

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 Engages DARDLEA on Support for Rural Farmers in Nkomazi

By Sandile Useni



Education Officer, Lucky Mabuza addressing stakeholders at the engagement.

The session, facilitated by CGE Education Officer Lucky Mabuza, brought together DARDLEA officials and community members involved in agriculture.

DARDLEA outlined various programmes and services available to farmers, including Phezu Komkhono Mlimi, Masibuyele Esibayeni, skills development and funding opportunities. The Department also highlighted the Mpumalanga International Food Market,

support on women farmers. Farmers, however, raised challenges including limited access to land, water rights and capacity-building opportunities. They emphasised that these challenges continue to affect their ability to expand production and benefit fully from agricultural programmes.

In response, DARDLEA encouraged farmers to engage their local Agricultural Assistants, who are available to provide technical assistance and information on departmental programmes and services.

The CGE emphasised the importance of ensuring that agricultural programmes are accessible, gender-responsive and responsive to the realities of rural communities, particularly women farmers. The session highlighted the need for continued collaboration and accountability to ensure that rural farmers have meaningful access to land, water, skills, funding and markets.

Naas, Mpumalanga — The Mpumalanga Provincial Office of the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) hosted an accountability session with the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) on support provided to rural and subsistence farmers in Nkomazi.

expected to open in September 2026, which will provide farmers with an opportunity to access markets and sell their produce.

Two women who have benefited from DARDLEA's programmes shared their experiences, demonstrating the potential impact of government



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Empowering Women Through Economic Opportunities and Customary Marriage Awareness



Education Officer, Boitumelo Zwane addressing stakeholders at the engagement.



On 26 August 2026, the Free State Office participated in a Women's Economic Empowerment Outreach under the theme "Empowering Women for Sustainable Development and Economic Inclusion," held in collaboration with Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) and the Department of Social Development (DSD).

The outreach brought together a cohort of economic empowerment agencies and government departments to provide information on available economic opportunities and skills development programmes within the sector.

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), represented by Boitumelo Zwane highlighted that marriage has significant economic implications and consequences, which have been found to disproportionately affect women compared to men, particularly in customary marriages. Against this backdrop, capacitating women on matters relating to the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act 120 of 1998 was particularly relevant to the session.

The education dissemination session also sought to raise awareness of the approaching 31 August 2026 deadline set by the Department of Home Affairs for the registration of customary marriages.

Communities were informed about the importance of registering customary marriages and how the Act provides legal recognition and protection in relation to marital status, inheritance, spouses and children.

Furthermore, the session highlighted the requirements for a valid customary marriage and the importance of ensuring that such marriages are properly registered. Participants were also informed about the role of the CGE in discharging its constitutional mandate to promote, protect and monitor gender equality, including addressing gender rights violations experienced by persons in customary marriages.

CGE Engages Department of Human Settlements During Public Service Women Management Week

By Galaletsang Lephogolo



Stakeholders at the engagement

As part of Public Service Women Management Week, a national initiative aimed at celebrating, empowering, and advancing women in leadership positions within the public service, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) in the North West Province participated in an engagement

hosted by the Department of Human Settlements on 25 August 2026. The session brought together female Senior Management Service members and provided a platform for discussion on gender transformation, women's empowerment, and inclusive leadership in the workplace.

During the engagement, the CGE delivered a presentation on gender mainstreaming, emphasising the importance of integrating gender perspectives into policies, programmes, budgets, and institutional practices to ensure equitable outcomes for women and men. The presentation further unpacked the HoD's Eight principles plan for Gender Mainstreaming, highlighting its role in driving gender equality and strengthening accountability within government institutions.

Furthermore, the session explored the Department's efforts to empower women and create an enabling environment that supports their growth and advancement. The engagement highlighted the need for continuous assessment of institutional practices to ensure that gender transformation goals are effectively implemented and sustained.

