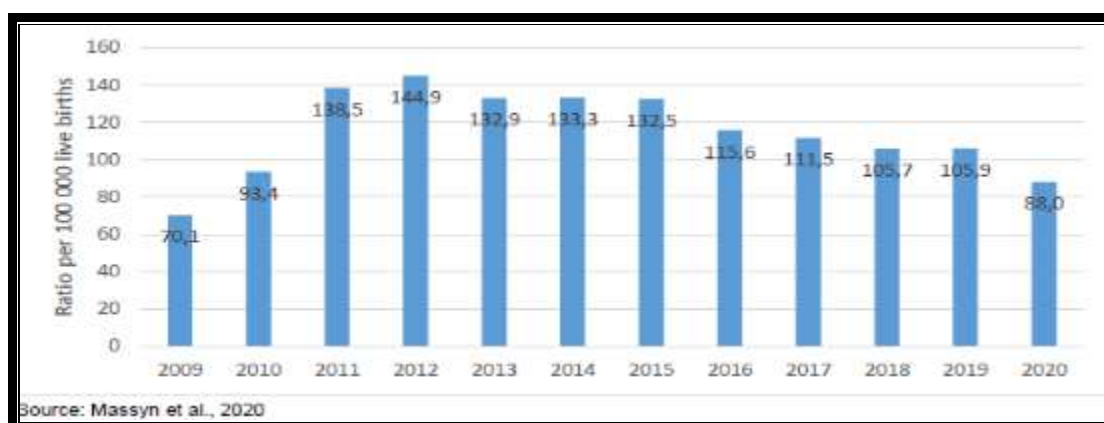
##### **a) Maternal mortality in facility ratio**

Maternal mortality in facility ratio (MMFR) refers to death occurring during pregnancy, childbirth and approximately six weeks after delivery or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of pregnancy and the cause of death.

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<sup>149</sup> The status of women's health in South Africa: Evidence from selected indicators

FIGURE 27: Trends in maternal mortality in facility ratio, 2009–2020

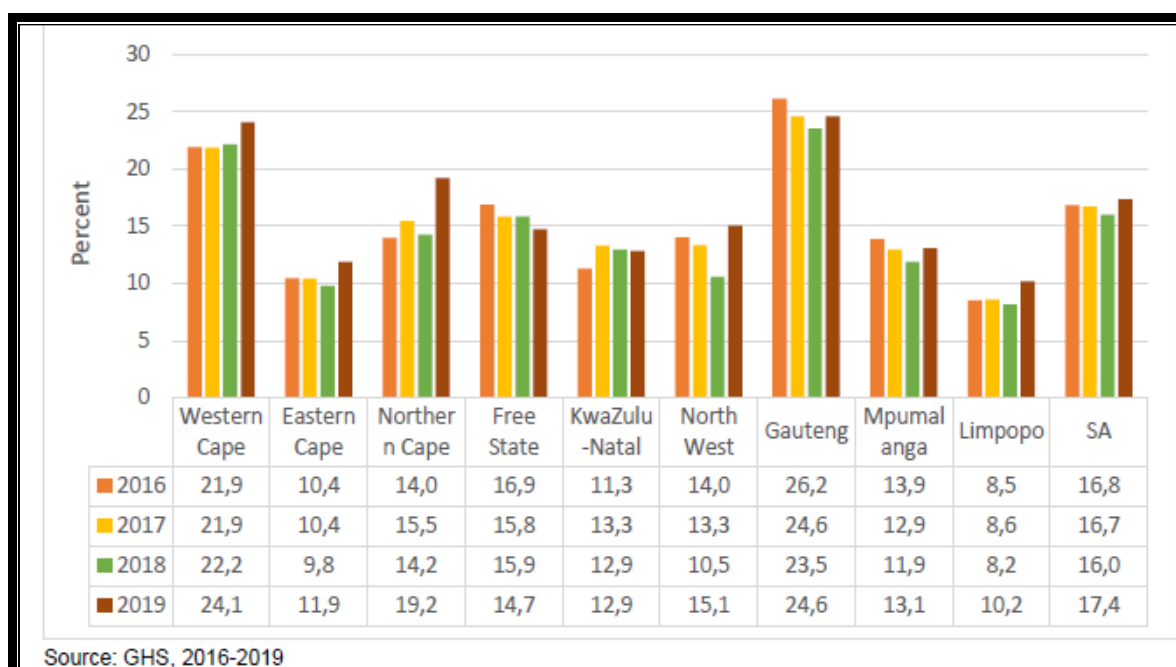


SOURCE: The Status of Women's Health in South Africa (Stats SA)

- Analysis of the above figure reveals that South Africa is experiencing a decrease in MMFR.
- The ratio peaked in 2012 at 144,9 deaths per 100,000 live births, and the country has since observed a gradual decline to 88,0 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020.
- The level of decline in 2020 is noticeably steeper than that observed in 2019.

**b) Women on medical aid: Percentage of women (aged 15–49 years) on medical aid**

FIGURE 28: Percentage of women on medical aid, province and national (2016–2019)



- The figure above shows that, nationally, the percentage of women 15–49 years covered by medical aid increased from 16.8% in 2018 to 17.4% in 2019.
- The percentage of women on medical aid was consistent at 16.8% on average in 2016 and 2017.

- From 2016 to 2019, findings indicate that Western Cape and Gauteng had the highest percentage of women who were on medical aid. In 2019, medical aid coverage was at 24.1% and 24.6% for the two provinces, respectively.
- Across all the years, Eastern Cape and Limpopo had the lowest percentages of women on medical aid.
- However, except for Free State, all the provinces are showing an improvement in coverage between 2018 and 2019.<sup>150</sup>

### c) Antenatal first visits before 20 weeks rate

- The antenatal first visit before 20 weeks rate refers to women who had a first visit before they were 20 weeks into pregnancy as a proportion of all antenatal first visits (NDoH, 2021).
- The table below indicates that in 2020, about 68.3% of women had their first visit before they were 20 weeks into pregnancy, suggesting a drop from 69.7% observed in 2019.
- All the provinces observed a decline in the percentage of women seeking their first antenatal visit before 20 weeks in 2020. This is apart from KwaZulu-Natal, which showed a slight increase of 74.6% in 2020 from 74.4% in 2019.

TABLE 14: Antenatal first visits before 20 weeks rate, provincial and national, 2018–2020

Antenatal 1 <sup>st</sup> visit before 20 weeks <sup>1</sup> rate (Expressed as a per cent)			
Province	2018	2019	2020
Western Cape	70,2	71,7	70,7
Eastern Cape	62,4	63,4	63,2
Northern Cape	63,2	65,6	60,7
Free State	65,2	66,6	62,2
KwaZulu-Natal	72,8	74,4	74,6
North West	68,4	71,3	68,1
Gauteng	64,0	66,4	63,9
Mpumalanga	75,2	77,0	75,1
Limpopo	66,8	68,8	67,5
<b>RSA</b>	<b>67,8</b>	<b>69,7</b>	<b>68,3</b>

Source: DHIS (2018-2020)

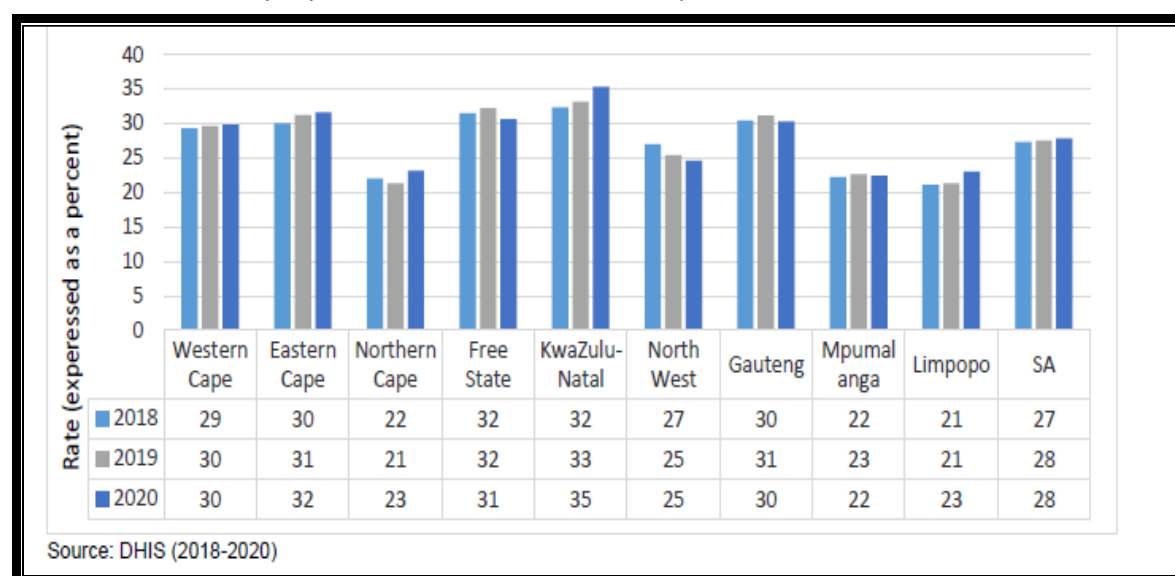
### d) Delivery by caesarean section rate

- The figure below presents the delivery by caesarean section rate as a proportion of total deliveries in health facilities for the period 2018–2020. Nationally, delivery by caesarean section rate between 2018 and 2020 was 28% on average.

<sup>150</sup> The status of women's health in South Africa: Evidence from selected indicators

- Apart from Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, none of the provinces showed consistent increasing patterns in the percentage of women who delivered by caesarean section between 2018 and 2020.
- The rate of delivery by caesarean section ranges from 22% in Mpumalanga to 35% in KwaZulu-Natal in 2020.

FIGURE 29: Delivery by caesarean section rate, province and national, 2018–2020



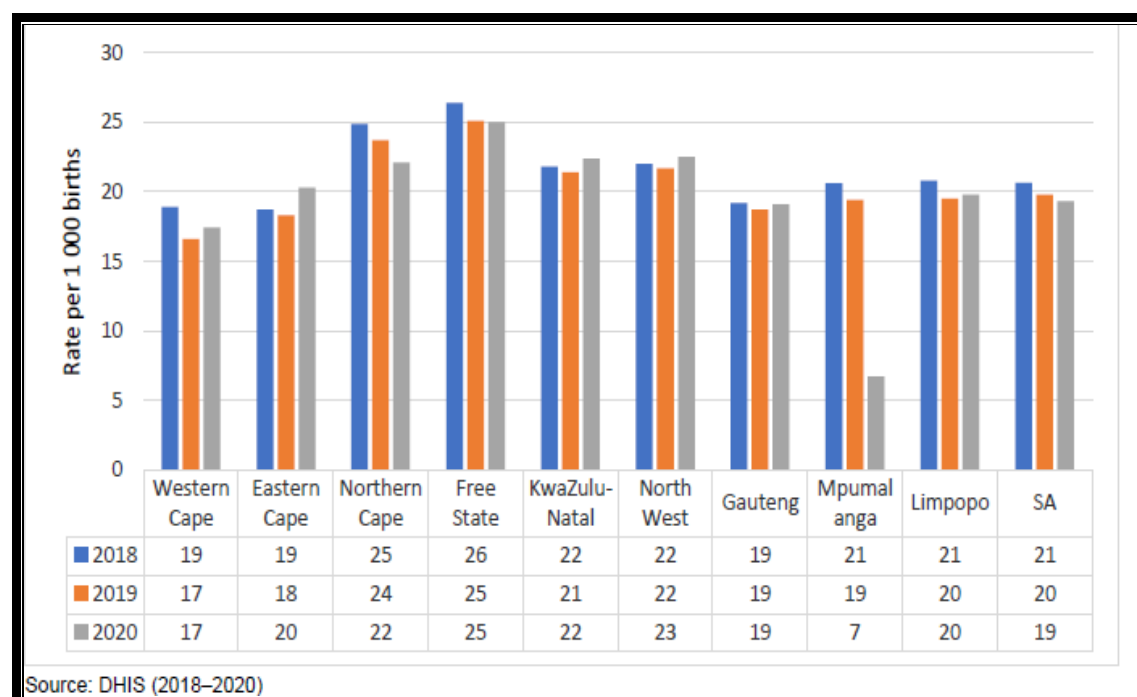
#### e) Stillbirth in facility rate

Stillbirth refers to a foetus that had at least 26 weeks of intra-uterine existence but showed no sign of life after complete birth.

The figure below presents the stillbirth in facility rate per 1,000 births and is presented as a proportion of total infants born in health facilities.

- At the national level, the stillbirth rate in the facility declined from 21 per 1,000 births in 2018 to 20 per 1,000 births in 2019, and it was 19 per 1,000 births in 2020.
- Provincial patterns in the figure showed a sharp decline from 19 per 1,000 births in Mpumalanga to 7 per 1,000 births in 2020.
- Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and North West observed an increase between 2019 and 2020.

FIGURE 30: Stillbirth in facility rate, province and national, 2018–2020



#### f) Pregnancy, termination (abortion) and deliveries

According to Stats SA, the proportion of pregnancy, rate of terminations (abortions), and other delivery-related issues are of concern to the government, as they are important indicators in the measure of the reproductive health status of women.

The following information is about the dynamics of selected pregnancy, termination and delivery-related indicators in South Africa, highlighting their patterns and trajectories, especially among women and adolescents between 2016 and 2020.<sup>151</sup>

#### g) Contraceptive methods currently used by age group

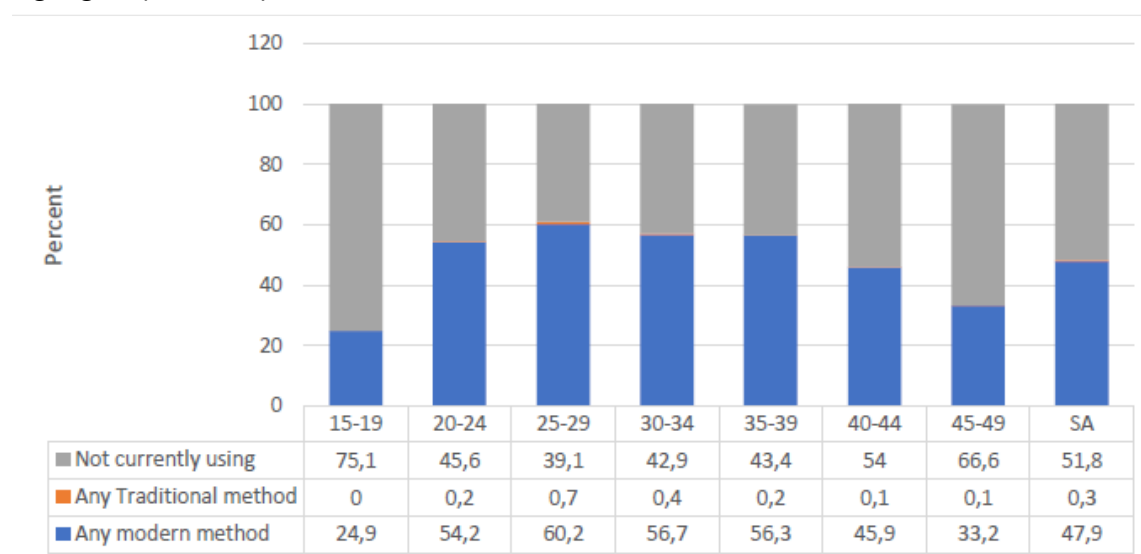
The results presented in the figure below show that the majority of the women in the age group 20–39 years used modern methods of contraception.

- The highest proportion of those not currently using were in the age group 15–19 years (75.1%), followed by those in the age group 45–49 (66.6%)
- A slightly higher proportion of women are not currently using any (51.8%) compared to those using modern methods (47.9%)
- An insignificant proportion of women used traditional methods during the study.

<sup>151</sup> The status of women's health in South Africa: Evidence from selected indicators



FIGURE 31: Distribution of all women by any contraceptive method currently used by age group 15–49 years, 2016

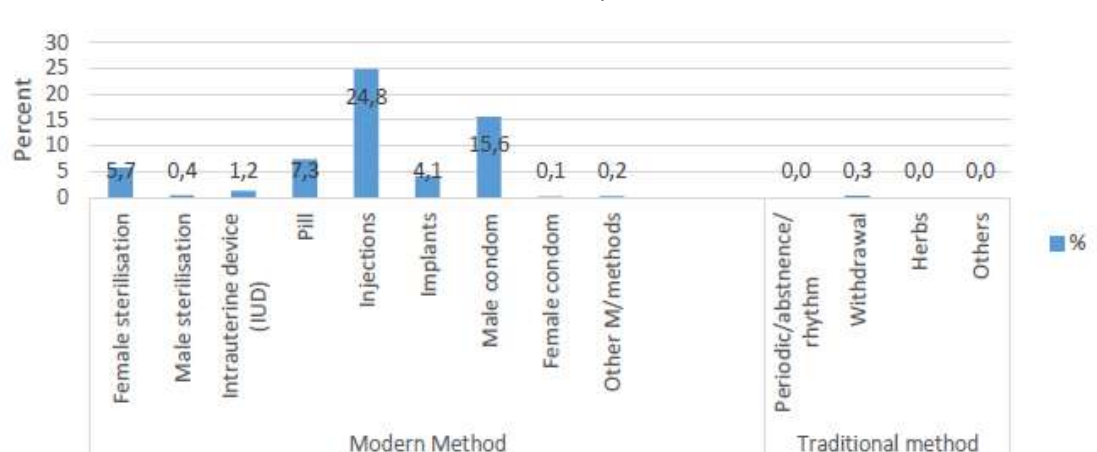


Source: SADHS, 2019

#### h) Modern and traditional contraceptive methods used

The results below show that most sexually active women in the country were using modern contraceptive methods such as injections (24.8%) and the male condom (15.6%), while the least prefer using the female condom (0.1%). An insignificant proportion of 0.3% were using the withdrawal method.

FIGURE 32: Modern and traditional contraceptive methods used.



SOURCE: The Status of Women's Health in South Africa: Evidence from selected indicators

#### i) Change in contraceptive distribution

The table below presents the changes in contraceptive distribution (numbers and percentages) from 2018 to 2020.

- The results show a positive percentage change in the distribution of norethisterone enanthate injection (47.9%) and female sterilisation (7.3%) contraceptive methods.

- Contraceptive elements that reported a high negative percentage change in distribution were sub-dermal contraceptive implant (-28,9), oral pill cycle (-12,6%), and male condom distribution (-11%), while male sterilisation (-1,2%) had the least.

TABLE 15: Changes in contraceptive distribution (numbers and percentage), 2018–2020

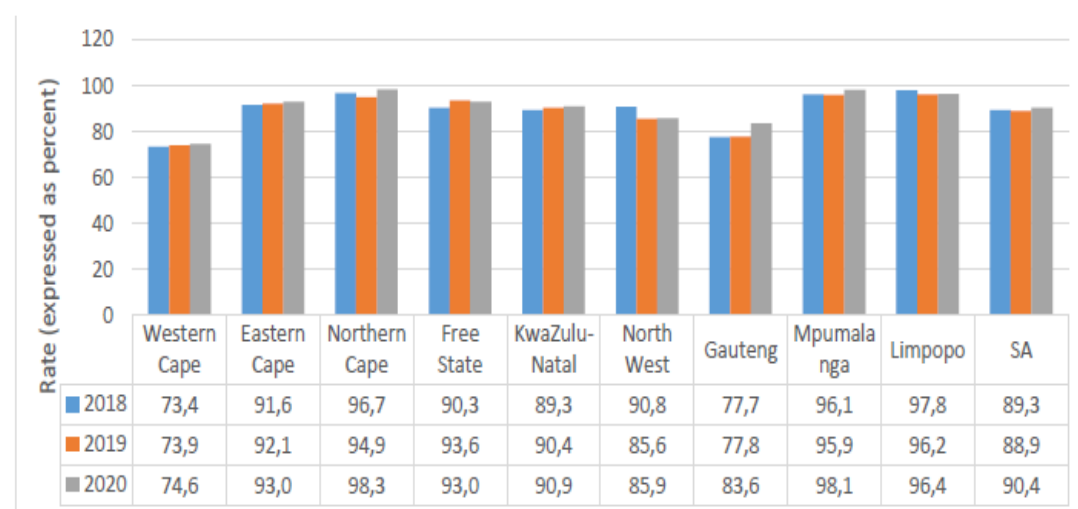
Data elements	2018/19	2019/20	% change
Female condoms distribution	17 658 915	16 562 153	-6,2
Male condoms distribution	726 202 616	646 587 444	-11
Depot medroxyprogesterone acetate injection	6 206 245	5574653	-10,2
Norethisterone enanthate injection	1 939 006	2 868 579	47,9
Oral pill cycle	4 257 198	3 719 328	-12,6
Female sterilisation	45 372	48 703	7,3
Male sterilisation	1 366	1 349	-1,2
IUCD	51 334	56 391	9,9
Sub-dermal contraceptive implant	213 260	151 615	-28,9

#### j) Termination of pregnancy 0-12 weeks rate

Termination of pregnancy 0-12 weeks rate refers to pregnancies terminated at health facilities in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy as a proportion of total termination of pregnancies (NDoH, 2021).

- With the exception of provinces such as Western Cape (74.6%), North West (85.9%) and Gauteng (83.6%), all other provinces presented rates above 90% in 2020.
- The proportion increased from 91.6% to 93.0% in the Eastern Cape between 2018 and 2020. It also increased between 88.9% to 90.4% in the same period nationally.
- These rates suggest an average of 89.5% over the three years in the country.

FIGURE 33: Termination of pregnancy 0–12 weeks rate, province and national, 2018–2020



Source: DHIS (2018–2020)

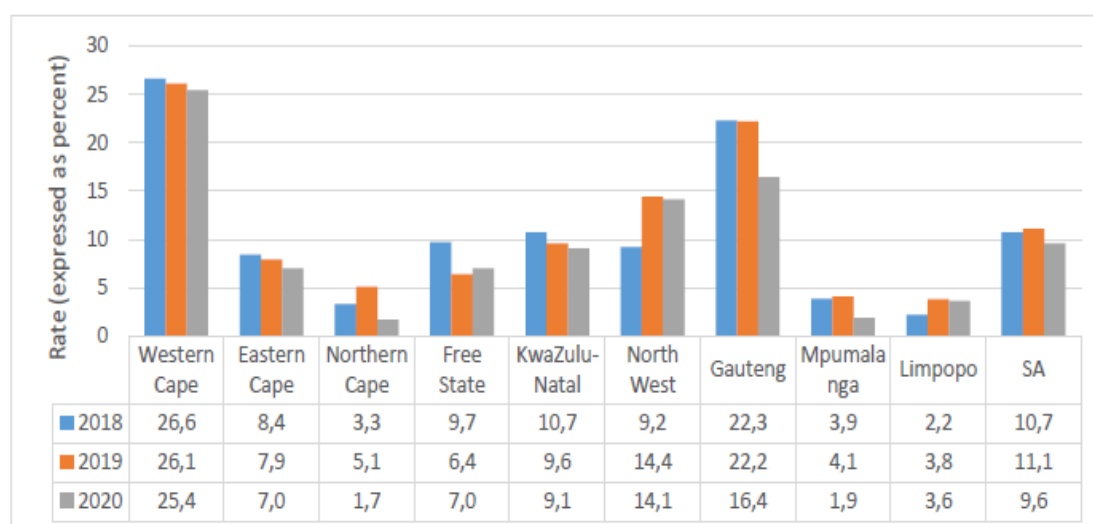
### k) Termination of pregnancy 13–20 weeks rate

Termination of pregnancy at 13–20 weeks rate refers to pregnancies terminated at health facilities at 13–20 weeks of pregnancy as a proportion of total termination of pregnancies (NDoH, 2021).

The figure below suggests that:

- Western Cape and Gauteng reported the highest termination rate across the years, while the Northern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga had the lowest rates in the study period.
- Gauteng province shows a significant decrease from 22.2% in 2019 to 16.4% in 2020.
- The rate of termination of pregnancy at 13–20 weeks dropped slightly from 11.1% in 2019 to 9.6% in 2020.

FIGURE 34: Termination of pregnancy 13–20 weeks rate, province and national, 2018–2020



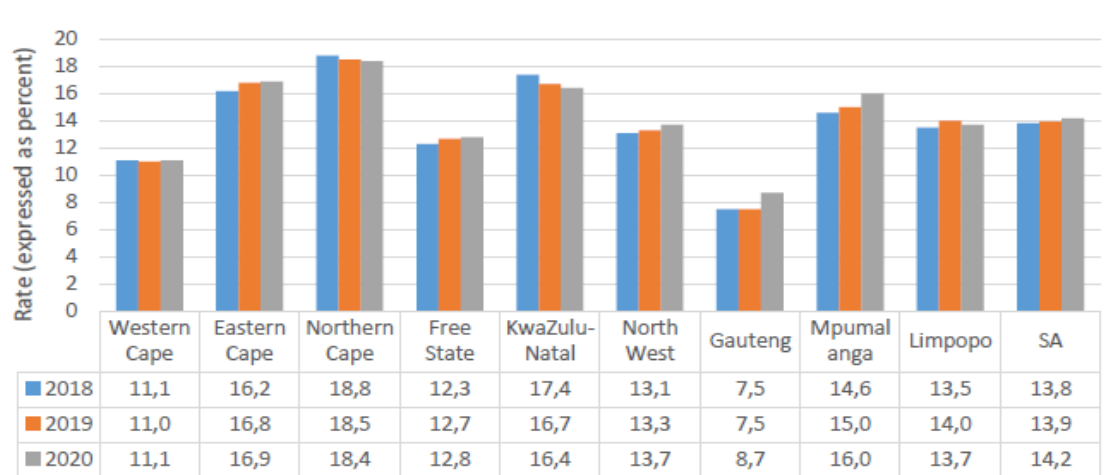
Source: DHIS (2018-2020)

### l) Delivery 10–19 years in facility rate by province

Delivery in 10–19 years (adolescents) in facility rate refers to deliveries to women under the age of 20 years as a proportion of total deliveries in health facilities (NDoH, 2021).

- Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal provinces recorded the highest in facility delivery rates among adolescents (10–19 years).
- Gauteng had the lowest rate between 2018 and 2020. The rate was almost consistent in the three years, at an average of 14%.

FIGURE 35: Delivery in 10–19 years in facility rate, province and national, 2018–2020



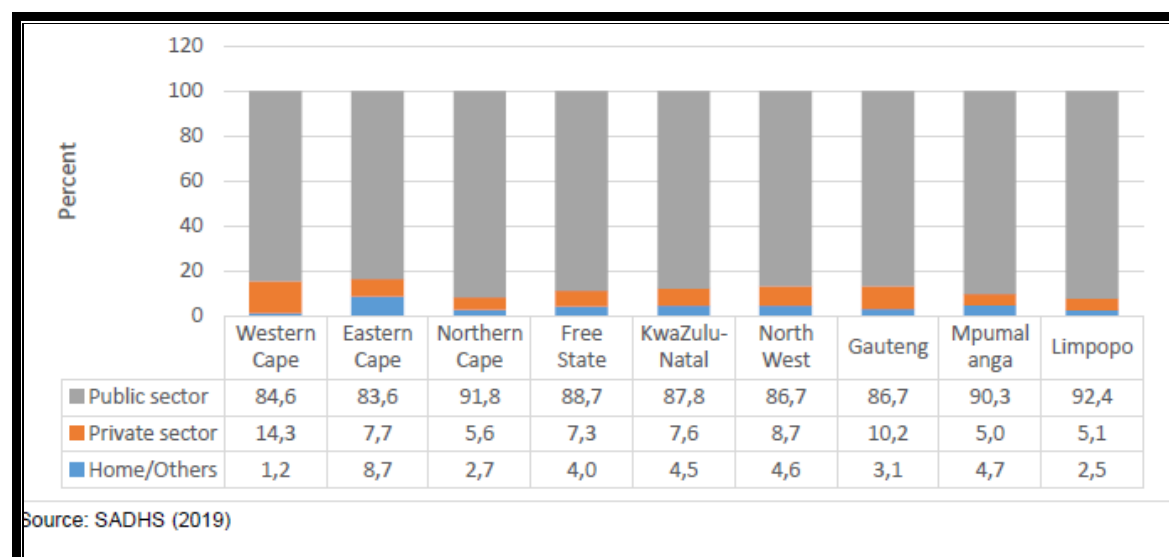
Source: DHIS (2018–2020)

### m) Deliveries in types of facilities

The figure below indicates that a majority of women in all provinces delivered in public facilities.

- Those in Limpopo (92.4%), closely followed by those in Northern Cape (91.8%), presented the highest proportions.
- The percentage of women who delivered in private facilities ranged from as low as 5% in Mpumalanga to 14.3% in Western Cape.
- Those in the Eastern Cape (8.7%) presented the highest proportion among those who delivered at home or at other facilities.

FIGURE 36: Deliveries in types of facilities, 2016



Source: SADHS (2019)

## **9.4. HIV/AIDS in South Africa**

### **A) Key findings from the 2017 national population-based survey – PMC (NIH.gov)**

The above survey – which is the fifth South African survey of HIV prevalence, incidence, and behaviour, conducted in 2017, shows that South Africa has made strides in the fight against the HIV epidemic. However, South Africa has remained unchanged and has regressed in other areas, thus delaying the possibility of realising the end of the HIV epidemic in the immediate future.

Research<sup>152</sup> shows that South Africa has the largest number of people living with HIV worldwide and that the high prevalence of HIV in this country has been attributed to various biological, socio-behavioural, contextual, and structural drivers. Of concern is that there are high rates of HIV incidence, especially among youth.

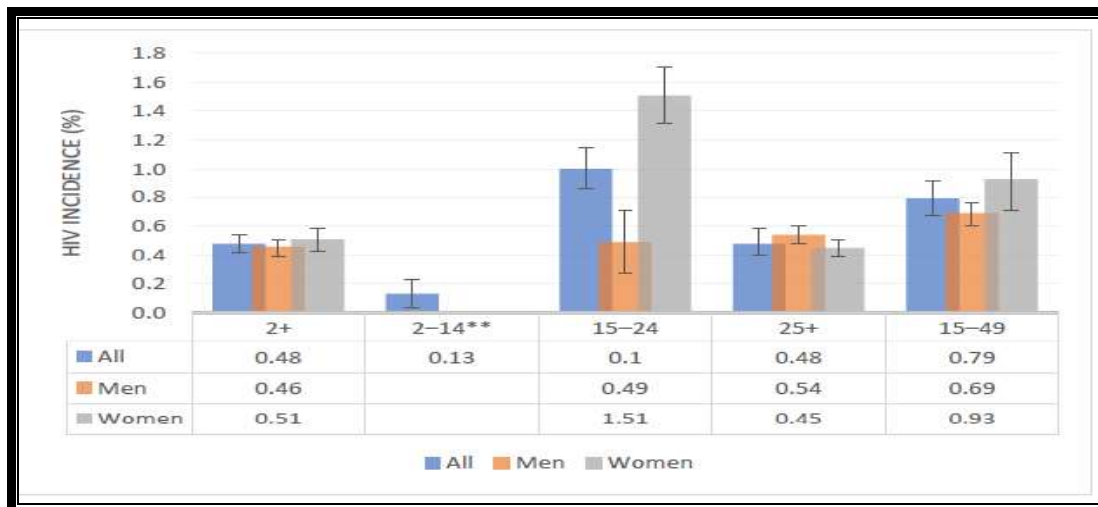
- The majority of HIV transmissions in South Africa are through heterosexual transmission, including through commercial sex.
- HIV prevalence is also increasing among men who have sex with men.
- Identified socio-behavioural and structural drivers of the HIV epidemic include having multiple sexual partners, condomless sex or inconsistent condom use, socio-economic power imbalances, harmful gender norms, sexual violence, alcohol and substance use, the age of sexual debut among youth, and age-disparate relationships.
- Age-disparate relationships between young women and older men have been driving the high prevalence of HIV in the country, especially among those aged 15–24 years. This dynamic is evidenced by the eight-fold risk of HIV infection among adolescent girls and young women compared to their male counterparts.
- Access to ARV therapy differs considerably by age and gender, resulting in age and gender differentials in the levels of viral suppression. There is therefore a need to expand access to treatment among young people. It is also stated that evidence-based HIV prevention interventions are urgently required to help reduce the incidence and the prevalence of HIV among those younger than 30 years, with a particular focus on young people.

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<sup>152</sup> PMC. The HIV epidemic in South Africa: Key findings from 2017 National Population-Based Survey (NIH.gov)

## B) HIV prevalence and incidence

FIGURE 37: HIV incidence

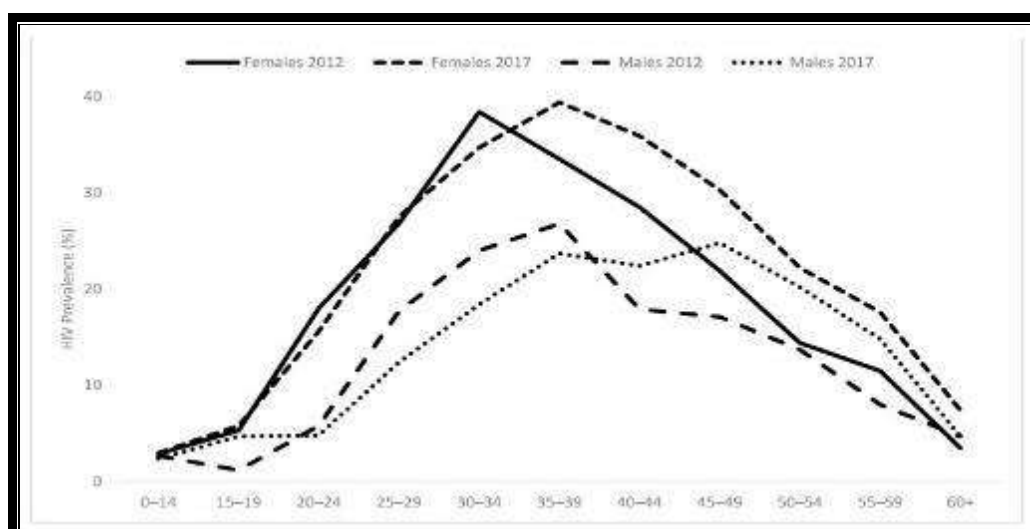


SOURCE: The National Centre for Biotechnology Information<sup>153</sup>

- The national estimate of HIV prevalence in South Africans of all ages was 14.0% (95% CI: 13.1–15.0), translating to an estimated 7.92 (95% CI: 7.1–8.8) million people living with HIV (2012-2017).
- Among women, HIV prevalence continued to increase among those aged 30 years and above, indicating an ageing pattern of the epidemic with no noticeable change among women younger than 30 years.
- A similar pattern was observed among men older than 35 years, albeit a noticeable decline in HIV prevalence among those aged between 25 and 35 years.

<sup>153</sup> The HIV epidemic in South Africa: Key findings from 2017 National population-based survey  
*International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*

FIGURE 38: HIV prevalence



SOURCE: National Centre for Biotechnology Information

### C) Exposure to antiretroviral (ARV) and HIV viral load suppression

- In 2017, out of over 7.9 million people living with HIV, 4,402,000 (62.3%) were exposed to ARV therapy (ART).
- A greater proportion of women (65.5%; 95% CI: 62.4–68.4%) than men (56.3%; 95% CI: 51.0–61.5%) living with HIV were on treatment.
- Half of the HIV-positive children aged 0–14 years (50.0%; 95% CI: 36.6–63.3%) were found to have been exposed to ARV.
- Exposure to ARV was highest among those aged 50 years and above (76.7%; 95% CI: 71.3–81.4%), intermediate for 25–49-year-olds (63.1%; 95% CI: 59.2–66.8%), and lowest among youth (39.9%; 95% CI: 32.1–48.3%).
- Among the 7.6 million Black Africans estimated to be living with HIV, 62.6% (95% CI: 59.5–65.6%) were found to be on treatment.
- The proportion of ARV exposure in other race groups was 51.3% (95% CI: 36.4–66.1%). Geographically, the KwaZulu-Natal province had the highest number of people using ARV.

The results of the national population-based survey<sup>154</sup> mentioned above show that strides have been made in controlling the HIV epidemic, especially in the reduction of HIV incidence, HIV testing, and treatment. It is stated further that there continue to be some challenges with the lack of significant behaviour change. People, especially youth, continue to engage in risky behaviour and delay treatment initiation.

Therefore, there is a need to develop or scale up targeted intervention programmes to increase HIV testing further and put more people living with HIV on treatment, as well as prevent risky behaviours (see Annexure 10 for further information).

<sup>154</sup> PMC: [Key findings from 2017 national population-based survey – PMC \(NIH.gov\)](#)

## D) Sixth South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour, and Communication Survey (SABSSM VI), 2022

The Sixth South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey (SABSSM VI) is a cross-sectional, population-based household survey designed to provide information on national and sub-national progress towards control of the HIV epidemic in South Africa.

SABSSM VI was conducted in all nine provinces among participants of all ages from January 2022 to April 2023. The survey collected information on key HIV indicators, social and behavioural factors, and access to medical interventions in South Africa.

TABLE 16: HIV prevalence 2022 (SABSSM VI survey 2022)

Variable	Females			Males			Total		
HIV Prevalence*									
Age (years)	N	%	95% CI <sup>2</sup>	N	%	95% CI	N	%	95% CI
0–14	6 432	2.2	1.4–3.3	6 219	2.6	1.8–3.7	12 651	2.4	1.9–3.2
15–24	4 920	6.9	5.9–8.2	4 007	3.5	2.6–4.7	8 927	5.2	4.5–6.0
25–49	9 814	28.0	26.1–30.1	6 310	14.7	13.2–16.4	16 124	22.1	20.7–23.5
15–49	14 734	22.3	20.8–23.8	10 317	11.0	10.0–12.2	25 051	17.0	16.0–18.0
15+	21 135	20.3	19.0–21.7	13 746	11.5	10.5–12.5	34 881	16.3	15.4–17.2
Race (15 years and older)**									
Black African	19 199	25.0	23.5–26.4	12 384	13.7	12.6–14.9	31 583	19.8	18.9–20.8
White	464	1.1	0.4–2.6	371	1.6	0.4–6.5	835	1.3	0.5–3.2
Coloured	1 290	5.9	4.2–8.3	855	4.1	2.6–6.4	2 145	5.1	3.7–6.9
Indian/Asian	163	0	–	119	2.6	0.8–7.8	282	1.2	0.4–3.7
Viral load suppression (VLS)***									
15–24	455	68.2	59.9–75.5	159	73.5	61.5–82.8	614	70.1	63.2–76.1
25–49	3 449	82.8	78.4–86.5	1170	74.9	69.9–79.4	4 619	80.5	76.6–83.9
15–49	3 904	81.6	77.5–85.1	1329	74.8	70.1–78.9	5 233	79.5	75.9–82.7
15+	5 110	82.9	79.8–85.7	1926	77.6	73.9–80.8	7 036	81.2	78.5–83.6

\*HIV status is based on laboratory testing results; \*\*The sums may differ by variable due to missing data;

\*\*\*VLS is defined as HIV RNA <1000 copies per milliliter among all persons who tested HIV positive; N represent denominators.

SOURCE: Sixth South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey (SABSSM VI) <sup>155</sup>

The following are the key findings of the survey:

- The overall national estimate for HIV prevalence for all ages (0+ years) was 12.7% (95% CI: 12.0–13.4), translating to an estimated 7.8 million (95% CI: 7.2–8.4) people living with HIV in South Africa in 2022.
- The national HIV prevalence was 16.3% among adults aged 15 years and older, translating to an estimated 7.4 million adults aged 15+ years living with HIV.

<sup>155</sup> SABSSM Vi Survey 2022

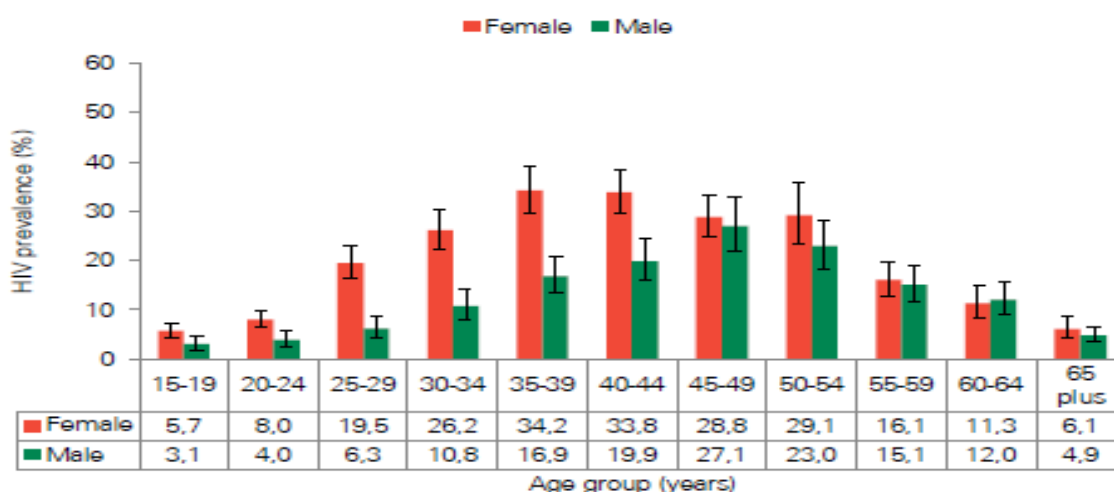


- Among adults aged 15+ years, HIV prevalence was nearly twice as high among women (20.3% compared to men (11.5%). By race, HIV prevalence was highest among Black Africans (19.8%), followed by Coloured (5.1%), White (1.3%), and Indian/Asian (1.2%).
- Viral load suppression (VLS) (defined as <1,000 copies/mL) among people living with HIV (PLHIV) aged 15+ years was 81.2% overall, 82.9% among women and 77.6% among men. VLS was lower among younger populations aged 15–24 years at 70.1%.

