



Commission for Gender Equality

# NEWSFLASH

A Commission for Gender Equality Newsletter

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**Vision:**



An independent, constitutionally mandated organisation that pioneers and catalyses gender development and transformation.

**Mission:**



To lead, promote, protect, monitor, and evaluate gender equality through research, managing public education, policy development, legislative initiatives, and litigation.

## CGE's Provincial Programme Gets Thumbs Up From Stakeholders in Eastern Cape **By: Lungelo Mesh**



The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) in the Eastern Cape recently held a significant session with stakeholders to discuss the organisation's Annual Performance Plan (APP) and provincial operational plan for the 2024/25 financial year. The event saw participation from various government departments, municipalities, and civil society organisations, all aiming to strengthen collaboration and communicate the CGE's key focus areas.

CGE Commissioner Leonashia Leigh-Anne Van Der Merwe highlighted critical issues observed in the last financial year, "We have noted that most health institutions do not have enough resources, especially in the labour wards," she stated. Additionally, she pointed out concerns regarding illegal initiation schools and the representation of women in leadership roles. Nceba Mrwebo, CGE's Eastern Cape Provincial Manager, emphasised the importance of gender balance in traditional courts. "One of our activities will be to engage with the house of traditional leaders and Cogta to

determine the extent of gender balance in traditional courts," he explained. Mr. Mrwebo also shared the office's focus areas in the current year, "We plan to hold a stakeholder accountability session addressing prevalent issues in the province, including gender-based violence (GBV) in schools, bullying of LGBTQIA+ learners, healthier masculinities, access to justice, and social services for vulnerable members of society".

Stakeholders pledged their support and cooperation with the CGE to empower communities and achieve gender equality. Institutions like One-to-One Africa expressed keen interest in the CGE's report on the state of neonatal and maternal health in the Eastern Cape and proposed future collaborations on gender and health issues. The engagement session showed the CGE's commitment to addressing gender equality challenges and fostering a collaborative approach to creating a more equitable society.

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- CGE's Provincial Programme Gets Thumbs Up From Stakeholders in Eastern Cape
- Legal Sector Supports CGE's Litigation and Investigation Mandate
- 30 Years Into Democracy, Gender Parity Remains An Elusive Concept
- The Impact of Climate Change: Progress and Challenges



**Editor:**  
Sello Molekwa

**Writers:**  
Keletso Rampeng  
Lungelo Mesh

**Contributors:**  
Noma- Afrika Wakashe

# Legal Sector Supports CGE's Litigation and Investigation Mandate

By: Keletso Rampeng



CGE Delegation explaining the submission handling process and litigation of the CGE



Representatives from Legal Aid, ProBono and Lawyers from Human Rights

"The CGE is a catalyst for the attainment of gender equality and Section 187(2) grants the commission power as regulated by national legislation, necessary to perform its functions, including the power to monitor, investigate, research, educate, lobby, advise and report on issues concerning gender equality" CGE's Commissioner, Prabashni Subrayan-Naidoo said in her address at a legal stakeholder engagement held to share the Commission's key performance activities, complaints submission and handling processes and the commission's litigation.

The stakeholder engagement was attended by representatives from Legal Aid, ProBono and Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) to name a few. "In terms of Section

11(1) (c) of the CGE Act, one of the CGE's powers and functions is to evaluate 'any law proposed by parliament or any other legislature affecting or likely to affect gender equality or the status of women' said CGE Legal Researcher, Bradley Swanepoel as he outlined a list of the commission's parliamentary submissions. The Acting Head of the Legal Department, Tsietsi Shuping spoke on the CGE's complaints-handling and litigation processes, "The CGE must investigate complaints and identify systematic/public interest matters amongst others, that may hinder the attainment of gender equality. We should challenge discriminatory laws and policies, while advocating for reforms, establishing legal precedents to guide future cases and to bring about change through litigation, said Shuping.

## 30 Years Into Democracy, Gender Parity Remains An Elusive Concept

By: Javu Baloyi | CGE Spokesperson

On the 06 of June 2024, the Chairperson of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) Mr. Mosotho Moepya handed a list of 400 Members of Parliament to the Chief Justice, Judge Raymond Zondo. In his summary, Mr. Mosotho indicated that 174 women (43.5%) and 226 men (56.5%) were on the list, a 3% decline from 45.25% in 2019.

The decline should be a serious cause for concern for a country ranked 12th in the global gender index. Consequently, this decline backward will likely take the country backward in attaining gender parity in the National Assembly. The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) had anticipated that 30 years into our democracy, political parties would emphasize a gender quota system for their members going to all spheres of government.

Through this setback, South Africa will rank very low on the global gender index.

Therefore, this decline places South Africa as an unequal society wherein gender parity is an afterthought in the manifestos and deliberations of political parties. Since 2009, the CGE has been observing national and local government elections. One of the key CGE recommendations was to ensure that political party lists must be gender disaggregated to meet the quota system, meaning there must be parity

in terms of the men and women on the lists. As per CGE's recommendations, the IEC should be afforded the power to veto political parties' candidate lists in compliance with gender parity quotas. (For full article, visit [www.cge.org.za](http://www.cge.org.za) under Articles)



# The Impact of Climate Change: Progress and Challenges

By: Keletso Rampeng



Stakeholders in attendance at the CGE Climate Change & Disaster Management Stakeholder Engagement.

The Commission for Gender Equality's (CGE) KwaZulu-Natal office hosted a stakeholder engagement last week on the state of disaster management in the province with representatives of the provincial and local governments. The session assessed the progress made in supporting persons and families affected by natural disasters that happened in April in 2022. More than 400 people lost their lives in the province while many families were displaced. In the aftermath of the 2022 floods, CGE conducted oversight visits to affected communities to observe and monitor disaster response and distribution of relief services and assess how people's gender rights were impacted.

During the visits, the Commission raised concern about some of the challenges it observed, such as the lack of sexual and reproductive health services due to health facilities being affected by the floods, lack of privacy as all genders were housed in one emergency shelter, poor provision of sanitary pads, allegations of sexual abuse due to poor security in the shelters. "Our mandate requires us to monitor and evaluate government's response to the catastrophic natural disasters that occurred between 8th April - 28th April 2022 and most recently in June 2024" CGE Commissioner Prabashni Subrayan-Naidoo told delegates. Some of the stakeholders that took part in the engagement included The Gugu Dlamini Foundation, Sandfields Disaster Relief Community Organisation, the Office of the KZN Premier, COGTA, Human Settlements and Department of Social Development.

The Commission made a call to duty bearers to reflect and ensure compliance with the Disaster Management Act in their response to natural disasters. "I am here to ask you to prioritise our community which was severely affected by floods, and we are still dealing with the effects thereof" said Chantal

Naidu of the Sandsfield Disaster Management Organisation. The office of the premier in KZN encouraged stakeholders to work together in dealing with disasters, "We are not here to point fingers at one another. We would like to take this as a conversation where we are going to identify faults and seek solutions" said Dante Mashile from the Office of the premier in the province further calling on stakeholders to be more active in local communities to better respond to disasters. While the Ethekwini Disaster Management Manager, Vincent Ngubane said "Ethekwini Municipality is vulnerable to incidents and emergencies such as fire, heavy rainfall, strong winds, lightning and thunderstorms as well as recently, cyclones" said Ngubane.



Commissioner Prabashni Subrayan-Naidoo speaking to stakeholders on the effect and aftermath of the recent floods in KZN