CGE ENGAGEMENT NORTH WEST PROVINCE – NUPSAW GBV AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

By Joyce Khutsoane



Commissioner Mulalo Nemataheni (top left) alongside stakeholders during the engagement.

Commissioner Mulalo Nemataheni on 27 August 2027 represented the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) at the NUPSAW GBV Awareness Campaign in Mahikeng, North West Province. The engagement brought together workers, government departments, Chapter 9 institutions, labour unions and civil society organisations under one shared mission: to strengthen collective action against gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), promote substantive gender equality, and ensure workers know their rights and where to seek support.

In her address, Commissioner Nemataheni reaffirmed the CGE's constitutional mandate to promote, protect, monitor, and advance

gender equality. She emphasised that GBV is not just a workplace issue, but a societal crisis that undermines dignity, productivity, and the full participation of women in the economy. She called on all stakeholders to move beyond awareness and toward accountability, implementation of workplace policies, and survivor-centred support systems.

A highlight of the day was the signing of a Pledge of Commitment by all stakeholders present. Through the pledge, stakeholders committed to work together and not in silos, to strengthen referral pathways, share information and hold each other accountable. From awareness to action, ending GBV is everyone's responsibility.

Equipping Community Members on Gender-Related Legal Issues



Legal Officer Sandile Useni addressing participants during the session.

on important legal and gender-related issues that affect individuals and families, including different types of marriages, marriage regimes, divorce, wills and estates, and the role of the Guardian's Fund.

The session aimed to equip officials with practical knowledge about the legal implications of marriage and divorce, the importance of understanding matrimonial property regimes, and the need for proper estate planning. Participants were also informed about the significance of having a valid will and the administration of estates, particularly in protecting the interests and rights of spouses, children, and other beneficiaries.

The discussion on the Guardian's Fund further highlighted the mechanisms available to protect and administer money belonging to minors and other persons who are unable to manage their own financial affairs.

The session provided an important platform for officials to engage on legal matters that have a direct impact on gender equality, family rights and economic security. Participants were encouraged to use the knowledge

gained to promote awareness and ensure that communities are better informed about their legal rights and responsibilities.



The session, facilitated by the Provincial Legal Officer, Sandile Useni, focused on important legal and gender-related issues that affect individuals and families, including different types of marriages, marriage regimes, divorce, wills and estates, and the role of the Guardian's Fund.

The Mpumalanga Provincial Office conducted a Gender and Development (GAD) Session at the Gert Sibande District Municipality offices in Ermelo, bringing together officials from various municipalities and government departments.

The session, facilitated by the Provincial Legal Officer, Sandile Useni, focused

Eastern Cape Women's Parliament

By Khaya Nkontso



Education Officer, Khaya Nkontso at the engagement.



GGE officials, Ludwe Mbeleni and Babalwa Dick at the exhibition table

The Eastern Cape Women's Parliament is a special sitting of the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature held annually during Women's Month. The platform provides an opportunity for women, particularly those from rural and marginalised communities, to raise

issues affecting their lives and to engage directly with government and other stakeholders.

The Women's Parliament seeks to amplify the voices of rural women in government processes, contribute to influencing legislation and public policy, and promote accountability on matters affecting women and communities.

Key areas of debate included health challenges in rural areas, including access to healthcare facilities and HIV-related concerns; gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF); economic transformation, with particular attention to employment opportunities, projects benefiting women and the development of the rural economy; as well as access to resources, education and land.

The Women's Parliament is held in commemoration of the historic 1956 Women's March, which remains an important symbol of women's collective action and resistance against injustice and inequality.

The Eastern Cape Provincial Office of the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), as a member of the Provincial Gender Machinery, participated alongside provincial departments, municipalities

and other stakeholders in efforts to advance women's empowerment and economic emancipation.

CGE established an information and exhibition stall where research reports covering various gender-related issues, educational materials and pamphlets were displayed and shared with participants. The CGE Legal Department was also available on-site to provide consultations and guidance to attendees on gender-related legal enquiries and complaints.

