



# NEWSFLASH



Commission for Gender Equality

A Commission for Gender Equality Newsletter

19 MAY 2022

EDITION 39

@CGE\_ZA

## CGE Welcomes UL's Gender Desk Launch



**CGE spokesperson Javu Baloyi (Right) and University of Limpopo's Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Mahlo Mokgalong at the Gender Desk launch in Polokwane.**

The Commission for Gender Equality has welcomed the decision by the University of Limpopo to launch a gender desk that will take care of gender related issues affecting students and staff. The Commission also called for other institutions of higher learning to follow the example. According to the university, the office will holistically administer gender-related services to its entire community. The desk will also be tasked with the mandate to combat gender stereotypes and sexism.

The launch, which took place on Wednesday in Polokwane, was an occasion that highlighted the challenges faced by victims of gender-based violence and sexism. It was an occasion used by the university to publicly declare its commitment to fighting gender-based violence on its campuses and protecting its community.

Speaking at the launch occasion, CGE spokesperson Javu Baloyi said universities and other institutions of higher learning have become breeding ground for gender-based violence and sexual crimes, "Universities cannot be judged in isolation, because people who are there come from environments endemic with gender-based-based violence and femicide" Baloyi said.

"The Gender Desk Office will assist with Gender-Based Violence. It is a problem that plagues the entire country. We want to educate the university and the surrounding community and create a safe environment where perpetrators and victims can come for assistance" said Professor Mahlo Mokgalong, University of Limpopo's Vice-Chancellor and Principal.

## What does the Commission for Gender Equality do?

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) has a Constitutional mandate to promote respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality in South Africa. The Constitution expressly articulates that the Bill of Rights is the foundation of our democracy which preserves the rights of the citizens of the Republic by entrenching the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom and that these rights amongst others must be respected, protected and fulfilled.

The Commission is an independent, catalyst organisation for the development and attainment of gender equality. Section 187(2) grants the Commission "the power as regulated by national legislation, necessary to perform its functions, including the power to monitor, investigate, research, educate, lobby and advise and report on issues concerning gender equality". Furthermore, the CGE has powers to review policies of public and private entities from a gender perspective and to ensure gender-aware and responsive policy making and practices. The CGE is thus uniquely mandated as a specialised human rights institution focusing on gender equality.

The CGE evaluates legislation, policies, practices and mechanisms and make recommendations to bring about continuous improvements to advance gender equality. This enables the CGE to influence legislative and policy changes which advance gender equality, whilst monitoring state compliance with national, international and regional instruments promoting gender equality. The CGE promotes and protects gender equality through public awareness, education and investigation, which is intended to lead to a more gender aware society, to contribute to behaviour-change and practices that promote social justice for victims of gender violations.

## Status of Women's Health In South Africa

About 39,7% of divorced women in South Africa experienced physical violence in their relationships. Women in Eastern Cape and North-West recorded a high proportion of physical violence at 31,4% and 29,5% respectively. HIV prevalence was highest among sexually active women in the age groups 25-29 to 45-49. The rate of HIV positive women who were already on Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) at 1st antenatal visit increased in all the provinces and at national level. The rate increased from 61,7% in 2018 to 71,5% in 2020 in the country. The highest rate was reported in Western Cape (77,6%), followed by Free State (77,4%) and KwaZulu-Natal (76,6%) in 2020. Women in the middle age group (35-39) had the highest number of COVID-19 cumulative cases. They are also more likely to vaccinate against the pandemic. Women in the age group 40-44 (46,6%) and above recorded the highest proportion of deaths due to non-communicable diseases. Although those in the age groups 15-19 and 40-44 had the highest proportion of deaths due to communicable diseases. (Source: Statistics South Africa)

