



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.

Commission for Gender Equality Concerned About Poor Support Given to Women Informal Traders in Tshwane

The Commission for Gender Equality will hold a public hearing with the City of Tshwane, where the city will account on the interventions it is implementing to support and develop informal traders. As part of the preparation for the hearing, the CGE met various stakeholders in the economic and research sectors who have worked with informal traders, to receive their inputs and views on solutions that are needed to develop street vendors. Women constitute the majority of traders who operate in the informal trading ecosystem and were the most affected during the coronavirus pandemic back in 2020.

Addressing stakeholders, CGE's provincial manager in Gauteng, Khutso Monyepao, said the Commission wants to understand the extent to which red tape and municipal by-laws affect the operations of informal traders. "The Commission wants to understand how municipal by-laws impact on the growth of informal traders, and to see what type of support is available to them for their upliftment," she said. Monyepao added that the views of other stakeholders who regularly interact with informal traders, can lead to positive interventions, "We want to find ways to fast-track the development of women informal traders. This is a build-up to an investigative hearing we will conduct where City of Tshwane will account on their role in developing informal traders" she said.



CGE Provincial Manager, Khutso Monyepao addressing stakeholders at the engagement on the empowerment of women in the informal sector within the City of Tshwane



Xoliswa Moerana from TUT, addressing the stakeholders on enterprise and supplier development office that seeks to develop informal traders who do business next to its campuses.

The gathering was attended by representatives from the Tshwane University of Technology, South African Human Rights Commission, Socio Economic Rights Institute, Small Enterprise Development Agency, SA Cities, and SAVE ACT. These organisations have done research in the informal economy sector or provide support to informal traders and small enterprises. Harriette Buga from the SA Human Rights Commission shared some of the findings from the research done by SAHRC, "Most informal traders struggle with understanding legal requirement for them to operate in their spaces. It is important to establish planning and management to enable informal traders to understand and comply with by-laws"

Continues on next page



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Commission for Gender Equality Concerned About Poor Support Given to Women Informal Traders in Tshwane
- Farmers Cite Difficulties in Accessing Communal Land in Mpumalanga
- CGE Releases Two Reports on Women's Access to Land and Maternal
- Sharing Gender Transformation Knowledge with Other Countries



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she said. Kopano Ntsoane from SA Cities raised concern that municipal by-laws were developed to protect big business and their property rights. This has put informal traders in a disadvantaged position because they are barred from running their businesses in spaces where they could make livelihoods.

Xolisa Moerane from TUT, said the university has an enterprise and supplier development office that seeks to develop informal traders who do business next to its campuses, "At Tshwane University of Technology, we are interested in contributing to the business development of areas where our campuses are located. We have an enterprise supplier development that develops informal traders through training. We use some of our students to help train informal traders". The CGE will meet City of Tshwane in November to hear its account.



Thandiwe Msibi from SAVE ACT, stating that a lot of women want to move away from survivalist informal businesses to establish formal enterprises.

Farmers Cite Difficulties in Accessing Communal Land in Mpumalanga



"As women in farming, we have a challenge in accessing land; some women in our region do not have enough space to plough their veggies; we are pleading with our traditional leaders to assist and grant us land because this is our means of living, we depend on the land to provide for our families". These were the words of Mrs. Busi Sibiyi – Makwakwa from kaMhlushwa in Nkomazi, Mpumalanga as she raised some of the challenges farming rural women face in the province. These challenges were raised during an outreach session on economic development hosted by the Commission for Gender Equality's Mpumalanga office.

The outreach was inspired by the release of a CGE report that details challenges faced by rural women in accessing communal land and the National Development Plan vision 2030 which states that by 2030 South Africa's rural communities must have better opportunities to participate fully in the economic, social and political life of the country. The session was facilitated by CGE Public Education and

Information Officer, Augustine Mabuza who reminded attendees that agriculture ensures food security, fights poverty, and creates job opportunities, "rural communities depend on agriculture for survival, therefore they must have access to land", he said.

Some of the challenges raised by the women farmers were the lack of support from the Department of Agriculture, lack of access to land, applications for funding being done online, which was detrimental to rural farmers, and lack of access to the market to sell their fruits and veggies. They further raised concern that due to gender discrimination, women are not allocated land by traditional councils, and they also struggle to get water. They stated that after floods ravaged the area in early 2023, government came to assess the damage but there was no support given to them. "We are requesting assistance with training and mentorship programmes to empower us with the necessary skills that will enable us to be productive", they said.