The session provided a valuable platform for CGE staff to engage directly with women and other participants, share information on the Commission's mandate and services, and strengthen collaboration with institutions working towards gender equality. It also created an opportunity to establish and develop new working relationships with Civil Society Organisations and other like-minded stakeholders.

CGE's participation demonstrated its continued commitment to ensuring that women's voices are heard, particularly those of women in rural communities, and to strengthening partnerships that advance gender equality, women's empowerment and the protection of women's rights in the Eastern Cape.

CGE Engages Parliament on Gender Equality and Women's Entrepreneurship

By Lesego Zungu

On 19 August 2026, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) participated in the capacity-building workshop/symposium hosted by the Portfolio Committee on Small Business Development to discuss Gender Equality and Parliamentary Oversight of Women's Entrepreneurship.

Opening the engagement, Commissioner Seehaam Samaai emphasised that women's economic empowerment is central to the CGE's mandate. She noted that empowerment is not simply about increasing the number of women participating in programmes or receiving financial support, but about ensuring that women participate meaningfully, sustainably and equally in the economy.

COO Patricia Ledwaba-Mametja delivered a presentation titled "Empowered Women, Empowered

Nations: Women's Entrepreneurship, Key Trends and Persistent Gaps." The presentation highlighted persistent barriers affecting women, particularly black women, rural women, young women and women with disabilities. These include limited access to finance and markets, exclusion from procurement opportunities, unpaid care responsibilities, and continued concentration in informal and precarious work.

Drawing on the CGE's research, including its 2024 Report on the State of Women in the Economy and research on women-owned Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), the Commission highlighted gaps in the implementation and oversight of gender-responsive economic policies. The CGE also reflected on the 40% public procurement pronouncement

for women-owned enterprises, noting its potential to transform women's economic participation if effectively implemented and monitored.

The Commission further stressed the connection between women's economic empowerment, safety and autonomy, highlighting the impact of gender-based violence (GBV), unpaid care work and gendered corruption, including sextortion, on women's economic participation. In its way forward, the CGE called for stronger parliamentary oversight of departmental plans and budgets, gender-responsive budgeting, the localisation of the National Strategic Plan on GBV, and greater attention to the digital gender divide as an emerging barrier to women's economic participation.

CGE Briefs Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture

By Lesego Zungu

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) briefed the Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture on 28 August 2026 on its research into gender inequality in sport. The briefing was led by Commissioner Kamohelo Teele, with Research Acting Deputy Director Lieketseng Mohlakoana-Motopi presenting the findings of two studies: Gender Inequality in Sport: Insights into the Women's National Soccer Team - Banyana Banyana (2024) and Assessing Gender Mainstreaming in the South African Sports Sector.

The Gender Inequality in Sport: Insights into the Women's National Soccer Team – Banyana Banyana (2024) study examined gender inequality through the experiences of South Africa's national women's football team. The research identified limited transparency around sponsorship agreements, finances, appearance fees and individual payments as a concern for Banyana Banyana players. The team also continues to attract fewer sponsors than Bafana Bafana, reflecting longstanding patterns of investment and

commercial support that have favoured men's football. The study further found that women national players face challenges relating to sports facilities, equipment, attire and transport, while insufficient consideration is given to the specific health and wellbeing needs of female athletes.

Mental health was also identified as an important concern, with female athletes potentially experiencing anxiety, depression, disordered eating and harmful effects associated with social media. The study further highlighted the scarcity of women in leadership positions within the South African Football Association (SAFA) and the absence of a dedicated gender unit at the time of the study. These institutional gaps can affect the growth and development of women's football and limit the ability to identify and address gender-related concerns. The CGE recommended increased investment in Banyana Banyana, grassroots development programmes and sponsorship for women's football in schools and communities, as well as the

professionalisation of women's football. The second study, Assessing Gender Mainstreaming in the South African Sports Sector, broadened the assessment beyond women's football to examine gender inequality across the sporting sector. The study also identified several limitations, including the participation of only 12 of the 20 targeted sporting federations. This limited the representativeness of the findings across the sector. In addition, the athlete sample was predominantly women, while responses were heavily concentrated in rugby and largely reflected national-level athletes. Incomplete and inconsistent gender-disaggregated data also limited comparisons across federations and the assessment of gender progression pathways.

