

Media Release

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25 Years of Democracy: Growing South Africa Together for Women's Emancipation

On the 27th and 28th of August 2019 SALGA in Mpumalanga hosted the Provincial Women Commission Lekgotla at Ingwenyama Conference and Sports Resort, attended by various women in the different leadership positions within local government and aimed to fulfill the following objectives:

- To provide annual status reports on gender parity in local government.
- To monitor gender mainstreaming processes in local government with the purpose to make women in leadership aware of the gender inequalities existing in their local space.
- To promote the sharing of best practices from member municipalities on how gender is mainstreamed in their local municipalities
- To empower women on Economic and Legal issues.
- To use the SWC Lekgotla to Lobby and advocate for the furtherance of the 50/50 campaign.
- To make resolutions that will assist SALGA to develop the provincial action plan and feed to the National action plan.

The SALGA Women Commission was established in 2010 with the purpose of ensuring that gender mainstreaming and women's issues, in particular, receive adequate attention at the local government level in policy and in practice.

2019 sees South Africa enter its 25th year of democracy. A milestone that calls on South Africa to reflect on the strides we have made in ensuring a society free of gender inequalities.

This year's annual commemoration will be held under the theme: **"25 Years of Democracy: Growing South Africa Together for Women's Emancipation"** and coincides with the country's celebration of 25 Years of Freedom and Democracy.

The theme is a call to South Africa to reflect on the country's success in achieving gender equality and mainstreaming the gender agenda across all sectors, from the arts to sport, politics, the economy, health, land ownership, entrepreneurship, and gender dynamics. The theme also calls on South Africans to break gender stereotypes and remove barriers that seek to serve misogynistic interests.

The Deputy Chairperson of SALGA Mpumalanga, Cllr. Sylvia Nxumalo opened the session with a Candle lighting ceremony, in recognition of women who served within the local government sphere and are no longer with us today.

This was followed by the Purpose of the event which was delivered by the Mpumalanga SWC Provincial Commissioner, Cllr. Mavis Charles. "This Lekgotla is sitting during week four of the 2019 Women's Month where the focus of government turns to activities that will develop action plans to mainstream the needs of women, young women and women with disabilities", said Cllr Charles.

Cllr. Lindiwe Ntlonze, National SWC Commissioner, gave the Keynote Address and said that "As local government, we have a significant role to play and contribution to make in ensuring that the living conditions of ordinary women show that there is indeed "a better life for ALL" through better access to basic services. Therefore, we should measure our success in terms of bringing changes to the plight of ordinary women in terms of their daily struggles and challenges".

The Mpumalanga Provincial Director of Operations, Mrs Gugu Langa, presented on the picture of Women representation in Local Government structures and posed a question - "What role can the SWC and Women Caucuses play in fighting patriarchy, achieving and maintaining the 50/50 balance" because currently we are not where we are supposed to be as local government.

Presentations were also delivered by Ms. Nandi Shongwe (Office of the Premier: Special Programs), Mrs. Sibusisiwe Goba-Sigawuke (SALGA Senior Advisor: Inclusive Communities), and by Commissioner Lindiwe Ntuli-Tloubatla from the Commission for Gender Equality.

Day One of the Mpumalanga SWC Lekgotla ended with a panel discussion which centred around the theme - "25 Years of Democracy: Growing South Africa Together for Women's Emancipation". The discussion was facilitated by SALGA Mpumalanga Deputy Chairperson Cllr. Tiny Mtimunye and panelists included representatives from SALGA, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) and the Inkomati Usuthu Catchment Agency (IUCMA).

The second day of the Mpumalanga SWC Lekgotla, facilitated by Cllr. Flora Maboja-Boltman who is a Provincial Executive Committee member of SALGA, commenced with an open mic session which focused on [#WhatWomenWant](#) in order to consolidate a comprehensive action plan to mainstream the needs of women, youth and persons with disabilities within priorities in municipal planning and budgeting.

Three empowerment sessions took place as well, focusing on the following topics:

- 1) The Department of Health presented a talk on Women's health, where the delegates were also shown how to do manual breast checks on themselves. He encouraged delegates to continue with health checks with their local clinics for continued healthy living.
- 2) Ms Moremadi Mabule from Sanlam presented on financial wellness, specifically focusing on the Legacy that women want to live behind one day for their children and for their families. She encouraged the delegates to ensure that their estates are in order.

- 3) The Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) presented on Economic Empowerment, highlighting some of the programmes that the Agency offers and how these can assist municipalities, benefiting the local citizen.

The Lekgotla resolved as follows:

- Ensure that Municipalities adopt Multi-Party Women Caucus as Section 79 Committees;
- Develop and Implement Gender policies in municipalities;
- Lobby and advocate for implementation of Women Empowerment Projects in the Offices of the Executive Mayors;
- Lobby and advocate local women to visibly support victims of Gender Based Violence;
- Lobby and advocate for Gender Budgeting and upgrading positions of Gender Focal Points in municipalities;
- Initiate programs for Coaching and mentoring of young women and women in general in municipalities;
- Initiate Teenage pregnancy programs in municipalities;
- Initiate programs to support the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender/ Transsexual Intersex and Queer/ Questioning (LGBTIQ+) Community in municipalities;
- Initiate Partnerships with stakeholders from different sectors of society to support and fund women's projects;
- Encourage Women to register diploma/ degree training through the municipal skills development plans;
- Include Functionality of women caucus and gender programs as a performance indicator for relevant senior managers;
- Coordinate women dialogues in municipalities.

The two-day Lekgotla ended with resolutions which will be implemented by SALGA and municipalities, through the assistance of various stakeholders.

Malibongwe!

END

ISSUED BY: SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

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