### E) HIV prevalence among adults aged 15+ years by province

Among adults aged 15 years and older, HIV prevalence varied geographically, ranging from 8.2% in the Western Cape to 21.8% in KwaZulu-Natal.

FIGURE 39: HIV prevalence

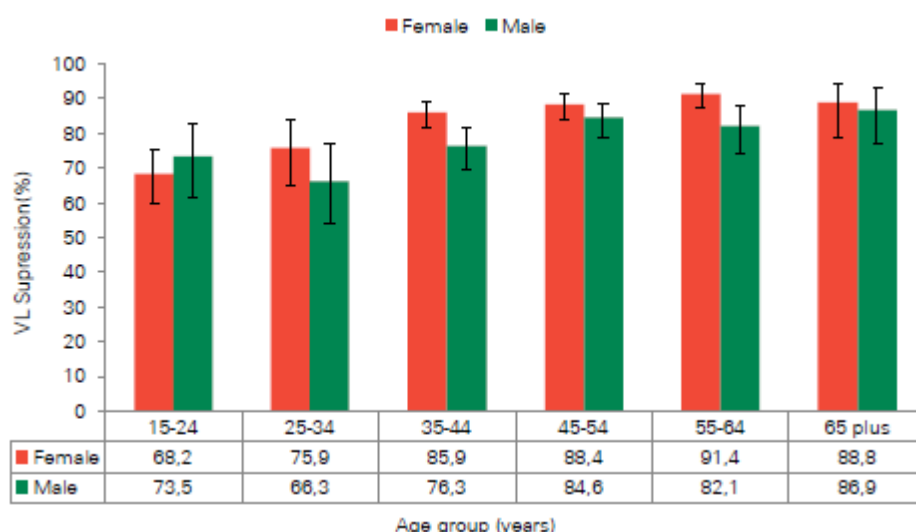


SOURCE: Sixth South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey (SABSSM VI), 2022

HIV prevalence:

- Among women, HIV prevalence was highest in ages 35–39 years at 34.2%, whereas among men, HIV prevalence was highest in ages 45–49 years at 27.1%.
- Pronounced differences in HIV prevalence by sex were seen among younger populations.
- Compared to men, HIV prevalence was approximately two-fold higher in women aged 15–19 (5.7% vs 3.1%), and 20–24 years (8.0% vs 4.0%), and three-fold higher in women aged 25–29 years (19.5% vs 6.3%).

FIGURE 40: Viral load suppression (VLS) among adults aged 15+ years living with HIV by age and sex

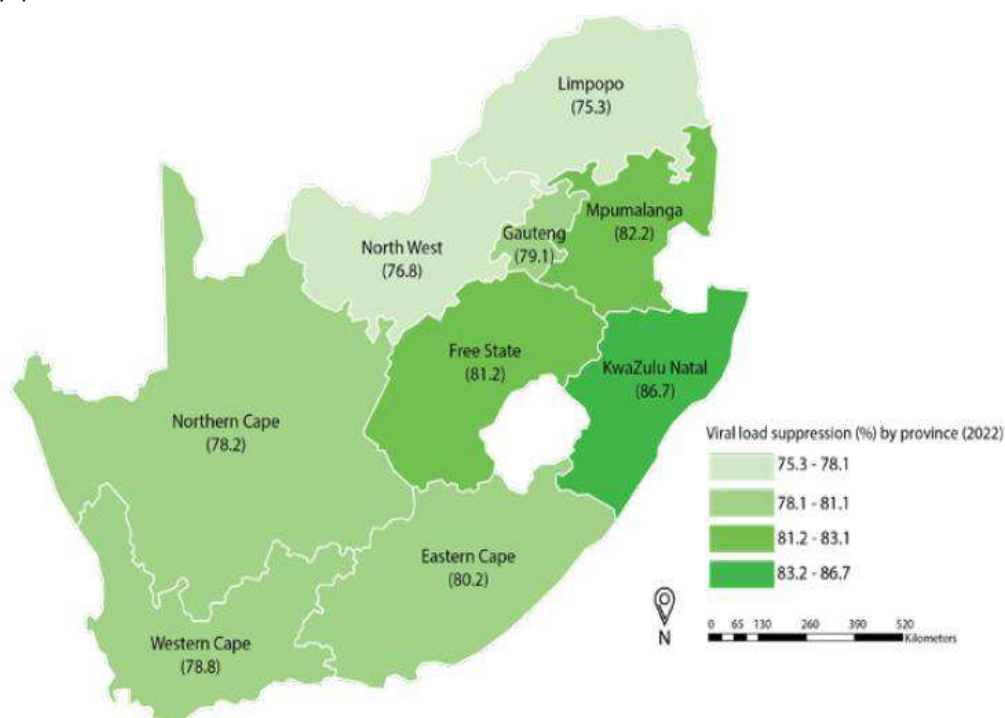


SOURCE: Sixth South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey (SABSSM VI), 2022 (DELETED).

The above figure shows the VLS and indicates the VLS among adults aged 15+ years living with HIV by age and sex.

- Population VLS among adult PLHIV was highest in women (91.4%) aged 55–64 years and 86.9% among men aged 65 years and older.
- VLS was lower among younger adults, with the lowest population VLS among women PLHIV aged 15–24 years (68.2%) and men PLHIV aged 25–34 years (66.3%).

FIGURE 41: Viral load suppression (VLS) among adults aged 15+ years living with HIV by province



## **F) Remarks from the report**

- HIV prevalence has decreased since the SABSSM V survey conducted in 2017; in 2022, HIV prevalence was 1.3% lower among those 0+ years and 2.4% lower among adults aged 15+ years than in 2017.
- The HIV epidemic continues to disproportionately affect various geographical regions and demographic groups, especially Black Africans, women, and youth.
- South Africa is closer to achieving the 95–95–95 treatment targets. Findings estimate that in 2022, 90% of adults knew their status, 91% of those diagnosed were on ART, and 94% of those on ART were virally suppressed.
- Strategies to improve both HIV diagnosis and ART use are urgently needed to achieve the 2025 national goals.
- Although South Africa has made strides in controlling the HIV epidemic, increased and sustained investment in advocacy and behaviour change interventions are still needed to improve condom use, reduce risky sexual behaviour, and increase demand for medical male circumcision.

### ***Forced sterilisation: Investigation report on the forced sterilisation of women living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa – conducted by the CGE***

Forced sterilisation occurs when an individual is sterilised without their knowledge or is coerced into giving consent, for instance, when financial or other incentives, misinformation, or intimidation tactics are used to compel one into the procedure, or consent is obtained based on false or incomplete information.

In 2015, the CGE received a complaint which was lodged on behalf of 48 (forty-eight) women whose cases of forced or coerced sterilisation were documented as a matter of public interest. The complaint was grounded on the gross human rights violations of women living with HIV, and it was alleged that these women had been subjected to forced and/or coerced sterilisation in public hospitals.

According to the CGE report, the rights violated include the following:

- The right to equality
- The right to dignity
- The rights to act autonomously and to choose one's own method of birth control
- The right to the highest attainable standards of health, including sexual and reproductive health rights
- The right to adequate and comprehensive information, among other rights.

The report further states that:

- The complainants, who are HIV-positive women, were forced to consent to sterilisation in circumstances that undermined their ability to act voluntarily and amounted to cruel or degrading treatment.

- The Department of Health has not recognised the devastating impact that sterilisation can have on a woman who has not consented.

### ***Legislative framework for cases of sterilisation***

The law in South Africa provides that, for a person to undergo the process of sterilisation, informed consent should be obtained. Using force or any other form of coercion is prohibited and amounts to a violation of human rights.

To this end, the law provides:

- South Africa's Sterilisation Act<sup>156</sup> provides for the right to sterilisation, to determine the circumstances under which sterilisation may be performed, and the circumstances under which sterilisation may be performed on persons incapable of consenting or incompetent to consent due to mental disability, and to provide for matters connected in addition to that. This Act prohibits sterilisations without informed consent.
- The Tubal Ligation Guidelines of 2014 set out for the Department of Health in KwaZulu-Natal.

The purpose of the guidelines is to provide clarity for all health facilities in the area regarding the provision of female sterilisation (tubal ligation) services to ensure:

- That all women who choose sterilisation as their preferred method of family planning have access to it
- That no woman is coerced into being sterilised or is sterilised without an appropriate consent procedure.

Furthermore, the guidelines provide that "for any woman to undergo sterilisation, they must have gone through an informed consent procedure which includes counselling, where the advantages and disadvantages of the procedure are laid out, and information on other forms of contraception available is given". In particular, the alternative of a long-acting reversible contraceptive (intra-uterine device or sub-dermal implant) must be discussed and offered.

The guidelines also state that the process of obtaining informed consent must be conducted in a language the woman understands and must be witnessed by at least one other health worker, who must also sign the consent form to confirm that informed consent was indeed obtained.

### ***Issues for determination by the CGE***

The CGE had to determine the following key issues from the complaint:

- Whether the complainants were subjected to either forceful and/or coerced sterilisation

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<sup>156</sup> Act 44 of 1988

- Whether the hospital staff had violated the complainant's rights to:
  - The highest attainable standards of health, including sexual and reproductive health
  - Dignity
  - Information
  - Freedom and security of the person
  - Right to equality and non-discrimination
  - Bodily autonomy
- Whether the Department of Health could be held liable for the gross violations of human rights if the claims are substantiated
- Whether the victims are entitled to any form of redress
- Whether the Department of Health has put measures in place to prevent forced and/or coerced sterilisation, including public sensitisation.

### ***Summary of the findings of the CGE***

- The complainants had their right to equality and freedom from discrimination violated.
- The complainants' right to dignity, bodily integrity, freedom, and security over their bodies were violated.
- The right to the highest attainable standards of health, including sexual and reproductive rights, was violated.
- The complainants were not provided with adequate knowledge of the sterilisation procedure before being asked to consent, thus violating their right to information.
- The complainants were not advised on other alternative methods of contraception.
- The complainants were subjected to cruel, torturous or inhuman and degrading treatment.
- The medical staff breached their duty of care to the patients.

### ***Recommendations of the CGE***

The CGE committed to referring the report and its findings to:

- Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA): HPCSA has the necessary capacity to investigate the professional conduct and behaviour of the implicated healthcare practitioners.
- South African Nursing Council (SANC): SANC guides and regulates nurses in all aspects of professional conduct and ethical behaviour.
- National Department of Health: NDoH must interrogate and scrutinise the provisions of the Sterilisation Act and interrogate consent forms for sterilisations to ascertain whether the provisions provide for and protect the principle of informed consent in all respects. The NDoH must report to the CGE within three months of receipt of the report as to what concrete steps the department will take to ensure the eradication of the harmful practice of forced sterilisation.
- South African Law Reform Commission (SALRC): SALRC must be consulted for amendments to legislation that ensure consent is properly obtained, such as

counselling prior to consent, the timing of obtaining consent, and compulsory information must be provided.

## **9.5. Initiatives by government to address issues of inequalities in health**

### **National Adolescent and Youth Health Policy**

The Department of Health has developed a National Adolescent and Youth Health Policy.<sup>157</sup> This was done to support and promote the health and well-being of young people in South Africa. Through this policy, the Department of Health aims to encourage the youth to lead healthy lives, learn how to identify and manage risks and develop and strengthen resilience.

#### **Objectives of the policy**

- To use innovative, youth-oriented programmes and technologies to promote the health and well-being of adolescents and youth.
- To provide comprehensive, integrated sexual and reproductive health and rights services integrated with HIV/AIDS and TB.
- To prevent, test and treat for HIV and TB. Retain patients within healthcare services and support better adherence to medicines). Integrate chronic and communicable disease management with sexual and reproductive health services.
- To prevent violence and substance abuse
- To promote healthy nutrition and reduce obesity.
- To empower adolescents and youth to engage with policy and programming on youth health.

In line with the policy, the DoH has developed numerous mechanisms and programmes to improve youth health within various components of health policy and programming:

- Adolescent and Youth Friendly Services (AYFS): This is a standard-driven approach to improve the quality of care for adolescents and youth.
- Integrated School Health Programme: This focuses on addressing both the immediate health problems of learners, including barriers to teaching and learning, as well as implementing interventions that can promote their health and well-being during childhood and beyond.
- Ideal clinics: These are defined as clinics with good infrastructure, adequate staff, adequate medicine and supplies, good administrative processes, and sufficient adequate bulk supplies. It uses applicable clinical policies, protocols, and guidelines, and it harnesses partner and stakeholder support.

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<sup>157</sup> National Adolescent and Youth Health Policy (2017)

- B-Wise: Interactive cell phone-based health platform to empower adolescents and youth to make the right choices based on accurate information. The primary target is young people between the ages of 10-24 years, both in and out of school. Secondary targets include healthcare providers, parents, teachers and other partners.
- She Conquers Campaign: A youth-led campaign collaborating with government, NGOs, businesses, and civil society to address the major issues that adolescent girls and young women face in South Africa today. With almost 2,000 adolescent girls and young women (aged 15 to 24 years) becoming infected with HIV every week, the DOH hopes to effect large-scale change if it works closely with young people, collaborating with partners and providing relevant services to mobilise and share resources and improve health provision and support.

## CLUSTER C. FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, STIGMA AND STEREOTYPE

CLUSTER	BPA	SDG	BPA STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	CEDAW	CEDAW GR
C. Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes	D. Violence against women J. Women and the media	SDG 5 SDG 11 SDG 16	An analysis may be made of their effects on women and men, respectively. S.O. D.1. Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women. Actions to be taken S.O.D.2. Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures. Actions to be taken S.O. D.3. Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking		Gen Rec 12; 19 and 35; 38 33; 31;14
Cross-cutting I. Human rights of women L. The girl child – leaving no one behind					

### 10. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

States have obligations to respect, protect and fulfil women's right to a life free of violence:

**Respect:** State agents must refrain from committing acts of gender-based violence, including in custodial settings. States must also abstain from enacting and implementing laws and policies that allow forced sterilisation or virginity testing, as well as laws sanctioning forced marriages.

**Protect:** States must exercise due diligence in preventing, punishing and redressing gender-based violence committed by private parties. The UN General Assembly has called on States to investigate promptly and thoroughly all killings, including those motivated by the victim's sexual orientation or committed in the name of honour.

**Fulfil:** The obligation to fulfil requires the State to ensure an enabling environment where gender-based violence is prevented, and access to legal, health and social services is ensured in cases where violence does occur.

*SOURCE: Gender-based violence: Information series on sexual and reproductive health and rights: OHCHR (Updated 2020)*

#### 10.1. Women's rights and violence against women (VAW)

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) defines violence against women as follows:

- a) "For the purposes of this declaration, the term 'violence against women' means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.



Article 3 of the DEVAW provides that “Women are entitled to the equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field”.

These rights include:

- The right to life
- The right to equality
- The right to liberty and security of person
- The right to equal protection under the law
- The right to be free from all forms of discrimination
- The right to the highest standard attainable for physical and mental health
- The right to just and favourable conditions of work
- The right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The obligation of the State is spelt out in Article 4, which provides that the State should condemn violence against women and should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations regarding its elimination. Furthermore, the State is obligated to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons.

According to the World Health Organization, 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner violence. Furthermore, violence against women has been one of the factors that hinder and derail women's participation in development activities.<sup>158</sup> Therefore, GBV by default hampers efforts to promote economic development. KPMG, in its study on “COSTING GBV”, demonstrated that R28 billion, which constitutes a significant percentage of the country's GDP, is used to fight GBV in the country.<sup>159</sup> Women and girls living in poverty also become vulnerable to sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

International obligation to exercise due diligence requires State Parties to put in place effective measures to prevent, investigate and prosecute cases of violence against women. This means that States must establish effective means to respond to cases of violence and address its structural causes by ensuring that comprehensive legal and policy frameworks, gender-sensitive justice and police systems, and available health and social services are in place.

In 2017, the CEDAW Committee updated General Recommendation (GR) 19 of 1992, which outlined violence against women as a form and manifestation of gender-based

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<sup>158</sup> World Economic Forum

<sup>159</sup> KPMG. [www.kpmg.co.za](http://www.kpmg.co.za) Too costly to ignore – the economic impact of gender-based violence in South Africa.

discrimination utilised to oppress women. This stance by the CEDAW Committee brought violence into the human rights realm.

General Recommendation No. 35 (GR 35) called on states to take appropriate legislative and other measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, trafficking and harmful practices. GR 35 emphasises the importance of providing comprehensive support services for survivors, ensuring access to justice and promoting gender equity in all areas of life. This GR 35 amplified the Beijing Platform's strategic objective regarding freedom from violence and stereotypes.

### **CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35 (GR 35)<sup>160</sup>**

The CEDAW Committee:

- Considers gender-based violence to be one of the fundamental social, political and economic means by which the subordinate position of women to men and their stereotyped roles are perpetuated, and further that such violence is a crucial obstacle to the achievement of substantive equality between women and men and to the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms
- Endorses the view of other human rights treaty bodies that, in determining when acts of gender-based violence amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, a gender-sensitive approach is required. Such a view will help to understand the level of pain and suffering experienced by women and that the purpose and intent requirements for classifying such acts as torture are satisfied when acts or omissions are gender-specific or perpetrated against a person on the basis of sex.
- Regards gender-based violence as being rooted in gender-related factors, such as the ideology of men's entitlement and privilege over women, social norms regarding masculinity, and the need to assert male control or power, enforce gender roles or prevent, discourage or punish what is considered to be unacceptable female behaviour.
- Recognises that the prohibition of gender-based violence has become a norm of international customary law.
- Expands the understanding of violence to include violations of sexual and reproductive health rights.
- Stresses the need to change social norms and stereotypes that support violence in the context of a resurgence of narratives threatening the concept of gender equality in the name of culture, tradition or religion.
- Clearly defines various levels of liability of the State for acts and omissions committed by its agents or those acting under its authority – in the territory of the State or abroad – and for failing to act with due diligence to prevent violence at

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<sup>160</sup> General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women (CEDAW/C/GC/35)

the hands of private individuals and companies, protect women and girls from the State, and ensure access to remedies for survivors.

- Unequivocally calls for the repeal of all laws and policies that directly and indirectly excuse, condone and facilitate violence.
- Emphasises the need for approaches that promote and respect women's autonomy and decision-making in all spheres of life.
- Emphasises the importance of Article 2 (e) of the Convention, which explicitly states that State Parties are to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organisation, or enterprise.
- Explains that the obligation, frequently referred to as an obligation of due diligence, underpins the Convention as a whole and accordingly, State Parties will be held responsible should they fail to take all appropriate measures to prevent, as well as to investigate, prosecute, punish and provide reparations for, acts or omissions by non-State actors that result in gender-based violence against women, including actions taken by corporations operating extraterritorially. In particular, State Parties are required to take the steps necessary to prevent human rights violations perpetrated abroad by corporations over which they may exercise influence, whether through regulatory means or the use of incentives, including economic incentives.
- Stressed that under the obligation of due diligence, State Parties must adopt and implement diverse measures to tackle gender-based violence against women committed by non-State actors, including having laws, institutions and a system in place to address such violence and ensuring that they function effectively in practice and are supported by all State agents and bodies who diligently enforce the laws.
- Indicates that the failure of State Parties to take all appropriate measures provides tacit permission or encouragement to perpetrate acts of gender-based violence against women. Such failures or omissions constitute human rights violations. The State Parties fail to prevent acts of gender-based violence against women in cases in which its authorities are aware or should be aware of the risk of such violence, fail to investigate, prosecute and punish perpetrators, and fail to provide reparations to victims/survivors of such acts,

## **10.2. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE (GBVF) IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **A) Examples of drivers of GBVF**

According to South Africa's strategic plan on GBVF,<sup>161</sup> the drivers of GBVF are complex and act at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels, driven by social and political forces. These drivers are said to be pervasive and patriarchal and are norms which promote the use of violence as acceptable social practice.

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<sup>161</sup> National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide

Such drivers feed into:

- Ideas of masculinity that are centred on male control of women, male sexual entitlement, inequitable gender attitudes, risk-taking and antisocial behaviour
- Ideas about femininity that promote women's subordination to men encourage men to be complicit in violence and the subjugation of women<sup>93</sup> and expectations on women to acquiesce to male partners' sexual desire and needs.

These social and gender norms are sustained in communities where there is a greater cultural value and emphasis on gender hierarchies and where there is a greater acceptance of the use of violence in interpersonal relationships.

Another determinant of GBVF in South Africa is the historical economic injustices which have resulted in women enduring poverty. Information from the National Strategic Plan indicates that poverty and GBV are mutually reinforcing and that this leads to poverty, increasing women's risk of experiencing violence and GBV's increasing risk for poverty.

Further analysis also shows that poverty leads to economic dependency on abusive male partners, while economic stress may increase the likelihood of arguments over resource priorities. Linking poverty to low education and unemployment is seen to be increasing women's vulnerability to experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV). In contrast, unemployment among men may cause strain and stress over their failure to fulfil household expectations.

There is a need to investigate and interrogate policy and legislative frameworks that South Africa has put in place to eradicate violence against women. GBV is pervasive due to patriarchal cultural and social attitudes. Patriarchal culture and historical precedents of inequality exacerbate the inequality that exists between men and women. Violence against women is considered one of the remnants inherited from the apartheid system, which was characterised by violence during the fight for a democratic dispensation. Violence is associated with masculinity and is characterised as one of the traits that promote male supremacy in all spheres of life within South African society.

The heteronormative belief system and normalised violent culture have contributed to promoting violence against women and tolerating gender-based violence in South Africa. Studies have shown that whilst people of all genders perpetuate and experience sexual violence, men are most often perpetrators and women and children are victims.<sup>162</sup> The UN Population Fund (UNDP) has highlighted that women and adolescent girls are the primary targets of GBV and remain at high risk as a result of "gender discrimination and their lower socio-economic status. Women have fewer

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<sup>162</sup> Jewkes, R. (2012). *Sexual VAW: The scope of the problem*.

options and fewer resources at their disposal to avoid or escape abusive situations and to seek justice".

Women also "suffer the consequences on their sexual and reproductive health", including forced and unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions and resulting deaths, traumatic fistula, and higher risks of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV".<sup>163</sup>

## **B) Violence against adolescent girls, young women and children**

A large number of children are raised in surroundings where they are exposed to violence from a young age. Their safety is at risk not only in the home but also in schools, universities, care facilities, churches, justice systems and their neighbourhoods or communities. Sexual violence, physical and emotional violence, bullying and trafficking remain the most common forms of violence against children.

Some high-profile cases of femicide include: In 2019, South Africa saw a young 19-year-old university student raped and murdered in a post office in Cape Town; in 2020, a pregnant young woman aged 28 was stabbed and hung from a tree in Johannesburg; in 2021, a young law student was killed and her body gruesomely dismembered and stuffed in a suitcase, These incidents forced South Africans to come together and demand that government should act and protect the women and children of South Africa.

Several meetings were organised by women from all races and corners of the country, and the President of the country was approached to act. At that point, the President declared GBVF to be a serious challenge and promised to attend to this scourge as soon as possible.



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<sup>163</sup> UNFPA (2014)

SOURCE: Government Communication and Information System (GCIS)

The Government of South Africa has been trying to address gender-based violence in many ways. Experts say much of this violence in South Africa is culturally rooted, with patriarchal attitudes entrenched by high levels of poverty and unemployment that leave women particularly vulnerable.



SOURCE: National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

Calls for urgent action to be taken to address this problem were made from all sectors of society over a long period. In response to calls from women's groups, civil society and the public, the first Presidential Summit on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide was convened in November 2018. The summit was instrumental in identifying key interventions to address gender-based violence and femicide, as well as other challenges faced by women and children with regard to safety and security, poverty, access to economic opportunities, and the contestation of their rights in a climate where patriarchy and chauvinism are widely prevalent and all-pervasive.

The summit concluded with the signing of a declaration that government, business, labour and civil society would collaborate to conceptualise, drive and implement concrete measures to eradicate gender-based violence and femicide.

### **C) The legislative framework and other initiatives used to address Gender Based Violence and Femicide in South Africa**

#### ***Presidential Summit on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide***

Parties that signed the declaration that resulted from this November 2018 presidential summit called for a multi-sectoral structure to be constituted to coordinate the implementation of a National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide.

The government came up with a plan which is anchored by five key interventions to be implemented:

- Urgently responding to victims and survivors of GBV
- Broadening access to justice for survivors

- Changing social norms and behaviour through high-level awareness-raising and prevention campaigns
- Strengthening existing architecture and promoting accountability
- Creating more economic opportunities for women who are vulnerable to abuse because of poverty.

During the second quarter of 2023 (July 2023 to September 2023), the SAPS released statistics that highlighted just how pervasive GBV is against women and children. During this period, South Africa recorded 10,515 cases of rape, 1,514 cases of attempted murder and 14,401 assaults against female victims and 881 cases of murdered women.

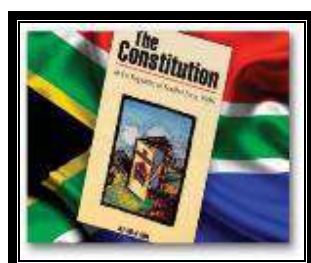
*TABLE 17: Snapshot of the number of assault cases that caused grievous bodily harm against women and children*

Period	Crime	Women 18+	Children 0-17 (boys and girls)
July 2021 to September 2021	Assault GBH	11 824	1 670
July 2022 -September 2022	Assault GBH	13 701	1 895
July 2023 to September 2023	Assault GBH	14 401	1 820

Furthermore, COVID-19 highlighted, yet again, the social inequities in our society and exacerbated the pre-existing problem of GBV. During the outbreak of coronavirus, President Cyril Ramaphosa described GBV as a 'second pandemic'.<sup>164</sup> This is because, during this period, GBV reports intensified as victims and/or survivors were locked down with their abusers.

In addition to the above-highlighted statistics, there has been significant progress as far as the enactment of legislative frameworks is concerned, but clearly, the above statistics indicate that there is still a long way to go to deal with the underlying patriarchal social and behavioural norms associated with GBV.

### **Constitution of South Africa**




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<sup>164</sup> CGTN. (2020); Africa Health Organisation (2021)

The Constitution of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, under Sections 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, creates a framework that guarantees protection against gender-based violence and slavery by emphasising equality, human dignity, freedom and security for all individuals, particularly those vulnerable to GBV.

- Section 9 prohibits discrimination on various grounds, including gender, race and sex. It guarantees the right to equal protection and benefit of the law for all individuals, ensuring that GBV survivors are not discriminated against.
- Section 10 enshrines the right to human dignity, equality and freedom, which strengthens the protection of individuals against GBV by emphasising the importance of human dignity.
- Section 11 specifically focuses on the right to life, which guarantees the right to be free from violence and harm.
- Section 12 on the right to freedom and security of the person protects individuals from various forms of violence and prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of individuals. In addition, it further amplifies the right to bodily and psychological integrity.
- Section 13 guarantees that no one should be subjected to slavery, servitude and forced labour.

In order to express the above-highlighted constitutional rights, the government has put in place laws and policies to safeguard a person's equality, human dignity, freedom, and security.

### ***Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (EEA)***

The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (EEA), Sections 2, 3, 5, 6, 50(2), and 60 are pertinent to sexual harassment in the workplace. Section 2, in particular, sets out the purpose of the legislation.

### ***Domestic Violence Act in 1998***

South Africa, to deal with gender-based violence, enacted the Domestic Violence Act in 1998<sup>165</sup> to give protection to victims and/or survivors of domestic violence. This Act has been amended several times, with a recent amendment introduced in 2021.<sup>166</sup> The recent amendment to the Act has significantly improved the definition of domestic violence by broadening and/or extending the Act to broadly include other forms of domestic violence.

The old Act limited domestic violence to sexual abuse, economic abuse, damage to property, physical abuse, and emotional, verbal, and psychological abuse. Currently, the Act also incorporates exposing a child to domestic violence, spiritual abuse, sexual harassment, related person abuse, controlling behaviour and coercive abuse. The

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<sup>165</sup> Act 116 of 1998

<sup>166</sup> Domestic Violence Amendment Act 14 of 2021



current Act also extends the definition of a domestic relationship to a person in a close relationship who shared or shares the same residence with the survivor. This close relationship is determined by the degree of trust between the survivor/victim and the abuser, the level of dependence, and therefore means that the parties need not be related in any manner.

The Act further increases accountability by including sections regarding adults who become aware that acts of domestic violence have been committed. The Act prohibits and punishes 'bystandersim' and pushes for adults that have knowledge or reasonable belief or have a suspicion of an act of domestic violence to report to the SAPS or to social workers. This mainly supports the notion that domestic violence cannot be deemed to be a matter to be dealt with by the family only.

The amended Act has further introduced online submission of applications for protection orders, which means there is access to this service outside court hours, as well as court days and further affords victims the flexibility to apply even in instances where their mobility is restricted as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Under this increased accountability mechanism, service providers within telecommunications/electronic communication may be directed by a court of law to furnish certain particulars to assist the court in determining domestic violence matters. The Act further takes steps to prevent femicide after receipt of a protection order by issuing a Safety Monitoring Notice to police to ensure constant contact with the survivor.

Non-compliance to directives under this amended Act calls for disciplinary measures to be undertaken.

### ***Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment, Amendment Act and Criminal Law Related Matters***

The President further signed into law the amendment drafted on Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related matters) Amendment Act,<sup>167</sup> which makes changes to the 2007 Act, as well as Criminal Related Matters Act,<sup>168</sup> which effects changes to the Magistrate Act of 1944, Criminal procedure Act of 1977 and Superior Court Act of 2013. These amendments introduce a number of changes which strive to improve South Africa's prevention of sex crimes. This became a necessity because, despite laws and policies being in place, perpetrators continued to evade justice.

In the Carmichele case,<sup>169</sup> the accused had a history of sexual violence offences and was released on bail by police and the prosecution despite the clear threat he posed to the survivor of the attack. The new provisions under this amendment guarantee that perpetrators of gender-based violence and femicide are not released on bail prior to

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<sup>167</sup> Act 13 of 2021

<sup>168</sup> Act 12 of 2021

<sup>169</sup> Carmichele v Minister of Safety and Security 2002 (1) SACR 79 (CC)

their first appearance in court, a move which does not allow for police and prosecution bail. During bail proceedings, existing protection orders against the accused person must be considered prior to a decision being taken. According to the new provisions, bail in gender-based violence and femicide cases must be denied unless it would be in the interests of justice to grant it.

The provisions further expand the ambit of the crime of incest and introduce a notion of sexual intimidation; they allow for virtual proceedings (witnesses can testify virtually) and allow for intermediary services (Intermediary services are now available to witnesses with certain disabilities and persons who suffer from physical, psychological, mental or emotional conditions).

Gesture-language is now considered as *viva voce*/oral evidence and allows a witness who lacks the sense of hearing or the ability to speak, to testify using a gesture-language. This ensures that services to victims of crime are victim and disability centric.

The amendment increases the National Register for Sex Offenders to include sex offenders in addition to those who have been convicted of sexual offences towards children and persons with mental disabilities. The amendment ensures that the register incorporates further particulars of the sex offender.

Tougher sentences have further been introduced in these amendments. Life imprisonment may now be imposed in femicide cases, domestic homicide, rape in domestic relationships, gang rapes, serial rape, and rape of a child under the age of 18 years.

### ***Protection from Harassment Act***

The primary purpose of the Protection from Harassment Act is to provide victims of alleged harassment with an effective remedy against harassment. This is done by making provision for the prompt and expedited issuing of Protection Orders for victims subjected to acts of harassment and/or threats of harassment.

### ***Combatting and Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act***

The Combatting and Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act interfaces with the broader agenda of maintaining international peace. SDG 5 on gender equality recognises that trafficking in women and girls is a form of violence against women that must be ended. The Prevention and Combatting of Trafficking Act<sup>170</sup> was enacted to ensure that the criminal justice system is effective in prosecuting criminals and protecting victims of trafficking.

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<sup>170</sup> Act 7 of 2013

### **National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide (NSP GBVF)**

In recent years, South Africa developed a comprehensive National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence and Femicide (NSP GBVF) aimed at addressing the pervasive issue of GBVF in the country. The work that culminated in this plan was coordinated by the interim steering committee on GBVF, which derived its mandate from Article 3 of the Declaration on GBVF, which is an outcome document of the Presidential Summit held in 2018. The NSP GBVF provides a multi-sectoral, coherent strategic policy and programming framework to strengthen a coordinated national response to the crisis of GBVF, to tackle the root causes of GBVF, enhance prevention efforts, improve access to justice for survivors, and strengthen support services rendered for survivors and/or victims.

South Africa counts among countries with the highest rates of gender-based violence and femicide. Women, girls, and LGBTIQ+ persons are abused, assaulted and murdered at the hands of men. Following the widespread protests, consultations and renewed commitments by the Government of South Africa, led by President Cyril Ramaphosa, to end gender-based violence and femicide, the NSP GBVF was adopted. This strategic plan came into effect in 2020.

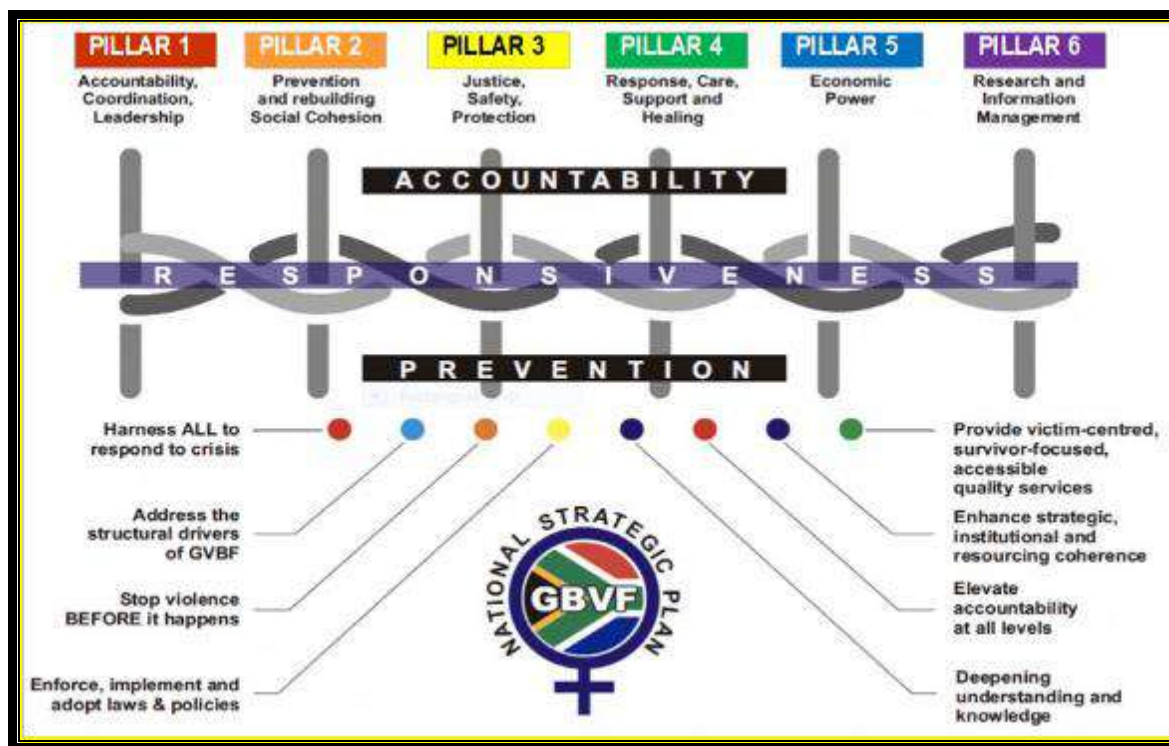
A multi-stakeholder approach was utilised when the NSP GBVF came into being, with government, feminists, gender justice activists and civil society organisations working together to produce the vision roadmap towards ending GBVF. The NSP GBVF was drafted to provide a cohesive strategic framework to guide the response to GBVF. The multi-stakeholder collaborative was formed as a collaboration and coordination mechanism that ensures all relevant stakeholders plan and work together under the pillars of the NSP GBVF. The stakeholders include entities from the private sector, development partners, civil society organisations, and private citizens.

The NSP GBVF consists of six pillars:

- *Leadership, coordination and accountability pillar* focuses on enhancing coordination among all relevant stakeholders, from the private sector, development partners, civil society organisations, and individual citizens and making sure they plan and work together. It further ensures that institutions become accountable and ensures effective leadership in addressing GBVF.
- *Prevention and rebuilding social cohesion pillar* aims to prevent GBVF through awareness campaigns, education programmes, and initiatives to promote social cohesion and behavioural change.
- *Justice, safety and protection pillar* seek to improve access to justice for survivors, enhance safety measures and provide better protection for victims of GBVF.
- *Response, care and healing pillar* focuses on improving response by providing comprehensive care and support services and promoting healing and recovery.
- *Economic power pillar* aims to empower women economically to reduce vulnerability to GBVF, promote financial independence, and create opportunities for economic development.

- *Research and information management* pillar focuses on generating and utilising data to inform policies, monitor progress, and strengthen interventions to address GBVF.

FIGURE 42: Six pillars of the NSP



All GBV survivors can access efficient and sensitive criminal justice that is quick, accessible, responsive and gender inclusive; has strengthened capacity within the criminal justice system to address impunity overall; effectively responds to femicide and facilitates justice for GBV survivors; and responds to amended legislation related to GBV areas that build on legislative reforms initiated under the ERAP (which was later adopted into the NSP GBVF).

As the process to roll out the NSP GBVF unfolds, the greatest success for this output has been enabled by the participatory and reflection-oriented approaches that have been utilised in ensuring that all pillars deliver and report, allowing for cross-pollination of information and inputs on work undertaken by various stakeholders. Following the Rapid Results initiative, supported by UN Women with the objective of enhancing coordination and capacity building of implementers at a national and local level, the NSP GBVF collaborative has sourced resources from funders to implement a further capacity-building process, which will focus on prevention.



SOURCE: Gender-based violence: Violence and abuse are poison to society. Let's make it stop: A resource guide. Produced by Government Communications (GCIS)

### **Booklet on gender-based violence**

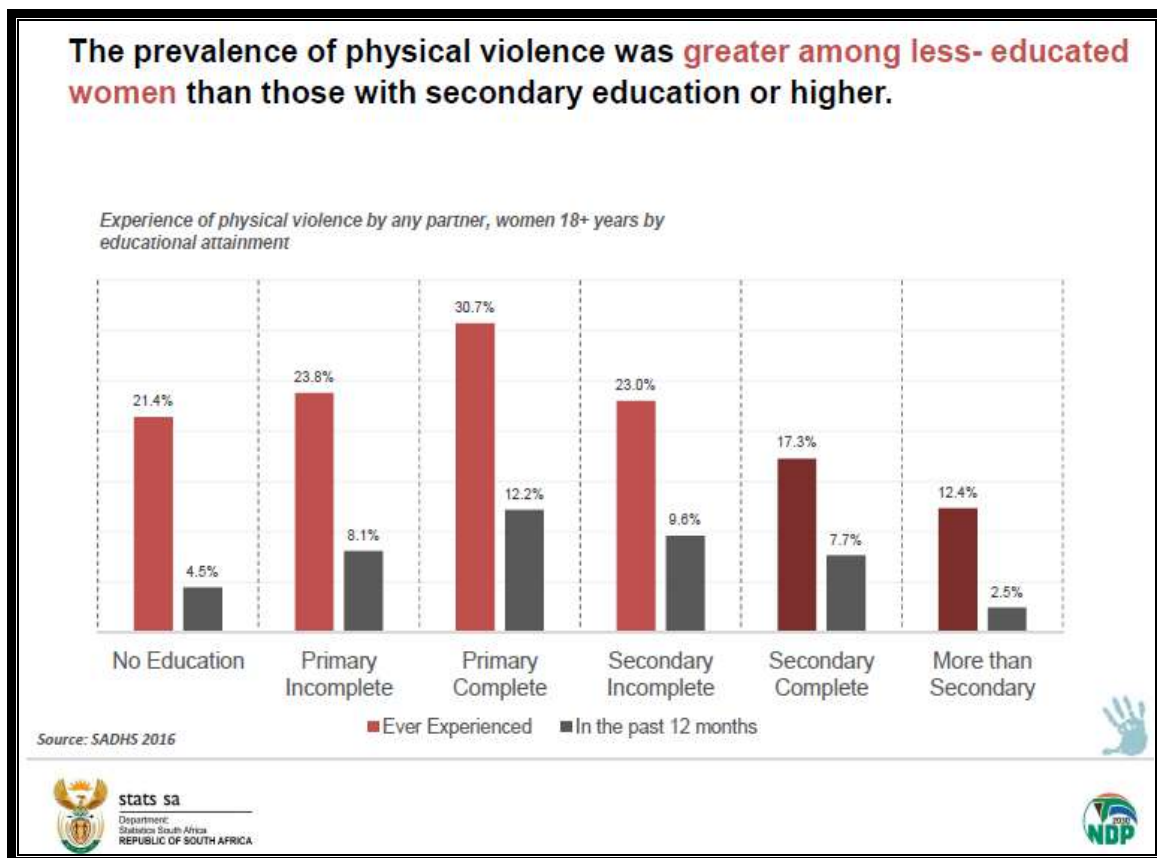
This booklet aims to provide information to individuals and communities, particularly victims of gender-based violence (GBV). The aims of the booklet appear below:



The information provided in this booklet is not a checklist or an exhaustive list of options available to victims of GBV. Many other organisations render invaluable services in the fight against GBV.