The CGE's briefing reinforced the need for stronger accountability and sustained investment to ensure that gender equality is embedded across South Africa's sporting sector and that women and girls have equal opportunities to participate, compete and lead in sport.

Understanding Sexual Consent with the University of the Free State



Panellists during the roundtable discussion.

On Thursday, 03 September 2026, the Free State Provincial Office participated in the University of the Free State roundtable discussion on sexual consent, which was part of the broader goal of realising institutional gender development and transformation. The CGE, as an oversight body, focused on the institutional responsibility of universities in responding to sexual violence and disputes concerning consent.

Free State Legal Officer, Thembu Ngoma emphasised that universities have a duty not only to prevent sexual violence through education and awareness,

but also to provide accessible and confidential reporting mechanisms, prompt responses, protection against retaliation, and appropriate support for affected students. Universities should avoid simplistic approaches to consent and instead carefully consider issues such as what was communicated, whether consent was voluntary, the existence of coercion or power imbalances, capacity to consent, and whether consent was withdrawn at any stage.

Boitumelo Zwane (Education Officer) highlighted that sufficient preparation of survivors and witnesses is key to successful

outcomes in tribunals and asked the university to explain how it ensures witness readiness for such tribunals. The CGE advocated for a human-rights and survivor-centred approach, supported by continuous training, clear protocols, independent oversight, monitoring and regular policy review. In her closing remarks, Thembu Ngoma emphasised that the central question is therefore not merely whether a university has a sexual violence policy, but whether its systems genuinely ensure that students are safe, supported, protected and able to participate meaningfully in higher education.



Free State Legal Officer, Thembu Ngoma emphasised that universities have a duty not only to prevent sexual violence through education and awareness,

Women's Celebration – Ephraim Mogale Municipality

By Malebo Ntjana



The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), on 31 August 2026 in Limpopo Provincial Office attended the Department of Social Development's Women's Celebration held in Dichoeng, Ephraim Mogale Municipality.

During the event, the Commission provided an overview of its mandate and highlighted its role in promoting gender equality, protecting gender rights, and addressing gender-related inequalities affecting communities.

One of the key issues raised during the engagement was child and teenage pregnancy, particularly the concerning occurrence of pregnancies involving children as young as nine years old within the community. The Commission highlighted the gendered impact of early pregnancy, noting that girls are more likely to experience disruptions to their education and, in some cases, drop out of school. In contrast, boys may continue with their education and gain access to economic opportunities, contributing to unequal economic outcomes between young women and men.

The Commission explained that this inequality can contribute to economic dependency, which may increase women's vulnerability to abusive and controlling relationships and is among the broader factors associated with Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF). The importance of addressing the underlying social and economic

inequalities that contribute to GBVF was emphasised.

The Commission also raised awareness on sexual consent, emphasising the importance of informed, voluntary, and freely given consent in all sexual relationships. In addition, maintenance was discussed, with the Commission highlighting how maintenance-related challenges can disproportionately affect women, particularly where they carry the primary responsibility for the care and financial support of children. Participants were informed about the role of the CGE and how they can seek assistance or lodge complaints relating to gender inequality and violations of gender rights.

The presentation further addressed Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, including the role of the Commission in receiving complaints, providing information and referrals, monitoring gender-related matters, and advocating for the protection and advancement of gender equality.

The issue of customary marriages was also discussed, particularly the non-registration of customary marriages. The Commission informed participants about the importance of registering customary marriages and highlighted that the registration deadline was 31 August 2026. It was clarified, however, that failure to register a customary marriage by the deadline does not automatically invalidate the marriage.

