



Commission for Gender Equality  
A society free from gender oppression and inequality

**Media Statement**

**For Immediate Release: 12 December 2022**

**COMMISSION FOR GENDER EQUALITY WELCOMES CALLS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON SEX WORK BILL**

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) welcomes the announcement by the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Ronald Lamola, that the Sex Work Bill is open for public comments. This marks significant progress towards the decriminalization of sex work in South Africa.

The CGE has always maintained that the criminalisation of sex work goes against the human rights of sex-workers in South Africa. It is our resolve that sex-work must be dealt with through economic and social interventions rather than criminal law.

The continued criminalisation of sex-work exposes traders to various forms of risks and abuses from the public and members of the police service.

This despite section 2 of the Constitution calling for the respect and protection of individuals regardless of their sexual orientation, gender, race, etc. Sex workers have reported various abuses by the law enforcement officers including being raped, blackmailed and being denied the right to access healthcare.

As per the Commission's standing position any regulation of sex-work and sex-workers in South Africa must follow a human rights approach that will deliver i) freedom and right of choice of work; ii) freedom for sex workers to form unions and enable sex workers to challenge unfair labour practices; iii) freedom from discrimination; iv) the right to the highest attainable standard of health; v) freedom and security of the person including the rights to be free from arbitrary arrest and detention, right to be free from violence and the right to bodily and psychological integrity.



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As much as we appreciate the initiative by Minister Lamola, it is therefore incumbent that citizens make comments based on the precepts of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

**END,**

**Issued by Commission for Gender Equality**

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The Commission for Gender Equality is established in terms of Section 181 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa to promote respect for gender equality and the protection, development, and attainment of gender equality. CGE Toll Free Number : 0800 007 709

GBV Toll Free Number: 0800 428 428, Stop Gender Violence: 0800 150 150 Witness, Survivors, and victims of GBV can send Please Call Me at \*120\*7867#