## D) Statistics on GBV in South Africa – Stats SA

FIGURE 43: Prevalence of physical violence

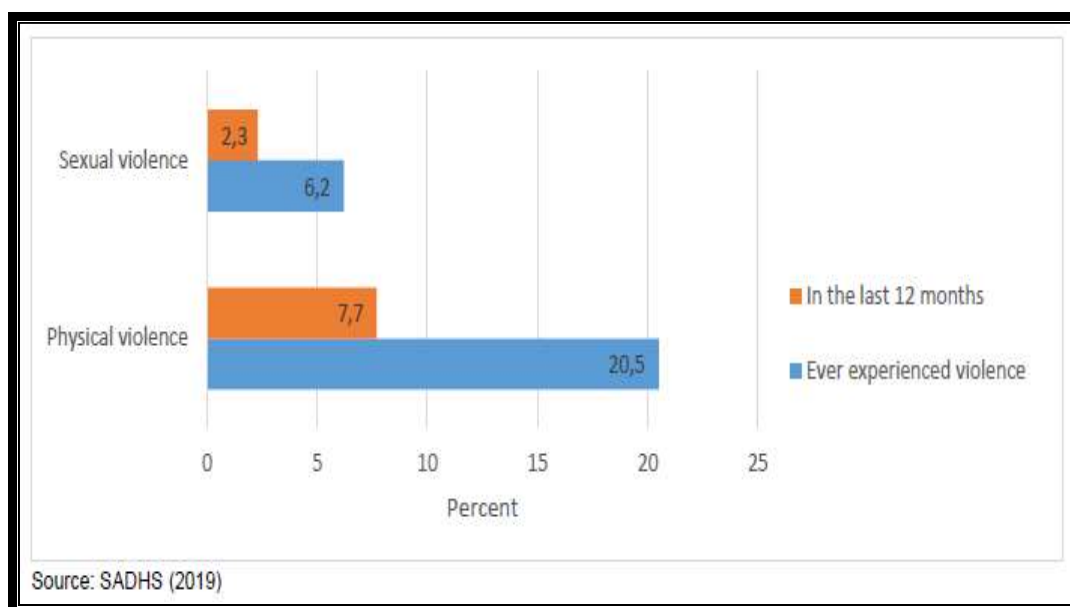


SOURCE: Stats SA: The Status of Women's Health in South Africa: Evidence from selected indicators

### a) Experience of violence, ever partnered women 18 years and older

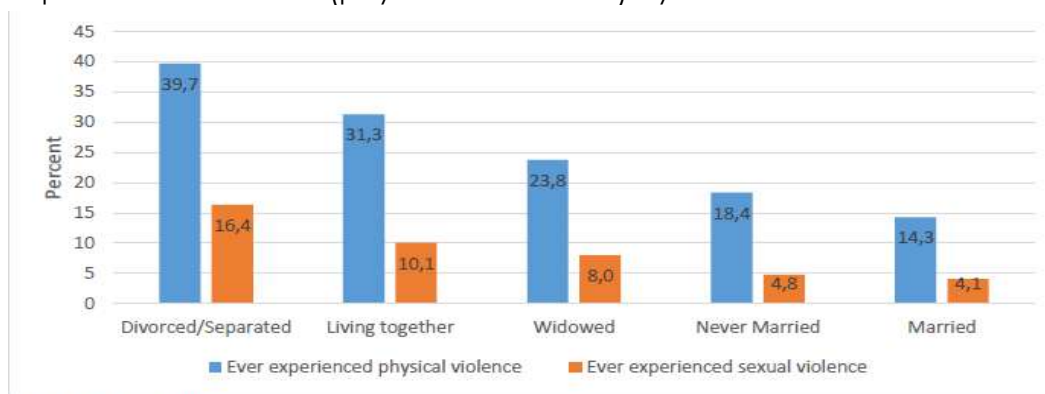
Information from Stats SA shows that one in five (20.5%) ever-partnered women reported having experienced physical violence by a partner, while 6.2% experienced sexual violence.

FIGURE 44: Experience of violence, ever-partnered women 18 years and older by marital status



- The results below show that 39.7% of ever-partnered women who are divorced experienced physical violence.
- The proportion is lowest among ever-partnered women who were married (14.3%).
- These patterns were consistent among those who ever experienced sexual violence.

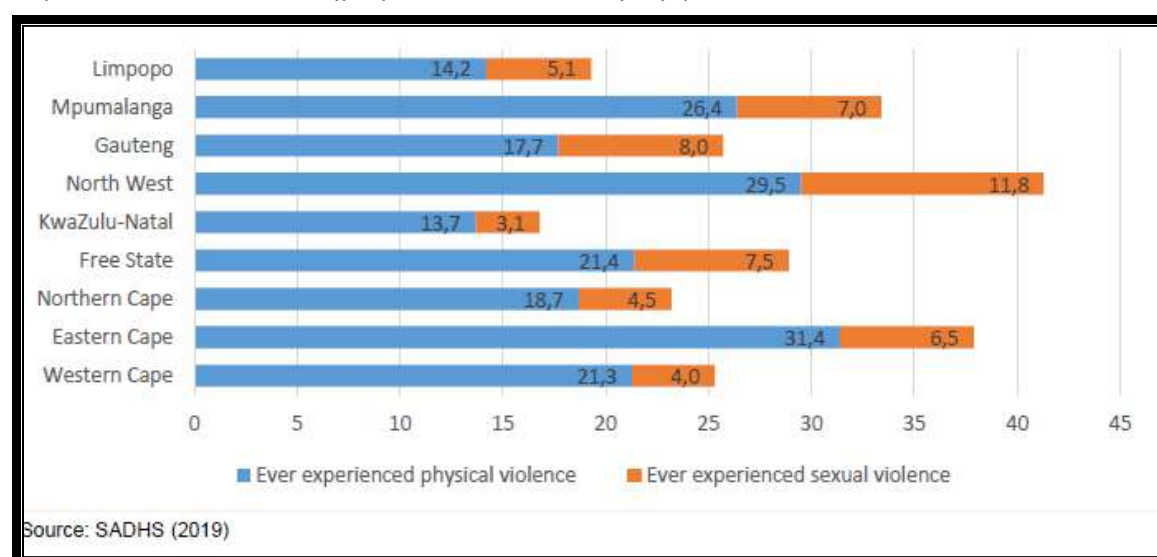
FIGURE 44: Percentage distribution of ever-partnered women 18 years and older who experienced violence (physical and sexual) by marital status



#### **b) Experience of violence, ever-partnered women 18 years older by province**

- Results presented below indicate that Eastern Cape (31.4%), followed by North West (29.5%) and Mpumalanga (26.4%), presented the highest proportions among partnered women who experienced physical violence.
- Women in KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo recorded the lowest proportion of physical violence at 13.7% and 14.2%, respectively.
- North West, at 11.8%, recorded the highest percentage among those who ever experienced sexual violence.

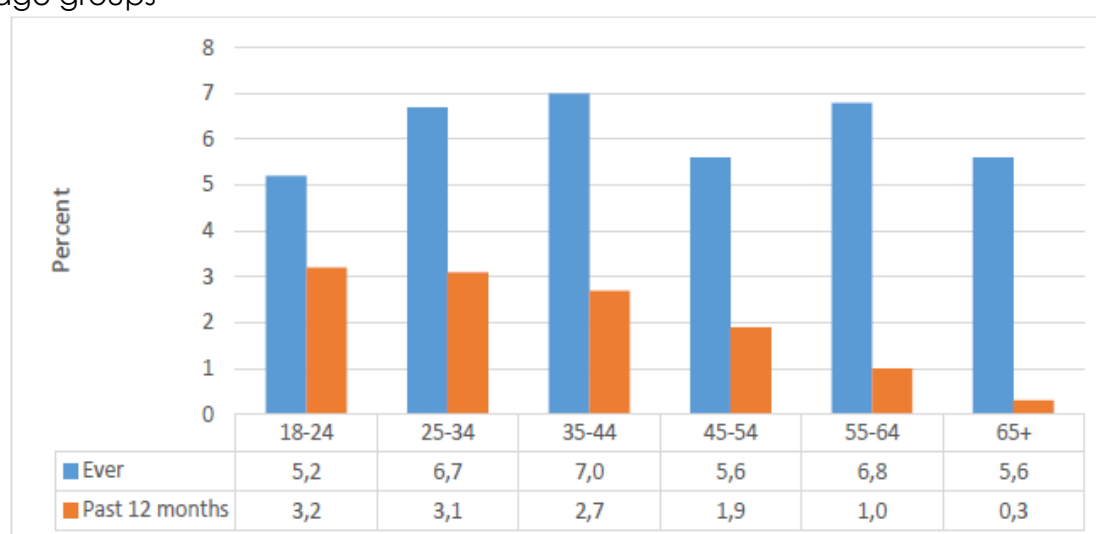
FIGURE 45: Percentage distribution of ever-partnered women 18 years and older who experienced violence (physical and sexual) by province



**c) Experience of violence, ever-partnered women 18 years older by age groups**

- The results below show that the proportions of ever-partnered women who ever experienced sexual violence were higher compared to those who experienced violence in the last 12 months before the survey.
- The proportions were highest among those in the age groups 35–44 (7.0%) and 55–64 (6.8%).
- The proportion of ever-partnered women who experienced sexual violence in the past 12 months from any partner shows a decreasing trend with increasing age.

FIGURE 46: Distribution of ever-partnered women 18 years and older who experienced sexual violence (ever and in the past 12 months) from any partner by age groups



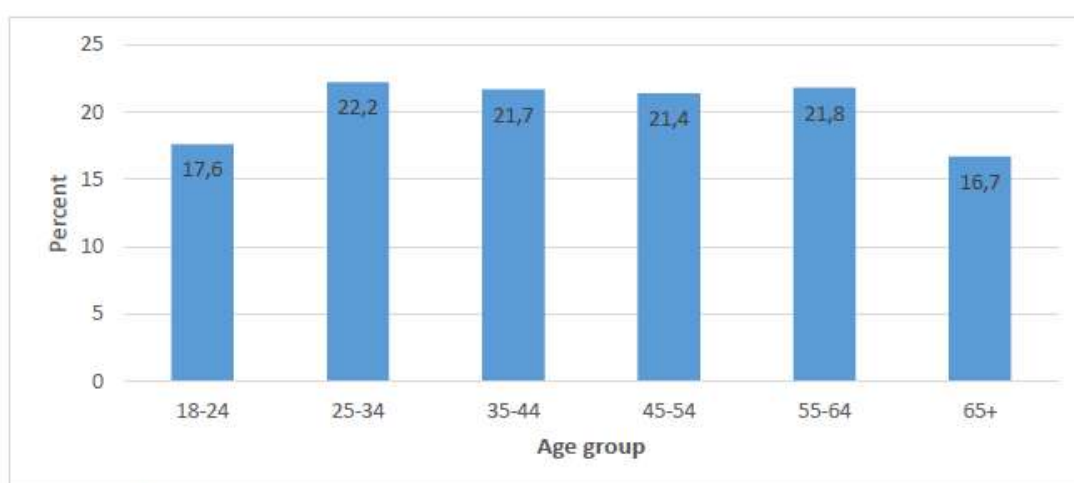
Source: SADHS (2019)



**d) Lifetime experience of violence, ever partnered women 18 years and older by age group**

- The figure below presents the distribution of ever-partnered women 18 years and older who experienced physical violence from any partner in their lifetime by age group.
- The results show that women in the age groups 25–34 to 55–64 reported the highest proportion of physical violence from any partner in the year of study.
- At a proportion of 16.7%, those aged 65+ years reported the least.

FIGURE 46: Distribution of women 18+ years who ever experienced physical violence from any partner in their lifetime by age group



Source: SADHS (2019)

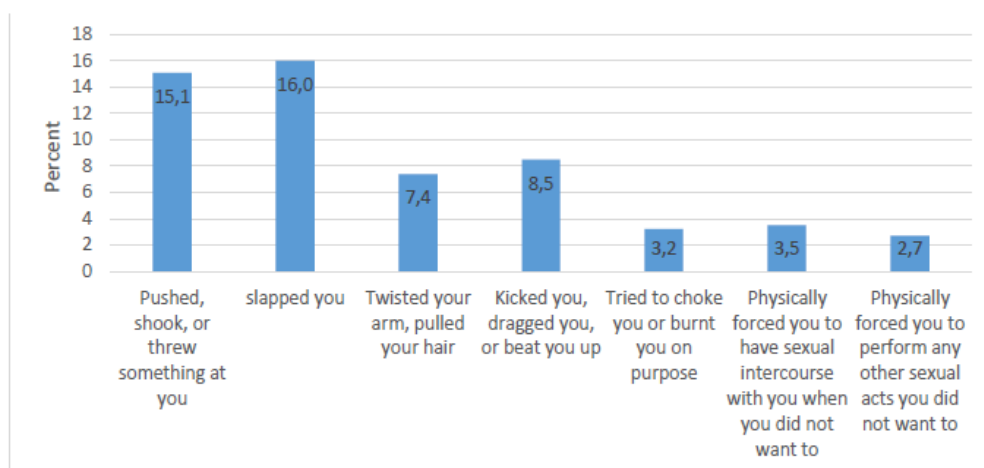
**e) Lifetime experience of violence, ever partnered women 18 years and older by age group**

- The figure below presents the distribution of ever-partnered women 18 years and older who experienced physical violence from any partner in their lifetime by age group.
- The results show that women in the age groups 25–34 to 55–64 reported the highest proportion of physical violence from any partner in the year of study.
- At a proportion of 16.7%, those aged 65+ years reported the least.

**f) Women's experiences of intimate partner violence**

- The most common reported act of intimate partner violence (IPV) among women includes being slapped (16%), closely followed by being pushed, shaken or having an object thrown at them (15.1%).
- Women who were physically forced to perform sexual acts (2.7%) reported the least.

FIGURE 47: Distribution of women on experiences of intimate partner violence, 2017

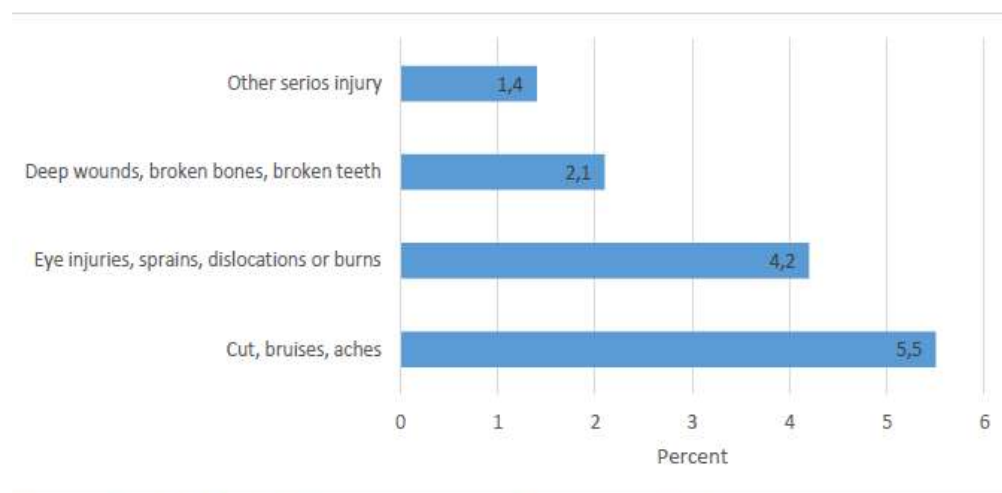


Source: South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour & Communication Survey (2017)

**g) Injury types experienced by women as a result of intimate partner violence (IPV)**

- The figure below shows the types of injuries women sustained due to IPV.
- Cuts, bruises and aches were the main injuries experienced as a result of intimate partner violence (5.5%).
- These are followed by eye injuries, sprains, dislocations or burns (4.2%).
- Women with injuries of deep wounds, broken bones, and broken teeth reported a proportion of 2.1%.

FIGURE 48: Distribution of injury types experienced by women



Source: South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour & Communication Survey (2017)

#### ***h) General individual perceptions of gender norms and societal issues***

Information from the Stats SA report<sup>171</sup> indicates that:

- Over 90% of persons aged 16 years or older did not believe that there is a justification for a man/husband to hit or beat his partner/wife.
- About 4.1% of the population believes that it is justifiable for a man/husband to hit or beat his partner/wife if she has sex with another man or woman, and about 2.5% said that it is justifiable for a man/husband to hit or beat his partner/wife if she neglects the children.
- In general, there has been a decrease in the percentage between 2019/20 and 2020/2021 for those who believe that it is justifiable for a man to beat his partner/wife.
- Both men (88.3%) and women (87.3%) think that spouses or intimate partners commit the most acts of gender-based violence.
- This is followed by those who think a previous partner, relative or family member who is part of the household and an unknown person or stranger commits the most acts of gender-based violence.
- The three leading groups/categories of perpetrators of acts of gender-based violence are persons known to the victim.
- There is an overall acceptance for persons aged 16 and above who agree that all kinds of violence against women and children must be reported (99.0%). They would call the police if they witnessed incidents of domestic violence at a neighbour or friend's place (93.0%).
- Almost two-thirds would mobilise a community to intervene if they witness domestic violence at a neighbour's or friend's place (67.5%), and they would personally intervene if they witness incidents of domestic violence at a neighbour's or friend's place (64.9%).

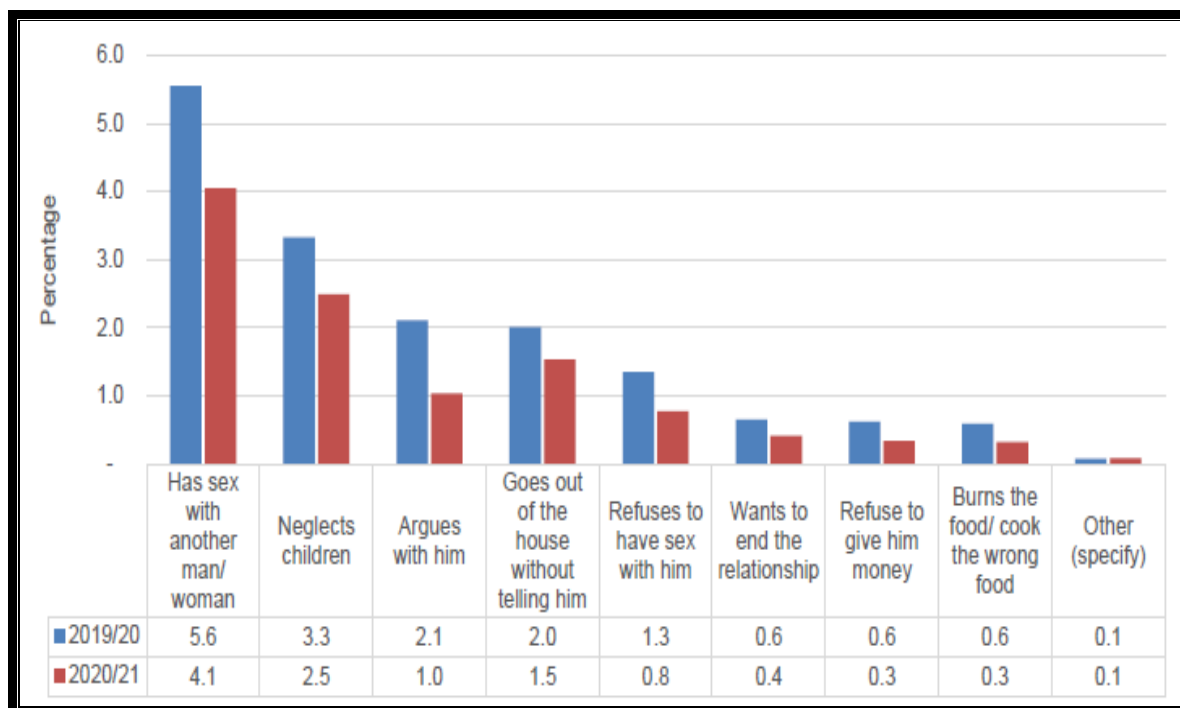
The following statistics show society's perspective on domestic violence against women and children and other social issues.

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<sup>171</sup> Governance, Public Safety, and Justice Survey GPSJS 2020/2021 Statistical Release P0341 Victims of Crime

FIGURE 49: Perceptions and attitudes of persons aged 16 years or older on whether it is acceptable for a man/husband to hit or beat his partner/wife under certain situations,

TABLE 18: 2019/2020 and 2020/2021



SOURCE: Governance, Public Safety, and Justice Survey (GPSJS) 2020/2021

- The figure above shows the perceptions and attitudes of persons aged 16 years and older on whether it is acceptable for a man/husband to hit or beat his partner/wife under certain situations in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.
- Over 90% of persons aged 16 years or older did not believe that there is a justification for a man/husband to hit or beat his partner/wife.
- About 4.1% of the population believes that it is justifiable for a man/husband to hit or beat his partner/wife if she has sex with another man or woman.
- About 2.5% said that it is justifiable for a man/husband to hit or beat his partner/wife if she neglects the children.
- Overall, the proportion of persons 16 years and above who believe it is acceptable for a man/husband to hit or beat his partner/wife has decreased between 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.

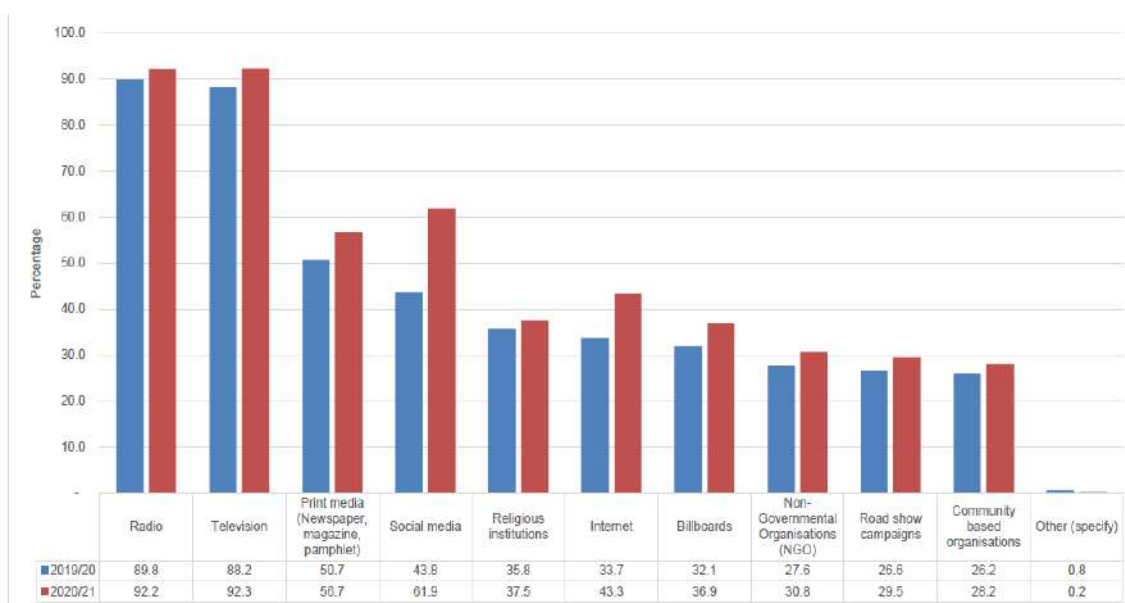
TABLE 19: Percentage of persons aged 16 years and above who are aware of the existence of social welfare-based services or facilities related to violence against women and children, 2019/2020–2020/2021

Indicator	2019/20	2020/21
Medical assistance	84,5	88,5
Protection order	84,0	87,5
Counselling services	80,9	83,3
Shelter or place of safety	50,9	47,2

SOURCE: Governance, Public Safety, and Justice Survey (GPSJS) 2020/2021

- The above table shows that almost four in five persons aged 16 years and older were aware of social welfare-based services or facilities related to violence against women and children in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.
- A decrease was observed in the awareness of shelters or places of safety from 50.9% in 2019/2020 to 47.2% in 2020/2022.

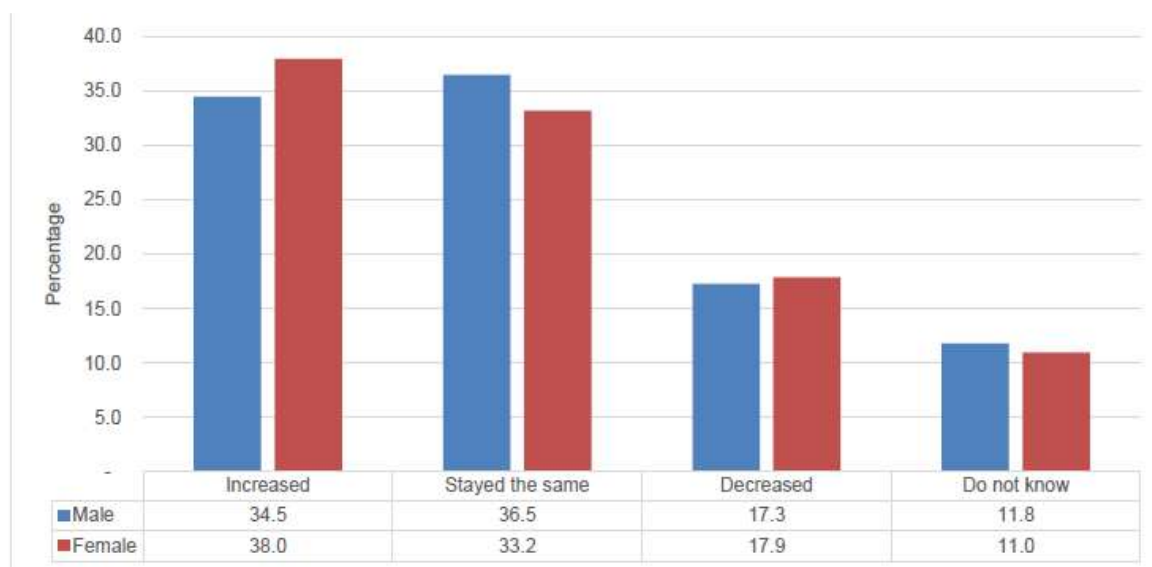
FIGURE 50: Percentage of persons aged 16 years and above who have ever seen or heard any campaigns about violence against women and children in any of the following platforms or institutions, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021



SOURCE Governance, Public Safety, and Justice Survey (GPSJS) 2020/2021

- The figure above shows that there has been an overall increase in the percentage of people who have ever seen or heard any campaigns about violence against women and children in any of the platforms or institutions between 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.
- The pattern is similar in both periods, with radio and television being the most popular platforms where people have ever seen or heard any campaigns about violence against women and children.

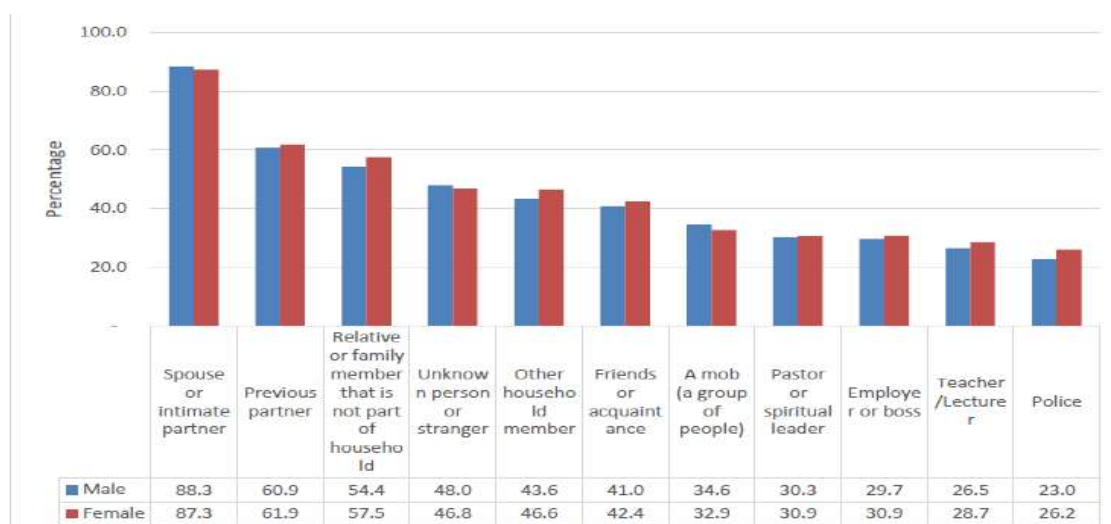
FIGURE 51: Percentage of persons aged 16 years and above by whether gender-based violence has increased, decreased or remained the same in their area by sex, 2020/2021



SOURCE: Governance, Public Safety, and Justice Survey (GPSJS) 2020/2021

- The figure above shows that a higher percentage of women (38.0%) than men (34.5%) think that gender-based violence has increased in their area.
- This figure also shows that more men than women believe that gender-based violence has stayed the same.

FIGURE 52: Percentage of persons aged 16 years and above by whom they think commits the most acts of gender-based violence by sex, 2020/2021

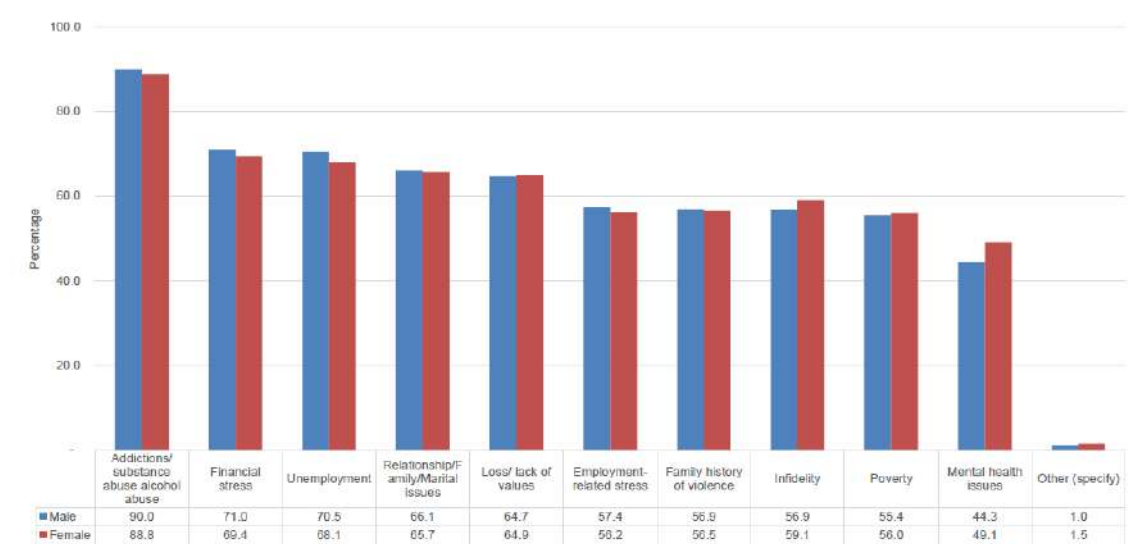


SOURCE: Governance, Public Safety, And Justice Survey (GPSJS) 2020/2021

- The figure above shows that persons aged 16 years and above think that the three leading groups/categories of perpetrators of acts of gender-based violence are persons known to the victim.

- Both men (88.3%) and women (87.3%) think that the spouse or intimate partners commit the most acts of gender-based violence.
- This is followed by those who believe a previous partner, relative or family member who is part of the household and an unknown person or stranger commits the most acts of gender-based violence.

FIGURE 53: Percentage of persons aged 16 years and above by what they think causes violence against women and children by gender, 2020/2021



SOURCE Governance, Public Safety, and Justice Survey (GPSJS) 2020/2021

- The figure above shows that both men and women think that addictions or substance/alcohol abuse causes violence against women and children.
- This is followed by financial stress, unemployment and relationship/family/marital issues.

## 11. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

### 11.1. Media and gender equality

UNESCO states that:

- "The media has a significant impact in shaping our thoughts and actions, reflecting and influencing societal structures and systems. It holds power over our understanding of gender, including norms, roles and stereotypes".

It is important to remember that gender norms, or societal expectations and standards, play a crucial role in the distribution of power within society. Such norms determine how individuals should behave and fulfil specific roles based on their perceived gender.

These norms are also reflected in media structures such as organisations, associations and newsrooms. Media, including the internet and social media, play a major role as both a source of information and as a shaper of opinions in societies. Regarding a

profession and media content, it is clear that there is a dimension of gender equality related to media.

A press statement by a group on the role of media in girls' and young women's activism and participation<sup>172</sup> indicates that gender inequality still constitutes a major obstacle in realising young women's and girls' unhindered participation in political and public life, including in the form of activism.

Media and journalism – as well as in its digital forms – greatly impact perceptions and ideas about the role of women and girls in society and thus could tend to perpetuate unhelpful stereotypes.

It is therefore important to address representation, safety and equality of women in this context as this might offer important opportunities for positive change and encourage greater public and political participation of girls and young women.

### **Global and regional context Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action prioritised the media as one of 12 crucial areas of concern for the advancement and empowerment of women. The need to advance gender equality in and through the media and information and communications technology (ICT) has been at the core of gender and media advocacy work since that time.



### **BPA's two strategic objectives for the media**

Strategic Objective 1: *Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.*

Strategic Objective 2: *Promote a balanced and non-stereotypical portrayal of women in the media.*

The BPA also encourages women's training and the adoption of professional guidelines to reduce gender discrimination within the media industry.

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<sup>172</sup> Submission to the OHCHR Working Group on Discrimination against Women and girls, 30 September 2021



The International Steering Committee of the Global Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG), an initiative of UNESCO, has expressed concern that progress towards media that support gender equality and women's rights objectives remains painfully slow.

## Women and the media in South Africa

Information from the Glass Ceilings study (2009), which was conducted jointly by Gender Links and South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF) and supported by the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), highlights that, while the media industry now has more women in senior roles, inequality and inequity persist.

According to the findings of the study, gender discrimination remains problematic, with the long history of inequality between the sexes being the basis. Further, gender discrimination in newsrooms is about power, with those in positions of authority usually the perpetrators and those in lower echelons: the victims.

In a 2018 Glass Ceiling study undertaken by the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF) and Gender Links (GL), it was found that challenges for women in the South African media seem to be reducing, but that more should be done about the underlying sexism in the media. Such challenges are said to be accompanied by emerging threats like cyber misogyny.

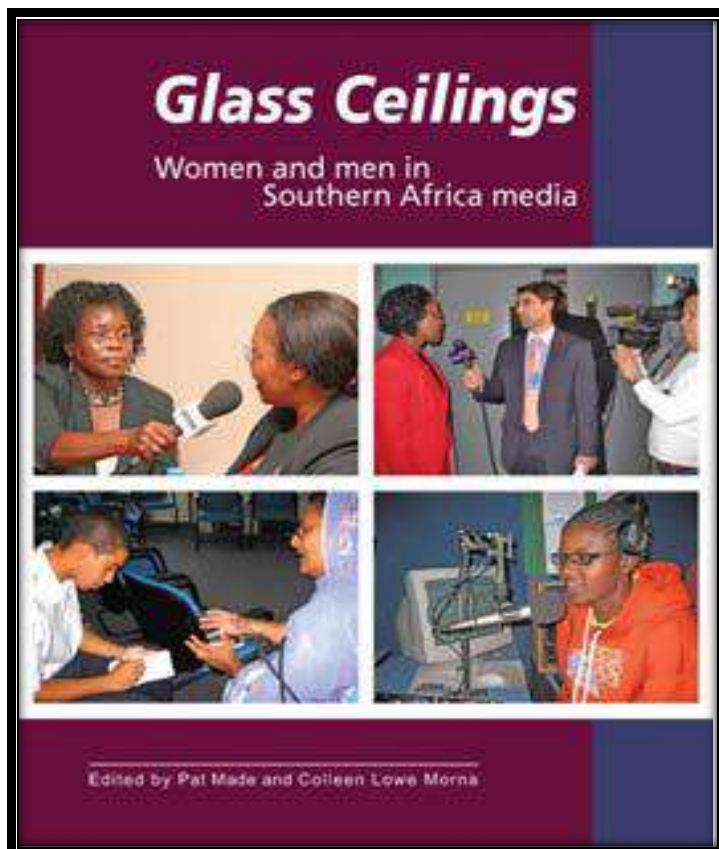
TABLE 20: Key indicators of women in South African media 2018 vs 2009

	Female 2018 %	Female 2009 %	Variance (2018 minus 2009) Percentage points
<b>Percentage of employees by sex</b>			
Overall	49	50	-1
Print	53		
Television	52		
Online	51		
Radio	48		
<b>OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS</b>			
Unskilled	60	23	37
Semi-skilled	74	55	19
Skilled technical	38	51	-13
Professionally qualified	52	42	10
Board of directors	19	38	-19
Senior management	46	35	11
Top management	36	25	11
<b>DEPARTMENTS</b>			
Finance and Administration	79	61	18
Advertising/Marketing	53	59	-6
Editorial	53	52	1
Production	42	66	-24
Design	32	34	-2
Distribution	30	33	-3
Technical	18	23	-5
<b>CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT</b>			
Part time	56	61	-5
Full time, fixed term contract	50	55	-5
Full time open ended contract	53	49	4

SOURCE: Glass Ceilings: Women in South African Media Houses 2018

The 2018 Glass Ceilings study found that there have been dramatic shifts in the race and gender composition of media houses since 2006, and further that:

- Black men now comprise half of top media managers.
- The proportion of Black women in top media management has increased fivefold but is still 20 percentage points lower than Black men.
- Black women, who comprise 46% of the population, constitute 40% of senior managers in the media, suggesting that change is on the way.



SOURCE: *Glass Ceilings: Women in South African media houses 2018*

The summary of findings of the 2018 Glass Ceilings study<sup>173</sup> include that:

- Gender parity is a reality in the overall composition of South African media houses: At 49%, there are equal proportions of women and men in South African media houses compared to the SADC region, which recorded 41% of women in the media in 2015.
- The bigger media houses have all achieved the 50% mark overall: A total of 24 of the media houses surveyed have between 50%-85% women. The bigger news media in South Africa are in the league of 50% women and above. Media 24 has 57% women, followed by Tiso Black Star (54%), the Mail&Guardian (52%), and the SABC (50%).

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<sup>173</sup> Glass ceilings Women in South African Media Houses 2018

- Increase but still no parity at the management level: Between 2009 and 2018, there has been an increase in women in senior management from 35% to 46% and in top management from 25% to 36%. Women (47%) and men (41%) attributed the gender gap to men being taken more seriously than women. Women (39%) and men (26%) felt that women are bypassed in promotion processes. Women (35%) and men (28%) attributed this to the old boys' network.
- The proportion of White men in top management has dropped but is still more than double that of White women: White men, who constituted 46% of top media managers in 2006, have dropped to 14% in 2018. White women in top management have dropped from 23% to 6% over the same period. However, there is still more than double the proportion of White men (14%) to White women (6%) in top management in the media.
- Black men are moving up the ranks at a much faster pace than Black women: The proportion of Black men in top management in the media has more than doubled from 22% in 2006 to 50% in 2018. The proportion of Black women in top management has gone up fivefold, from 6% in 2006 to 30% in 2018, but this is still 20 percentage points lower than for Black men. Black women (30% in top management compared to 46% of the population) are grossly under-represented. The gap is beginning to narrow for Black women at the senior management level, where they comprise 40% of the total.
- There has been an increase in the number of women middle managers but a decline in the number of skilled professionals: Women middle managers such as assistant editors, news presenters/anchors, correspondents, designers, and producers have increased from 47% to 52%. However, there has been a decline in women skilled technical and academically qualified workers (such as reporters and sub-editors) from 51% to 38%. This may reflect the general decimation of these core footsoldiers as new media takes over the mainstream media.
- The gender pay gap appears to be widening: In the three media houses that provided data to the study, the pay gap between women and men in 2018 at 23% was higher than in 2009 (17%). This may in part reflect the "eroded middle" in which women tend to predominate in the new media era, with the structure of media increasingly dominated by a few top executives and a large number of junior staff responsible for social media.
- Policies do not promote equal sharing of responsibilities in the home: 81% of the media houses said they have maternity leave, compared to only 31% with paternity leave policies.
- Sexual harassment is a daily reality for women in the media, but remedies are not prioritised: In 2018, 87% of media houses said they had sexual harassment policies, compared to 82% in 2009. Almost all media houses (91%) reported dealing with sexual harassment cases. Countless first-hand accounts in the report attest to sexist attitudes and practices at work and in the field.
- Cyber misogyny is a growing threat: While only 6% of official respondents felt that cyber misogyny is an issue in South Africa, 30% of women and 9% of men who responded to the perception questionnaire agreed that women journalists do face cyber violence.

