



Commission for Gender Equality
A body to see that gender equality and equality

27 April 2024

Media Statement

To: All Media Houses

30 YEARS INTO DEMOCRACY. STRIDES ARE BEING MADE TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) joins other constitutional bodies and many other institutions in celebrating Freedom Day. The CGE acknowledges successes and irroads that have been dom by the South African Democracy which gave the right of gender equality as a human right. Equally, as we celebrate the successes of our freedom, we need to ask ourselves some hard questions as government and those who have a duty to care, about the progress we've made towards enabling the freedom that was promised for many South Africans. since the advent of our democracy. Are we there yet? Are we making any losses or gains towards changing the *status quo* for the plight of the previously disadvantaged groups? Is there real transformation on the ground? Is real gender equality achieved in policy and in making?

The CGE has over the years conducted various transformation initiatives, including the Employment Equity Public Investigative hearings on the extent of gender transformation with both the public and private sectors. Furthermore, the CGE has conducted research studies to inform policy and hold stakeholders and government accountable. It has gone to the deepest of areas for various segments of communities to advocate, sensitise, and inform communities and stakeholders about the gender equality discourse and rights, as a way of liberating communities across the country. As we have been monitoring if real transformation is happening, the question remains, is the freedom for equality realised, or are we regressing from the gains made?



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The latest annual report by the Commission of Employment Equity (CEE) confirms that there are still some challenges hindering gender equality and gender transformation. Various reports cite a concerning issue of women who are disproportionately marginalised, who are without real employment, and who are not participating in real procurement reforms comparatively, post the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a concern to CGE as the picture paints it clearly that the gender equality gap is widening systematically.

The country is advancing in accelerating equitable education and sensitisation on policy and many other interventions that are meant to capacitate and protect gender equality. However, at the backdrop of this advancement, the CGE is highly concerned about the spate of Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) in the country. The CGE is further concerned about the killings of women, the elderly and children, which seem to be going unabated. The scourge of GBVF, as a pandemic points to some of the darkest moments in our journey to attain gender equality. This setback is cancelling all the in-roads that have been manifested in upholding the respect for human rights. Challenges faced by women regarding inclusion and access to land, as highlighted by various studies of the CGE, are also of great concern. "This concern is painting a picture that to this day, land distribution in the country, sadly, is skewed in favour of men," said Advocate Nthabiseng Sepanya-Mogale, Chairperson of the Commission of Gender Equality.

To promote respect for individual rights and freedoms, the CGE invites people across all walks of life to respect other people's right to choose sexual orientation, as enshrined by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The commemoration of Freedom Day must align with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which promotes unity and human dignity by guaranteeing freedom of choice, equality, and forbidding any form of discrimination. It is incumbent upon us all, irrespective of our backgrounds, to promote unity and human dignity.



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"It is in our endeavour to utilise such opportune moments like the Freedom Day to advocate for a society free of gender oppression and inequality. The Commission as mandated by the Constitution will continue in its strides to ensure that the general population is *au fait* with their rights, as enshrined in the Constitution", added Chairperson Sepanya-Mogale.

Ends,

Contact Person: Javu Baloyi (Spokesperson)

Email: Javu@cge.org.za

Cell: 083 579 3306