CGE Releases Two Reports on Women's Access to Land and Maternal Healthcare

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) launched two reports on Exploring Barriers to Women's Access to Communal Land in selected provinces, and the State of Maternity and Neonatal Healthcare in the Eastern Cape Province. CGE Chairperson, Adv. Nthabiseng Sepanya-Mogale said the reports are amongst the seventeen which were produced by the CGE during the 2023/24 financial year. The report on Access to Land highlights challenges that prevent women in rural areas getting access to communal land, such as issues of marital statuses and cultural practices that required women to adhere to certain dress and behavioural expectations.

CGE found that in Limpopo, communal land became expensive when designated for entrepreneurial activities, with traditional leaders and headmen demanding a 50% share of the business. Unmarried women were often disadvantaged and risked losing their undeveloped land to reallocation and felt pressured to live with men for security as traditional leaders, who were often men, would grab their land. While presenting the report, acting Head of Policy and Research, Naledi Selebano, said the Commission has shared its recommendations with implicated government entities such as the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform, and Rural Development. CGE expects government to ensure that necessary national legislative reforms related to communal land are introduced to replace the Communal Land Rights Act, which was repealed in 2010.

"Legislative reforms must address existing challenges of patriarchal practices, gender discrimination, and exclusions that are currently being justified under the guise of cultural beliefs and norms, which subjugate women and queer persons", she said. In his presentation of the report on Maternal healthcare, acting Head of Legal Services, Tsietsi Shuping, said



CGE Chairperson, Adv. Nthabiseng Sepanya-Mogale, opening and welcoming the attendees



Eastern Cape HOD for Health, Dr. Rolene Wagner, welcoming the CGE's report into the state of healthcare in the province

lack of resources, bad infrastructure, shortage of beds and lack of training of health care practitioners are some of the findings that are in the state of maternity and neonatal health care in the Eastern Cape province report. He further highlighted some of the recommendations made by the CGE, "in light of these findings recommendations for health services improvement include enhancing data reporting accuracy, implementing effective infection prevention and control measures, addressing capacity and infrastructure limitations, improving complaint resolution processes and ensuring the effective implementation of quality improvement plans", he said.

Eastern Cape HOD for Health, Dr. Rolene Wagner, welcomed the CGE's report into the state of healthcare in the province, and assured the Commission that work was being done to respond to its recommendations, "We are going to drive a culture of change to ensure that we correct all the challenges in our hospitals and reduce maternal death. We want to make it safe for women to deliver babies and have so far increased the number of clinical nurses so that we are able to reduce teenage pregnancy" Wagner added that the provincial department was making interventions in rural communities to detect pregnant women early and deliver HIV treatment programmes.



CGE CEO, Dr. Dennis Matotoka, giving an overview of the reports

Sharing Gender Transformation Knowledge with Other Countries



Prof Rhoda Wanyenze from Makerere University in Uganda, stating that CGE has helped UNISA with developing guidelines on ensuring gender transformation and advancing gender policies



Chairperson, Adv Sepanya-Mogale speaking on the mandate of the CGE

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) hosted Prof Rhoda Wanyenze from the Makerere University in Uganda, who visited South Africa to study how universities are advancing gender transformation and the role played by CGE in helping institutions of higher learning build gender equality mechanisms. Prof Wanyenze was accompanied by Prof Grace Khunou from the University of South Africa. "CGE has helped UNISA with developing guidelines on ensuring gender transformation and advancing gender policies" said Prof Khunou.

CGE Chairperson, Adv Nthabiseng Sepanya-Mogale spoke on the Commission's mandate, "We are a constitutional body and that gives us a strong mandate to play an oversight role in monitoring the implementation of gender transformation by private and public entities". CGE CEO Dr. Dennis Matotoka said in his remarks that gender transformation should not be an afterthought in institutions, but that there should be intention in creating an enabling environment for it.



CGE Chairperson Adv Nthabiseng Sepanya-Mogale and Commissioner van der Merwe handing over a collection of research and legal reports to Prof Wanyenze and Prof Khunou



As South Africa celebrates 30 years of democracy in 2024, the CGE invites you to The State of Gender Equality in 30 Years of Democracy Conference to reflect on the state of gender equality in the country- the successes, the constraints, and opportunities. This includes consolidating lessons learnt from the past and carving a way forward for gender equality in South Africa.

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