- New breed of young media women is asserting their rights: The 2018 Glass Ceilings survey reflects both a backlash against feminist and an increased anger and assertiveness by women in the media against sexism, which may be the result of the general zeitgeist of the times globally and nationally.

Key recommendations from the study include:

- Greater ownership and control of the media by women, especially Black women
- All media adopting gender and diversity policies
- Setting targets for achieving parity at all levels
- Banning sexism
- Calling out mansplaining
- Revealing and closing the gender wage gap
- Opening spaces for women to speak out
- Family-friendly practices
- Self-monitoring and reporting.

### **11.2. Key issues on violence against women and on women and the media**

The following must be commended regarding GBV:

- Amendments were made to improve the legal framework
- Increased activism, education and support for survivors, including legal advocacy and support.

#### **Gaps**

- Lack of proper training of the police and government departments on the legislative changes that have been made
- Shortage of GBV desks in many police stations
- Lack of sufficient rape kits
- Lack of funding for shelters for survivors of GBV
- Lack of legal information for GBV survivors
- Classification of GBV as assault by SAPS is problematic as this does not give a clear picture and proper statistics.

#### **Recommendations regarding GBV**

- There is a need for a more *systemic or holistic approach to GBV prevention and to recognise the existing* intersections between gender and other factors that increase the risk of experiencing GBV. This includes intersections between gender, race, socio-economic status, culture, religion, geography, history and other factors.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> A scoping study of CSVR's work with gender and gender-based violence

- SAPS should separate GVB statistics from assault crime statistics and provide clear, separate GBV statistics.
- Effort is needed to ensure that strategies outlined in NSP GBVF are effectively implemented and monitored.
- Sufficient resources must be allocated to implement the NSP GBVF.
- There is a need to finalise the 2019/2020 GBVF Prevalence Study, which will provide valuable insights into underlying factors contributing to GBVF in the country and help inform policies and interventions.
- The GBV Council must finalise the establishment of the GBV Council, which requires:
  - More training and support for traditional leadership structures
  - An increase in GBV education
  - Simplification of GBV laws and policies.

### **Gaps – UN Women<sup>175</sup>**

- The under-reporting of incidents of GBV against women and girls due to the social legitimisation of violence and a culture of silence and impunity.
- Social legitimisation of domestic violence and the frequent resort to reconciliation within the extended family contributes to a high percentage of complaints withdrawn by victims and survivors of domestic violence.
- Insufficient focus on transforming the underlying gender inequality and power imbalances within relationships, families, community, institutional and State structures, as well as limited attention to addressing the factors contributing to GBV, such as alcohol abuse and unemployment, and the interplay between various forms of violence and harmful practices (e.g. child marriage and intimate partner violence).
- Inadequate assistance and remedies are offered to women seeking to escape violent relationships, which is reflected by the insufficient number of shelters available for GBV victims and survivors.
- Stigmatisation of GBV victims and survivors by health professionals and law enforcement officers, legal illiteracy, and a lack of trust in law enforcement.
- Lack of disaggregated data on the number of reported, investigated, and prosecuted cases of GBV, including domestic violence and sentences imposed.
- Lack of data on intersecting forms of discrimination that certain groups face, such as lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women and intersex persons, refugee women, women and adolescent girls living with HIV, women with disabilities, women and girls with albinism, and women human rights defenders and activists.

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<sup>175</sup> Gender-based violence against women and girls in Southern Africa – key human rights trends

### **Recommendations – UN Women**

- To conduct thorough investigations, have more prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators in GBV cases against women and girls
- For intense training for court officials, including magistrates and judges, prosecutors and police officers, on the strict application of criminal law provisions on GBV against women and girls
- To enhance access to justice for victims and survivors of GBV, including by enabling their participation in judicial processes
- To strengthen victim and survivor support services, including adequately funded shelters and safe houses, in particular, in rural and remote areas and operationalise victim and survivor-centred and gender-sensitive approaches in support and income-generating opportunities for victims at all the various stages of accountability processes
- To recognise and collaborate with diverse women and girl-led organisations, including those representing the most marginalised women and girls, as part of comprehensive approaches to end GBV
- Enhance access to justice for victims and survivors of GBV, including by enabling their participation in judicial processes
- Strengthen victim and survivor support services, including adequately funded shelters and safe houses in rural and remote areas in particular, and operationalise victim and survivor-centred and gender-sensitive approaches in support and income-generating opportunities for victims at all the various stages of accountability processes.

### **Recommendations for women and the media**

- Black women must take senior positions so as to have greater ownership and control of the media
- All media must adopt gender and diversity-friendly policies
- Media houses must set targets for achieving parity at all levels and ban sexism
- There is a need to reveal and close the gender wage gap
- The media houses must adopt family-friendly practices.

### **CLUSTER D: PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS**

D. Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions	G. Women in power and decision-making H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women J. Women and the media	SDG 5 SDG 16 SDG 17	Power S.O. G.1.: Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making S.O. G.2.: Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and	Art 3 Art 7	CEDAW General Recommendation No. 40
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			leadership, actions to be taken Institutional Mechanism S.O. H.1.: Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies S.O. H.2.: Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects S.O. H.3.: Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation		
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This cluster examines social empowerment from perceptions of social gender norms and ascertains gender equality in government's decision-making positions using the Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey.<sup>176</sup>

SDG 5, Target 5 seeks to "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life".

**Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 65 in 2021 agreed conclusions: Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life<sup>177</sup>**

At its 65th session, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) made the following crucial points on women and decision making:

"There is a need for States to take action to fully implement existing commitments and obligations with respect to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and the full and equal enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination of any kind so as to improve women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence".

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<sup>176</sup> Gender Series Volume IX: Women Empowerment, 2017-2022 Statistics

<sup>177</sup> (E/CN.6/2021/3)

Therefore, States must:

- Take measures to achieve women's equal and meaningful participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, social and cultural life, and remove all structural barriers that prevent the participation of women and girls, including legal, institutional, economic, social or cultural barriers
- Protect and promote the right to freedom of opinion and expression and women's equal rights to engage in political activities and public life as a whole, to ensure women of all ages, without discrimination of any kind, fully, equally and meaningfully participate at all levels of decision-making and in all sectors, including through political parties and civil society, women's and youth-led organisations, free from violence and harassment, including bullying or threats
- Set specific targets and timelines to achieve gender balance in executive, legislative and judicial branches of government at all levels and in all areas, including commissions, specialised committees, and task forces, and achieve these through relevant measures, such as affirmative actions, appropriate temporary special measures, including quotas, appointments, training programmes and targeted outreach to women, including young women and women who are in vulnerable situations
- Take all necessary measures to encourage political parties to nominate equal numbers of women and men as candidates, promote equal leadership in party structures and mainstream a gender perspective into party programmes;
- Encourage the implementation of measures and mechanisms, including appropriate mechanisms to track progress, to achieve the goal of 50/50 gender balance at all levels of elected positions
- Develop and implement policies and programmes, including through appropriate funding and innovative measures to promote women as leaders, executives and managers in all areas, in particular in strategic economic, social and political decision-making positions, with the goal of achieving gender balance at all levels;
- Strengthen gender-responsive institutional reforms by taking measures to achieve gender balance in leadership positions in decision-making bodies at all levels, develop transformative approaches and changes in institutional structures and practices, and use the gender mainstreaming strategy to accelerate the implementation of legislation and public and fiscal policies, including, through gender-responsive budgeting for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls
- Ensure that the perspectives of all women and girls are taken into account and that women and girls, as appropriate, fully and equally participate in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities that affect their livelihoods, well-being and resilience, and that women and their organisations, and girl – and youth-led organisations, are fully, safely and actively able to participate in the decision-making process, policies and institutions at all levels
- Strengthen the capacity of national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by providing sufficient allocation of financial,



technical and human resources to enable them to effectively carry out their mandates

- Strengthen women's voices and leave no one behind in public life by provide capacity-building and training to enable women and girls to develop capacities, skills and expertise to participate in public life and exercise leadership;
- Implement measures to address violence and higher rates of poverty faced by rural women and girls and ensure their access to quality education, public health, including healthcare services, justice, water and sanitation and other resources, information and communications technology, infrastructure, as well as access of rural women to financial services, economic resources and opportunities, decent work, social protection, sustainable and time, and labour-saving infrastructure and technology, and land, to promote their full and effective participation and decision-making in public life
- Promote and protect the rights of older women by ensuring their equal access to social, legal and financial services, infrastructure, healthcare, social protection, and economic resources and their full and equal participation in decision-making;
- Ensure the full and effective participation and decision-making of women of African descent in all aspects of society, including political, economic, social and cultural, recognising the significant contribution of women and girls of African descent to the development of societies and bearing in mind the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024)
- Strengthen efforts to empower women and girls with disabilities and enhance their participation and promote leadership in society through taking measures to address all barriers that prevent or restrict the full and equal participation and inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in all spheres of life, including through the creation of enabling programmes, community outreach, mentoring and capacity building programmes, and ensure their access, on an equal basis with others, to economic and financial resources and disability-inclusive and accessible social infrastructure, transportation, justice mechanisms and services, in particular in relation to health and education, as well as productive employment and decent work for women with disabilities, including in the government and public sector, the private sector and civil society, and by ensuring that the priorities and rights of women and girls with disabilities are fully incorporated into policies and programmes, and that they are closely consulted and actively involved in decision-making processes
- Address root causes of gender inequality and eliminate barriers to women's full and equal participation.
-

## **12. WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING**

### **12.1. CEDAW and women in power and decision making**

CEDAW General Recommendation 23 provides for measures that should be identified, implemented and monitored for effectiveness under Article 7, including the following:

- Achieve a balance between women and men holding publicly elected positions
- Ensure that women understand their right to vote, the importance of this right and how to exercise it
- Ensure that barriers to equality are overcome, including those resulting from illiteracy, language, poverty and impediments to women's freedom of movement
- Assist women experiencing such disadvantages in exercising their right to vote and to be elected.

Under Article 7, Paragraph (b), such measures include those designed to ensure:

- Equality of representation of women in the formulation of government policy
- Women's enjoyment in practice of the equal right to hold public office
- Recruiting processes directed at women that are open and subject to appeal
- Encourage non-governmental organisations and public and political associations to adopt strategies that encourage women's representation and participation in their work.

#### **Decision-making roles**

- Empowerment of women is core to processes of sustainable development, which includes leaving no one behind by addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequalities.
- Achieving women's empowerment depends on the interplay of several factors, such as addressing social discriminations that exist based on sex, disability, race, and religion, as well as changing perceptions and gender norms that dictate women's role in society.
- Social empowerment of women involves freedom of movement, economic security and stability, decision-making, and free participation in a society with equal opportunities for advancement. Therefore, advocacy of laws and regulations, discouragement of social norms about discriminatory gender roles and providing public infrastructure will go a long way toward making women's empowerment a reality.

### **12.2. Women in power and decision making in South Africa**

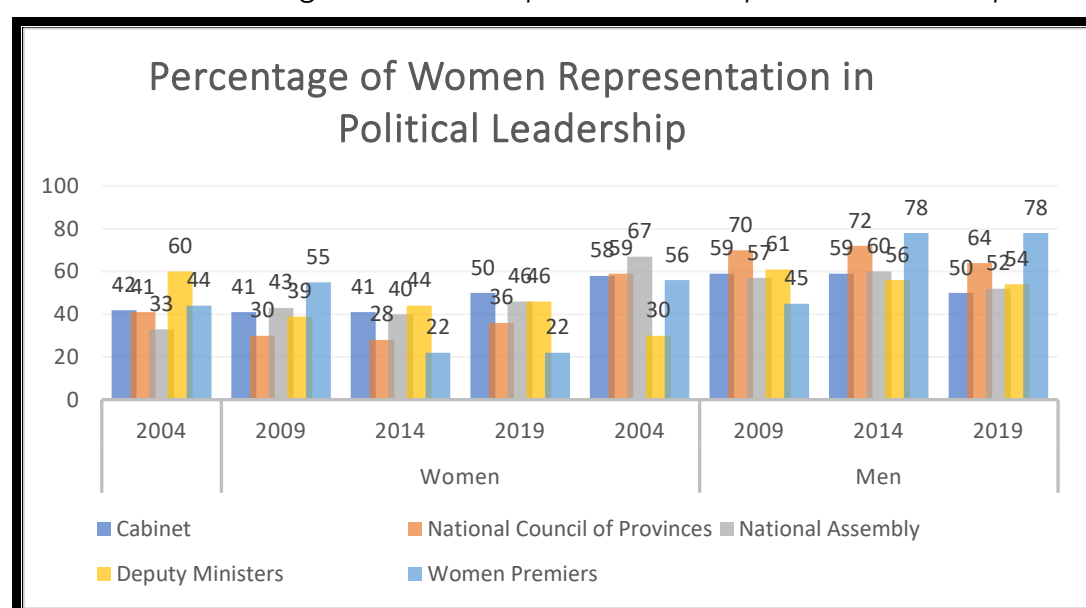
Increasing women's political participation and leadership are vital mechanisms that support women in realising their human rights, and they are also crucial for economic and social development.

Participation is designated to create equal opportunities for women, men, and gender non-conforming persons to be represented in and to fully engage in peace and security structures and processes.<sup>178</sup> Balanced political participation and power-sharing between women and men is the internationally agreed target set in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This is also considered crucial for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Some of the key priorities and indicators include:

- Women in executive government positions
- Women in national parliaments
- Women in local government
- Expanding participation in the private sector.

FIGURE 54: Percentage of women representation in political leadership

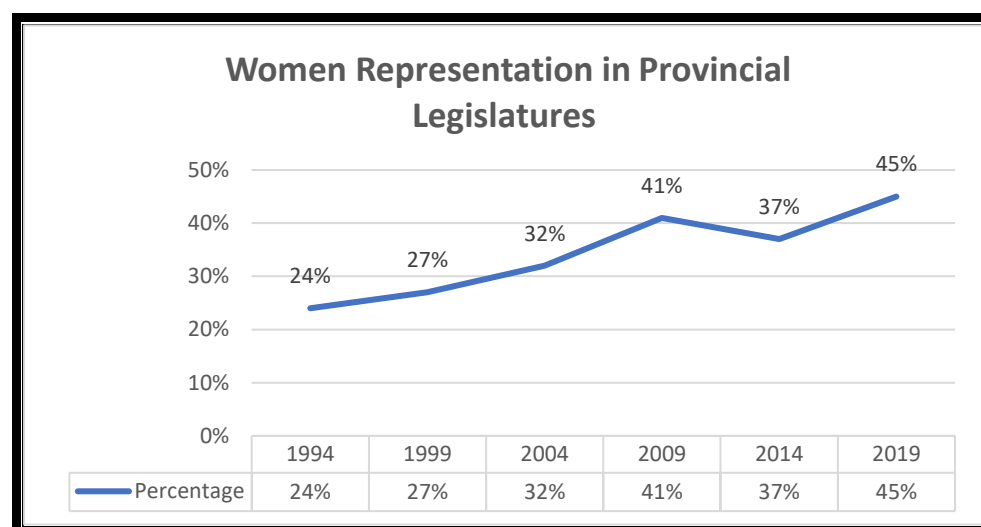


SOURCE: Gender Links; Stats SA

The table above indicates the representation of women in political leadership, including the National Assembly, National Council of Provinces, Members of Parliament, Deputy Ministers, and Premiers. The statistics demonstrate that there have been strides over the years between the 2004 national and provincial elections and 2019. Representation of women has been increasing steadily in the National Assembly, but it dipped in 2014 after former President Jacob Zuma assumed power. The progression resurfaced after President Cyril Ramaphosa assumed power in 2018, therefore reaching 50% representation since the 2019 national and provincial elections.

<sup>178</sup> South African Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan 2021

FIGURE 55: Women representation in provincial legislatures



SOURCE: Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), 2019

The table above presents the gradual increase in the number of women in legislatures since the first democratic elections in 1994 when women's representation was 24%, and it gradually increased by an average of 4%. The number increased significantly between 2004 and 2009, when South Africa saw 9% representation of women in legislatures. The numbers, however, dipped in 2014 by 4% after the new administration but increased by 8% after the 2019 national and provincial elections, resulting in more opportunities for the activists and government (with civil society key stakeholders within the security sector) to work together on the development of the Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan (WPS NAP), which was later adopted in March 2021.

TABLE 21: Gender representation of women in local government elections

Year	2011		2016		2021	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
At Province level	43%	57%	49%	51%	46%	54%
At Ward level	33%	27%	32%	68%	27%	73%
Total	38%	62%	41%	59%	37%	63%

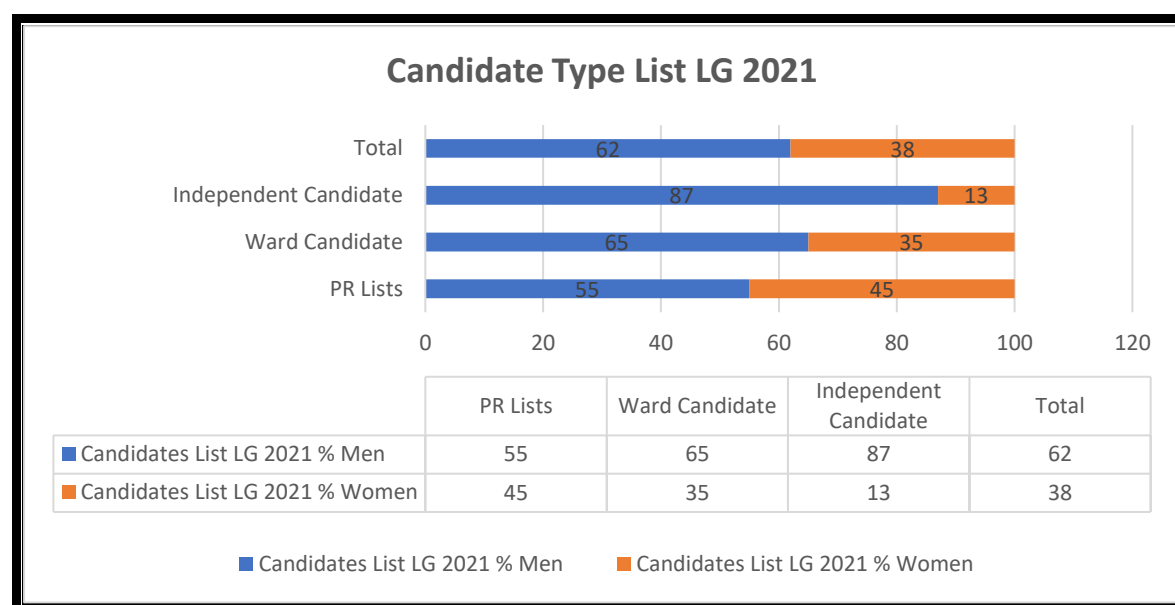
SOURCE: International Electoral Commission (IEC)

The 2021 local government elections witnessed regression in terms of the overall results in the history of South African democratic elections, as well as with the representation of women. It is notable that there has been a progression over time (since 1995) when the representation of women increased from 19% to 29% in 2000. The numbers subsequently increased to 40% in 2006 but declined to 38% in 2011. In the 2021 local government elections, of the 58,000,000+ population of South Africa, 26,204,579

eligible voters registered to vote, and women constituted 55% of the registered voters, while only 45% of men registered. It is noted that only 12,063,709 of the registered persons cast their votes.<sup>179</sup>

Despite women being the majority voters, the outcomes of the 2021 local government elections demonstrate that even after all the campaigns, advocacy and enabling legislative framework, women remain less represented in decision-making positions. To illustrate this, the table below presents representations of women who have been elected after the 2021 local government elections.

FIGURE 56: Candidate type list, local government elections, 2021

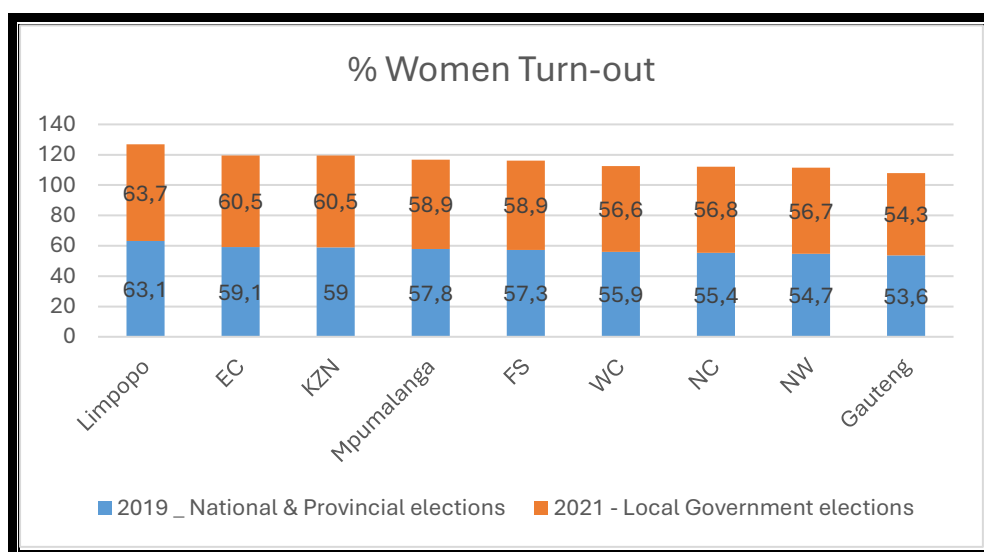


SOURCE: International Electoral Commission (IEC), 2021

The table above further demonstrates that the representation of women in political leadership is not influenced by their high number within the political space. This, as a result, is indicative of the gaps that hinder women's participation in leadership positions, which continue to create more inequality within South African society, positioning women in non-substantive positions where they are unable to make decisions for women by women. Women are less represented in these key structures, demonstrating the need for a call for concern for South Africa, especially regarding the implementation of the Women Peace and Security National Action Plan (WSP NAP).

<sup>179</sup> International Electoral Commission (IEC)(2021)

FIGURE 57: Voter turnout for 2019 national and 2021 local government elections



SOURCE: International Electoral Commission (IEC)

The table above provides a picture of voter turnout during the 2019 national and the 2021 local government elections. The statistics show an average of 57.3% for the national and 58.4% for local government elections, respectively, of participation of women in electoral processes.

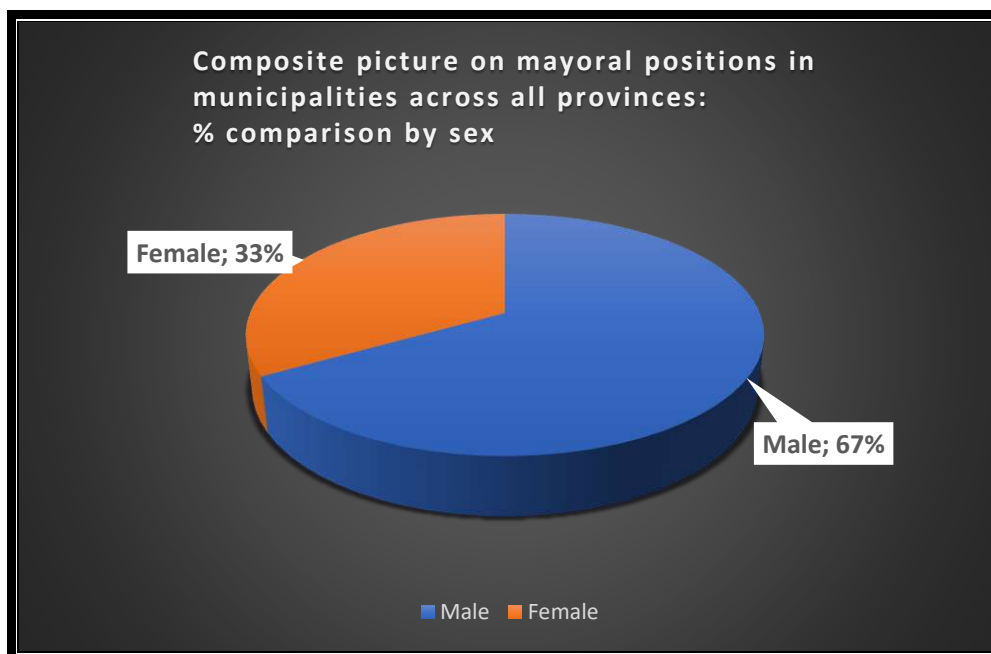
It is notable that there has been a steady progression over the years, where in 2000 and 2006, the turnout was 48% and increased to 57% during the 2011 and 2016 local government elections, respectively. These figures demonstrate an 11% regression for the 2021 elections, as mentioned. These results demonstrate the impact of the gloomy political climate on the voters in the country.

TABLE 22: Mayoral positions by sex and provinces 2021

Provinces	Male	Female
Western Cape	86.7%	13.3%
Gauteng	81.8%	18.2%
KwaZulu-Natal	81.5%	18.5%
South Africa	68.1%	31.9%
Northern Cape	64.5%	35.5%
Limpopo	63%	37%
Eastern Cape	61,5%	39.5%
Mpumalanga	60.0%	40%
Free State	52.2%	48.8%
North West	50%	50%

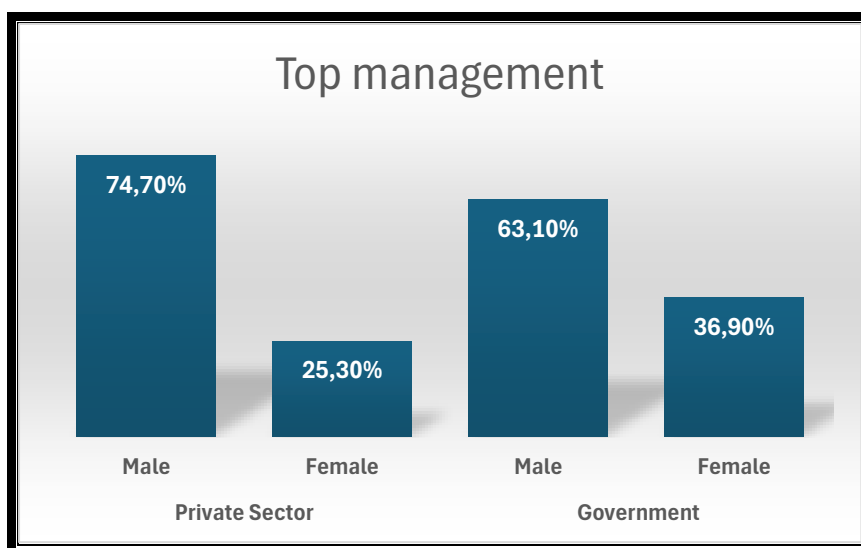
The table above presents the representation of women in mayoral positions by provinces since the 2021 local government elections. The findings demonstrate that there has been a concerning regression in relation to the participation of women in local political leadership. The average of women's representation is 31.9%, while men are in the majority with 68.1%. One of the key challenges leading to this imbalance is that no legislation promotes 50/50 representation as provided for by the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, therefore creating major hindrances in terms of substantive and meaningful participation of women in decision-making structures.

FIGURE 58: Mayoral positions in municipalities across all provinces



SOURCE: International Electoral Commission (IEC); Stats SA 2022

FIGURE 59: Top management in private and public sectors



SOURCE: Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) 2022-2023

The figure above demonstrates that the balance at top management levels for both the government and private sector is still skewed, with 74.7% of leadership positions in the private sector being steered by men, compared to 25.3% of their female counterparts. The government, on the other hand, has exhibited some strides, with 63.1% male representation in top management positions, compared to 36.9% female representation, which is slightly higher compared to women's representation in private sector top management positions.

### **12 .3. Report from the Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) – Annual Report (2021-2022)**

Information from the *Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report*<sup>180</sup> indicates that:

- The CEE is encouraged by the increase in the female group representation at the Top Management level, even though the increase is statistically insignificant.
- This gain for the female group has been primarily in the public service over the years, while the private sector is rather sluggish.
- In the public service, women represented 41.4%, and in the private sector, women represented 24.6% at this occupational level.
- In senior management, although there is a slight improvement in women represented (0.7%), men continue to dominate at this occupational level.
- A similar trend is detected in both the public service and the private sector, where men still dominate at this occupational level.

The CEE continued to analyse the workforce profile trends over three years (2019-2021) and provided insight into the progress made in terms of equitable representation of the various population groups (i.e., per race and gender, among others, at various occupational levels).

*TABLE 23: Top management by population group (all employers), 2019-2021*

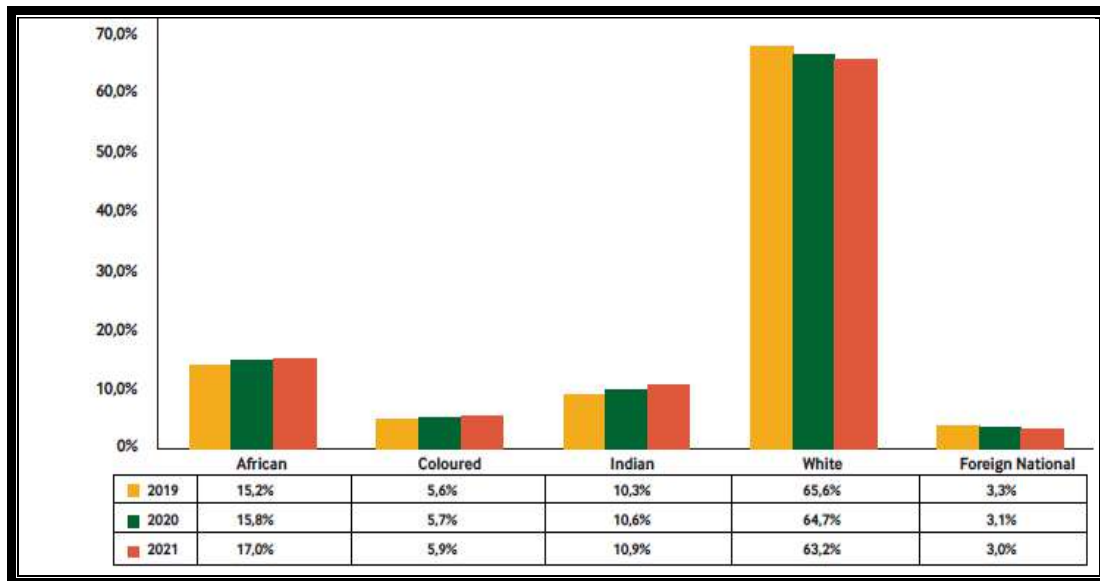
National EAP by Population and Gender Group* (*Source: Statistics South Africa, (QLFS, Quarter 3, 2021)						
MALE			FEMALE			Total
AM	African Male	43.6%	AF	African Female	35.8%	79.4%
CM	Coloured Male	5.0%	CF	Coloured Female	4.1%	9.1%
IM	Indian Male	1.8%	IF	Indian Female	0.9%	2.7%
WM	White Male	4.9%	WF	White Female	3.9%	8.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>55.3%</b>			<b>44.7%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

SOURCE: Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) Annual Report (2021-2022)

<sup>180</sup> 22nd Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) Annual Report (2021-2022)



FIGURE 60: Top management by population group

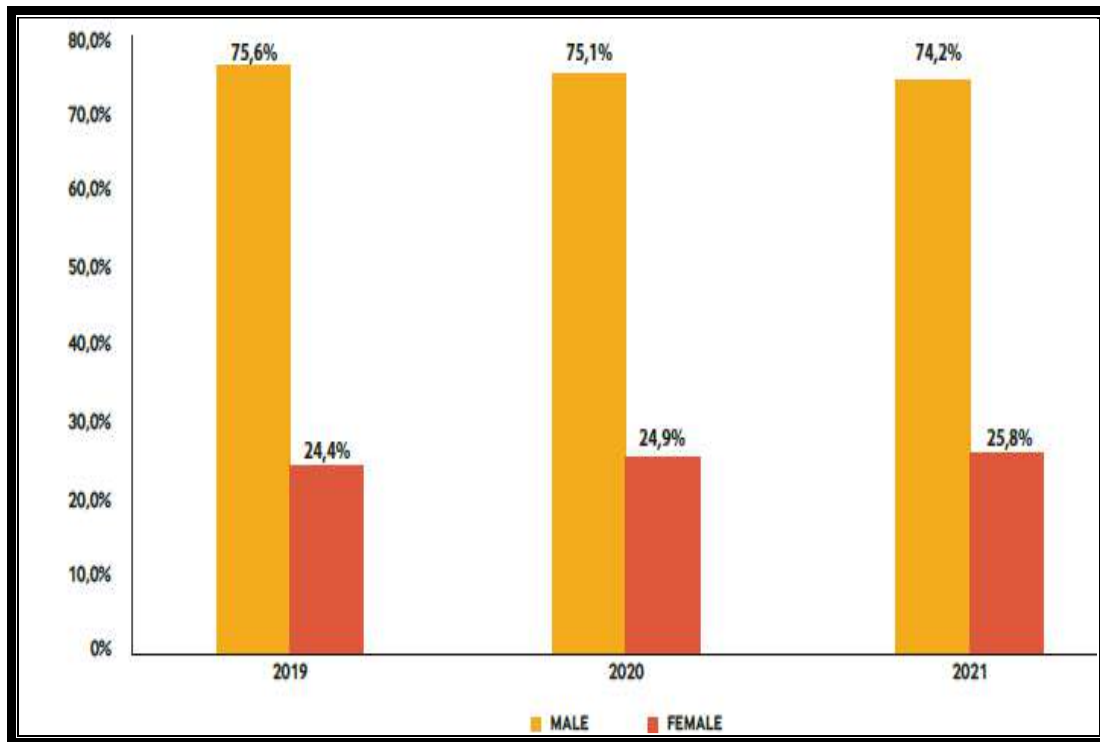


SOURCE: Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) Annual Report (2021-2022)

CEE's comments:

- The figure above shows that from 2019-2021, the White and Indian population groups remain overrepresented, and the Black African and Coloured population groups remain under-represented against their EAP at top management.
- The White population exhibits a gradual decline in representation, with an average 1% decline at this occupational level.
- Foreign national persons' representation is declining at a slow pace, which may be a result of slow skills transfer at the top management level.

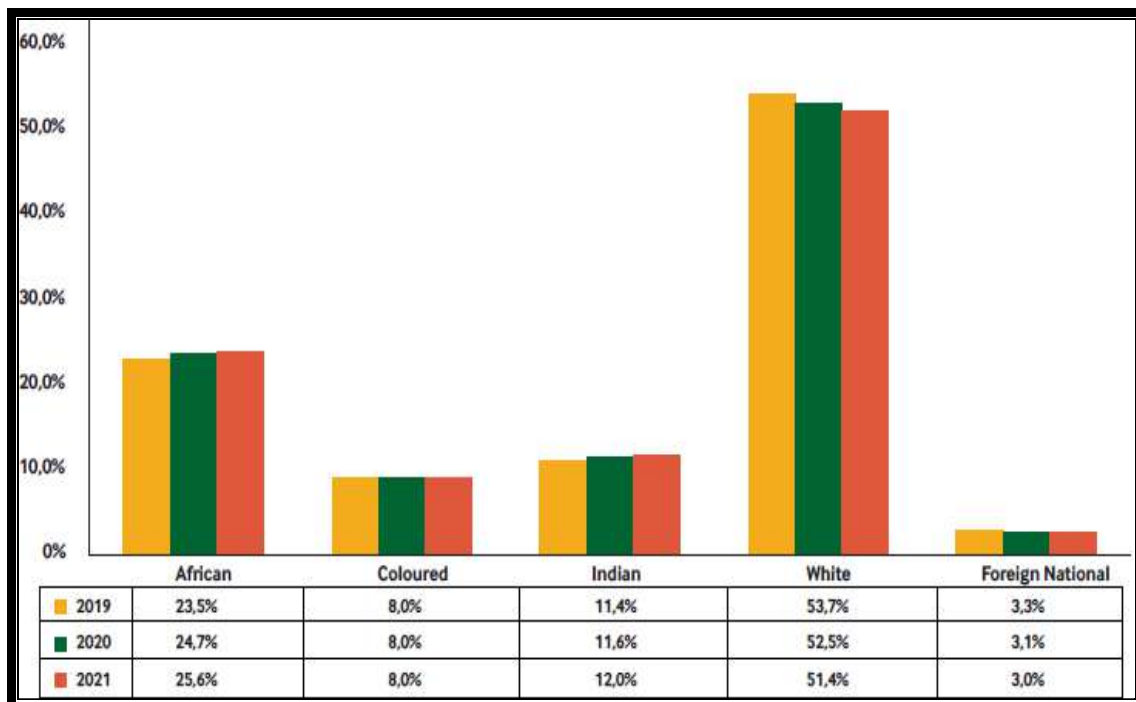
FIGURE 61: Top management by gender) 2019-2021



SOURCE: Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) Annual Report (2021-2022)

The figure above shows a slight increase in female representation at the top management level, resulting in a 1.4% increase from 2019-2021.

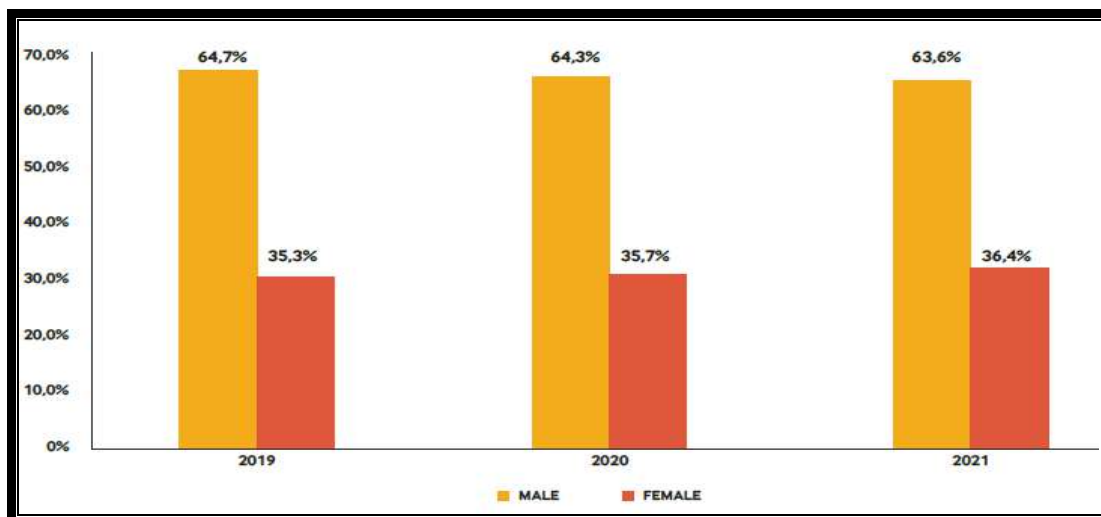
FIGURE 62: Senior management by population group



SOURCE: Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) ) Annual Report (2021-2022)

- The above figure shows a slight drop in the representation of the White population group at the senior management level.
- It also shows an under-representation of the African and Coloured population groups at this occupational level.
- The representation of foreign national persons appears to remain consistent at around 3% at this occupational level.

FIGURE 63: Senior management by gender



SOURCE: Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) Annual Report (2021-2022)

- The figure above shows a gradual increase of less than 1% of women represented at the senior management occupational level.
- Men continue to dominate at this occupational level, consistently remaining above 63% from 2019-2021.

## 12.4. Department of Public Service and Administration's (DPSA)

### Annual Performance Plan (APP) 2024/2025

TABLE 17: Current status (2024/2025) of representation of women, youth and persons with disabilities within the public service

Employee Category	Total Employees	Females	Males	Persons with Disabilities	Females (PWD)	Males (PWD)	Youth Representation
<b>Public Service</b>	1415036	917978 (64.87%)	491157 (35.13%)	13373 (0.95%)	7472 (55.87%)	5901 (44.13%)	360,662 (25.49%)
<b>Senior Management Services (SMS) Band</b>	9567	4326 (45.22%)	5241 (54.78%)	176 (1.84%)	75 (42.61%)	101 (57.39%)	103 (1.08%)
<b>Middel Management Services (MMS) Band</b>	18300	8580 (46.89%)	9720 (53.11%)	346 (1.89%)	143 (41.33%)	203 (58.67%)	1,074 (5.87%)

SOURCE: Department of Public Service and Administration's (DPSA) Annual Performance Plan (APP) 2024/2025

The information below is from the Department of Public Service and Administration Annual Performance Plan (DPSA APP):

- Women constitute 51% of the population of South Africa, yet fewer women are participating in the labour force, indicating a high unemployment rate.
- Women are poorly represented in leadership positions and often concentrated at lower levels of organisations.

