



MINISTRY
PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**MINISTER N. KIVIET SPEECH ON THE
DOLLY MZ AidUME FOUNDATION
WOMENS CONSERVATION AT WILD
COAST SUN , EASTERN CAPE ON
THE 27TH AUGUST 2023 AT 10H00**

Program Director

Princess Ziyanda Sigcau

**Councillor Danisa Mafumbatha , Mayor of Winnie Madikizela
Mandela Local Municipality**

Dolly Mzaidume Foundation Members

Panelists

Mbizana Women's Desk

South African Model Foundation

Community Members

Distinguished Guests

Comrades

Malibongwe

It is my pleasure to join you in this important program with regard women issues in the context of growth and development. I wish to pass my sincere appreciation to the foundation invite for the inaugural series of Women Conservations. Its not a mistake to have this conservation during the month of women. Women have played an important role in ensuring that our country is what it is today, If it was not their relentless struggles in the 50s and 60s we will not be enjoying the freedom we are enjoying today. Despite these significant strides there is still a lot to be done. There are some people who go to bed without food , some have no access to clean drinking water. Young people still remain unemployed and the rate of lawlessness is immense in particular in the rural areas through gender based violence.

The foundation is named after a selfless leader Comrade Dolly a community developer , a public representative who carried her responsibilities par excellence. She fought and demonstrated selflessness , courage , and boldness as a young woman when it was not fashionable to do so. This led her to be in the first cohort of the deployees in the Provincial Legislature of the Eastern Cape as a Member. It is suffice to say as we gather here today we should acknowledge that women struggles come a long way. The declaration of the 9th of August as the Women's Day is a result of the struggles that were waged by the women in the 50s and the 60s. As the theme of this inaugural event suggests that “ **Who were we before we were told who we should be** “ it will be important to give a synopsis of the women's struggles and the gains thus far achieve on the path traversed.

We will remember that nearly seven decades ago, a group of 20,000 South African women from all walks of life and various parts of our country marched to the Union Buildings, demanding an end to the dehumanizing pass laws. The problem started when the apartheid government announced that it would start issuing reference books to black women from January 1956.

Women rose to the challenge and organised themselves against repression and oppression. Women organised demonstrations in 1955. From 1955 and onwards the pass issue became the most important focus of their militancy. Today, we salute the courage of this generation and its leaders, including Lilian Ngoyi, Rahima Moosa, Helen Joseph, Sophie De Bruyn, Albertina Sisulu, Bertha Gxowa, Motlalepula Chabaku, and many others. The ruling party as the major anti government party identified itself closely with the campaign reiterating that the pass struggle was not for women alone , but for all African people.

Women like Sophie De Bruyn , Lilian Ngoyi , Lilian Diedricks , Bertha Mkize , Dora Tamana , Florence Matomela , Ida Mntwana , Rahima Moosa , Albertina Sisulu , Winnie Mandela , Helen Joseph, Ray Simons . Amila Cachila , Charlotte Maxeke , Ivy Gcina ,Katie Iouw , Catharina Symmons and many more will always be remembered for their role as women in the struggle against apartheid and women emancipation.

Women's Month in South Africa presents a valuable occasion for us to honour the generations of women whose struggles have paved the way for empowering women and advancing gender equality up to the present day. This year's theme, *"Accelerating Socio-Economic Opportunities for Women's Empowerment,"* underscores the need to improve women's participation in our economy. Unfortunately, our economy remains dominated by men, and more women are unemployed than men. Women are more likely to work part-time, unskilled, and semi-skilled jobs that offer lower pay. Women bear a disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work, making them more vulnerable to poverty, food insecurity, and hunger.

Gender equality and / or equity is one of the major challenges facing democratic governance in Africa as a whole and in the Southern African Development Community. This is a phenomenon that is facing the world. Since the pre-colonial era , African women have been deemed to be of lesser worth , including by their own fellow African men. African women were inferior beings who had to be kept under the control of the men. In the past Lobola was a symbolic gesture and these days it has changed to become a source of income that fathers could rely on to cover their financial obligations. Gender inequality can be deemed an impediment to good governance. Women have a right to develop themselves in their careers and contribute to the mainstream economy without any social or economic prejudice.

We have to make a thorough assessment of the gains and achievement of women in general and in government in particular. Despite the women's struggle the issue of gender equality remains a major challenge. The significance of that March had to be analysed. Women had to show that the stereotype of women as politically inept and immature, tied to the home, was outdated and inaccurate.

Here we are today because of their struggle, women are in leadership position but still more needs to be done. This summit is meant to deal with that. We have come a long way as a nation, which provides us an excellent opportunity to take stock of the path traversed and to make an assessment of the journey that is still ahead. Prioritising diversity in leadership is not about achieving an optical illusion. It is about tapping on the full breath and depth of talent available and equipping companies, government and organisations with diverse talents and viewpoints so that they can better navigate and address challenges in a more complex and competitive global environment.

Women leaders bring with them a unique set of leadership strengths, enhancing the ability of the leadership to navigate challenges. A progressive and future oriented society is one which provides access to opportunities for all, and maximises the potential of all talent, men and women. Achieving greater diversity requires concerted effort by government, organisations and companies to redesign processes to be gender friendly, and to prioritise women leadership.

Today we face a series of challenges in our society like gender based violence, climate change, pandemics and systematic inequality which have a direct impact on women's lives and that of society. Also of critical importance to be noted is the persistent patriarchal oppression that has denied women their rights and dignity for centuries in particular violation of the fundamental rights of women in all spheres of life, persistent and systematic social and economic discrimination against women.

What is needed now is for women to be directly involved in changing their lives for the better so as to create a better society for future generations. It is critical for women leaders to have political space and economic resources to challenge structures of oppression and to develop positive empowering solutions.

Women have shown the innovativeness to lead even when they have access to limited resources. However this should not be a reason to deny them access to resources. Global finance must be more accessible for women so that women leaders can have the tools they need to succeed. The current political , economic and social scenario is characterized by continuous and rapid changes which require strategies oriented towards sustainable development and economic growth. Women over time have demonstrated the ability to successfully manage the challenges imposed by social dynamics and environmental change. Women play a key role as promoters of sustainability.

Throughout time, women have demonstrated their values and abilities in addressing the challenges imposed by social dynamics and environmental changes. President Nelson Mandela during the International Women's Day in 1996- said-:

“As long as women are bound by poverty , and as long as they are looked down upon-, human rights will lack substance. As long as outmoded ways of thinking prevent women from making a meaningful contribution to society-, progress will be slow. As long as nations refuses to acknowledge the equal roles of more than half of itself-, it is doomed to failure“!

This platform is an important platform to ensure that women occupy their rightful places in the society, The foundation must not only encourage conversations of this nature but must also tend to ensure that women are equipped with skills. It will be important to form strategic partnership with various role players not only government but the private sector. Women in rural areas have all the skills required but have no knowledge what to do for their potential to recognized not only in this region and Eastern Cape but world wide. The foundation must establish Private Public Partnership to ensure that women of this region have skills to improve the quality of life of all citizens.

In conclusion , a woman is economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on economic decisions. It is thus important to note the importance of the objectives of this foundation in the context of women growth , development and empowerment. This is a good initiative it must be supported to ensure that women are better skilled to improve the quality of life of al the citizen. As this is the first initiative and an inaugural meeting I wish you all the best rest assured I will walk the road with you in ensuring that women have the capacity and the all the necessary skills that are needed.

I wish you all the best