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A Commission for Gender Equality Newsletter

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Celebrating women leaders in the Engineering, Infrastructure and Mining sectors



South Africa must find ways to enforce implementation of policies that speak to promotion of gender equality at all levels of society. This was the statement by Chairperson of the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), Ms Tamara Mathebula, during her address at the Women and Leadership Conference on Wednesday in George, Western Cape.

Mathebula's address focused on the Beijing Platform for Action Generation Equality, based on the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), which was agreed upon in 1995 by women from around the world. Mathebula said the CGE has been monitoring government's compliance in the implementation of the BPfA Declaration.

"In 2015 the CGE conducted its baseline review as a monitoring process which sought qualitative and quantitative data, on the key elements of the strides made in the implementation of each of the 12 critical areas of concern," she said. The conference's vision is to profile women and their contribution to the economy through

entrepreneurship, business leadership and government service delivery. Refilwe Buthelezi, acting President of the Engineering Council of South Africa, said barriers that hinder the recruitment of female leaders in business should be addressed, "If the future of engineering is to be more gender equitable, the attraction, education and retention of technical women must be addressed" she said.



CGE discusses traditional harmful practices in KZN



30 March 2022 was the last day of Unisa's gender-based violence (GBV) awareness series of activities in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). Zanele Ncwane, the Commission for Gender Equality's (CGE's) Provincial Manager in KZN, addressed the Unisa community on harmful traditional practices (HTPs).

Ncwane explained that the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (better known as the Maputo Protocol) defines HTPs as all behaviours, attitudes and practices which negatively affect the fundamental rights of women and girls. These rights include their right to life, health, dignity, education and physical integrity. HTPs have been going on for many years. In some parts of South Africa,

they continue to happen and be practised without being a problem to the livelihoods of women and girls. Many members of the community continue to believe HTPs are accepted cultural practices. Ncwane discussed early and forced marriages which happen mostly through *ukuthwala*, virginity testing/inspection (*unomehlo*), which she said happens mostly in rural areas, and widowhood (the practice of *ukungenwa/ukungena*).

Zanele concluded the discussion by questioning HTPs in South Africa, as, in most cases, they are misunderstood as anti-traditional rights and crimes like human trafficking (for the purposes of marriage). In some communities, HTPs are not regarded as a crime, but as GBV. (Article by Unisa)

A call for GBV Dedicated Units



The CGE officials meeting with police officers at the Temba Police Station in Hammanskraal.

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) congratulated Mr. Sehlahle Fannie Masemola on his appointment as the new national Police Commissioner for the South African Police Service (SAPS). and wishes that through his leadership, SAPS will implement systems to escalate the fight against gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF). The CGE calls on the national Police Commissioner to speedily address the historical DNA backlog which continues to affect rape cases in courts across the country and denied victims of

the justice they deserve. The CGE also calls on the national Police Commissioner to establish dedicated units in all the 9 provinces that would attend to gender-based violence cases. "We have observed that there is a lack of well trained and dedicated SAPS officials that are able to deal with these cases and the Police Stations themselves don't have dedicated units with human resources and vehicles that are able to deal with these crimes," CGE Chairperson, Tamara Mathebula.