FIGURE 64: Representation at senior level – employment top management

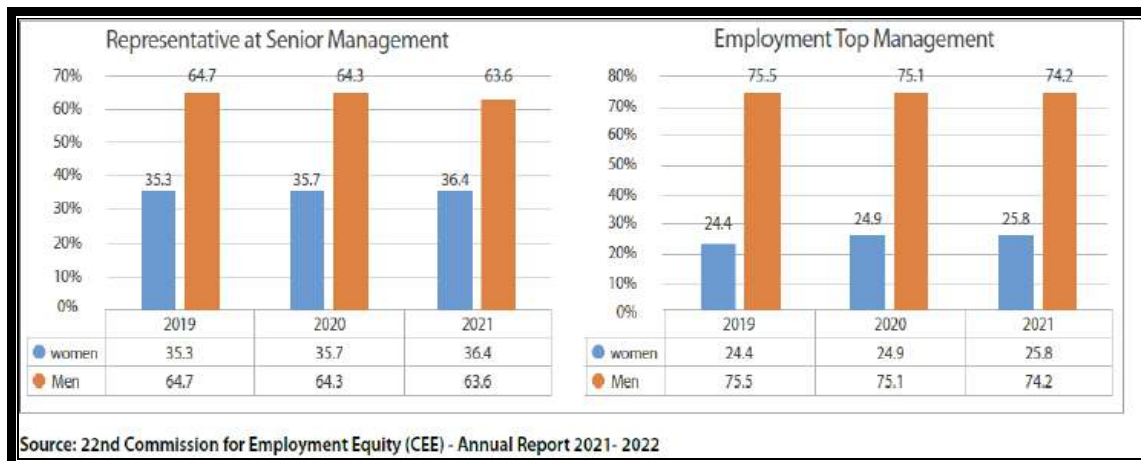
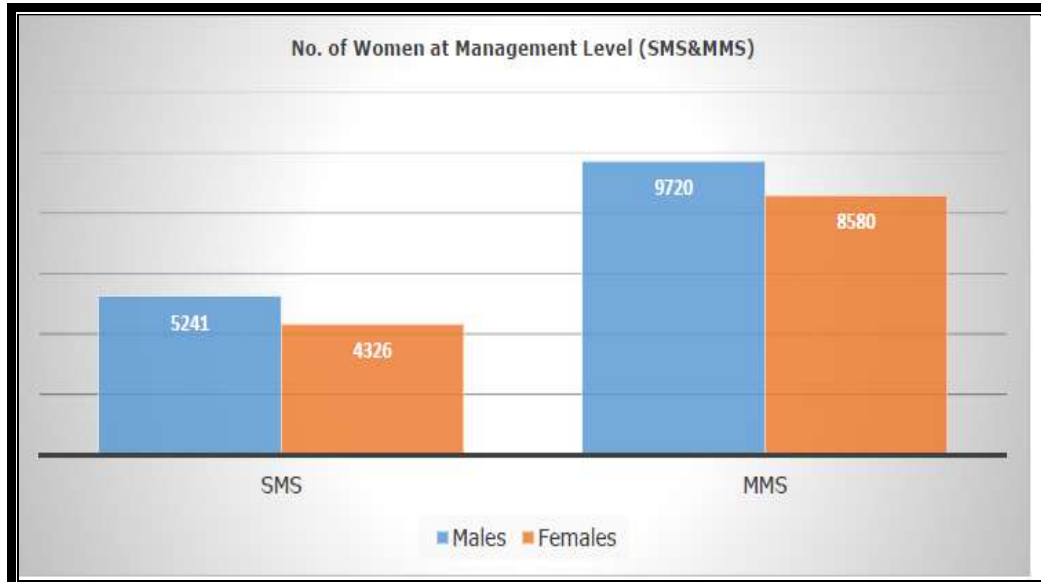


FIGURE 65: Public service trends and statistics regarding the representation of women in management positions



SOURCE: Department of Public Service and Administration's (DPSA) Annual Performance Plan (APP) 2024/2025

According to the DPSA, the graph above indicates that the representation of women in public service senior and middle management positions is still not equal to that of men.

## Management positions in the public service and private sector in South Africa

TABLE 24: Top management by gender

Private sector		All government	
Male	Female	Male	Female
74.7%	25.3%	63.1%	36.9%

### i) Department of Labour

Information from the Department of Labour (revealed in the 2023 Employment Equity Report during the department's series of Employment Equity (EE) countrywide roadshows) indicates that:<sup>181</sup>

- About a quarter of women are in the top management level in the South African labour market as of 25 August 2023
- Merely 26.5% of women, in general, occupy the top management of the workforce in South Africa, compared to their male counterparts at the top by 73.5%.

The 2022 EE status by all employers currently states the following regarding the country's female workforce compared to the male workforce:

- Top management by gender – 26.5%
- Senior management by gender – 37.2%
- Professionally qualified by gender – 48.2%
- Skilled-technically by gender – 49.4%
- Semi-skilled by gender – 44.8%
- Unskilled by gender – 43.5%.

### ii) Judiciary

During the period under review, 52 judges were appointed, of which 40% (21 of 52) were Black women, 37% (19 of 52) were Black men, 17% (9 of 52) were White men and 6% (3 of 52) were White women.

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<sup>181</sup> Government of South Africa: [www.labour.gov.za/about-a-quarter-of-females-sit-in-the-top-management-level-in-sa-labour-market—employment-equity-\(2\)](http://www.labour.gov.za/about-a-quarter-of-females-sit-in-the-top-management-level-in-sa-labour-market—employment-equity-(2))

TABLE 25: Race and gender composition of judges appointed

SUPERIOR COURT	African Male	African Female	Indian Male	Indian Female	Coloured Male	Coloured Female	White Male	White Female	Total
Constitutional Court	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Supreme Court of Appeal	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	5
Eastern Cape Division of the High Court	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	4
Free State Division of the High Court	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Gauteng Division of the High Court	5	4	1	1	0	0	5	2	18
KwaZulu-Natal Division of the High Court	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
Limpopo Division of the High Court	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mpumalanga Division of the High Court	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
North West Division of the High Court	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Northern Cape Division of the High Court	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
Western Cape Division of the High Court	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Electoral Court	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Labour Court	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>NATIONAL TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>PERCENTAGES</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>100%</b>

SOURCE: Annual Judiciary Report 2021/2022

### iii) Magistrates Courts

The race and gender composition of the Magistrates Courts is:

- 39% Black women (783 of 2022)
- 36% Black men (733 of 2022)
- 13% White women (256 of 2022)
- 12% White men (250 of 2022).

TABLE 26: Race and gender composition of all magistrates

POST CLASS	African Male	African Female	Indian Male	Indian Female	Coloured Male	Coloured Female	White Male	White Female	Total
Regional Court President	4	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	8
Regional Magistrate	96	86	15	23	20	14	50	43	347
Chief Magistrate	2	7	1	1	1	1	2	1	16
Senior Magistrate	36	27	6	10	7	4	15	20	125
Magistrate	388	410	63	90	94	107	183	191	1526
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>PERCENTAGES</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>100%</b>

SOURCE: Annual Judiciary Report 2021/2022

### 13. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

BPA area of concern	Specific objectives
H. Institutional Mechanisms	<p>S.O. H.1.: Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies.</p> <p>S.O. H.2.: Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes, and projects.</p> <p>S.O. H.3: Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.</p>

According to the BPA:

- National machineries for the advancement of women have been established to, design, promote the implementation of, execute, monitor, evaluate, advocate and mobilise support for policies that promote the advancement of women.
- National machineries are diverse in form and uneven in their effectiveness. These mechanisms are sometimes hampered by unclear mandates, lack of adequate staff, training, data and sufficient resources, and insufficient support from national political leadership.
- Mechanisms and institutions to promote the advancement of women as an integral part of mainstream political, economic, social, and cultural development, as well as initiatives on development and human rights, sometimes encounter similar problems emanating from a lack of commitment at the highest levels.
- Methodologies for conducting gender-based analysis in policies and programmes and for dealing with the differential effects of policies on women and men have been developed in many organisations and are available for application but are often not being applied or are not being applied consistently.

- e) A national machinery for the advancement of women is the central policy-coordinating unit. Its main task is to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas.

The necessary conditions for the effective functioning of such national machineries include:

- Institutional mechanisms or processes that facilitate, as appropriate, decentralised planning, implementation and monitoring with a view to involving non-governmental organisations and community organisations from the grassroots upwards
- Sufficient resources in terms of budget and professional capacity
- Opportunity to influence the development of all government policies.

In addressing the issue of mechanisms for promoting the advancement of women, governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.

### **13.1. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women in South Africa**

#### **A) Gender mainstreaming**

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women, as well as of men, an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. It is very important to remember that gender mainstreaming is not an end but a means to achieve gender equality.

The aim or goal of mainstreaming is to ensure that women can participate on an equal basis with men, have equal rights and have an equal voice and influence in the decisions that affect their lives. Gender equality does not simply mean equal numbers of women or men, nor does it mean treating women and men the same.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> UNSDG, Gender mainstreaming



## **B) National Gender Machinery (NGM)**

South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality<sup>183</sup> outlines the National Gender Machinery (NGM) as a web of institutions that support gender equality in the country. The Public Service Commission defines the NGM as "the mechanisms for transforming gender relations in South Africa".<sup>184</sup> Collectively, the role of these institutions is to promote and protect gender equality in South Africa. These institutions are located within the three tiers of government. In the Executive, it is the Ministry for Women. In the Legislature, it is the multi-party women's caucus, the Women's Empowerment Unit in the Office of the Speaker, and the Portfolio Committee on Women. In the public service, there are gender desks or units (although some have been closed down). Some of the gender desks or units within the public sector have been redefined as special programmes units within other departments, tasked with the responsibility of mainstreaming gender within the department as an entity, among other demanding responsibilities.

The creation of the NGM was embraced in Africa after the 1985 UN Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi, Kenya. One of the main aspects of the Nairobi Platform of Action was the institutionalisation of gender machinery. The 1995 Beijing Platform of Action reinforced the importance and urgency of establishing these structures, as well as mainstreaming gender. Gender mainstreaming was officially adopted by United Nations Member States, South Africa being one of those member states, at the Beijing Conference. It was adopted as a strategy for accelerating the advancement of women and the realisation of women's human rights. South Africa further committed itself to the implementation of gender mainstreaming as one of its National Commitments through the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPA) of 1996. Gender mainstreaming is also a requirement under South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (National Gender Policy Framework). The then-President made the government's commitment to gender mainstreaming clear in his February 2003 State of the Nation Address, where he called for the acceleration of efforts on gender mainstreaming and the implementation of the National Gender Policy Framework.<sup>185</sup>

It is therefore important to retrospectively investigate that gender is a discourse that is informed by the global community through the international and regional instruments that are designed to guide the member states on how to relieve women from their state of marginalisation, subjugation and GBV.

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<sup>183</sup> This was adopted by the OSW in 2000 and it is the current official policy framework that guides gender implementation in South Africa

<sup>184</sup> Public Service Commission. (2007). *Gender mainstreaming initiatives in the public service in South Africa*, p. 19

<sup>185</sup> Gender Mainstreaming Assessment Report; Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (2004, August)

Such international and regional instruments that guided and continue to guide South Africa's regulatory framework include:

- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and Children (CEDAW)
- Beijing Platform for Action (BPA)
- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (now replaced by the SDGs)
- ILO Conventions
- African Charter on Human and People's Rights
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, also known as the Maputo Protocol/Women's Protocol
- SADC Declaration on Gender and Development
- Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, among others.

### **Overview of the National Gender Machinery (NGM) in South Africa**

The NGM conversation began in the 1990s in preparation for the 1994 elections so that women's and gender concerns could be absorbed into the arena of politics and to ensure that these issues become part of the priority list for action for decision-makers in both the public and the private sector. As gender mainstreaming became more predominant after the Beijing Platform for Action International Conference, South Africa learned from good practices how best to mainstream gender. It was, therefore, decided that it was not viable to create one Women's Department or Ministry or a single structure to drive the agenda as there was a tendency for marginalisation or "ghettoisation" of such a structure as other Countries experienced it. The model that was, therefore, adopted was strategically to place government, legislatures, independent bodies, and civil society across the board to take charge and to play an active role in terms of mainstreaming gender within their structures as provided for within the National Gender Policy Framework. The model sought to create several entry points to avoid being marginalised, therefore allowing each structure to take charge.<sup>186</sup>

The South African National Gender Machinery (NGM) consisted of the following structures;

- The Office of the Status of Women (OSW) was situated in the office of the Presidency at the National level and in the Premiers' offices at the provincial level. Gender Focal Units in government are also placed at both national and provincial levels.
- The Commission for Gender Equality is an independent body and a Chapter 9 constitutional body. The Commission for Gender Equality is a statutory body created to oversee public education, deal with complaints on gender discrimination and oversee the implementation of international treaties.

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

- The Parliamentary Joint Monitoring Committee(JMC) on the Improvement of the Quality of Life and Status of Women, the structure consists of members from the National Assembly and members from the National Council of Provinces (NCOP).
- Gender-focused non-governmental organisations.
- Women's community-based organisations, e.g., the PWMSA.
- Gender or women's units in political parties and trade unions.

The structures as presented above were, however, unable to execute their mandates effectively due to a lack of financial and human resources. Research also indicates that one of the challenges that these structures faced was the overlapping mandates, which led to confusion and conflict about which structure should be doing what.

### **C) Current National Gender Machinery (NGM) structures**

#### ***Department of Women***

The establishment of the Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities (DWCPD) was approved by the government of President Zuma in December 2009, following the dismantling of the OSW and the JMC as indicated above. The mandate of the department, among other things, included coordinating compliance with the country's obligations under international instruments and "to address challenges and concerns regarding social justice and the marginalisation of women, children and persons with disabilities".<sup>187</sup> Its mandate also entailed advocacy and mainstreaming, institutional support and capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation of equality and empowerment of women, children and persons with disabilities.

The department was dismantled in 2014 after five years and repositioned into the Presidency, named the Department of Women in the Presidency. This has positive implications in that it appears the department will be solely focusing on a Women's Empowerment agenda. The mandate of the department is to lead, coordinate, and oversee the transformation agenda for women's socio-economic empowerment, rights, and equality.<sup>188</sup>

#### ***Portfolio Committee on Women***

##### *Mandate/Role and functions*

The mandate of the Committee on Women is to oversee the Executive, promote public participation, facilitate international agreements, and review matters of public interest in relation to the Department of Women in the Presidency.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> McBride, D. & Mazur, A. (2011). op.cit., p. 26

<sup>188</sup> Government of South Africa: <http://www.women.gov.za/index.php/about-us>

<sup>189</sup> Budgetary Review and Recommendation Report of The Portfolio Committee on Women in the Presidency (23 October 2014)

The committee's role is to monitor and oversee the work and sound financial management of relevant bodies, including the Department of Women and the CGE. The portfolio committee has the mandate to investigate any matter of public interest that falls within the area of responsibility of the department and the CGE. Specifically, it has the following functions:

- Consider Bills
- Deal with departmental budget votes
- Oversee the work of the department they are responsible for
- Make recommendations about any aspect of the department, including its structure, functioning and policy.

### ***Commission for Gender Equality (CGE)***

#### *Mandate/Role and functions*

The CGE was established in 1997 in line with chapter nine of the Constitution and in terms of the Commission on Gender Equality Act (39 of 1996). Its mandate is wide, and it includes the following:

- Monitoring and evaluating the policies and practices of both government and private sector institutions
- Public education and information
- Making recommendations to the government to promote gender equality, including suggestions for law reform and new legislation (with regard to personal and family law, Indigenous law, customary law, and any other law)
- Following up complaints (with its powers to subpoena); investigating gender matters and complaints; and resolving conflicts by mediation; conciliation and negotiation
- Monitoring government's complaints with reference to international conventions.

#### *Progress and challenges*

One of the biggest and most recurring challenges with the NGM is the overlapping mandates that often cause confusion among commentators and observers of the work of some of the NGM structures. In particular, the issue of overlapping mandates was repeatedly raised in relation to the work of the Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities and remains the issue after the dissolution of the department and its reconstitution as the Department of Women. However, the CGE's mandate is clearly defined not only within the CGE Act but also within the Commission's own strategic planning document and the Constitution of the Republic. Gouws<sup>190</sup> has argued that it is for this reason (overlapping and not clearly defined roles

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<sup>190</sup> Gouws, A. (2010). op.cit.

of other structures) that many structures within the NGM are deemed stagnant. She has proposed that the various structures should articulate their mandates clearly.

A study by the African Development Bank in 2009<sup>191</sup> also pointed to an area of weakness, that the CGE was focusing mainly on running workshops rather than holding government accountable, adding that awareness raising was stretching the capacity of the CGE to the detriment of its important role as a government watchdog, which CGE alone is mandated to perform. However, this is a fairly dated criticism, especially given the broad strategic changes that have been introduced since 2011. The CGE's 2011-2012 Annual Report identifies a number of successes around the four major functional areas within the CGE's constitutional mandate (i.e., monitoring, investigations, public education and information, and collaboration with other institutions pursuing similar objectives).

### **SALGA Women's Commission (SWC)**

#### *Mandate/Role and functions*

In recognition of the disparities between gender mainstreaming policies and actual implementation, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) decided to establish its Women's Commission in 2010. This was underpinned by a broader concern with the poor implementation of the 50/50 representation target for women and men in municipalities. It must be remembered that the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development demands that there be equal representation and participation of women in decision making by 2015. SALGA's concern was that women were not only under-represented in key positions but were also often being replaced by men, including as councillors, thus contradicting the government's commitment to increasing women's representation and participation.

The aim of the SALGA Women's Commission is therefore to strengthen gender equality and centralise women's voices at the local government level. The SWC seeks "to coordinate, promote and advocate for gender-appropriate strategies and practices within member municipalities and feed into regional and continental processes".<sup>192</sup>

### **National Council on Gender Based Violence**

#### *Mandate/Role and functions*

The National Council on Gender Based Violence, colloquially known as the GBV Council, is a newly established national structure. On 25 December 2011, the Cabinet approved the establishment of the National Council on Gender Based Violence. The Council was only launched/inaugurated on 10 December 2012, under the auspices

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<sup>191</sup> African Development Bank (2009), op. cit.

<sup>192</sup> SALGA. (2010). *Women in local Government Summit Report*, p. 19

of the country's Deputy President, Kgalema Motlanthe, with the purpose of coordinating the work of combating gender-based violence in the country. The Council is specifically mandated to intensify the implementation of the 365 Days National Plan of Action to address the high levels of sexual offences against women and girls, particularly rape and indecent assault.

The Council is a high-level, multi-sectoral national response to address gender-based violence in the country. The establishment of the Council came as a result of the government's acknowledgement of the high levels of sexual offences against women and girls in South Africa. Moreover, its establishment came in compliance with the recommendation of the CEDAW Committee during its 967th and 968th Sessions. Nonetheless, a general critique of this structure, supplemented by a recent CGE study on the effectiveness of the GBV Council, reveals a troubled institution that has not been able to fulfil its mandate and whose future lies in the balance.

### **Civil society organisations**

Civil society organisations are perceived as key and central to the struggle for gender equality and collaboration with these organisations is essential. Therefore, their contributions towards gender equality have led to many successful legislative, economic, political and other milestones in a democratic South Africa. Although NGOs face many challenges around issues of funding and capacity, their work in gender equality and reshaping, particularly women's and girls' participation in economic and political spheres, has been more than commendable. For instance, Watson<sup>193</sup> points out that NGOs' work on gender relations is characterised by advocacy and lobbying work for women. Furthermore, their work extends to lobbying members of Parliament and political caucuses as a strategy to build partnerships and networks for the purpose of enhancing participation and creating platforms in which members of Parliament and communities may have 'access' to each other and allow for interventions to be implemented following the bottom-up approach.

It is clear therefore that the relationship between the NGM and civil society organisations working in the gender sector should be complementary and collaborative. However, this relationship remains one aspect of the national gender machinery that continues to lead to questions regarding the readiness and ability of the NGM to promote and develop collaborative relations with civil society.

### **Gender Focal Point (GFP) – gender mainstreaming**

#### *Mandate/Role and functions*

The GFP mechanism forms part of the National Policy Framework on Gender Mainstreaming. This structure was put in place to ensure that departments comply with

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<sup>193</sup> Watson, J. (2002), *Women & law making: A study of civil society participation*, Public Education Office, Parliament of South Africa

gender mainstreaming directives and put in place gender-sensitive projects and programmes. The national policy framework mandates government institutions to establish dedicated gender units or focal points to assist in the formulation and implementation of effective action plans to promote women's empowerment and gender equality within the public service. The Public Service Commission (PSC) completed a once-off audit report on the status of the GFP in 2007.<sup>194</sup> The audit sought to measure compliance with current gender mainstreaming policies.

The audit found that a number of national, provincial and local departments did not have GFPs. However, the recent trend has been that increasing numbers of government departments are appointing their GFP posts at the National and Provincial level. Based on available information, it is not clear what level of gender representation has been achieved among GFPs. However, based on CGE's recent work involving GFPs, it has become clear that the overwhelming number of appointments to the post of GFP are women.

The GFPs were intended to fulfil the following functions:<sup>195</sup>

- To ensure that each department implements the national gender policy framework.
- To ensure that the department in question has employed a GFP at the Deputy Director Level.
- To ensure that gender issues are routinely considered in departmental strategic planning exercises.
- To ensure that departments reflect gender considerations in their business plans and routinely report them.
- To review departmental policy and planning in line with the National Gender Policy Framework.
- To review all policies, projects, and programmes for their gender implications
- To ensure that departments provide and use gender-disaggregated data in their work.
- To establish mechanisms to link and liaise with civil society.
- To co-ordinate gender training and education of all staff within departments so as to ensure that gender is integrated into all aspects of the work to monitor and evaluate departmental projects and programmes to assess whether they are consistent with national gender policy.
- The National Gender Policy Framework further provides for the placement of the GFPs inside the Offices of Directors-General in all government departments.

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<sup>194</sup>. PSC. (2007). Gender mainstreaming initiative in the public service. Public Service Commission. Retrieved 24 February 2014 from [http://www.psc.gov.za/documents/2007/gender\\_streaming/gender\\_mainstream.pdf](http://www.psc.gov.za/documents/2007/gender_streaming/gender_mainstream.pdf)

<sup>195</sup>. Government of South Africa. South Africa's National Policy Framework on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, pp. 35, 39, 40

One of the key observations that came out of the study conducted by the CGE was that many of the GFPs are appointed at lower levels (e.g. Assistant Director Level) as opposed to the level of Directorship or above, which is in line with the National Policy Framework to give them the necessary authority for enforcing gender mainstreaming mandate. This general low ranking of GFPs in government also denies these institutions access to the necessary resources, at the same time preventing them from exercising the authority to shape policy decisions and implementation of policies and programmes on gender mainstreaming in the public service.

Gouws<sup>196</sup> reached broad conclusions on the inefficiency of GFPs because of a lack of authority coupled with a lack of resources and skills. Gouws further highlighted that the status quo on the position of GFPs and their inefficiency hinder the optimal functioning of the GFPs.<sup>197</sup>

This was further confirmed by Mvimbi<sup>198</sup>, who argued that the OSW and GFPs lacked the political authority to hold anyone accountable for government commitments towards gender equality.

#### **D) Accountability of the NGM**

Two types of accountabilities where the NGM is involved:

- Holding the government accountable for delivering on gender equality
- Being accountable to the women in civil society.

The role of the CGE as part of the NGM is therefore to hold the government accountable, something which, in the past, has been portrayed as being reluctant to do.<sup>199</sup> As a result, this compels the Public Service Commission to come up with strategies on how to ensure that the government is held accountable and create a platform where women's organisations are able to keep the NGM accountable for driving the gender agenda in the country.

#### **Gender Barometer**

The Public Service Commission has been conducting a series of studies on the Gender Barometer since 2009, which has been rolled out to date. One of the components that the Gender Barometer Tool seeks to measure is the level of knowledgeability on

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<sup>196</sup> Gouws, A. (2005). *Assessing the National Gender Machinery in South Africa: Gains and weaknesses*, pp. 112-115; cited in Christie van der Westhuizen (ed.), *Gender instruments in Africa: Critical perspectives, future strategies* (p. 123)

<sup>197</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> The Post- Apartheid South African State and the advancement of gender equality: The experience of the National Gender Machinery

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.* (Mashabane Cases can be considered as an example of the quoted reluctance)



gender mainstreaming by the Gender Focal Points (GFPs), as well as the supervisors. The findings have indicated that the majority of the GFPs are placed in positions without the relevant expertise on gender and mostly assume the position of events coordinator (the findings present that they are mostly active during Women's Month and the 16 Days of Activism). The Public Service Commission also conducted a study on assessing the effectiveness of gender focal points in South Africa, which echoed the cohort findings on the Gender Barometer that has been undertaken across the departments since 2009.

Lack of knowledgeability and expertise by the officers who are tasked with the responsibility of mainstreaming gender within their respective departments pose as one of the factors that hinder gender transformation across the departments in the Republic.

### ***13.3. Gender responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and auditing***

A study on Rwanda shows that that country has a similar population distribution to South Africa, with 52% of women at an economically active age and being tasked with the responsibility of performing their care work, as well as contributing to the economy.

The Rwanda study contributed to the policy-making process and highlighted the importance of gender budgeting in South Africa. Gender budgeting in Rwanda is part of a bigger strategy that was built in 1999. Lessons learned from Rwanda show that gender budgeting should ensure that the policies and programmes take into consideration the specific constraints, options, incentives, and needs of women, girls, men, and boys and that resources are allocated accordingly.<sup>200</sup>

Such studies have shown the link between gender and poverty and the role of gender in economic growth. The results were as follows:

- Gender is the number one poverty issue
- Gender and poverty impact growth
- Gender and poverty impact development.

### ***13.4. Issues to be addressed under Cluster D***

- There is a need to promote and develop National Gender Machinery, which will create a collaborative platform and relations.
- The gender machinery in South Africa should be reviewed. It will be important to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are involved and that their roles are well

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid. (Rwandan model should be interrogated further as it is more ideal and appropriate for South Africa)

defined. The coordination of the machinery must have well-thought-out roles agreed to by relevant role players, with a well-defined mandate.

## CLUSTER E: WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT

E. Peaceful and inclusive societies	E. Women and armed conflict	SDG 5 SDG 16	<p>S.O. E.1. Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation.</p> <p>S.O. E.2 Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments.</p> <p>S.O. objective E.3. Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations.</p> <p>S.O. E.4. Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace.</p> <p>S.O. E.5. Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women.</p> <p>S.O. E.6 Assist the women of the colonies and non-self-governing territories.</p>
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1. CEDAW General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (2013).

2. Women, Peace and Security Resolutions of the United Nations Security Council:

- Resolution 1325 (2000)
- Resolution 1820 (2008)
- Resolution 1888 (2009)
- Resolution 1889 (2009)
- Resolution 1960 (2010)
- Resolution 2106 (2013)
- Resolution 2122 (2013)

### 14. WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) have established important obligations for the protection of women's human rights and achievement of gender equality relative to issues of international peace and security.

The CEDAW Committee reiterates in General Recommendation No. 30 that:

- Protecting women's human rights at all times, advancing substantive gender equality before, during and after conflict, and ensuring that women's diverse experiences are fully integrated into all peacebuilding, peace-making and reconstruction processes are important objectives of the Convention.
- State Parties' obligations continue to apply during conflict or states of emergency without discrimination between citizens and non-citizens within their territory or effective control, even if not situated within the territory of the State Parties.
- The Committee has repeatedly expressed concern about the gendered impacts of conflict and women's exclusion from conflict prevention efforts, post-conflict transition and reconstruction processes and that reports of State Parties do not provide sufficient information on the application of the Convention in such situations.
- Women are not a homogenous group, and their experiences of conflict and specific needs in post-conflict contexts are diverse. Women are not passive bystanders or only victims or targets. They have historically had and continue to have a role as combatants, as part of organised civil society, as human rights defenders, as members of resistance movements and as active agents in both formal and informal peacebuilding and recovery processes. State Parties must address all aspects of their obligations under the Convention to eliminate discrimination against women.<sup>201</sup>

*"Women play multiple roles in conflict and post-conflict situations, and these roles extend well beyond those of caregivers and victims. As such, it becomes crucially important to promote women's agency and build on their potential in peace processes by including them in all levels of participation – including in peacekeeping, negotiations, mediation, socio-economic reconstruction, disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) processes."*<sup>202</sup>

The CEDAW Committee recommends that State Parties:

- Ensure redress for the acts of private individuals or entities as part of their due diligence obligation
- Reject all forms of rollbacks in women's rights protections to appease non-State actors such as terrorists, private individuals or armed groups
- Engage with non-State actors to prevent human rights abuses relating to their activities in conflict-affected areas, in particular, all forms of gender-based violence; adequately assist national corporations in assessing and addressing the

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<sup>201</sup> UN Women. *Guidebook on CEDAW general recommendation No. 30 and the UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security-*

<sup>202</sup> ACCORD Resolution 1325 in 2020 – Looking Forward, Looking Back.

heightened risks of abuses of women's rights, and establish an effective accountability mechanism

- Use gender-sensitive practices (for example, the use of female police officers) in the investigation of violations during and after conflict to ensure that violations by State and non-State actors are identified and addressed.

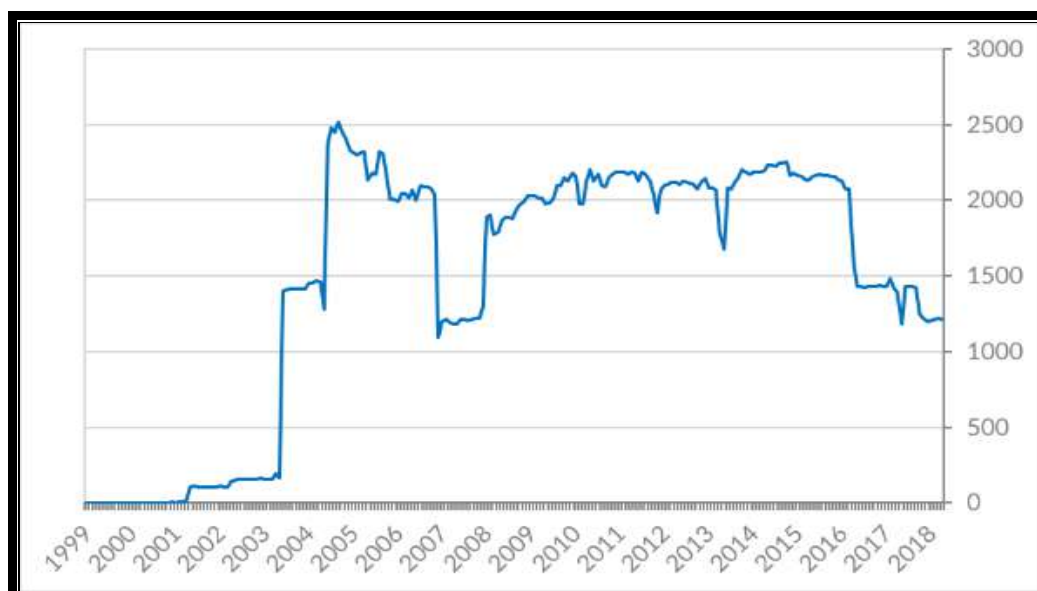
Furthermore, the Committee urges non-State actors such as armed groups:

- To respect women's rights in conflict and post-conflict situations, in line with the Convention
- To commit themselves to abide by codes of conduct on human rights and the prohibition of all forms of gender-based violence.

#### CSW 65<sup>TH</sup> Session

*Ensure that the perspectives of women and girls, as appropriate, are taken into account in armed conflict and post-conflict situations and in humanitarian emergencies and that they effectively and meaningfully participate, on equal terms with men, in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of policies and activities related to conflict prevention, peace mediation, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, as well as take into account the perspective of women and girls who are internally displaced and who are refugees; and ensure that the human rights of all women and girls are fully respected and protected in all response, recovery and reconstruction strategies and that appropriate measures are taken to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls in this regard.*

TABLE 27: Number of South African uniformed personnel deployed per month to UN missions<sup>203</sup>



<sup>203</sup> ISS Africa: <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/images/2018-11-15-peacekeeping-graph3.png>

## 14.1. WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Gender inequality, conflict and fragility are key challenges to sustainable development, and they are inextricably linked: women's active participation in conflict resolution contributes to peace and resilience, and unequal gender relations can drive conflict and violence. Conflict and fragility also place enormous burdens on women and girls, while peacebuilding and State-building can provide unique opportunities to advance recognition of their rights.

SOURCE: OECD. (2017). *Gender equality and women's empowerment in fragile and conflict affected situations*

South Africa, as with other countries, has signed an international agenda for women's gender equality and women's meaningful inclusion and participation when peace initiatives are brokered. The Beijing Platform for Action calls for women's participation in conflict resolution and promotes women's contribution towards promoting a culture of peace. In 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, which further affirmed the importance of the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peace operations and post-conflict peacebuilding and governance. This resolution acknowledged the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and therefore the importance of women's participation in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction. The creation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) is the result of the implementation of Resolution 1325.

South Africa, as a signatory to this international peace agenda, responded to the UN Secretary's call for countries to develop National Action Plans (NAPs). Since 2005, the NAPs have been key frameworks and/or tools that have been designed to institutionalise and translate international legal frameworks on WPS, other related operational documents and the guidelines into the localised national strategies with specific objectives in line with the domestic context.<sup>204</sup> They provide a framework for addressing the specific needs and experiences of women in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as increasing women's participation in peace processes and decision-making.

The purpose of a National Action Plan includes the following:

- Enables governments to work with grassroots organisations in relation to the promotion of security at the local level while also complying with international obligations
- Explains the national and international legal and policy frameworks on WPS
- Articulate the government's commitments and priorities regarding the Women, Peace, and Security agenda

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<sup>204</sup> Jacevic, M.M. (2019). *WPS, States, and the National Action Plans*, pp. 273-292. Oxford University Press

- Maps specific actions and operations that various departments, agencies, and institutions should undertake to fulfil the commitment and achieve change
- Promotes coordination across all government bodies and clarifies the specific roles of civil society organisations
- Offers additional tools for successful implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation systems for purposeful results
- Makes available constitutive coordination structures and explains the reporting and accountability measures to ensure systematic WPS agenda operations
- Specifies human technical and financial resources needed for effective implementation
- Bridges gender gaps, therefore increasing stability and fostering peace.

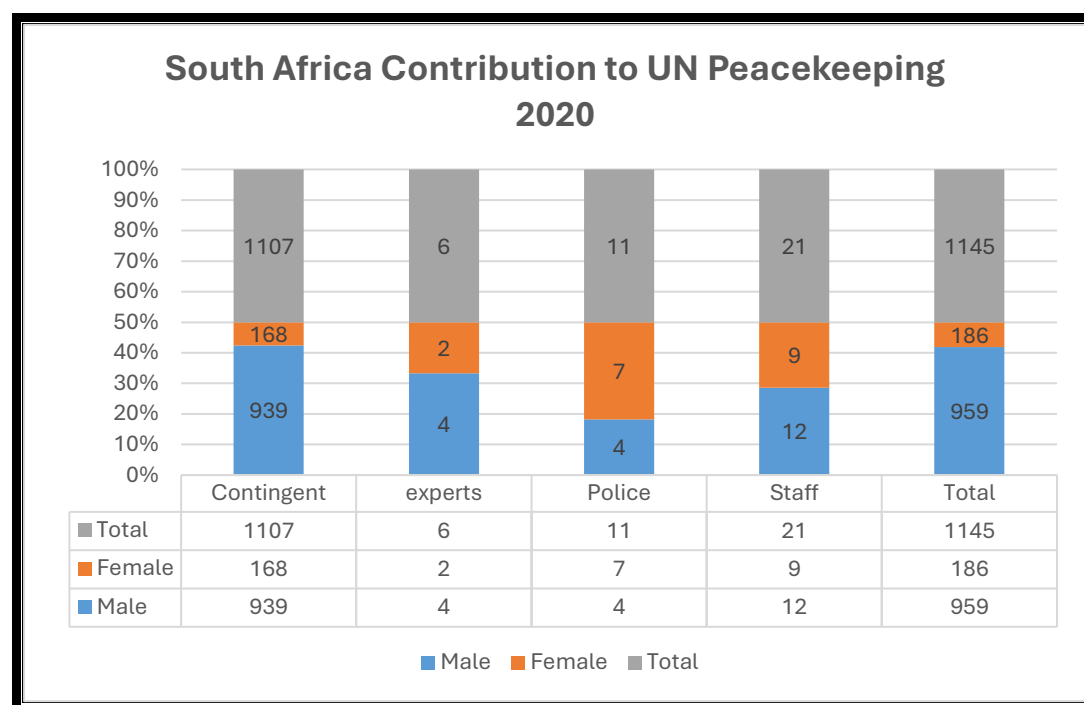
Research also demonstrates that NAPs, among other advantages in some countries, have led to increased GDP growth.

The deployment of women to peacekeeping missions is another element that is crucial for the effective implementation of Resolution 1325. Increasing the number of women in peacekeeping missions can lead to more inclusive and effective peacebuilding efforts, as women bring unique perspectives and skills to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. By deploying more women to peacekeeping missions' countries can better address the specific needs of women and girls affected by conflict, promote gender equality and contribute to lasting peace. Statistics highlighted below indicate the contribution of South Africa to UN Peacekeeping. The numbers show that men constitute the majority of those deployed for peacekeeping missions. Deployees are disaggregated according to their respective designations. It is notable that out of 1,145 deployees, there were 959 men and 186 women, respectively. The statistics depict that men constitute the majority in peacekeeping deployments and that, as a result, there are consequences regarding the participation of women in peacekeeping processes within the countries to which they are deployed.



SOURCE: National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, 2020-2025

FIGURE 66: South Africa's contribution to UN Peacekeeping, 2020



Source DoD 2021

## 14.2. SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY NATIONAL ACTION PLAN (WPS NAP)



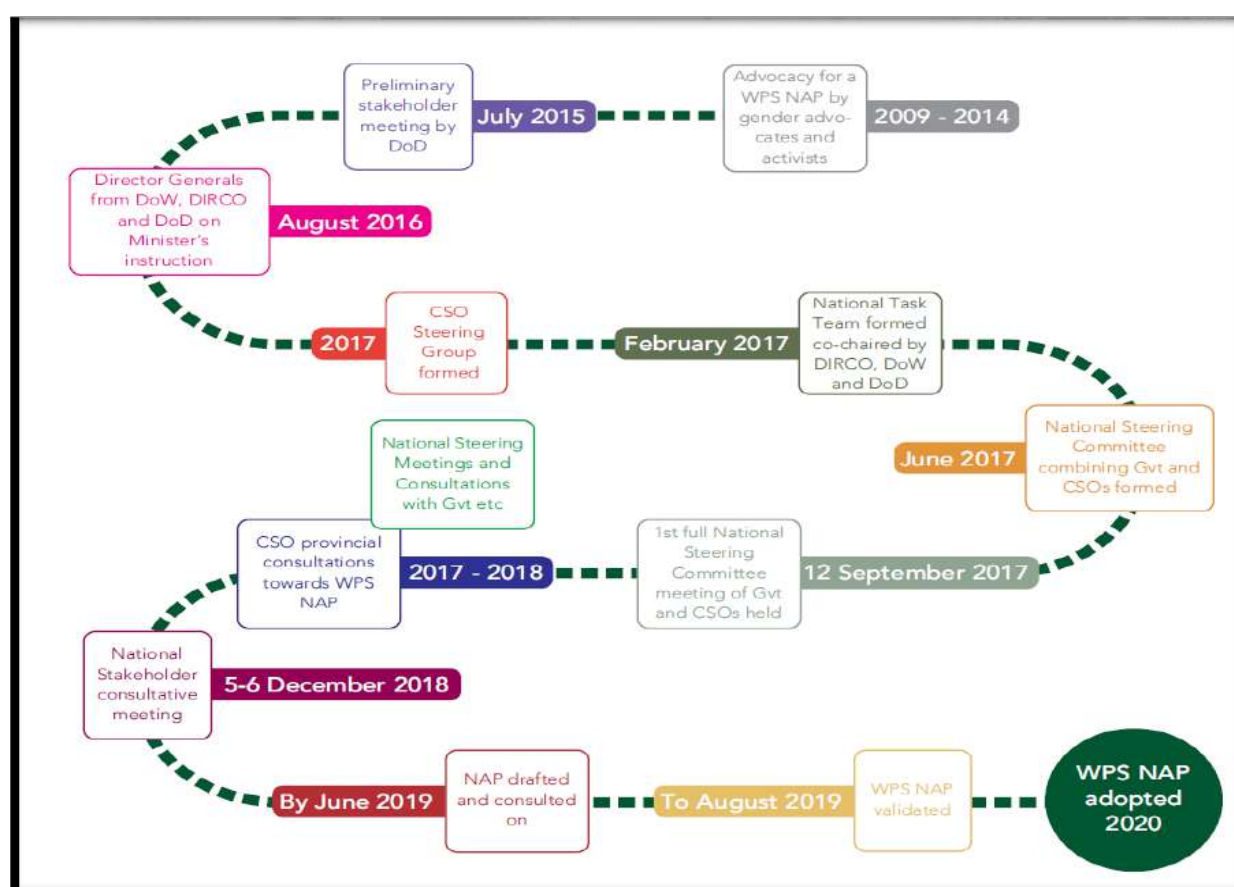
South Africa initiated its process of developing a Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan (WPS NAP) in 2009, when the country was selected as a pilot country by the UN for the development of NAPs. However, this process saw many challenges and was impeded as many attempts were made to move it forward in 2011 and 2015. In 2018, the country saw a shift when government and civil society organisations jointly worked together to ensure the drafting of the NAP, which highlighted the actions that



the country would undertake to ensure the promotion of the women's peace and security agenda globally, continentally, and nationally.