Participants were encouraged to seek appropriate assistance regarding the registration and recognition of customary marriages.

The engagement provided an opportunity for community members to gain greater awareness of their rights, the challenges affecting women and girls, and the services and support mechanisms available through the CGE.



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OPINION PIECE

By Mable Shayi and Naledi Selebano

Beyond 50/50: Rethinking Fairness, Labour, and Equality in Marriage



The language of a “50/50 marriage” has become increasingly popular in contemporary discussions about relationships. At first glance, it appears to represent the very essence of equality of two individuals contributing equally to the growth and sustainability of a shared life. Yet beneath this seemingly straightforward principle lies a fundamental question about what exactly we are measuring when we speak about equality in marriage.

Too often, the notion of 50/50 is reduced to financial contribution. Equality is quantified through salaries, household bills, bond repayments, and monthly expenses. However, this narrow understanding overlooks a vast sphere of labour that remains largely invisible despite being indispensable to family life. The meals prepared, children nurtured, homes managed, birthdays remembered, emotional crises navigated, and relationships maintained constitute forms of work without which families would simply cease to function. Yet because this labour does not generate an income, it is frequently excluded from calculations of value.

This exclusion reflects a long-standing societal tendency to privilege paid labour over unpaid labour. Economies count wages and governments measure productivity. Markets assign monetary value to goods and services.

But the countless hours spent caring, nurturing, organising, and sustaining households are rarely accorded the same recognition.

The consequences of this invisibility become evident within many marriages. A woman may work a full day in formal employment only to begin a second shift when she returns home. She prepares meals, supervises homework, attends to children’s needs, manages household routines, and often carries the emotional responsibility of ensuring the wellbeing of family members. Her contribution extends beyond the visible tasks of caregiving; it includes what researchers call the mental load, the constant planning, remembering, anticipating, and coordinating that keeps family life functioning smoothly.

The critical question, therefore, is not whether a marriage is mathematically divided into equal halves. Rather, it is whether the burdens and benefits of partnership are shared in ways that are just. Equality should not be confused with symmetry. Human relationships are not accounting exercises, nor are they spreadsheets designed to balance perfectly every day. A fixation with numerical equality risks obscuring the deeper ethical principle of fairness that should underpin marriage.

Fairness recognises that individuals contribute in different yet equally

valuable ways. It acknowledges that relationships exist within changing social, economic, and personal circumstances. There are seasons in every marriage when one partner may contribute more financially while the other contributes more through caregiving and domestic responsibilities. At other times, those roles may shift entirely. Children are born, careers evolve, health challenges emerge, and family obligations expand. A resilient marriage is not one that rigidly enforces equal inputs at every moment but one that adapts with generosity, empathy, and mutual commitment.

This argument should not be interpreted as an endorsement of traditional gender roles. Indeed, genuine equality requires that men participate fully in domestic labour and caregiving responsibilities. The challenge is not merely to increase women’s participation in the public sphere; it is to ensure that men participate equally in the private sphere. Until domestic labour is shared more equitably, women’s economic empowerment will continue to coexist with disproportionate expectations within the home.

Ultimately, the debate about 50/50 marriages invites us to reconsider how we define value, contribution, and equality. If society continues to recognise only what can be measured in monetary terms, then many forms of labour, care, and sacrifice will remain invisible.

It is our view that a successful marriage is not one in which each partner contributes an identical 50 percent. Instead, it is one in which neither partner feels unseen, overburdened, or alone in carrying the weight of the relationship. Equality, at its deepest level, is not about dividing every task into perfect halves. It is about building a partnership rooted in shared responsibility, mutual care, and recognition of each other’s humanity. That is not merely a fair marriage, but a just one.

Read more: <https://cge.org.za/beyond-50-50-rethinking-fairness-labour-and-equality-in-marriage/>