This 11-year process culminated in WPS NAP being finalised and adopted in 2021. It should, however, be noted that South Africa had consistently contributed towards peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and mediation in Africa prior to the existence of the NAP. The journey of the development of the NAP was made possible by CSO initiatives when all seemed to collapse from the government's perspective with blurred and stagnant progress. CSOs led by the Foundation for Human Rights, under the support of the UN Women and other development partners, initiated the consultative process across all the provinces, targeting women in their diversity.

FIGURE 67: Process for developing the national action plan on women's peace and security



SOURCE: The National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for South Africa

The NAP is framed around the four pillars of the UNSCR 1325. It has seven priority areas and 21 specific strategic objectives, each with associated activities and key stakeholders for implementation.

Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's equal participation and gender equality in peace and security decision-making processes at all levels</li> </ul>
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women and girls are protected from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and their rights are protected and promoted in conflict situations</li> </ul>
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention of conflict and all forms of violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations</li> </ul>
Relief and recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advancement of relief and recovery measures to address international crisis through a gender lens</li> </ul>

## 1 A) Objectives of the NAP

- To promote, protect and respect an inclusive, safe and peaceful society by operationalising the WPS Agenda in South Africa
- Implement, evaluate, and report on agreed-upon WPS frameworks at international, continental, and regional levels
- To ensure the full and meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes, structures and institutions at all levels
- To establish and implement effective conflict management institutions, systems and processes
- To prevent violence against women, girls and gender non-conforming persons and protect them in all situations
- To position and promote South Africa as a credible international leader on issues related to WPS
- To ensure an integrated and coordinated approach to and the utilisation of best practices towards information and knowledge management for WPS.

## 2 B) NAPS guiding principles

- Uphold and respect the human dignity of all
- Promote, maintain and defend gender equality
- Protect and empower women, girls and gender non-conforming persons
- Listen and respond to the needs of women, girls and gender non-conforming person's voices
- Inclusive and responsive peace and security processes and institutions
- Appropriate redress for victims of GBV
- Enhanced accountability.

### **3 C) Progress on implementation of the NAP**

Since the adoption of the NAP, government and CSO partners have been embarking on a series of activities across the country to reach communities to popularise the NAP and promote capacity building through workshops, awareness raising, dialogues, radio, and TV shows to ensure peaceful communities.

South African has been at the forefront of the WPS agenda, as mentioned. It is important to note the historic participation of South Africa in the WPS agenda from its inception, as it was part of the Windhoek Declaration advocating for the inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes. It also supported Namibia in the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, as the resolution was adopted under its chairing of the United Nations Security Council. It is also important to commend South Africa for sponsoring Resolution 1820 and, subsequently, Resolution 2493 in 2019.

Since the adoption of the NAP, government and CSO partners supported by the development partners have been embarking on a series of activities across the country to popularise the NAP and promote capacity building through workshops, training, awareness raising, dialogues, radio stations, and TV shows in view of promoting peaceful communities. Moreover, some of the achievements since the adoption of the NAP include the translation of the NAP into Indigenous official languages, such as Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans and Sesotho. This initiative is aimed to ensure access by the population groups in the country to optimise accessibility to the benefits of the existence of the NAP in the country. These initiatives are also utilised to assist in reaching remote communities according to the country's terrain. Moreover, they are further utilised as strategic initiatives to achieve sustainable peace and social cohesion. This is through conducting dialogues, sensitisation workshops and the use of diverse advocacy strategies to popularise the NAP and bring South African communities back to a culture of upholding and adhering to the human rights discourse.

Civil society organisations, as mentioned, have been the key role players and partners in the development and implementation of the NAP. These organisations have made strides and developed peace programmes, which are implemented through established peace clubs. Their rationale is to augment the national initiatives of building successful and peaceful communities that thrive on mitigating trauma, risky environments, domestic violence, and gender-based violence, as well as femicide, as these continue to escalate. The persistence of gender-based violence and femicide demonstrates insecurity in both the private and public spheres as internationally considered crimes against humanity. As a long-term mitigation strategy, these organisations also use music, poetry, and storytelling through digital dialogue platforms. They have contributed immensely to youth lifestyle modification, upliftment, and self-worth, which enable youth to make healthy and empowering daily choices.

One of the milestones that have been achieved in the implementation of the NAP is the Peace Song, which was composed by LOPECO under the support of UN Women. The Peace Song was intended to be an iconic and monumental initiative to promote

social cohesion and sustainable peace in South Africa and beyond. Further initiatives include training young boys and girls as peacekeepers, establishing peace benches to arrest conflict and violence among learners in schools, as well as preventing bullying that has led to the loss of lives of learners through violence and suicide in some instances. Moreover, the introduction of peace ambassadors was implemented in primary schools, as well as parental skills training programmes for parents.

Among other initiatives achieved were the following:

- Peace poems
- Peace clubs
- Peace camps
- Peace courts
- Peace podcasts
- Peace awards.

#### **4 D) Women Election Mechanism for Peace (WEMP) Peace Rooms**

In terms of the NAP under the prevention pillar, South Africa must build a comprehensive peacebuilding architecture and initiate preventative measures for building a safe society for women and girls and gender non-conforming persons. In line with this objective, during the 2021 local government elections, 80 women were trained as election observers and deployed to various localities to observe the elections. During that period, three pilot peace rooms were set up at Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape.

In Gauteng, the WEMP Peace Room was set up at Sunny Park Hotel in Park Town from 30 October to 2 November 2021. The Peace Room consisted of eight peace advocates who were actively engaged in the peace room. One of the key responsibilities was to receive and analyse the incident reports and ensure that every incident had sufficient information for recording purposes. Another key objective of the peace room was to ensure coordination of the entire early warning machinery. There were four peace envoys in a secluded section of the Peace Room who were reacting to incidences and escalating them, as well as other civil society reports as they were received. The Peace Room also had messengers who were the general feeders of information and data, and their key responsibility was to gather information and report. They were responsible for observing the gender dynamics in incidences where there was violence, discrimination and other related intolerances. The peace messengers had to report those by filling out the forms, using the call line, and using the app provided. These peace messengers were crucial with regard to data collection and were vigilant of what was happening on the ground that would inform the peace room activities.

#### **5 E) Government-driven initiatives**

The government has made strides in the implementation of the WPS NAP since its adoption in March 2021. The government has since developed a White Paper on

Peace Support and Gender Mainstreaming. The South African Police Service has developed a five-year strategy to ensure that gender is mainstreamed within all the programmes.

<b>Government initiatives</b>	
	White Paper on Peace Support and Gender Mainstreaming
Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities	Gender-responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and auditing framework Strengthening of National Gender Machinery
South African Police Service	A five-year strategy is used to ensure gender mainstreaming within all the programmes There is a Gender Unit that should be adequately resourced so that it can be effective in executing its mandate
Department of Defence	Train management and staff on GRPBMEA in October In transformation management, the department focuses on equity status in the department quarterly
Department of Sports and Arts and Culture	2021 Social Cohesion Strategy
Anchored by DIRCO with key departments and CSOs	2021 Upheaval Peace Table Declaration with recommendations submitted to the President
Department of Justice	National Prevention Strategy
State Reporting	UN, AU, and SADC ongoing
DIRCO	Gertrude Shope Women Mediators' Network Training 249 participants trained in conflict resolution, mediation and negotiation between February 2019 and February 2022
Women's Peacebuilders Network	Provided intervention strategies during the KwaZulu-Natal, North West and Eastern Cape natural disaster

### **14.3 ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED UNDER CLUSTER E**

- A monitoring and evaluation plan has to be developed
- Funding must be allocated for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan (WPS NAP)
- There is an urgent need for a coordinated multi-sectoral steering committee.

## CLUSTER F: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION; CLIMATE ACTION AND RESILIENCE -BUILDING

ITEM	REPORT CLUSTER	BPA AREA OF CONCERN	SDGs
F	Environmental Conservation; climate action and resilience -building	<p>S.O. K.1. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels actions to be taken</p> <p>S.O. K.2. Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development</p> <p>S.O. K.3. Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women</p>	<p>SDG 2</p> <p>SDG 12</p> <p>SDG 13</p> <p>SDG 14</p> <p>SDG 15</p>
<p>I. Human rights of women</p> <p>L. The girl child; human rights; leaving no one behind</p>			



SOURCE: [Women and the Environment – Global Women's Issues: Women in the World Today, extended version \(opentextbc.ca\)](#)

*Because of women's relationship with the environment, they can be crucial agents of environmental conservation, sustainable development and adaptation to climate change.*

## 15. WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### 15.1. CLIMATE CHANGE

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to other natural climate variability that has been observed over comparable time periods”.<sup>205</sup>

Climate change, as a process, manifests in a number of ways, including a rise in average temperatures and changes in rainfall patterns leading to floods, droughts, and, in some areas, desertification.

Climate change is a global challenge that burdens all of humanity in various ways, but not equally. The world's poor, the majority of whom are women, are encumbered disproportionately.

The phenomenon of climate change is undermining the enjoyment of human rights, especially of the people on the frontline of the climate crisis who have contributed least to the causes of climate change. Climate justice links human rights and development to achieve a people-centred approach to the climate crisis – safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its resolution equitably and fairly.

As the world struggles to grapple with rapid onset disasters, as well as respond to slower degradation caused by climate change, it is crucial to ensure that the plight of women is firmly on the agenda of concerns and that women – from various backgrounds – are able to lead in negotiations and participate in the design and implementation of programmes.

It is important to understand that while women face unique and sometimes disproportionate burdens as a result of climate change, they are not merely victims. On the contrary, women are also agents with important perspectives and Indigenous knowledge, which can inform and influence solutions to address climate change. In many communities around the world that are already acutely affected by climate change, women still must adapt their lives to survive and care for their dependents.<sup>206</sup>

The inclusion and consideration of women and their needs is not simply a moral right but also a smart and strategic approach to addressing climate change.

While high-level discussions about climate change have historically been dominated by the issues of national pollution and industrial concerns – which are certainly crucial

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<sup>205</sup> UNFCCC. (1992). Retrieved 17 August 2015 from [https://unfccc.int/files/essential\\_background/background\\_publications\\_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf)

<sup>206</sup> Impact and Agency in Human Rights, Security, and Economic Development

– identifying and enacting effective mitigation and adaptation measures will depend on the consideration of gender-based vulnerabilities and the participation of women.

The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon declared 2015 the year for global action on climate change. Additionally, this year marked three key anniversaries related to women's empowerment, economic development, and the creation of a peaceful world.

## **15.2. CLIMATE CHANGE, CEDAW AND THE SDGS**

CEDAW provides an insightful framework for linking climate change with the protection of women from harm caused by climate-related vulnerabilities and the advancement of gender equality, including women's ability to lead alongside men in pursuit of sustainable solutions.

This notion aligns closely with the Beijing Platform for Action, which does not explicitly mention climate change but holds relevance to climate change through an emphasis on women's decision-making and the protection of the environment.

In the SDGs, gender is integrated into the goals, and gender equality serves as a key theme throughout the agenda. Moreover, the relationship between climate change and women's empowerment is reinforced from a security standpoint in the framework for UNSCR 1325.

As the International Bar Association (IBA) noted in a 2015 report on the relationship between international law and climate change, *"Gender equity is also an essential element of climate change justice. [...] As climate change accelerates migration and displacement, women in particular are subject to abuse and deprivation"*.

Climate change worsens the cycle of poverty and vulnerability for women and girls. Women are more likely than men to die during and in the aftermath of disasters, and women's socio-economic marginalisation increases their vulnerability after natural disasters. For those women who do survive the impacts of natural disasters and climate change-related events, adjustment to their new circumstances may be difficult. Women often lack legal assets and rights to property, which leaves them few resources with which to rebuild their lives. Livelihood scarcity leaves women to head households without the social stature or material resources to do so. As women travel greater distances to collect the resources to support themselves and their families, they are more prone to attack and abuse.

These factors perpetuate the cycle of poverty and the continued marginalisation of women.

As a cross-cutting issue, climate change intersects with population growth, human mobility, urbanisation, and food, water, and energy insecurity, all of which increase the vulnerability of women. In order to reduce the likelihood of reinforcing existing inequalities, policies and programmes targeting climate change mitigation must take



into account the power dynamics between men and women at national and international levels, as well as their differential access to resources within communities.

At the same time, by focusing on capacity-building to augment women's opportunities, climate change initiatives can also boost women's economic participation and bolster growth. Capacity-building efforts can promote women's knowledge of issues and ability to take leadership or decision-making positions, which in turn leads to changing social norms and outcomes and increased economic growth. Research shows that women invest up to 90% of their income – 30% to 40% higher than men – on the well-being of their families.

Nobel Peace Laureate and founder of the Grameen Bank Muhammad Yunus notes that *"when a destitute mother starts earning an income, her dreams of success invariably centre around her children [...] money entering a household through a woman brings more benefits to the family as a whole"*.

Promoting women's economic empowerment is also one of the most effective ways to improve human development indicators.

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Promote and protect the rights of Indigenous women and girls by addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers they face, including violence, ensuring access to quality and inclusive education, healthcare, public services, economic resources, including land and natural resources, and women's access to decent work, to ensure their empowerment and full and effective participation in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas and eliminate structural and legal barriers to their full, equal and effective participation in political, economic, social and cultural life, while respecting and protecting their traditional and ancestral knowledge and recognising the distinct and important role of Indigenous women and girls in sustainable development and noting in that regard the importance for Indigenous women and girls of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

### **15.3. CSW 66TH SESSION 2022, WOMEN AND CLIMATE CHANGE AGREED ON CONCLUSIONS**

The following are some of the important considerations of the CSW (E/CN.6/2022/L.7):

- a) The General Assembly resolution 71/312 of 6 July 2017, in which the Assembly endorsed the declaration titled *Our ocean, our future: Call for action* and recognises the importance of gender equality and the crucial role of women and youth in the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- b) The Declaration on the Right to Development and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: The promotion and protection of, and respect for, the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls, including the right to development, which are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, are crucial for the full and equal participation of women and girls in

society and for women's economic empowerment and should be mainstreamed into all policies and programmes;

- c) A call for the creation of space for young women and girls to participate in shaping the decisions on climate change, environmental degradation, and disasters that will affect their future and for this to be in the curricula at all levels of education.
- d) Gender inequality, coupled with climate change, environmental degradation and disasters, poses a challenge to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with disproportionate impacts on women and girls, especially those in vulnerable and marginalised situations and conflict settings and those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status.
- e) It is a concern that climate change, environmental degradation and more frequent and intense disasters caused by natural hazards often result in the loss of homes and livelihoods, water scarcity and disruption to supply, destruction and damage to schools and health facilities, including transportation systems, and the displacement of women and girls and their families and communities. Because of such displacement, including forced and prolonged displacement, women and girls face specific challenges, such as separation from support networks, homelessness, and increased risk of all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence. Additional challenges include reduced access to employment, education and essential healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare services and psychosocial support.
- f) The importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective into disaster risk management recognises the need for the inclusive participation and contribution of all women and girls, older women, widows, and Indigenous women and girls.
- g) There is a need to take a whole-of-government approach to ensure that climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes are gender-responsive, including through the coordination and capacity-building of parliamentarians, national gender equality mechanisms, mayors, local elected officials, and municipalities and the institutions responsible for measures to address climate change, environment and disaster risk reduction.
- h) Women often take the lead in promoting an environmental ethic, reducing resource use, and reusing and recycling resources to minimise waste and excessive consumption. Women can also have a particularly powerful role in influencing sustainable consumption decisions.
- i) A concern that the lack of disaggregated data and gender statistics on climate change, environmental degradation and disaster risk reduction across sectors, especially with regard to women and girls in the context of environmental conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation, is limiting the capacity of policymakers to identify gender differences in vulnerability and adaptive capacity, as well as to develop and adopt effective, evidence-based policies and programmes at all levels. Accessible, up-to-date, comprehensible, science-based, non-sensitive risk information complemented by traditional knowledge is required.
- j) The important roles and contributions of Indigenous women, rural women, women smallholder farmers, women who use coastal marine resources as agents in eradicating poverty and enhancing sustainable agricultural and fisheries

development and food security, and as guardians of biodiversity must be recognised. This includes highlighting the importance of ensuring that the perspectives of all Indigenous and rural women and girls are taken into account and that they fully and equally participate in the design, implementation, follow-up to and evaluation of policies and activities that affect their livelihoods, well-being and resilience.

- k) It is crucial to underscore that meaningful progress in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls necessitates closing gender gaps, introducing gender-responsive policies, interventions and innovations, including in agriculture and fisheries, and ensuring women's equal access to agricultural and fisheries technologies, technical assistance, productive resources, land tenure security and access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance and natural resources, as well as access to and participation in local, regional and international markets.

The CSW called for the Integration of gender perspectives into climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes and recommended the following:

- i) Integration of gender perspectives into the design, funding, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes on climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity protection, and environmental degradation and pollution, including from chemicals, pesticides and plastics, such as microplastics, as well as into needs assessments, forecasting and early warning systems, and disaster prevention, preparedness, response, relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction plans at the national, regional and international levels, as appropriate.
- ii) The recognition and promotion of awareness of the disproportionate and distinct effects of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters on women and girls, in particular those facing violence, discrimination and displacement, harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage, and insecurity of land tenure, income and food, and ensure that policies and programmes reflect these impacts; and take targeted action to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacities of all women and girls, including in cities and tropical, arctic, coastal, mountainous and rural areas.
- iii) Strengthening of the coordination and gender mainstreaming across sectors and all levels of government in the integrated formulation, implementation and evaluation of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes, including by supporting research and awareness-raising activities at the national, regional and international levels on the impact of technological, demographic, urbanisation, migration and climate change trends on women and girls.
- iv) Strengthening of the capacity of national gender equality mechanisms at all levels, with sustainable and adequate funding and scaled-up, voluntary technology transfer, including through national budget allocations and official development assistance, to ensure the participation of such mechanisms in climate, environmental and disaster risk governance and to support the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the design, delivery, monitoring and

evaluation of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.

- v) Promotion of the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of young women in decision-making processes on climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction action by addressing gender-specific barriers, ensuring their full and equal access to quality education, technology and skills development, leadership and mentorship programmes, increased technical and financial support, and protection from all forms of violence and discrimination.
- vi) Leveraging and strengthening the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and the influence of all women and girls, especially those from rural areas and from the most affected communities, as well as those in vulnerable situations, in the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and in climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives and programmes, including in conflict settings and humanitarian emergencies, and encourage sharing and learning.
- vii) Promoting a gender-responsive approach and the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation of women in decision-making and leadership of women and girls in water and sanitation, including in household energy management in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes. Furthermore, take measures to reduce the time spent by women and girls on collecting household water and fuel and protect them from threats, assaults and sexual and gender-based violence while doing so. Ensure access to water, sanitation, and hygiene, including menstrual health and hygiene management, for all women and girls, especially those in marginalised and vulnerable situations, including in schools and other educational settings, workplaces, health centres, public and private facilities and at home; and address widespread silence and stigma, as well as the negative impact of inadequate and inequitable access to sanitation on the access of girls to education.
- viii) Expand gender-responsive finance to Increase the gender responsiveness of investment in climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.
- ix) Promoting and protecting the rights of all Indigenous women and girls by addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers they face, including violence and higher rates of poverty, ensuring access to quality and inclusive education and employment, healthcare, public services, economic resources, including land and natural resources, and promoting their full and effective participation in the economy and in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas, taking into account the principle of free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples and their ancestral knowledge and practices, and recognising their cultural, social, economic and political contributions to climate change mitigation and adaptation, environmental action and disaster resilience.
- x) Enhancing gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex.

#### **15.4. CEDAW GENERAL RECOMMENDATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

The CEDAW Committee acknowledges and reiterates that:

- i) Mortality and morbidity levels in situations of disaster are higher among women and girls. Due to gender-based economic inequalities, women, and women

heads of household in particular, are at a higher risk of poverty and more likely to live in inadequate housing in urban and rural areas of low land value that are vulnerable to such impacts of climate-related events as floods, storms, avalanches, earthquakes, landslides and other hazards.

- ii) The higher levels of mortality and morbidity among women during and following disasters are also a result of the inequalities that they face in gaining access to adequate healthcare, food and nutrition, water and sanitation, education, technology and information.
- iii) Failure to engage in gender-responsive disaster planning and implementation often results in protective facilities and infrastructure, such as early warning mechanisms, shelters and relief programmes, that neglect the specific accessibility needs of diverse groups of women, including women with disabilities, older women and Indigenous women.
- iv) Women and girls also face a heightened risk of gender-based violence during and following disasters. In the absence of social protection schemes and in situations in which there is food insecurity combined with impunity for gender-based violence, women and girls are often exposed to sexual violence and exploitation as they attempt to gain access to food and other basic needs for family members and themselves. In camps and temporary settlements, the lack of physical security, as well as the lack of safe and accessible infrastructure and services, including drinking water and sanitation, also result in increased levels of gender-based violence against women and girls.
- v) The categorisation of women and girls as passive 'vulnerable groups' in need of protection from the impacts of disasters is a negative gender stereotype that fails to recognise the important contributions of women in the areas of disaster risk reduction, post-disaster management and climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- vi) Well-designed disaster risk reduction and climate change initiatives that provide for the full and effective participation of women can advance substantive gender equality and the empowerment of women while ensuring that sustainable development, disaster risk reduction and climate change objectives are achieved. It should be underscored that gender equality is a precondition for the realisation of the SDGs.

## **6 General principles of the Convention applicable to disaster risk reduction and climate change**

The three general principles – equality and non-discrimination, participation and empowerment, accountability and access to justice – are fundamental to ensuring that all interventions relating to disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change are implemented in accordance with the Convention.

Therefore, State Parties should ensure that all policies, legislation, plans, programmes, budgets and other activities relating to disaster risk reduction and climate change are gender responsive and grounded in human rights-based principles, including the following:

- a) Equality and non-discrimination: with priority being accorded to the most marginalised groups of women and girls, such as those from Indigenous, racial, ethnic and sexual minority groups, women and girls with disabilities, adolescents, older women, unmarried women, women heads of household, widows, women and girls living in poverty in both rural and urban settings, women in prostitution and internally displaced, stateless, refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women;
- b) Participation and empowerment: through the adoption of effective processes and the allocation of the resources necessary to ensure that diverse groups of women have opportunities to participate in every stage of policy development, implementation and monitoring at each level of government, at the local, national, regional and international levels;
- c) Accountability and access to justice require the provision of appropriate and accurate information and mechanisms to ensure that all women and girls whose rights have been directly and indirectly affected by disasters and climate change are provided with adequate and timely remedies.

### **15.5. EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA**

A study<sup>207</sup> undertaken in rural areas of South Africa highlights the role that women play in environmental preservation. The study indicates that women are known as agents of change in community natural resource management, innovation, farming, and caregiving. As such, women are said to hold the key to adaptation to climate change.<sup>208</sup> Women pass on their skills regarding water management, forest management, and biodiversity management, among others. Through these experiences, women have gained valuable knowledge that allows them to contribute positively to the identification of appropriate climate adaptation and mitigation techniques.

The study highlights two important facts:

- An understanding of gender-differentiated climate impacts and vulnerabilities will help address the specific needs of women and men.
- Therefore, gender mainstreaming climate change policies is urgent.

Findings suggest that gender-differentiated impacts manifest in the unequal distribution of roles and responsibilities between men and women. Socially constructed roles and responsibilities place the burden of climate variability impact on women through extra workloads to cope with climatic stressors.

Women work more hours than men, and this affects women physically and emotionally. Women worry about the well-being of their household members, especially children who depend on them. Although men do not work the same

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<sup>207</sup> Babugura, A., Nompumelelo, C., & Mthokozisi, M. *Gender and Climate Change: South Africa Case Study*

<sup>208</sup> UNDP (2009)

number of hours as women, they are affected more psychologically than physically, often due to unemployment, resulting in negative coping mechanisms.

## **15.6. INITIATIVES BY THE VARIOUS SECTORS**

### **7 A) Government**

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) developed a strategy called Toward Gender Mainstreaming in the Environment Sector.

The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that initiatives in the sector are aimed at supporting the creation of policies that support gender mainstreaming and gender analysis during the development of new projects and ensure the inclusion of gender perspective into project cycles.

The objectives of the strategy are to:

- Provide strategic guidance for gender mainstreaming in the environment sector.
- Provide direction on how gender mainstreaming for the environment sector can be put into practice.
- Provide a framework for gender mainstreaming and outlining funding opportunities.

### ***Summary of the various areas covered in the strategy***

#### ***Gender and environmental sciences***

Understanding that women remain an integral part of the government's environment programmes and their participation is crucial in ensuring inclusiveness in environmental planning and decision-making.

- For academies of science to successfully fulfil their mandate, the inclusion of both men and women in their operations is of utmost importance.
- The collection, analysis and reporting of gender-disaggregated data for evidence-based knowledge allows for introspection on the role of women and advocates for the increased participation of girls and women in particular. Participation is particularly required in the nation's science system, and the system should also include and appreciate the contribution of Indigenous knowledge.
- The evidence-based monitoring also allows increased discussions on the importance of applying the gender lens in the conceptualisation and implementation of sector programmes, with a specific focus on advocacy, skills development and forging strong partnerships to sustain programmes.

#### ***Gender and climate change***

- Vulnerability to biodiversity loss, desertification, and climate change impacts are deeply connected to gender. Conversely, sustainability interventions, responses,

and solutions should consider gender issues if they are to fully meet the objectives for which they were established.

- Because of gender differences in social and economic roles and responsibilities, the effects of climate change affect women and men in different ways.
- Emerging policy efforts are recognised for prioritising the needs of women, including the special needs and circumstances of rural women.

The goals of gender mainstreaming in climate change are:

- To ensure that women and men participate equally in decision-making with regard to policy and policy instruments aiming to improve the adaptation capacities of communities.
- To ensure that women and men participate equally in decision-making with regard to policy and policy instruments aiming to mitigate the risk of drastic climate change and destruction of ecosystems at all levels.
- To ensure that all policies and policy measures take into consideration the gender impact of climate change.

### **Gender and the green economy**

*The main issues and entry points for gender mainstreaming within the green economy are:*

- Economic transformation should broaden opportunities for all South Africans, but particularly for the historically disadvantaged. Economic transformation should also provide equity in life chances and encompass an ethos of inclusiveness that is presently missing. Such opportunities and inclusiveness should also benefit women.
- The national strategy for sustainable development does require us to strengthen financial support and extend services to such women's organisations.

### **Gender and waste management**

*The main issues and entry points for gender mainstreaming within waste management are:*

- Integrating a gender perspective in assessment studies, planning, implementation and monitoring of waste management projects. This should include a gender-specific analysis of how available waste and resources are valued and used.
- Consultations prior to the introduction of new policies, procedures and technologies, as well as equal representation of women and men in these consultations.
- Create equal opportunities for men and women to benefit from awareness-raising and training initiatives for waste management.
- Empowering women to move up the hierarchy of waste management, not only as collectors but as managers of waste business opportunities, among others.



### **Gender and biodiversity and conservation/oceans and coasts management**

*The main issues and entry points for gender mainstreaming within biodiversity and conservation/oceans and coast management programmes are:*

- Integrating a gender perspective in the decisive socio-political, economic and cultural aspects of conservation and coastal management.
- Ensuring that a gender perspective is explored for the incorporation of important knowledge, skills and experiences into all conservation programmes.
- Taking into account gender mainstreaming principles toward enhancing the sustainability of environmental resource use on land and in the oceans and coastal environments.
- Ensuring equal participation of both women and men as beneficiaries of oceans and coasts in terms of harvesting needs, which currently has to be improved and prioritised, e.g., fishing quotas.

### **Gender and air quality management**

The main issues and entry points for gender mainstreaming within air quality management are:

- To raise awareness of linkages between exposure to harmful air pollution and the effects on human health and the environment and gender differences in risks and impact
- To promote a participatory approach to ensure the participation of women and vulnerable populations in policy-development and decision-making processes.

## **8 B) National Climate Risk and Vulnerability (CRV) Assessment Framework<sup>209</sup>**

South Africa's national government, led by the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF), has established a common framework to guide the development and review of CRV assessments to enable a more integrated approach to climate adaptation.

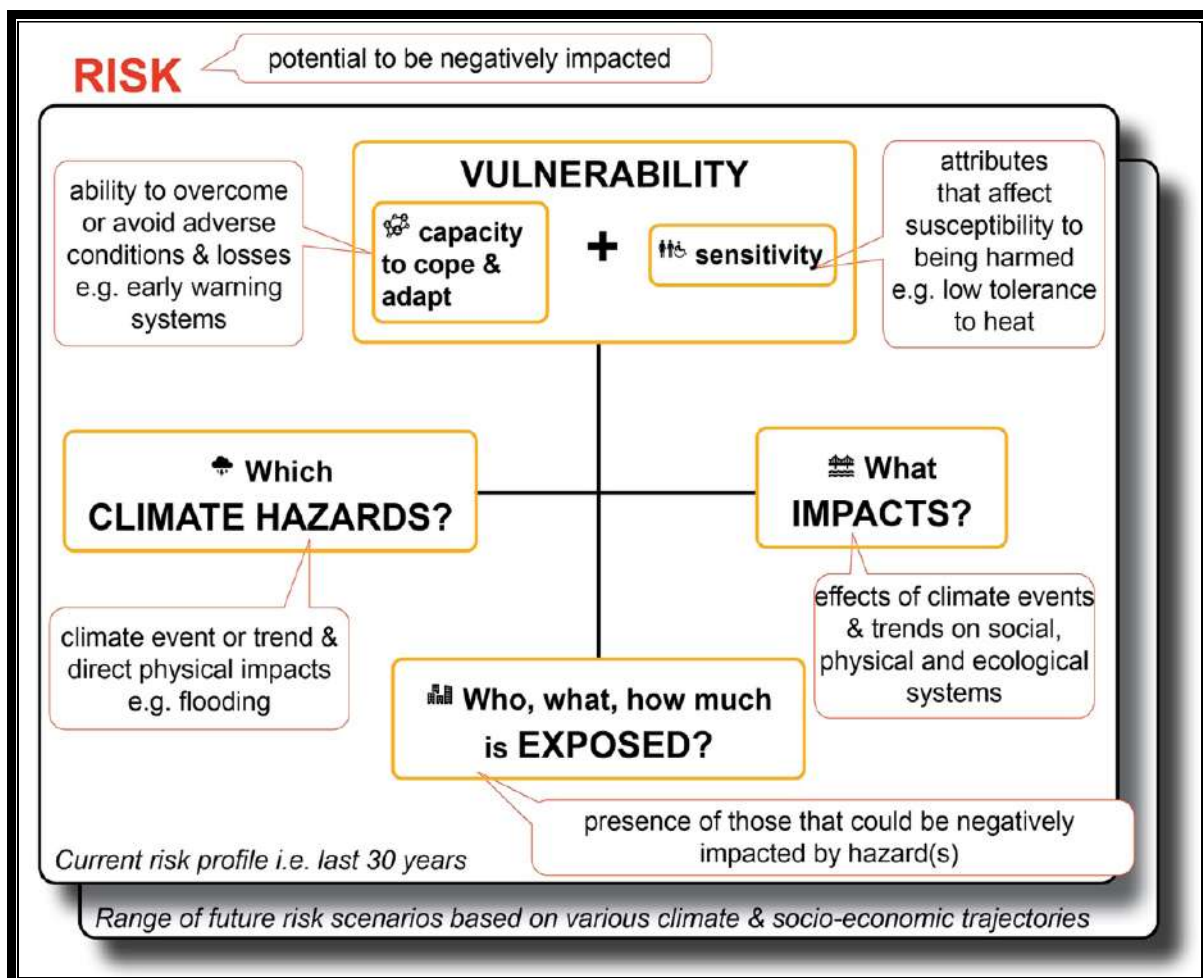
According to the DEFF:

- a) The framework is intended to guide how to undertake CRV assessments to enable alignment, comparison and aggregation across the assessments and thereby underpin an integrated, effective climate adaptation response across scales. The framework promotes the use of a standard set of concepts as the basis for each assessment, as shown in the figure and described in detail in the full document.
- b) This framework is used because climate variability and climate change impacts are not experienced equally, even when the same climate event or climate pattern occurs.

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<sup>209</sup> Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, (2020). *National Climate Risk and Vulnerability (CRV) Assessment Framework summary document*. Government of South Africa.

- c) Designing and implementing effective interventions that reduce climate risk is necessary to assess where, to what extent, and by whom various climate impacts have been experienced, why the patterns are as they are, and how this might change in the future.
- d) There are mounting demands on public, private and NGOs to undertake CRV assessments for policy, planning, funding, insurance and compliance reasons.
- e) Existing assessments have tended to be patchy in their coverage and have used a variety of approaches, methods and data. These inconsistencies have proved problematic for evaluating assessments and aggregating assessment findings to inform planning and decision making at larger scales and higher levels of governance.



SOURCE: Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, 2020. National Climate Risk and Vulnerability (CRV) Assessment Framework summary document

## PART 4

### 16. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REVIEW

#### 16.1. FINDINGS FOR CLUSTER “A” WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY


**I. The President's 40% Procurement Pronouncement: The President made a public pronouncement that government intends to allocate 40% of public procurement expenditure towards women-owned enterprises.**

This initiative must be applauded. However, it has brought about a number of other issues that need to be addressed.

Such issues include the following:

- a) Information from the assessment done by the CGE indicate that was evidence to show any effort by government to develop a clear policy and legislative framework that complies with and enforces the 2020 pronouncement.
- b) Understanding Public Procurement, and the laws and policies involved in that process (Legal and institutional frameworks) is very critical
- c) Having a procurement system that Gender-responsive procurement system (GRP).
- d) Ensuring that stakeholder who will be involved in the procurement system, including Women owned businesses and other relevant SMMEs are capacitated and supported. It is common knowledge that women—especially more disadvantaged women—do not know enough about how procurement works, often leaving them dependent on men for this.
- e) Ensuring that South Africa has systems in place to ensure capacity building amongst prospective beneficiaries of such the procurement programmes, promoting partnerships and data development to create evidence of who is in such businesses, successes and failures from which they can learn. Data and information can be collected through conducting studies and ensuring that reports are produced and made available to relevant stakeholders.
- f) The absence of mechanisms for suppliers to lodge grievances can prevent women from learning why they did not get a contract and how to improve for their next bid.

**II. The gender wage gap**

-  South Africa has a robust legislative framework to support pay equality, and both listed and unlisted companies are expected to pay fairly, responsibly, and transparently.

- ✚ The Employment Equity Act enforces the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. The Employment Equity Amendment Act, No 47 of 2013 (EEAA) which was promulgated into law in 2014 also clarifies the matter. What is left is the implementation of the law by the employers.
- ✚ The King IV Codes infers that companies do a gender pay audit, adjust remuneration policy, and provide implementation plans for changes. Proper enforcement of the code seems to be a challenge.
- ✚ The JSE Listing Requirements mandates companies to table their remuneration policy and implementation report at their annual general meetings. Shareholders have a right to vote against a remuneration policy. Investor activists should report against the policy or implementation report if gender equality is not guaranteed or made explicit.

### **III. Domestic workers**

The following developments must be applauded:

- ✚ Improved new minimum wage of wages of domestic workers, including cleaners, child minders, gardeners, drivers and any other workers in private households, as well as farm workers to R27.58 per hour, which is an increase of 2.5 percentage points above the average rate of inflation, that was 6% in 2023 is applauded;
- ✚ Employers and employees of domestic workers will be required to contribute to the Unemployment Insurance Fund;
- ✚ The Compensation Fund, which accepts claims from domestic workers and their dependents for injuries or deaths resulting from work-related accidents;
- ✚ Rehabilitation for those falling victim to an occupational injury or disease will now have access to the Compensation Fund;
- ✚ In terms of the new law, an employer of a domestic worker is required to provide facilities, services and benefits aimed at rehabilitating employees who are suffering from occupational injuries or diseases to return to work to reduce disability resulting from their injuries or diseases;
- ✚ Employers are also required to report or submit claims for any incident that occurred before the act.

### **IV. Rural women**

Rural women are still affected by some of the following challenges:

- ✚ The negative effects of patriarchy, which still prescribes the roles that rural women, play.
- ✚ High levels of illiteracy in information and communication technologies (ICT).
- ✚ Lack of awareness of initiatives aimed at women empowerment in their communities;

- ✚ Difficulties in accessing formal employment.
- ✚ Restrictive socio-cultural norms: Unpaid care work, unequal sharing of care
- ✚ Exclusion of women in community decision-making and development initiatives

### **Recommendations for Cluster A**

Efforts must be made to implement recommendations from the assessments by CGE, UNWOMEN and those from the Study by Prof Elgbe. Such recommendations include the following:

#### **a. Gender responsive Procurement**

- i. South Africa needs an advocacy and awareness campaign to promote public understanding of the benefits of gender-inclusive procurement, especially at the local level, and to drive cultural change in how the public and private sectors think about gender-based procurement and in the way stakeholders operate.
- ii. Government should create a comprehensive policy and regulations to implement gender-responsive procurement, setting out objectives and targets including mandatory requirements for gender inclusion and also provide direction on how these targets can be met, guidance on implementation, including implementation of the President's 40, % target for WOB participation.

Possible measures should include:

- ✚ Requiring subcontracts to be offered to WOBs;
- ✚ Reserving contracts under certain thresholds to WOBs;
- ✚ Providing for direct women's economic empowerment scores, separate from the Black Economic Empowerment score;
- ✚ Including gender as a sub-criterion when evaluating bid quality; and
- ✚ Requiring contract holders to consider the gender perspective when executing commissioned tasks.
- ✚ Government should implement measures to address transparency, complexity, capacity, and accessibility concerns. These should include publishing collated data on gendered procurement at departmental, local, provincial, and national levels in an accessible format. Central Supplier Database procurement information should be disaggregated by sex.
- ✚ Government entities should adopt a more integrated and long-term approach to the support and development of WOBs, including training for business owners and employees on gender-responsive procurement (GSP).
- ✚ Efforts must be made to ensure that WOBs are supported, properly advised and information be simplified on the procurement services and different sectors.

- 📌 Business leaders: Directors, leaders and managers all have a role to play in creating workplaces that support and encourage women to develop their full potential – and close the gender pay gap.
- 📌 Social protection policies, such as minimum wage legislation and social security benefits, can be effective if they consider the specific needs and vulnerabilities faced by women in the labour market. For instance, since its inception, the minimum wage law in South Africa has been effective in addressing pay differences for earners in the lowest deciles of the earnings distribution.

## **b. Gender Pay Gap**

- 📌 Employers can also promote transparency in pay structures within organizations, ensuring that salary ranges, pay scales and benefits are clearly defined and communicated.
- 📌 UNWOMEN recommends that having policies that support work–life balance, such as flexible working arrangements, setting an upper limit to the number of working hours in the week, parental leave (where both parents are encouraged to take time off), and affordable and good-quality childcare, care for people with disabilities and elderly care, can encourage women to fully participate in the labour market. This would help to reduce the gender pay gap while also ensuring that household and caregiving responsibilities can be redistributed more equitably between men and women.

## **c. Domestic workers**

The Department of Labour should find ways of engaging more with the Domestic workers Unions for awareness raising and empowerment regarding changes in the laws and policies that affect them.

## **d. Rural women**

- i. Awareness raising about women's human rights and opportunities especially in the rural areas is needed.
- ii. Elderly women in rural areas must be assisted with the unpaid care work that they spend a lot of their time doing. Effort must be taken to address unrecognised time use and unpaid care work done by these women.
- iii. Government must address the high levels of illiteracy amongst rural women and embark on technology/ ICT literacy education.
- iv. There must be efforts in embarking on rural women's access to formal employment, younger women in particular;
- v. It is critical to address the issues of exclusion of women in community decision-making and development initiatives:

## 16.2. FINDINGS FOR CLUSTER “B” POVERTY, EDUCATION AND HEALTH

### I. Findings for Poverty

There is:

- 🚦 A lack of Strategies that are alignment with international standards.
- 🚦 A lack of stakeholder participation in the drafting of strategies such as those meant for social security grants;
- 🚦 Insufficient recognition of gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities as well as structural gender inequalities by the social security strategies (Grants). The need to look more at both the actors that were involved in the development of the strategy and the mechanisms created to monitor its implementation when doing monitoring and accountability of such strategies.

Additional findings provided below come from the following reviews and dialogue:

- 🚦 ***A Review of the National Development Plan (NDP) : Advancing Implementation towards a more capable nation;***
  - 🚦 ***“South African policies go some way to tackling poverty and inequality: Centre for Social Development in Africa Published 2021;”***
  - 🚦 ***South Africa’s integrated approach to addressing poverty, inequality and exclusion - Centre for Social Development in Africa and the University of Johannesburg: Dialogue report -November 2020.***
- a) Despite measures being put in place to deal with poverty, the country still lacks a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy. There is therefore a need to consolidate the existing different programmes impacting poverty into a deliberate anti-poverty strategy.
  - b) Women and girls continue to suffer the negative impacts of persistent patriarchy, gender inequality, discrimination and a pandemic of gender-based violence.
  - c) The Poverty Trends Report (Statistics South Africa, 2017) and other research reflect that black African females are disproportionately affected by poverty. Black African females, children (17 years and younger), people from rural areas, and those with no education suffer the most.
  - d) Women’s poverty levels are higher than the national or country level. Individuals living in female-headed households also continue to account for shares in poverty that are larger than their shares in the population.
  - e) A household headed by a female has a 48% probability of being poor compared to a 28% probability for a household headed by a male. Violence against women remains a major problem in South Africa

- f) The findings from conducted research show that in 2015 a higher proportion of females (41.7%) were living below the Lower Bound Poverty Line compared to males (38.2%).

Some of the gaps identified in the reviews included the following:

- ✚ The gap between policy and practice: More needs to be done to include poverty, inequality and social exclusion in all policy making.
- ✚ Recognition of poverty, inequality and social exclusion cannot be limited to policy and strategy documents. It must be reflected in legislative documents because laws are binding.
- ✚ Policy-making institutions must take ownership of the national mandate. Each government department must develop solutions. They cannot simply rely on the National Development Plan to reduce poverty and inequality.

Despite poverty being identified as one of the critical areas to bring gender equality in South Africa:

- 10% of legislative documents and more than half of all policy and strategy documents mentioned poverty, inequality, social exclusion, gender, race, disability and spatial disparities at least once;
- Reviews emphasise that more references do not mean deeper engagement with these issues. In some cases, the issues are not critically analysed.
- References to poverty, inequality and social exclusion must explain how they affect each law and policy. They should also offer strategic interventions.

## **II. Recommendations for Poverty**

- ✚ Implementation and enforcement of the existing poverty and inequality policies is essential and should not just be limited to their existence on paper.
- ✚ It is essential that each policy-making institution across social, economic, environmental and administrative sectors take custodianship of the national mandate, not simply relying on the NDP to identify and address sectoral linkages with poverty, inequality, exclusion, but seeking to go beyond it by applying both sectoral expertise and social developmental evidence, to identify specific pathways to poverty reduction.
- ✚ There is a need to develop of a toolkit for a systematic approach to mainstreaming poverty, inequality and social exclusion policy: Using good practice that emerges from the various spheres.



### **Regarding Social Security policies - UNWOMEN recommends as follows:**

It is important to:

- a. Involve national gender equality mechanisms, women's rights organizations and other gender experts, as well as trade unions and organizations of informal workers in the development of national social protection strategies.
- b. Strengthen the capacity of social protection stakeholders to both identify and address gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities through specific social protection measures.
- c. Recognize and promote public investments in the care economy as a key part of social protection systems that can support economic development by enabling job creation, expanding women's employment opportunities, and supporting the capabilities of children and care-dependent adults.
- d. Strengthen coordination between social protection systems and Violence against Women and Girls services, on how to identify and refer survivors, drawing on the expertise of national gender equality mechanisms and women's organizations.
- e. Generate pathways and support for women's rights, workers' rights and other rights-based civil society organizations to shape social protection policies and systems, including through participatory monitoring and evaluation.
- f. Strengthen the collection and use of gender and social protection data, including sex-disaggregated data on coverage and benefit levels, as well as qualitative data that capture the intended and unintended impacts of policies and programmes on women and girls.
- g. Conduct further research to identify the barriers and bottlenecks for translating recognition of gender-specific risks into gender-responsive social protection strategies, policies and programmes.

### **III. Findings for Education**

- a. One of the commitments in the NDP is that of universal access to early childhood development (ECD) by 2030, and two years of quality pre-school. Government's decision to transfer the responsibility for all ECD functions to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in 2022 must therefore be applauded. This will provide a good opportunity to review and enhance South Africa's approach to supporting the holistic development of young children, in line with SDG 4.

SDG 4 requires that government must ensure that girls and boys must have access quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they can be prepared for primary education. By putting ECD under the department of Basic Education will directly assist with meeting the educational needs of these children more directly

- b. The fact that female learners outperformed boys by the equivalent of a grade level of learning on average nationally is a good sign of moving towards achieving gender equality in education. This requires that effort be made to sustain this and ensure that targets of goal 4 are reached by 2030.

***Some of the challenges still facing the education system in South Africa include the following:***

- a) The NDP committed to eliminate infrastructure deficiencies in schools by 2016, ensuring that all schools meet minimum standards. However, South Africa still has pit latrines and these have resulted in the loss of life of a number of learners.
- b) The school (learning) environment in South Africa is sometimes faced with hostilities, violence and riots, which have impeded proper learning. The violence affect even primary schools, where learners sometimes attack Educators. This is a concern because it causes high crime rates within the schooling environment.
- c) The High dropout rates, including due to teenage pregnancy makes it impossible for some learners to even complete grade 12. Dropping out of school can have serious and lasting effects on individuals and society and can result in:






- ✚ **Limited Career Opportunities:** Individuals who drop out of school often face limited job prospects. Without a high school diploma or equivalent, they may be restricted to low-paying jobs with little room for advancement.
- ✚ **Higher Unemployment Rates:** Lack of education makes it harder to find stable employment, leading to higher unemployment rates among dropouts.
- ✚ **Generational Impact:** The effects of dropout can extend to future generations. Children of dropouts are more likely to face similar challenges.
- ✚ **Economic Impact:** Societies with high dropout rates experience reduced economic productivity and growth.
- ✚ **Loss of Potential:** Every dropout represents unrealized potential—talents and contributions that could benefit society

- d) There has been an escalation of GBV in institutions of Higher learning. Information from a study conducted by the Council for Higher Learning (CHE) indicates that incidents of GBV are generally underreported and further that the majority of incidents, particularly those in which the LGBTQI people are victims, either go unreported, or, when reported, they are not followed up and investigated. The CHE further indicates that, universities in particular, often display the tendency to downplay the magnitude of the scourge of GBV on their campuses because they are driven by concerns of public image and status, and not wanting to commit the institutions to providing the necessary responses.

#### **IV. Recommendations for Education**

- a. Education is a powerful tool for personal growth and societal progress. Therefore, efforts to reduce dropout rates should focus on improving educational quality, addressing socio-economic disparities, and providing support to struggling students.
- b. The Department of Education must address the issue of boys being outperformed by girls and make an effort of closing that gap towards achieving gender equality between girls and boys so as to avoid the reversal of equality. This requires that effort be made to sustain this and ensure that targets of goal 4 are reached by 2030.
- c. Proper infrastructure in schools including the eradication of pit latrines is long overdue. Government must prioritise and ensure the safety of the learners in the school environment;
- d. Government must ensure that violence in schools is addressed and that parents are involved in the prevention of violence and discipline of the perpetrators thereof.
- e. Universities need to recognise that issues of violence especially GBV is an institutional problem and affects all who are a part of the institution. This recognition demands a critical reflection and interrogation of existing structures, hierarchies, and systems throughout the academe, which could give rise to gender biases, discrimination, and exclusion. Managements of universities need to review their policies and ensure that there are policies that seek to address GBV directly. Security personnel on campuses need to be conscientised about GBV and be trained to support victims in getting the incidents reported and the perpetrators brought to book.

#### **V. Findings for Health**

- a. Research still shows that South Africa has the largest number of people living with HIV worldwide, and that the high prevalence of HIV in this country has been attributed to various biological, socio-behavioural, contextual, and structural drivers. Of concerning is the fact that there are high rates of HIV incidence, especially among youth.
- b. The issue of forced sterilisation is a cause of concern. It indicates the need to raise awareness especially among women on their rights:
  -  to act autonomously and to choose one's own method of birth control;
  -  to equality;
  -  to dignity;
  -  to sexual and reproductive health and rights;
  -  to adequate and comprehensive information,

## **VI. Recommendations for Health**

- a. The Department of Health must ensure that information on reproductive right reach all women including women in the rural areas, Awareness raising programmes must be put in place, with the involvement of Civil Society Organisations to assist in reaching out to the areas.
- b. More efforts must be in place to enforce the existing policies on HIV/AIDS and specifically target the youth,

### **16.3. FINDINGS FOR CLUSTER "C", VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND WOMEN AND THE MEDIA**

#### **I. Findings for VAW including GBV**

The prevalence of GBV in South Africa has forced the President of the country to declare GBV as a serious challenge and declared it a pandemic. This has made civil society to demand amendment in certain legislation in order to address the existing challenges.

- a) The development of a National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP GBVF), which aims at addressing the pervasive issue of GBVF in the country, is an effort that must be applauded. The NSP provides a multi-sectoral, coherent strategic policy and programming framework to strengthen a coordinated national response to the crisis of GBVF, to tackle the root causes of GBVF, enhance prevention efforts and improve access to justice for survivors and strengthen support services rendered for survivors and/ or victims. This shows commitment to fight the scourge of GBV&H;
- b) Legislations for amendment included the Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Act 12 of 2021, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 13 of 2021 and the Domestic Violence Amendment Act 14 of 2021. The President further stated that these laws would protect victims of abuse and make it more difficult for perpetrators to escape justice. This commitment will need serious resources and proper implementation for it to bear fruit.
- c) The recent signing into law of the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) Bill and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) Amendment Bill, form part of government's efforts to strengthen institutions, develop partnerships and build state capacity to address GBV&F in South Africa. It is hoped that these would be some of the efforts, to ensure improvements in conviction rates and in stricter sentencing. While this progress is welcomed, the greatest task will be to prevent Gender-Based Violence from being perpetrated in the first place.
- d) It is important to note the increased activism in GBV&H, education and support for survivors, including legal advocacy on the issues that are related to GBV.

What will be needed is how to sustain these efforts and make sure that women and girls in the rural areas are also included and supported.

**Additional challenges that still exist include:**

- ✚ Lack of proper training of the police and government departments on the legislative changes that have been made.
- ✚ Shortage of GBV desks in many police stations.
- ✚ Lack of sufficient rape kits.
- ✚ Shelters which are supposed to care for survivors of GBV still have less funding support
- ✚ Lack of legal information for GBV survivors.
- ✚ Classification of GBV as assault by SAPS is problematic because this does not give a clear picture and proper statistics.

**II. Recommendations For Violence Against Women and GVB in general**

- a. It is recommended that serious effort be made to raise awareness amongst law enforcement officers about the new laws that deal with GBV
- b. There is a need for a more *systemic or holistic approach to GBV prevention and to recognise the existing* intersections between gender and other factors that increase the risk of experiencing GBV. This includes intersections between gender, race, socioeconomic status, culture, religion, geography, history and other factors.
- c. SAPS should separate GVB stats from the Assault crime stats and provide clear separate GBV Statistics.
- d. There is a need to ensure that strategies outlined in NSP GBVF are effectively implemented and monitored. In addition to that, the allocation of sufficient resources for the implementation of the Plan is also critical.
- e. There is a need to finalise Prevalence Study that commenced in 2019/2020 which will provide valuable insights into underlying factors contributing to GBVF in the Country, helping to inform policies and interventions.
- f. The establishment of GBV Council is critical so as to fast track the implementation of the NSP GBVF
- g. More training and support for traditional leadership structures on GBV&F and the related laws is needed;
- h. It is important that there be an more effort to raise awareness about GBV&F and that the GBV&F laws and policies be simplified.

### **III. Findings for Women and the Media**

Summary findings of the 2018 Glass Ceiling Study shows that:

- ✚ Gender parity is a reality in the overall composition of South African media houses. The bigger media houses have all achieved the 50% mark overall. However the parity does not translate to management level
- ✚ The proportion of white men in top management has dropped whilst black men are moving up the ranks at a much faster pace than black women:
- ✚ There has been an increase in women middle managers, but decline in skilled professionals;
- ✚ The gender pay gap appears to be widening
- ✚ Policies do not promote equal sharing of gender roles and responsibilities in the home
- ✚ A new breed of young media women are asserting their rights: Research reflects both a feminist backlash, and an increased anger and assertiveness by women in the media against sexism.

### **IV. Recommendations for Women and the Media**

- a. Black women must take senior positions so as to have a greater ownership and control of the media ;
- b. All media must adopt gender and diversity friendly policies;
- c. Media houses must set targets for achieving parity at all levels; and ban sexism;
- d. There is a need to reveal and close the gender wage gap;
- e. The media houses must adopt Family friendly practices;

#### **16.4. FINDINGS FOR CLUSTER “D” PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS**

- a) There is a need to promote and develop National Gender Machinery that will create a collaborative platform and relations.
- b) The gender machinery in South Africa needs to be reived. It will be important to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are involved and have their roles well defined. The coordination of the machinery must have well thought -out roles agreed to by relevant role players, with a well-defined mandate.

#### **16.5. FINDINGS FOR CLUSTER “E”- WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT**

##### **I. Findings**

- a) South Africa has developed National Action Plan (NAP), which provides a framework for address the specific needs and experiences of women in conflict and post conflict situations, as well as increasing women's participation in peace processes and decision-making.

- b) After the adoption of the NAP, government and CSOs partners supported by the development partners have been embarking on a series of activities across the country to popularise the NAP and promote capacity building through workshops, trainings, awareness raising, dialogues, radio stations, TV shows in view of promoting peaceful communities.
- c) The NAP has been translated into indigenous official languages, such as Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans and Sesotho, with the aim of ensuring access by different population groups in the country to optimise accessibility on the benefits of the existence of the NAP in the country.
- d) Government developed a White Paper on Peace Support and Gender Mainstreaming in line with the commitments of the NAP.
- e) A Five-Year Strategy to ensure Gender Mainstreaming within all the programs related to the NAP has been developed.
- f) A Gender Unit needs to be adequately resourced so that it can be effective in executing its mandate.

## **II. Recommendations for Women and Armed Conflict**

- a) A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan has to be developed.
- b) Funding must be allocated for implementation of the WPS Plan
- c) There is an urgent need for a coordinated multi-sectoral steering committee.

### **16.6. FINDINGS FOR CLUSTER "F" WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

#### **a) Gender mainstreaming**

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) developed a Strategy and called it *"Toward Gender Mainstreaming in the Environment Sector"*.

The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that initiatives in the sector are aimed at supporting the creation of policies that support gender mainstreaming and gender analysis during the development of new projects and ensure the inclusion of gender perspective into project cycles

Such areas include:

- i. Gender and Environmental Sciences : Understanding that women remain an integral part of government's environment programmes and that their participation thereof is critical in ensuring inclusiveness in environmental planning and decision-making;
- ii. Gender and Climate Change : to ensure that, sustainability interventions, responses and solutions consider gender issues if they are to fully meet the objectives for which they were established.

- iii. gender mainstreaming gender in in climate so as to ensure that women and men participate equally in decision-making with regards to policy and policy instruments aiming to improve the adaptation capacities of communities.
- iv. *Gender and the Green Economy: Main issues and entry points for gender mainstreaming within Green Economy include* Economic transformation which is about broadening opportunities for all South Africans regarding the green economy.

**b) National Climate Risk and Vulnerability (CRV) assessment framework**

The department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF), has established a framework to guide the development and review of CRV assessments to enable a more integrated approach to climate adaptation. The framework is intended to provide guidance on how to undertake CRV assessments in order to enable alignment, comparison and aggregation and thereby underpin an integrated, effective climate adaptation response across scales. This framework is has been developed because climate variability and climate change impacts are not experienced equally, even where the same climate event or climate pattern occurs.



## ANNEXURES

### ANNEXURE 1:

#### **SOUTH AFRICA'S RESPONSE TO THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL IN LINE WITH ECOSOC RESOLUTION 2015/6<sup>210</sup>**

In July 2020, the UN Secretary-General requested Member States to submit reports on progress made on "women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development at national levels". This was done in line with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution 2015/6, in terms of which the Secretary-General was expected to submit a report to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at its 65th Session in 2021 on the progress made at country level on women's empowerment.

South Africa was also requested to report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's empowerment and sustainable development and the prospects for a gender-responsive recovery.

South Africa's report focused on progress made in the following areas:

- Measures taken to strengthen normative, legal and policy frameworks for the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Actions and investments made for financing gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- Steps taken to bolster women's leadership and women's full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of sustainable development.
- Macroeconomic, labour and social policies put in place to promote full and productive employment and decent work for women, in response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's employment and economic rights and independence.
- Response and recovery measures to the COVID-19 pandemic taken to improve and expand social protection for women in healthcare coverage, unemployment benefits, paid sick leave, paid parental leave, maternity benefits, pensions, and income support, including cash transfers.
- Action taken to increase resources and support for women's organisations and civil society organisations in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Steps taken to improve gender-responsive data collection in the context of follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to track and monitor the gender-specific impacts and response measures to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report highlighted the following as some of the developments:

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<sup>210</sup> South Africa's Report on the Implementation of Agreed Conclusions on 'Women's Empowerment and the link to Sustainable Development (2020)

- a) Normative, legal and policy frameworks
- Amendments governing employment equity and equal pay
  - Targets for women in the petroleum and energy sector
  - Targets for women in the mining sector codes
  - Addressing the issue of tightening laws around gender-based violence and femicide, including amendments to the Domestic Violence Act, Sexual Offences Act and laws governing the access to justice for women
  - Proposed changes to the Marriage Act to ensure legislation governing the age of marriage and prevention of early marriages, prevention of forced marriages and harmful cultural practices in this regard, as well as re-introducing the bill on hate crimes
  - The Traditional Courts Bill and the issue of land redistribution – both of which significantly impact the lives of women
  - Adopting amendments on the issue of preferential procurement
  - The draft Bill on Public Procurement sought to rescind the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (the proposed bill addresses the issue of women, persons with disabilities and youth as beneficiaries of public procurement processes).

Mention was made of the National Development Plan: Vision 2030 (the NDP is seen as the blueprint for tackling South Africa's challenges and serves as a long-term vision for the country). The NDP is aligned with Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

## **9 C) Gender equality issues as identified by the sixth Administration (2019-2024)**

According to the 2020 report<sup>211</sup> by the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, South Africa's sixth Administration identified seven national priorities for the country for the period 2019-2024.

These were:

- i) Building a capable, ethical and developmental state
- ii) Economic transformation and job creation
- iii) Education, skills and health
- iv) Consolidating the social wage through reliable and quality basic services
- v) Spatial integration, human settlements and local government
- vi) Social cohesion and safe communities, and a better Africa and world.

The report included the country's gender priorities at that time. These included:

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<sup>211</sup> South Africa's Report on the Implementation of Agreed Conclusions on 'Women's Empowerment and the link to Sustainable Development (2020)

- i) Addressing gender inequality and the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming across all sectors of society through the effective implementation of gender-responsive planning, policy, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation, research and auditing
- ii) Full and effective implementation of laws, policies and strategies
- iii) Greater emphasis on women's economic emancipation through economic empowerment, financial inclusion and economic justice and rights
- iv) Transforming unequal gender relations
- v) Confronting the issue of patriarchy, toxic masculinities, misogyny, stereotypes, hierarchies, language and practices that perpetuate the demons of patriarchal norms in society, including in the workplace.

The report by the Department of Women acknowledges the following:

- i) A demonstration of a gender-responsive implementation approach in the current Medium-Term Strategic Framework 2019-2024, which prioritises gender as a cross-cutting focus area that should be gender mainstreamed into all elements of South Africa's developmental future and all programmes and interventions of government.
- ii) That the South African government has put measures in place to ensure that the Medium-Term Strategic Framework includes targets, indicators, and intervention measures that are gender responsive, and which must be achieved within the period 2019-2024.
- iii) That the South African Cabinet adopted a Gender Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing framework in 2019, which seeks to ensure that planning instruments at a national, sub-national, sectoral, institutional and programme level are gender-responsive and that sufficient resources are allocated to interventions which contribute to women's empowerment and gender equality.

### ***Financing gender equality and the empowerment of women***

South Africa has programmes that specifically target women to facilitate their participation in the mainstream economy, with the goal of developing sustainable enterprises that contribute to the country's gross domestic product, employment equity and economic transformation to enable women to have equal access to and control over economic resources.

Among these programmes is the Women's Empowerment Fund (WEF) as part of the National Empowerment Fund (NEF), which was established in 2014 to affirmatively drive the value and volume of approvals for and disbursement to businesses that are owned and managed by Black women.

The National Empowerment Fund is a government agency that is set up to provide capital for Black economic empowerment transactions. The NEF caters for Black women and aims to empower them to become part of the entrepreneurial society.

The various programmes are supported through the NEF and extend to women as beneficiaries.

Programmes' aims:

- Firstly, the programmes aim to reverse the imbalances created by previous policies and programmes, which negatively impacted women-owned enterprises and hindered their participation in the economy.
- Secondly, the programmes aim to transform economic conditions and create an enabling environment for women enterprises.

Government Focus	Sector	Examples of NEF Investment Breakthrough
<b>Township &amp; Rural Economy</b>		A dedicated fund that supports businesses in rural areas and townships. The businesses are in various sectors including property (shopping malls), petroleum sector (petrol stations) and tourism. To date the NEF disbursed over R2.1 billion in support of entities in rural and township economies. More than 50% of support has gone to women-owned businesses
<b>Support SMEs</b>		A dedicated fund that has supported entrepreneurship, procurement & franchise funding, as well as business planning, incubation, training and mentorship support. To date the NEF disbursed over R1.6 billion towards 454 small and medium enterprises. 45% of this support has accrued to black women-owned businesses.
<b>Energy</b>		Invested over R885 million in more than 100 service stations countrywide, supporting in excess of 2 937 jobs. 44% of the service stations are owned and managed by black women entrepreneurs.
<b>Black Industrialists</b>		Create new manufacturing and industrial capacity alongside local and international partners. To date the NEF has invested circa R900 million in developing projects with a total of 24 projects currently under development, 5 of which are operational businesses and have created over 3600 jobs and leveraged more than R4 billions of third-party funding.
Source: Growing Gender Dividend, National Empowerment Fund – Growing Black Economic Participation, August 2020		

SOURCE: South Africa's report on the implementation of agreed conclusions on 'women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development, 2020

### **Women's leadership and equal participation in decision-making**

South Africa has put clear targets in place regarding key areas of political and governance levels to promote the advancement, representation, and full participation of women in power structures and key decision-making levels. These clear targets were determined in an effort to achieve gender parity within the political sphere, the public service, and the private sectors.

For example:

1. Schedule 2: Electoral Code of Conduct of the South African Electoral Act 73 of 1998 states that every registered party and every candidate must:
  - a) Respect the right of women to communicate freely with parties and candidates
  - b) Facilitate the full and equal participation of women in political activities
  - c) Ensure the free access of women to all public political meetings, marches, demonstrations, rallies, and other public political events
  - d) Take all reasonable steps to ensure that women are free to engage in any political activities.
2. South Africa has had considerable success in advancing women's representation and gender equality across the State machinery. There has been a steady

increase in the number of women elected as Speakers, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Premiers, Members of Parliament, Mayors, Councillors, and Chairpersons of Portfolio Committees in the National Legislature.

3. The representation of women Ministers in cabinet reached 50% in June 2019.
4. In 2019, 46.1% of seats in Parliament were taken up by women. Women's representation in local government increased from 19% in 1995 to 41%. There is a 39% representation of women as Municipal Mayors following the 2016 local government elections.
5. The percentage of women Judges was 38.5% in 2019, and approximately 44% of women Magistrates in South Africa, with most of them located as Regional Court Presidents (i.e. over 50%).
6. There has been an increase in the number of women in senior management positions in public service, including Directors-General and Heads of Departments in national and provincial departments. There is an estimation that 42% of women are in senior management positions in public service.
7. Women have broken down the barriers of entry in sectors such as the military, police force, navy, and air force.
8. The number of women in management and decision-making positions in the private sector and state-owned enterprises has increased, especially among professional women, women CEOs, women on boards, women directors, and women managers.

The gap between women and men at managerial levels is still wide. Unfortunately, a 2017 Businesswomen's Leadership Census shows that only 20.7% of directors and 29.4% of executive managers are women. At the top leadership level of organisations, women account for only 11.8% of CEOs or Chairpersons.

## 10 E) Summary of South Africa's response to COVID-19

Headings	Actions
Women leaders' roles in South Africa's response to COVID-19	<p>Women ministers led in most processes, with the Minister for Local Government and Traditional Affairs leading the Disaster Management Process as the custodian of the Act<sup>212</sup>.</p> <p>The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities participated in various structures at various levels, in various workstreams that were undertaking the technical work of the government's response to COVID-19 with the overarching objective to mitigate negative impacts of the pandemic on women and girls, particularly the most vulnerable.</p>
Economic, labour and social policies to promote employment and decent work in response to the	<p>a) The South African Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guarantees everyone the right to fair labour practices</li> <li>• Provides for the rights of every worker, including women</li> </ul>

<sup>212</sup> Disaster Management Act 257 of 2002

<p>impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's employment, economic rights and independence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affords everyone the right to social security</li> <li>• Legislation and policies are based on the principle of equality expressed in the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (as amended), which seeks to achieve equity in the workplace through the promotion of equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment, the elimination of unfair discrimination, and includes affirmative action measures to redress disadvantages experienced by designated groups (Black people, women, and persons with disabilities)</li> <li>• Permits organs of the State (such as departments of government and public entities) to implement a preferential procurement policy that advances persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.</li> </ul> <p>b) The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 prohibits systems that prevent women from inheriting family property and which unfairly limit access of women to land rights, finance, and other resources.</p> <p>c) The Labour Relations Act and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act govern the issues of parental leave, maternity leave and benefits, night shifts, and conditions of service.</p> <p>d) The BCEA has been amended to introduce provisions relating to employees legally accessing parental leave, adoption leave and commissioning parental leave</p>
	<p>As a result of the lockdown, all forms of employment were stopped except for essential services and goods. Many women lost their jobs and sources of income and experienced increased levels of poverty, food insecurity and hunger.</p> <p>With the closure of schools, unpaid care work and family household responsibilities increased dramatically for women and girls.</p>
<p>Response and recovery measures to the COVID-19 pandemic taken to improve and expand social protection for women (e.g., healthcare coverage, unemployment benefits, paid sick leave, paid parental leave, maternity benefits, pensions, income support such as cash transfers)</p>	<p>The Government of South Africa introduced a range of measures to mitigate the worst effects of the pandemic on businesses, on communities, and on individuals.</p> <p>Key socio-economic measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and to address the increased vulnerability to poverty and hunger that would affect poor households as a result of the COVID-19 disaster and subsequent lock-down included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child support grant increased by a once-off R300 per child cash pay-out in May 2020</li> <li>• A COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant to caregivers of a R500 cash pay-out.</li> <li>• All other grants (older persons grant, foster care grant, disability grant and care dependency grant) were increased by R250 per month from May to October 2020;</li> <li>• A new COVID-19 Social Relief Distress grant of R350 for unemployed citizens was introduced for six months.</li> </ul> <p>Support for informal and formal businesses such as spaza shops:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMME debt relief facility: women accounted for 32.8% of the total SMME grants approved,</li> <li>• Tourism relief fund for (SMMEs) and freelance guides: the fund benefitted about 3,861 women SMMEs</li> <li>• Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) (employees and employer): as of 14 May 2020, UIF had disbursed just under R12 billion (R11,915,612,569.90) through 167,524 employers and benefitted 2,092,774 workers. A total of R155,481,810 has been paid to 56,641 workers through bargaining councils representing 909 employers. From 26 March 2020 to 14 May 2020, the fund paid R249,743,938.38 in maternity benefits for 27,631 recipients.</li> </ul> <p>Other funding that benefitted women</p> <p>Compensation Fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary Employee Relief Scheme (Domestic)</li> <li>• Temporary Employee Relief Scheme</li> <li>• Sport, Arts and Culture Relief Fund.</li> </ul> <p>Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC) COVID-19 Funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Empowerment Fund (NEF) and Small Enterprise Financing Agency (SEFA)</li> <li>• Approximately 14 companies that were 100% women-owned supplied water tanks and hand-washing stations to schools.</li> </ul>
Action taken to expand the availability and affordability of care services to address the increase in unpaid care work and domestic work because of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., care subsidies, paid leave)	<p>A COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant to caregivers of R500 per caregiver from June to October 2020. Women constituted 97.7% of the beneficiaries.</p> <p>The Minister of Employment and Labour introduced measures to ensure that more vulnerable workers benefit from the COVID-19 Temporary Employer/Employee Relief Scheme scheme, which resulted in several domestic workers being paid directly. UIF figures showed that a considerable number of domestic workers had benefitted.</p>
Action taken to increase resources and support for women's and civil society organisations to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic	<p>The National Development Agency (NDA) contributed towards the eradication of poverty and its causes, even within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, by providing grant funding to civil society organisations to implement development projects in poor communities and strengthen the institutional capacity of CSOs that provide services to poor communities.</p> <p>The NDA worked in partnership with 52 national CSOs that provide poverty eradication interventions within their local communities through grant funding interventions.</p> <p>The NDA provided the CSOs with protective clothing and kits (including face masks, gloves and hand sanitisers) and information pamphlets in local languages. At a basic level, CSOs continued to assist communities with the distribution of food parcels, support elderly and disabled persons, and disseminate information at hot spots, as well as during door-to-door visits within communities. They also assisted with community screening interventions, counselling for gender-based violence cases, and assisting people who needed</p>

	access to chronic medication to visit healthcare facilities. They also assisted communities with the various registrations to access government relief funds, such as SASSA special relief distress funds and the Department of Agriculture Disaster Relief Fund for small-scale farmers.
Steps taken to improve gender-responsive data collection in the context of follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to track and monitor the gender-specific impacts and response measures to the COVID-19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities introduced a COVID-19 gender tracking tool to monitor the implementation of the COVID-19 response and intervention measures by government departments, as well as the economic recovery measures. The tracker also aims to obtain information on the extent to which women have benefitted from COVID-19-related public expenditure, including the procurement of personal protective equipment.</li> <li>ii) The challenge with obtaining gender and sex-disaggregated data persists, however, the implementation of the gender-responsive tracking system is gaining hold and beginning to deliver the data which will assist in determining how women have benefitted from the COVID-19 response measures and to also assist in gender-responsive planning and budgeting in the economic recovery process.</li> <li>iii) The National Medium-Term Strategic Framework contains specific targets and indicators that are gender responsive. Quarterly reporting processes are also aimed at periodically obtaining disaggregated data on gender, age, and disability.</li> <li>iv) Through Stats SA, regular disaggregated data is collected and analysed through periodic labour force, household, community surveys, and censuses, among others.</li> <li>v) The government, through the Department of Health and other partners, also provides weekly and daily reports on COVID-19. The Department of Health periodically disaggregates the data according to age and sex.</li> </ul>

## ANNEXURE 2:

### GLOBAL GENDER EQUALITY IN 2023: URGENT EFFORTS NEEDED TO REACH 2030 GOALS<sup>213</sup>

This annual review by UN Women and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs examines the state of gender equality within the framework of the 17

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<sup>213</sup> UN Women: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/feature-story/2023/09/global-gender-equality-in-2023-urgent-efforts-needed-to-reach-2030-goals>



Sustainable Development Goals. At the current rate, we risk leaving more than 340 million women and girls in abject poverty by 2030, and an alarming 4% could grapple with extreme food insecurity by that year.

Even with significant progress in certain sectors, as we approach the halfway mark of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, monumental challenges remain:

SDG 1: No poverty	The report forecasts that by 2030, 8% of the global female population (approximately 342 million women and girls) will continue to live on less than USD 2.15 a day. Only 42% of countries have sex-disaggregated poverty data readily available, impeding targeted interventions.
SDG 2: Zero hunger	While progress in narrowing the gender gap in food insecurity has been made, roughly 24% of women and girls may still experience moderate to severe food insecurity by 2030. Gender disparities in agriculture persist, with limited access to land, resources, and ownership affecting productivity.
SDG 3: Good health and well-being	While maternal mortality reduced globally from 2000 to 2020, progress has stagnated since 2015. High maternal death rates in sub-Saharan Africa and central/southern Asia highlight inequalities in healthcare access and quality.
SDG 4: Quality education	Increases in girls' enrolment in education are commendable, but nearly 110 million girls and young women could remain out of school by 2030 if progress stalls. Gender gaps in education and training opportunities persist, affecting future earning potential and overall development.
SDG 5: Gender equality	Gender equality sees limited progress, with just two of this goal's indicators nearing their targets. No indicator has fully met its aim.  Deep-seated biases persist, marked by unequal health access, unequal political representation, economic gaps, and inadequate legal defences. Crucial data for monitoring progress is missing in many countries. Furthermore, 28 countries do not recognise women's equal rights in marriage and divorce. Globally, 19% of young women are married before age 18, and there is a notable disparity in leadership roles.  A significant investment of an additional USD 360 billion annually is crucial to achieving gender equality, a cornerstone to meet broader sustainable development objectives.
SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation	While more women now have access to safe drinking water, around 380 million women and girls live amid high or critical water stress, a number projected to increase to 674 million by 2050 due to climate change.
SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy	Approximately 341 million women and girls could lack access to electricity by 2030, with clean cooking fuels remaining out of reach for many. Universal electricity could elevate 185 million women and girls from poverty by 2050, and modern cookstoves could prevent 6.5 million pollution-related deaths.
SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth	Disrupted careers, care responsibilities, and wage discrimination mean women only earn a third of the global income generated by labour. For each dollar men earned in labour income, women earned only 51 cents. The gender wage gap and under-representation of women in the labour

	force continue, indicating the need for policy reforms to ensure equitable opportunities and wages.
SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Women hold 21% of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) jobs, and only one in three researchers is a woman. Gender disparities in technology and innovation persist, hindering women's participation in STEM fields and impeding progress in emerging technologies like artificial intelligence.
SDG 10: Reduced inequalities – gender	Discrimination comes in many forms and remains commonplace, undermining human rights. According to the latest available data, up to 21% of people living with HIV reported being denied health care in the past 12 months, and up to 26% of women living with HIV reported that their treatment for the virus was conditional on taking contraceptives.
SDG 11: Sustainable cities	By 2050, urban areas are expected to house 70% of the world's female population, totalling 3.3 billion. Alarming trends suggest a third of these women and girls could find themselves living in inadequate housing or slums. Moreover, women with disabilities, representing approximately 18% of the female population, face heightened challenges. A 2022 study indicated that a mere 27% of 190 countries and regions explicitly protected the rights of women with disabilities.
SDG 12–15: Responsible production and consumption, climate action, life below water, life on land	Up to 158 million more women and girls might find themselves in poverty by mid-century due to worsening conditions fuelled by global warming. This represents 16 million more than their male counterparts. An alarming 236 million more women and girls may experience food insecurity compared to 131 million men and boys. Despite these numbers, only 55 of the world's national climate action plans include gender-specific adaptation measures, and only 23 recognise the vital role of women as change agents in the fight against climate change.
SDG 16: Peace and strong institutions	Since 2017, the number of women and girls in conflict-ridden areas has surged by 50%, tallying up to 614 million by 2022. In 2023, those in extremely fragile areas were especially vulnerable, facing higher poverty rates and increased food insecurity. Intimate partner violence is 2.4 times higher in extremely fragile contexts compared to non-fragile settings.
SDG 17: Partnerships	A dire need for enhanced financial backing exists in countries where gender equality lags the most. The yearly budget dedicated to gender equality as a principal objective remains low at USD 5.7 billion, just 4% of total bilateral aid. This minimal support, coupled with only one in four countries actively tracking gender equality funding, underscores the challenges faced in achieving parity.

## LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

As the world's population ages, older women's challenges and contributions are often overlooked. Discrimination, economic insecurity, and violence plague older women, necessitating policies that support their engagement, healthcare, and well-being.

The Gender Snapshot 2023 underscores that gender equality is slipping further away, with various Sustainable Development Goals still far from achieving their targets. Urgent, coordinated efforts are imperative to accelerate progress by 2030, with enhanced funding, data tracking, policy reforms, and inclusive partnerships being key

drivers of transformative change. The report's findings serve as a call for action to ensure that the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is fulfilled, leaving no woman or girl behind.

### **ANNEXURE 3: UN WOMEN: GUIDANCE NOTE: BUILDING GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROCUREMENT: LESSONS FROM RESEARCH AND PRACTICE, 2022**

#### **GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROCUREMENT (GRP)<sup>214</sup>**

Gender-responsive procurement (GRP) is the sustainable selection of services, goods or civil works that consider the impact on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM) definition of GRP is:

*"The sustainable selection of services, goods or works that takes into account the impact on gender equality and women's empowerment, and actively seeks to reduce barriers to entry for women's businesses to benefit from business opportunities".*

UN Women works with governments, the private sector, civil society and women entrepreneurs in alignment with Target 8.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the focus on:

*"Promoting development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services".*

UN Women use the strategy of gender-responsive procurement (GRP) to identify the challenges and barriers preventing WOBs from accessing and fully participating in global and local value chains and comprehensive how-tos that buyers can implement to increase sourcing for WOBs.

UN Women conducted a study in 2022 and produced a Guidance Note: *Building Gender-Responsive Procurement: Lessons from Research and Practice*. The intention was to use the results of the study to develop recommendations for programming and policy development that can have a transformative impact on the material realities of women entrepreneurs, business owners and workers. The intended targets for the recommendations of the study were development actors, government, civil society, the United Nations and the private sector, who are planning or implementing such GRP policies and programmes. The aim is that this knowledge will foster learning that

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<sup>214</sup> UN Women. (2022). *Guidance Note: Building Gender Responsive Procurement: Lessons from Research and Practice*

enables GRP advocates to scale up their programmes based on evidence and practical experience. A few countries, including Rwanda, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa, participated in that study.

According to the study, strategic entry points and challenges for GRP depend on the following four factors:

- Legal and institutional frameworks (institutions)
- Partnerships among different stakeholders (partnerships)
- Data (evidence)
- Capabilities of buyers and suppliers (capacity) in a country.



SOURCE: UN Women Guidance note named "Building Gender Responsive Procurement: Lessons from Research and Practice."

## 11 Findings of the study

### ***Institutions***

- Procurement systems reflect the values of the buyers, and these are sometimes reproduced through their actions.
- Women's negative experiences with procurement processes are sometimes due to a lack of gender responsiveness and/or deficiencies in the procurement process and system.
- Dominant sexist norms and behaviours limit and constrain many women's autonomy when setting up and running a business.
- Entrenched traditional and patriarchal perceptions restrict women's mobility, limit social networks, discriminate based on gender or marital status, impose restrictions based on reproductive and domestic responsibilities and hamper decision-making powers and time availability, therefore strictly limiting women's economic activity and growth of businesses.
- These factors force WOBs to operate in the informal, lower value-added service sectors and home-based enterprises that produce specifically for intermediaries. The situation results in limiting WOBs' access to financial literacy, business skills, and business acumen, which are crucial for sustainable growth. Many women fail to

increase the scale of their enterprises enough to trigger significant economic renewal.

- The formal framework in a country matters for gender-responsive procurement (GRP), from laws and regulations to policies, even though it is not enough by itself to ensure that procuring entities will successfully apply GRP.
- Legal and policy frameworks pose obstacles to GRP when they ignore gender and/or lack precision, enforcement, comprehensiveness, or consistency (e.g., failing to meaningfully define WOBs or to set formal obligations, targets and sanctions regarding GRP) or leave agencies or departments with discretionary power to shape their procurement. In addition, among SMEs that are buyers, a number lack a formal procurement policy altogether, even when they have a stated goal of practising GRP.
- In the public sector, a set of laws, regulations, amendments, legal notices and processes make up the formal legal and institutional framework of procurement, whether it is gender-neutral or includes provisions for GRP (as is the case in South Africa).
- Other kinds of policies can advance GRP. For example, provisions in favour of SMEs in procurement are helpful, particularly in contexts where SMEs are typically owned or dominated by women.
- WOBs can also take advantage of policies outside the realm of procurement, such as credit support measures for SMEs.
- Preferential procurement in support of disadvantaged groups can enable GRP if it includes women in the groups concerned.
- In the private sector, the set of relevant formal policies, mandates and strategies adopted by individual companies for GRP typically include:
  - Policies and processes on procurement
  - Sourcing and structured and competitive bidding
  - Programmes for sustainability or supplier diversity
  - Any policies, mandates or strategies for GRP developed at a high level
  - Any initiatives for buying from or supporting women-owned suppliers or for GRP, be it as part of corporate social responsibility or because of public laws for affirmative procurement, as is the case in South Africa.
- Beyond individual company policies, there can also be volunteer industry codes on affirmative procurement. Moreover, in South Africa, several sectors have adopted Codes of Good Practice or Charters to apply the publicly mandated broad-based Black economic empowerment (BBBEE).

### **Partnerships**

GRP programming rests on close collaborations with many diverse stakeholders. The studies recommended four major approaches to partnership:

- Close collaboration with women entrepreneurs and WOBs is necessary, sometimes focusing on WOBs with the greatest likelihood of success in procurement, including more disadvantaged WOBs. The major aim is to support and empower them to

seize opportunities in GRP and consult with them to facilitate dialogue with public, private, and non-profit actors to improve women's position in procurement.

- Close collaborations with public officials, civil servants, and political party leaders to push for improvements in the formal framework and in the practices and capacities of public procurement so that WOBs benefit as both direct and subcontracted suppliers.
- Lessons from the private sector show a need for close collaboration with large private companies to encourage them to adopt and implement policies to increase the inclusion of WOBs in their supply chains.
- Both the public service and private sectors propose close collaborations with other relevant stakeholders such as various professional associations (chambers of commerce, business associations, trade or industry associations), women's associations, the main private and non-profit institutions promoting women's entrepreneurship, actors promoting gender equality and development actors.

### **Evidence**

Studies covering major angles are significant for:

- The mapping of women's businesses in a particular market.
- The current state of participation of women's businesses in procurement
- The supply-side barriers women entrepreneurs face
- The demand-side frameworks, experiences and contexts that shape GRP practice in countries
- Political and economic factors more broadly.

It is crucial to have evidence that is disaggregated by business size, sectors or industries and stage in value chains (as done for South Africa).

On the public sector side, such analyses covered issues including processes during tendering, bid evaluation, award and payment and the social, political, cultural, and other nuances shaping public procurement (as in South Africa).

On the private sector side, the analysis was structured around supply chains (as in South Africa).

## **12 Capacity**

Capacity gaps for procurement organisations:

- The lack of requirements for and enforcement of accountability regarding GRP, with no sanctions for failure,
- The absence of mechanisms for suppliers to lodge grievances can prevent women from learning why they did not get a contract and how to improve for their next bid.
- Arguably, procurement entities can reproduce the gendered segmentation of markets by associating women's businesses only with sectors where women are typically present in larger numbers.

- Gender imbalances in procurement staff may mean that GRP is considered a women's issue as opposed to a mainstream issue that impacts everyone.
- Corruption in procurement, where present, has gendered implications specifically detrimental to women suppliers.

### **Partnerships**

- In terms of relationships, reliance on pre-existing, exclusionary procurement networks to choose suppliers is common. Such physical and virtual networks are economic, cultural and inter-related. They are often closed in that they tend to exclude those who are not actively connected to existing networks because buyers look first at those they know.
- The conditions for access are more challenging for micro and small WOBs compared to medium WOBs.
- In South Africa, White women have a small advantage over Black women in accessing such networks. In addition, the private sector often requires an in-person pitch, which many women find very difficult to do due to cultural reasons and low self-confidence.

### **Evidence**

- There may also be problems with data collection, monitoring, and evaluation of gender in an entity's procurement or the support of WOBs. For example, some institutions have set up no data systems, while others lack a unified framework for this. Gender-disaggregated data typically fails to systematically integrate intersectionality.
- Additionally, public and private actors may not agree to share their data publicly to protect information they consider to be internal or confidential.
- Some procuring entities lack knowledge of women's businesses and the context of the country for women entrepreneurs.
- There may be a lack of good-quality data on WOBs. There are also few easy and reliable ways for procuring entities to check that businesses are really owned and run by women.
- Sometimes staff, including senior staff and operational management, do not understand GRP or do not have the tools to implement it, such as integrated financial management information systems.
- Some procuring entities provide no support or set conditions to access procurement, which puts them out of reach for many WOBs.

### **Capacity gaps: Buyers**

- At the tender calls stage, buying entities often fail to adapt their channels of communication, language and wording (in procurement documents and even support services) to make them accessible to women.
- At the (pre-)qualification stage, many financial and non-financial conditions and requirements structurally hamper WOBs, especially the ones run by the most

disadvantaged women. As part of this, financial requirements for bid security and performance guarantees constitute a particular obstacle.

- During the tender evaluation, the lack of information on the status of applications discourages a number of WOBs from bidding. During the contract, technical specifications that change or are vague, as well as a lack of follow-up and communication on the part of procuring entities, all pose problems for women entrepreneurs. After the completion of a contract, delays in payment are a major problem for WOBs and deter them from engaging in procurement, including in GRP initiatives.

### **Capacity gaps: Suppliers**

Challenges of entrepreneurship and business ownership for women:

- Dominant sexist norms and behaviours limit and constrain many women's autonomy when setting up and running a business. These translate into real challenges for women when it comes to accessing procurement.
- Women – especially more disadvantaged women – do not know enough about how procurement works, often leaving them dependent on men for this.
- Entrenched traditional and patriarchal perceptions restrict women's mobility, limit social networks, discriminate based on gender or marital status, impose restrictions based on reproductive and domestic responsibilities, hamper decision-making powers and time availability, and limit women's economic activity and the growth of their businesses.
- These factors force WOBs to operate in the informal, lower value-added service sectors and home-based enterprises that produce specifically for intermediaries.
- The situation results in limiting WOBs' access to financial literacy, business skills, and business acumen, which are crucial for sustainable growth. Many women fail to increase the scale of their enterprises enough to trigger significant economic renewal.

Sometimes, women's businesses lack the capacity for effective bidding strategies, such as setting competitive pricing or using collective bids through collaborations or joint ventures. Further, women's lack of awareness often applies to GRP, GRP opportunities and GRP-related support.

In some countries, women entrepreneurs' widespread ignorance about the applicable rules and procedures dramatically lessens the impact of the legal provision for affirmative procurement, as this:

- Prevents many women entrepreneurs from bidding for tenders they would have had high chances of winning
- Leads some women entrepreneurs to submit bids that are of poor quality
- Exposes women entrepreneurs who have won a tender to penalties and sanctions for not complying with the specifications of the tender.

Lastly, women make less use of the recourses available to them in procurement procedures, especially for grievance and redress.



### **Systematic gaps**

There are also significant gaps, obstacles and poor practices in the products and services that public and private financial institutions offer women entrepreneurs.

Formal banking and financing (e.g., through banks and credit support) are not well designed for women entrepreneurs – especially SMEs. Instead, women entrepreneurs have to rely more on their personal contacts for funds. Most countries note this. In some countries, even public systems that support financing and credit for enterprises are out of reach for WOBs. Some financial institutions also exhibit gender discrimination against women entrepreneurs.

In South Africa, organisations tasked with supporting WOBs seem to have neglected those in rural areas, failing to provide them with resources and instead concentrating resources on metropolitan areas. Public programmes for enterprise development, including for small businesses, are not filling the many gaps throughout the value chain for either small businesses or WOBs.

## **13 Recommendations**

The report synthesised 11 studies produced by UN Women on gender-responsive procurement from seven countries. The key takeaway for actors who are planning and implementing GRP interventions is that GRP can be adapted depending on several contextual factors.

- Rights-based approaches should apply to GRP actions, which must be anchored on human rights and workers' rights.
- Programming should be applied with an intersectional lens, with due account given to the interplay of structural inequalities that combine with gender (e.g., socio-economic class, caste, geography, age, ethnicity, nationality, migration and refugee status, and disability).
- GRP projects should strive to empower even the most disadvantaged suppliers by ensuring that any support and capacity-building provided to WOBs on procurement reaches and is tailored to diverse businesses.
- Stakeholders should recognise that not all businesses can be suppliers, and it is essential for Country Offices to have typologies that distinguish survival or sustenance enterprises, 'steady state enterprises', and high-growth enterprises among WOBs.
- GRP stakeholders can also strive to make procurement work better for all small businesses.
- Partners' programming should dedicate more attention and action to developing sector-specific programming to tackle the effects of the gender segmentation of businesses by sectors. It is thus important to be aware of sectors where women suppliers are currently concentrated and enable them to move to a different stage in the value chain if they wish.

### **Tackle corruption**

- Governments should tackle corruption in procurement while simultaneously strengthening their laws on the protection of women to put a stop to financial or sexual corruption or favouritism in public procurement. They should also strengthen the ethics code of contracting authorities, evaluate its application and regularly train officials in good ethical practices.
- Such policies should address both general and gender-based forms of corruption in procurement. Regarding a problem such as sexual extortion, this means having appropriate legal frameworks, as well as policies and programmes on awareness-raising, reporting mechanisms and data and research.
- Programming should be integrated with efforts toward sustainability and resilience with sensitivity to trends like violent conflicts, public health crises and climate change.

### **Partnerships**

- Advocacy should involve actors who have actual influence over the procurement areas concerned.
- Strengthening the capacities of women's associations and industry associations is helpful so they can conduct evidence-based advocacy towards public or private buyers and procurement associations.
- Mobilising and organising WOBs to demand change using public awareness campaigns is a key strategy.
- Fostering champions for GRP among procuring entities that establish and implement industry guidance or codes on procurement.
- Procuring entities should institutionalise collective and individual accountability for GRP, especially at senior levels.
- Ensuring collaboration, coordination and communication between and within public procuring entities can entail designating one institution within the State as the leading entity in charge of achieving the set objectives of GRP.
- To achieve a multi-sectoral approach between and within government departments, planning, finance and procuring departments should coordinate, communicate and cooperate.

### **Evidence**

- To be effective, procuring organisations and stakeholders involved should ensure that outcomes, results and impacts are publicly reported, monitored and evaluated.
- Procuring entities should move towards a culture of gender-focused audits.
- Financial institutions should also be encouraged to gather, analyse and communicate gender-disaggregated data about their clients.
- Evaluation by the procuring entities themselves should be complemented by reviews conducted by expert third-party intermediaries and academics to produce objective and rigorous evidence and ensure that private and public initiatives for GRP are not "little more than political and public relations posturing".

- Publicity and integrity of data and knowledge are all the more important, given that a number of powerful public and private procurement entities have refused to provide access to their GRP initiatives or their data. For example, academics who wanted to research Coca-Cola's 5by20 Programme in South Africa were denied access. These programmes of 'transnational business feminism' "revealed themselves as hyper-visible yet largely inaccessible and also as deeply protective of their practices and of the knowledge produced about them".

### **Demand-side capacity**

- It is essential to specifically target not only an organisation's procurement procedures and tools but also its wider organisational practices.
- Procuring entities should simplify and streamline the procedures, processes, documentation and IT tools in their procurement, including improving payments to suppliers so that they are paid on time.
- This may require ring-fencing the funds for payment to prevent their reallocation and have procuring entities pay interest on delayed payments.
- It also involves putting in place systems to connect buyers and suppliers.
- Procuring entities should create mechanisms or tools to connect buyers and WOBs as suppliers by gathering and sharing gender-disaggregated data on women and men suppliers and supporting the creation of supplier databases.
- Digital solutions may reduce some of the discrimination women face as business owners in face-to-face interactions. Likewise, reducing the number of intermediaries for a transaction enables women to reap more benefits from this.
- WOBs struggle when it comes to actions such as securing licences and intellectual property rights, negotiating customs procedures, navigating logistics costs, particularly in rural areas, and accessing appropriate finance because of the high barriers to entry. Companies in developing economies face even greater barriers.
- E-commerce platforms are controlled mainly by large companies, which can put smaller companies such as WOBs at a disadvantage and create extreme power disparities. This could put more pressure on women's unpaid care work, drive women's reliance on the gig economy, which is precarious, reinforce trade inequalities between the Global North and Global South, and enable companies to extract and abuse data from women-owned companies.
- Stakeholders can unite around the Women's Empowerment Principles, through which companies can advance gender equality and women's empowerment both internally and in their supply chains.
- Actors in the GRP space can update and localise the Corporate Guide to Gender-Responsive Procurement for a comprehensive set of steps businesses can take to improve their supplier diversity programmes and so on.
- To facilitate organisational change, procuring entities can turn to the internal expertise they already have among their staff in human resources and, if available, among staff tasked with diversity. These professionals can apply their skills to supplier diversity instead of leaving this to the procurement department alone.

- They are likely to have relevant expertise in building diversity programmes and can, for example, increase employees' knowledge and support of supplier diversity by including this in employee training. They may also have business contacts belonging to disadvantaged groups, who could "facilitate networking and business relationships between the company's procurement department and diverse suppliers".

### ***Supply-side capacity***

- Country actors supporting GRP should help connect WOBs with capacity-building on procurement given by public, private and non-profit organisations in the form of training, mentoring, coaching and fully integrated supplier development programmes. They should leave no disadvantaged suppliers behind by ensuring that any support and capacity-building provided reaches and is tailored to diverse WOBs, including the more disadvantaged ones and SMEs.
- Country actors should also help enhance WOBs' financial capacities. This includes advocacy to transform financing services so they meet women entrepreneurs' needs and provide credit support, especially in rural areas, collaborate with banks to develop tailored products for SMEs, and consider creating a one-stop platform to connect WOBs, procuring entities and financial institutions.
- Support should also aim to help women be more comfortable with navigating the financial process, as their perceptions in this area affect their willingness to seek financing and to then bid on procurement.
- Actors supporting GRP should also enhance WOBs' social capital. This entails actively linking women entrepreneurs into existing procurement networks, supporting WOBs in registering on procurement platforms, having women's and industry associations connect WOBs through a network on affirmative procurement, mentoring or coaching WOBs on procurement and creating a platform for WOBs to collaborate and build their networks.
- Actors for GRP should improve WOBs' access to and positioning in local, national or international markets. For example, they can help WOBs to have better market information, focus on expanding industries (e.g., services) that are more accessible to them, enter supply chains through supplier and enterprise development, develop tailored business models, such as joint ventures, partnerships and subcontracting, form national or regional value chains; and adopt niches.
- Actors for GRP can also help WOBs achieve the right balance between integration and autonomy in relation to the supply chain. This will be particularly important for WOBs that start with one large business (often owned by men) as their main client and for WOBs who become regular subcontractors for a major contractor to a large business (which may also be owned by men).
- Retaining independence from businesses not owned by women matters for the women involved because it is one of the criteria for businesses to keep qualifying as WOBs.

## ANNEXURE 4: WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

Principle	Explanation
Principle 1: Leadership promotes gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affirm high-level support and direct top-level policies for gender equality and human rights</li> <li>• Establish company-wide goals and targets for gender equality and include progress as a factor in managers' performance reviews</li> <li>• Engage internal and external stakeholders in the development of company policies, programmes and implementation plans that advance equality</li> <li>• Ensure that all policies are gender sensitive – identifying factors that impact women and men differently – and that corporate culture advances equality and inclusion</li> </ul>
Principle 2: Equal opportunity, inclusion and non-discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay equal remuneration, including benefits, for work of equal value and strive to pay a living wage to all women and men</li> <li>• Ensure that workplace policies and practices are free from gender-based discrimination</li> <li>• Implement gender-sensitive recruitment and retention practices and proactively recruit and appoint women to managerial and executive positions and to the corporate board of directors</li> <li>• Assure sufficient participation of women – 30% or greater – in decision-making and governance at all levels and across all business areas</li> <li>• Offer flexible work options, leave and re-entry opportunities to positions of equal pay and status</li> <li>• Support access to child and dependent care by providing services, resources and information to both women and men</li> </ul>
Principle 3: Health, safety and freedom from violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking into account differential impacts on women and men, providing safe working conditions and protection from exposure to hazardous materials and disclosing potential risks, including to reproductive health</li> <li>• Establish a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of violence at work, including verbal and/or physical abuse, and prevent sexual harassment</li> <li>• Strive to offer health insurance or other needed services – including for survivors of domestic violence – and ensure equal access for all employees</li> <li>• Respect women and men workers' rights to time off for medical care and counselling for themselves and their dependents</li> <li>• In consultation with employees, identify and address security issues, including the safety of women travelling to and from work and on company-related business</li> <li>• Train security staff and managers to recognise signs of violence against women and understand laws and company policies on human trafficking, labour and sexual exploitation</li> </ul>
Principle 4: Education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in workplace policies and programmes that open avenues for the advancement of women at all levels and across all business areas and encourage women to enter non-traditional job fields</li> <li>• Ensure equal access to all company-supported education and training programmes, including literacy classes and vocational and information technology training</li> <li>• Provide equal opportunities for formal and informal networking and mentoring</li> <li>• Offer opportunities to promote the business case for women's empowerment and the positive impact of inclusion for men, as well as women</li> </ul>

Principle 5: Enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand business relationships with women-owned enterprises, including small businesses and women entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Support gender-sensitive solutions to credit and lending barriers</li> <li>• Ask business partners and peers to respect the company's commitment to advancing equality and inclusion</li> <li>• Respect the dignity of women in all marketing and other company materials</li> <li>• Ensure that company products, services and facilities are not used for human trafficking and/or labour or sexual exploitation</li> </ul>
Principle 6: Community leadership and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead by example – showcase the company's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment</li> <li>• Leverage influence, alone or in partnership, to advocate for gender equality and collaborate with business partners, suppliers and community leaders to promote inclusion</li> <li>• Work with community stakeholders, officials and others to eliminate discrimination and exploitation and open opportunities for women and girls</li> <li>• Promote and recognise women's leadership in, and contributions to, their communities and ensure sufficient representation of women in any community consultation</li> <li>• Use philanthropy and grants programmes to support the company's commitment to inclusion, equality and human rights</li> </ul>
Principle 7: Transparency, measuring and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the company policies and implementation plan for promoting gender equality public</li> <li>• Establish benchmarks that quantify the inclusion of women at all levels</li> <li>• Measure and report on progress, both internally and externally, using data disaggregated by gender</li> <li>• Incorporate gender markers into ongoing reporting obligations</li> </ul>

## ANNEXURE 5: UN WOMEN PROCUREMENT PRINCIPLES<sup>215</sup>

*According to UN Women, to procure in the best interest means to carry out procurement activities in a manner that best enables the organisation to reach its general and specific objectives in line with applicable procurement procedures. The ultimate objective of the procurement function is to add value to the organisation through its programme delivery and fulfilment of programme goals, as well as meeting the organisation's overall mandate of gender equality and women's empowerment.*

### 14 Best value for money

The best value for money principle in the procurement process means considering all relevant factors, including the costs and benefits for UN Women. This principle enables the consideration of social (including gender-related), economic and environmental policy objectives in the procurement process. This means that UN Women looks at the combination of whole life-cycle costs, quality and efficiency.

<sup>215</sup> UN Women: <https://unwomen.org/en/about-us/procurement/procurement-principles>

## **15 Fairness, integrity and transparency**

The procurement process shall be performed in a fair and transparent manner, free from fraud, corruption and other unethical practices. Sound procurement requires:

- **Fairness:** All eligible entities must be given the same opportunities to compete for UN Women–financed activities. A fair process is free from favouritism, self-interest, or preference in judgment and ensures equal opportunity and treatment for all vendors.
- **Integrity:** The procurement process must protect the organisation from prohibited practices, including fraud, corruption, collusion and other unethical practices. UN Women requires all UN Women personnel and vendors to observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement processes and in the execution of UN Women contracts.
- **Transparency:** UN Women requires transparency in the procurement cycle to ensure good-quality procurement and accountability. Sufficient and relevant information on procurement opportunities and processes must be made available to the appropriate interested parties in an open, consistent, and timely manner through widely accessible means.

## **16 Effective competition**

Effective competition at UN Women means that all potential vendors shall be provided with timely and adequate notification of the procurement requirements and an equal opportunity to tender. The buyers shall ensure that restrictions are not placed on the competitive processes, limiting the pool of potential vendors. Effective competition is also understood in the context of gender equality and in full respect of the right of women to access the United Nations market, including gender-responsive businesses from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

## **ANNEXURE 6: SOME WAYS TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE WOMEN AT WORK**

### **17 Attract the right women**

- **Audit recruitment and selection practices for gender bias:** Make sure that positions are promoted in a way that will appeal to both men and women. For example:
  - Check if salaries can be negotiated
  - Check for reward schemes that are based on individual performance and have reduced hyper-competitiveness
  - Check if family-friendly support structures are mentioned.
- **Make sure salary negotiations are fair:** Consider having salary negotiators for women candidates
- **Do not ask for previous payslips:** Women traditionally earn less than men. Asking for their previous salary slip perpetuates existing pay discrepancies.

## **18 Develop family-friendly workplaces**

- Find ways to make the workplace family-friendly: In male-dominated environments and industries, find ways to normalise the integration of families into organisational life.
- Make it possible for men and women to be present parents: Provide decent childcare for working families and make it possible for both men and women to fulfil their family obligations.
- Look beyond maternity leave: Explore the potential for onsite creches, flexible working arrangements and childcare subsidies to close the wage gap. Find ways to give all parents the opportunity to be actively involved in their children's education.
- Encourage men to be active parents: Make sure that men feel comfortable using the parental leave available to them.
- Support primary caregivers who are studying: Implement study support mechanisms like paying for childcare while primary caregivers are studying.

## **19 Evaluate HR practices for gender bias**

- Look for unconscious bias in performance criteria: Evaluate performance criteria to see if hyper-competitiveness, self-confidence and disagreeableness are encouraged and rewarded.
- Are highly competitive reward schemes necessary? Rewards linked to highly competitive behaviour may have unintended gender consequences.
- Look for an excessive focus on face time: Does the organisation demand long hours at the cost of family time?
- Who gets the glory projects: Examine how strategic projects are allocated and the decision criteria that are used when individuals are chosen to work on key projects.
- Let women leaders be women: Highlight and educate the workforce regarding potential gender differences in leadership, specifically with regard to the perceptions and preferences of followers. These follower preferences may lead to women being under-rated as leaders, thereby impacting their career prospects and pay.
- It is a collective effort: Encourage unions to pay attention to the gender wage gap.

## **20 Mentor and support developing women**

- Guide young women to fast-track their performance: Key career sponsors can identify stretch assignments and help young women understand the consequences of career and leave choices.
- An informed, conscious choice: Make sure that women realise the impact that taking extended maternity leave may have on their careers.



## **ANNEXURE 7: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT – UN WOMEN**

### **21 Five things guaranteed to accelerate Women's economic empowerment**

According to UN Women, the following issues are key to women's economic empowerment:<sup>216</sup>

### **22 Resources**

- Connecting women with financial resources can help them meet their basic needs and start or grow businesses. Closing the credit gap for women-owned small and medium enterprises would result in an increase in annual incomes on average by 2030.
- In addition to financial resources, women need access to land, information, technology, and natural resources.
- Women are less likely than men to own or have secure rights for agricultural land.
- When women do have equal rights to access, own, and use resources, they can invest in themselves by improving their well-being and education, starting a business or exercising agency over their income to build a society that works for them. For example, in many contexts, women's economic empowerment reduces gender-based violence, increases political and social participation and leadership, and facilitates disaster risk reduction.

### **23 Jobs**

- When women thrive in the world of work, they are better positioned to exercise their agency and realise their rights.
- Work must be productive and in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity.
- Gender inequality in earnings alone costs the world more than twice the value of global GDP in terms of human capital wealth.
- Measures such as pay transparency, equal pay for work of equal value, and access to care services can help close the gender pay gap, leading to gender equality in the workplace.
- Increasing women's meaningful participation in sectors where they are currently under-represented, including science, technology, and engineering, is key to their empowerment.

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<sup>216</sup> UN Women Asia Pacific. Retrieved 27 February 2024 from <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/stories/explainer/2024/02/five-things-to-accelerate-womens-economic-empowerment#:~:text=Five%20things%20>

## 24 Time

- Care work remains undervalued and underpaid.
- On average, women spend around three times more time on unpaid care and domestic work than men.
- The existing social organisation of care reflects profound inequalities of status and power and often exploits the labour of women and girls.
- The gendered disparities in unpaid care work are a profound driver of inequality, restricting women's and girls' time and opportunities for education, decent paid work, public life, rest and leisure.
- Investing in transforming care systems is a triple win: it allows women to reclaim their time while creating jobs in the care sector and increasing access to care services for those who need them. It is estimated that closing existing gaps in care services and expanding decent work programmes would create millions of jobs.
- When access to care is considered a right, and the responsibility is shared with the State through the provision of public goods and services and the private sector through support like maternity leave and childcare facilities, women are enabled to participate in the formal labour market to use their time to generate income.

Unpaid care work refers to all unpaid services provided within a household for its members (by women, primarily, but also to varying degrees by girls, men and boys), including direct care of persons and housework and voluntary community work (Elson, 2000).

These activities are considered work, because theoretically one could pay a third person to perform them.

However, they are typically not included in the System of National Accounts or – in the case of activities like fetching water/fuel – are theoretically included but often not well documented or accounted for (Folbre, 2018).

SOURCE: *Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment: Time Use Data and Gender Inequality*<sup>217</sup>

## 25 Security

- Women face numerous threats to their security, including gender-based violence, conflict, food insecurity, and a lack of social protection.
- Violence at home or in the workplace is a violation of women's rights and impedes their economic participation.
- The issue of women and girls living in conflict-affected/crisis areas can exacerbate pre-existing economic disparities, such as women's disproportionate share of unpaid care work.
- Crises also deepen inequalities among women, for example, migrant women are twice as likely to experience violence than non-migrants.
- Research suggests that gender-responsive social protection systems, like cash transfers, can reduce mortality rates among women, demonstrating the links between economic empowerment and security.

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<sup>217</sup> Ferrant, G. & Thim, A. (2019). OECD Development Policy Papers February 2019 – No. 16

- No matter what form it takes, insecurity hinders women's economic empowerment, traps them in poverty, and prevents them from realising their rights and potential. It is crucial to bring together diverse stakeholders, including in the private sector, and challenge social norms that value women as inferior to men as economic actors.

## 26 Rights

- Human rights are at the core of women's economic empowerment.
- Unjust, patriarchal economic systems perpetuate gender inequality, and discriminatory social norms stand in the way of women's access to information, networks, jobs, and assets.
- Key strategies to promote women's rights in the context of economic empowerment include the adoption of laws and policies that support women's economic empowerment and the repeal of discriminatory laws and legal frameworks.
- While acknowledging the intrinsic value of women's economic empowerment, which has human rights at its core, it is also important to account for the great costs of constraints on women's economic empowerment in societies and economies. The protection and support for women human rights defenders, as well as accountability for human rights abuses, are needed. This requires documenting women's rights abuses, collecting sex-disaggregated data, and developing partnerships for joint advocacy programmes.
- It is necessary to develop and implement accountability mechanisms to protect women's rights and ensure that women's voices are amplified in all spaces of decision-making.

### ANNEXURE 8: NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2030 – QUOTES ON POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

*The National Development Plan aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030*

*No political democracy can survive and flourish if the mass of our people remains in poverty, without land, without tangible prospects for a better life [...] attacking poverty and deprivation must therefore be the first priority of a democratic government.*

*The plan presents a long-term strategy to increase employment and broaden opportunities through education, vocational training and work experience, public employment programmes, health and nutrition, public transport and access to information. While there are quick wins to be achieved in each of these areas, the strategies will take time to have a large-scale effect on poverty.*

*In nearly every facet of life, advances are being made in building an inclusive society, rolling back the shadow of history and broadening opportunities for all. South Africa has been able to build the institutions necessary for a democratic and transformative State. The Constitution enshrines a rights-based approach and envisions a prosperous, non-racial, non-sexist democracy that belongs to all its people. Healing the wounds of the past and redressing the inequities caused by centuries of racial exclusion are constitutional imperatives.*

*Eighteen years into democracy, South Africa remains a highly unequal society where too many people live in poverty and too few work. The quality of school education for most Black*

learners is poor. The apartheid spatial divide continues to dominate the landscape. A large proportion of young people feel that the odds are stacked against them.

Uniting South Africa is both an essential input into the process of reducing poverty and inequality and a direct outcome of successful poverty reduction. To build a socially cohesive society, South Africa should reduce poverty and inequality by broadening opportunity and employment through economic inclusion, education and skills, and specific redress measures; promote mutual respect and inclusiveness by acting on the constitutional imperative that South Africa belongs to all who live in it and that all are equal before the law; and deepen the appreciation of citizens' responsibilities and obligations towards one another.

Women make up a large percentage of the poor, particularly in rural areas. The plan takes gender – along with race and geographic location – into account, proposing a range of measures to advance women's equality. Disability and poverty operate in a vicious circle. Disability often leads to poverty, and poverty, in turn, often results in disability.

Persons with disabilities face multiple discriminatory barriers. Disability must be integrated into all facets of planning, recognising that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. In line with the priorities of the plan, persons with disabilities must have enhanced access to quality education and employment. Efforts to ensure relevant and accessible skills programmes for persons with disabilities, coupled with equal opportunities for their productive and gainful employment, must be prioritised.

South Africa has an urbanising, youthful population. This presents an opportunity to boost economic growth, increase employment and reduce poverty. The National Planning Commission, recognising that young people bear the brunt of unemployment, adopted a 'youth lens' in preparing its proposals.

Source: Reconstruction and Development Programme, 1994

## **Poverty, inequality and social exclusion in South Africa: a systematic assessment of key policies, strategies and flagship programmes**

Submitted to the National Development Agency by the Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA), University of Johannesburg

### **ANNEXURE 9: RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION STRATEGIES FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE: BY UN WOMEN**

UN Women recommendations:<sup>218</sup>

- Involve national gender equality mechanisms, women's rights organisations and other gender experts, as well as trade unions and organisations of informal workers, in the development of national social protection strategies.
- Deliberately integrate a gender and life course perspective into risk and vulnerability assessments so that strategies cover maternity alongside other important gendered risks and vulnerabilities.
- Strengthen the capacity of social protection stakeholders to both identify and address gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities through specific social protection measures.

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<sup>218</sup> Putting gender equality at the centre of social protection strategies in sub-Saharan Africa: How far have we come? UN Women Policy Brief No. 4

- Recognise and promote public investments in the care economy as a key part of social protection systems that can support economic development by enabling job creation, expanding women's employment opportunities, and supporting the capabilities of children and care-dependent adults.
- Strengthen coordination between social protection systems and VAWG services, including training for frontline implementers of social protection on how to identify and refer survivors, drawing on the expertise of national gender equality mechanisms and women's organisations in this area.
- Generate pathways and support for women's rights, workers' rights and other rights-based civil society organisations to shape social protection policies and systems, including through participatory monitoring and evaluation.
- Strengthen the collection and use of gender and social protection data, including sex-disaggregated data on coverage and benefit levels, as well as qualitative data that capture the intended and unintended impacts of policies and programmes on women and girls.
- Conduct further research to identify the barriers and bottlenecks for translating the recognition of gender-specific risks into gender-responsive social protection strategies, policies, and programmes.

## **INDICATORS FOR ASSESSING NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION STRATEGIES FROM A GENDER AND HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE**

### **27 A) Overarching enabling framework**

- National social protection strategies use human rights and other international frameworks as an overarching framework
- Acknowledgement of human rights
- General human rights instruments are referenced
- Gender-specific human rights instruments are referenced
  - The strategy expresses a commitment to universalism
  - The strategy commits to progressively providing higher levels of protection
  - The strategy adopts a life course approach
  - The strategy defines gender equality and/or women's empowerment as an objective of social protection
  - The strategy recognises gender gaps in access to social protection
  - The strategy recognises family diversity as an issue to be considered in social protection
  - The strategy was put together through a consultative process.
- The national gender equality mechanism was involved in the process
- Civil society organisations were consulted as part of the process
- Social partners were consulted as part of the process.

## **28      B) Recognition of gendered risks and vulnerabilities**

### ***a. Strategies recognise gendered life course risks***

- Child and early marriage
- Barriers to education
- Maternity-related health risks
- Maternity-related income risks
- Teenage pregnancy
- Single motherhood
- Widowhood
- Old age.

### ***b. Strategies recognise structural inequalities***

- Violence against women
- Unpaid care and domestic work
- Less access and control over resources.

## **29      C) Specific measures and programme design features**

### ***a. Strategies consider policies and programmes***

- Social insurance
- Social assistance
- Public services
- Infrastructure (e.g., roads, housing, electricity and sanitation).

### ***b. Strategies put forth specific actions to address gender equality***

- Social insurance
- Social assistance
- Public services
- Infrastructure.

### ***c. Strategies put forth specific actions to address structural gender inequalities***

- Specific actions to address violence against women
- Specific actions to increase women's income-earning capacity
- Specific actions to recognise, reduce and redistribute unpaid care.

### ***d. Strategies put forth specific actions to close coverage gaps between women and men***

### ***e. Strategies put forth specific actions to extend social protection to informal workers***

## **30      D) Accountability, monitoring and evaluation**

- a) The Monitoring & Evaluation framework includes gender-specific indicators

- b) The Monitoring & Evaluation framework includes participatory methods
- c) The strategy is embedded in national legislation
- d) The strategy includes grievance, feedback and complaint mechanisms that inform policy assessment and reform.

#### **ANNEXURE 10: THE HIV EPIDEMIC IN SOUTH AFRICA: KEY FINDINGS FROM 2017 – NATIONAL POPULATION-BASED SURVEY<sup>219</sup>**

South Africa has made strides in the fight against the HIV epidemic, as shown in the key findings from the fifth South African survey of HIV prevalence, incidence, and behaviour conducted in 2017. However, South Africa has remained unchanged and has regressed in other areas, thus delaying the possibility of realising the end of the HIV epidemic in the immediate future.

The findings from this survey show that compared to previous years, the incidence of HIV has declined from 1.07% in 2012 to 0.48% per year in 2017. All age-sex groups reflect this decline. However, the HIV incidence remains high enough to sustain the HIV epidemic.

- Young women aged 15 to 24 years contributed 66,200 of all new HIV infections in 2017.
- South Africa also found young women continue to be newly infected with HIV at high rates.
- The high burden could be due to age-disparate relationships, as well as the burden young women face in accessing testing and treatment services and condom use.
- HIV prevalence has increased over the years in South Africa, especially among adults. This increase should be interpreted in the context of expanded access to ARVs, which can lead to reduced HIV-related mortality coupled with sustained new HIV infections.
- The study indicates that those who are infected with HIV continue to live longer.
- Other findings confirm this reduction of mortality among people living with HIV, with an estimated 10.5% yearly decrease in HIV deaths in South Africa from 2007–2017.
- Unfortunately, large numbers of new infections are indicated, especially among youth, where the prevalence of HIV has remained unchanged since 2008. This unchanging pattern in those younger than 30 years indicates a lack of success in HIV prevention.
- Access to ARV is increasing among people living with HIV. However, there are gender and age disparities in accessing ARV.
- Women are more likely to seek and access treatment than men, whilst older people are more likely to be on treatment than those who are young, a finding that remains unchanged from 2012. One contributing factor to this dynamic is that

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<sup>219</sup> National Center for Biotechnology Information: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9265818/>

men are less likely to seek medical attention when needed, therefore delaying HIV diagnosis and treatment initiation.

- Women were more likely to be tested for HIV compared to men in this study.
- The differentials in treatment by age raise equity concerns that are crucial to the fulfilment of SDG 3. The delayed diagnoses and treatment among youth are likely to lead to an increased risk of morbidity and increased onward transmission of the virus.
- Less than two-thirds of people living with HIV were on ARV in months following the policy to put all those diagnosed with HIV on treatment.
- Continued monitoring of ARV initiation and adherence will be needed to assess the impact following full implementation of the treatment.
- Access and adherence to ARV increase the likelihood of viral load suppression. Viral load suppression among those on ARV was 87.3% compared to 62.3% of everyone living with HIV (irrespective of access to ARV). This translates to 37.7% of people living with HIV not being virally suppressed in the general population, highlighting the scale of the treatment coverage gap that can contribute to sub-optimal outcomes at the individual level, as well as ongoing transmission of HIV.
- Viral suppression increases with age due to older people being more likely to be on ARV compared to those who are young.
- Among youth not on ARV, 77.5% were virally unsuppressed, indicating a high risk of HIV transmission among youth during unprotected sexual intercourse. Youth aged 15-24 should be specifically targeted to be enrolled in treatment with strengthened adherence programmes that will lead to higher levels of viral suppression as a way to prevent further transmission of HIV.
- A number of sexual behaviours contribute to an increased risk of HIV infection. These include early sexual debut, age-disparate relationships, multiple sexual partners, and lack of condom use.
- The results show an increase in the proportion of youth reporting early sexual debut. Women were more likely to report having had a sexual partner five years older than themselves, which has been shown to increase the risk of HIV among youth. Men were more likely to report multiple sexual partners in the last 12 months.
- Furthermore, condom use remains a challenge as low levels of condom use at last sex continue to be reported.
- The role of confounding factors in the use of condoms, such as marital status and inter-partner relations, should be considered in the interventions aimed at improving condom use. For behaviours related to biomedical prevention, self-reported circumcision was highest (70.2%) among men aged 15 to 24 years.
- For the first time since this survey collected circumcision information, male medical circumcision surpassed traditional male circumcision, although overall voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) uptake is lower than the 80% target.
- The results presented from this large, population-based survey are designed to be applied to the respective populations of South Africa. The overall HIV testing response rate was lower in 2017 compared to the 2012 survey (67.5%). Although this was still within an acceptable range to draw generalisable inferences, efforts



are underway to conduct a more rigorous analysis of the impact of such differential uptake.

- The declining HIV testing response rate does present some limitations for inferences among White and Indian people. An analysis of the impact of such bias on the 2012 survey indicated no significant difference in HIV prevalence based on such differences in testing uptake by age and sex.

## **ANNEXURE 11: SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2015-2030**

### **1. GOAL**

To attain the expected outcome, the following goal must be pursued:

Prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience.

### **2. EXPECTED OUTCOME**

To achieve the following outcome over the next 15 years:

*“The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.”*

### **3. SEVEN GLOBAL TARGETS**

- Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower the average per 100,000 global mortality rate in the decade 2020–2030 compared to the period 2005–2015
- Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower the average global figure per 100,000 in the decade 2020–2030 compared to the period 2005–2015
- Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global GDP by 2030
- Substantially reduce disaster damage to crucial infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030
- Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020
- Substantially enhance international cooperation in developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of the present Sendai Framework Disaster Risk Reduction by 2030
- Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems, as well as disaster risk information and assessments for people by 2030.

#### **4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Drawing from the principles contained in the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action and the Hyogo Framework for Action, the implementation of the present Sendai Framework Disaster Risk Reduction will be guided by the following principles while taking into account national circumstances, and consistent with domestic laws, as well as international obligations and commitments:

- Each State has the primary responsibility to prevent and reduce disaster risk, including through international, regional, sub-regional, transboundary and bilateral cooperation. The reduction of disaster risk is a common concern for all States, and the extent to which developing countries are able to effectively enhance and implement national disaster risk reduction policies and measures in the context of their respective circumstances and capabilities can be further enhanced through the provision of sustainable international cooperation.
- Disaster risk reduction requires that responsibilities be shared by central governments and relevant national authorities, sectors and stakeholders as appropriate to their national circumstances and systems of governance.
- Managing the risk of disasters is aimed at protecting persons and their property, health, livelihoods and productive assets, as well as cultural and environmental assets, while promoting and protecting all human rights, including the right to development.
- Disaster risk reduction requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership. It also requires empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially the poorest. A gender, age, disability and cultural perspective should be integrated into all policies and practices, and women and youth leadership should be promoted. In this context, special attention should be paid to the improvement of organised voluntary work of citizens.
- Disaster risk reduction and management depends on coordination mechanisms within and across sectors and with relevant stakeholders at all levels, and it requires the full engagement of all State institutions of an executive and legislative nature at national and local levels and a clear articulation of responsibilities across public and private stakeholders, including business and academia, to ensure mutual outreach, partnership, complementarity in roles and accountability and follow-up.
- While the enabling, guiding and coordinating role of national and federal State governments remain essential, it is necessary to empower local authorities and local communities to reduce disaster risk, including through resources, incentives and decision-making responsibilities, as appropriate.
- Disaster risk reduction requires a multi-hazard approach and inclusive risk-informed decision-making based on the open exchange and dissemination of disaggregated data, including by sex, age and disability, as well as on easily accessible, up-to-date, comprehensible, science-based, non-sensitive risk information, complemented by traditional knowledge.

- The development, strengthening and implementation of relevant policies, plans, practices and mechanisms should aim at coherence, as appropriate, across sustainable development and growth, food security, health and safety, climate change and variability, environmental management and disaster risk reduction agendas. Disaster risk reduction is essential to achieve sustainable development;
- While the drivers of disaster risk may be local, national, regional or global in scope, disaster risks have local and specific characteristics that must be understood for the determination of measures to reduce disaster risk.
- Addressing underlying disaster risk factors through disaster risk-informed public and private investments is more cost-effective than primary reliance on post-disaster response and recovery, and contributes to sustainable development.
- In the post-disaster recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction phase, it is crucial to prevent the creation of disaster risk and reduce it by 'building back better' and increasing public education and awareness of disaster risk.
- An effective and meaningful global partnership and the further strengthening of international cooperation, including the fulfilment of respective commitments of official development assistance by developed countries, are essential for effective disaster risk management.
- Developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and African countries, as well as middle-income and other countries facing specific disaster risk challenges, need adequate, sustainable and timely provision of support, including through finance, technology transfer and capacity building from developed countries and partners tailored to their needs and priorities, as identified by them.

DESPITE SLOW PROGRESS,

## THE WORLD IS FALLING FAR BEHIND IN ACHIEVING QUALITY EDUCATION

WITHOUT ADDITIONAL MEASURES, BY 2030:



**84 MILLION**  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
WILL BE **OUT OF SCHOOL**



**300 MILLION**  
STUDENTS WILL LACK  
**BASIC NUMERACY/LITERACY**  
SKILLS



**ONLY 1 IN 6**  
COUNTRIES WILL  
ACHIEVE **UNIVERSAL**  
**SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
COMPLETION TARGET



THE PANDEMIC

CAUSED  
LEARNING  
LOSSES  
IN **4 IN 5** OF  
104 COUNTRIES  
STUDIED

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES ARE **RIISING**, BUT THE PACE IS SLOW AND UNEVEN

COMPLETION RATES



LOW- AND LOWER-  
MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES  
FACE A NEARLY

**\$100 BILLION**  
**ANNUAL**  
**FINANCING GAP**  
TO REACH THEIR  
EDUCATION TARGETS

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