

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HER WORSHIP THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF
MOTHEO DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, Me. FANISWA CHAINE AT THE
CELEBRATION OF THE WOMEN'S DAY.**

The Mayor of Mantsopa, Ntate Willem Mathee,
The Executive Mayor of Mangaung Local Municipality, Me. G. Mothupi,
Members of Mayoral Committees present,
Councilors,
Officials from various municipalities,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are just five (5) days away from the August 9, the day on which women would be reminding themselves of their victory against the pass law in 1956. We are meeting here in Hobhouse with an objective to launch this important month of women in South Africa. Our launch of this month as a district municipality is but part of the many activities that would be unfolding to highlight the plight of women in South Africa as a whole.

Programme Director, this year also marks the 51st Anniversary of 1956 August 9 Women march and furthermore; the 1st Anniversary of the Progressive Women's Movement of Southern Africa that was launched last year. The movement that brings all women from all walks of life together in fighting against women and children abuse, the demons of racism and oppression for a just and free society.

As we celebrate the Women's Day five days from today; we should remember that the struggle is not yet over in ensuring women emancipation as we have just begun a long journey to our freedom as women.

Women are faced with many challenges in society, both socially; economically and politically. All these challenges we need to overcome, though we know it would not be an overnight action. It is further imperative us to identify our institutions with all these challenges and say, how far we have traversed since the April breakthrough of 1994, and take stock of our achievements and failures in shaping programmatic solutions to these problems permanently.

Programme Director, it is true that lot has been done in transforming the state and empowerment of women, however what has been achieved is not enough when looking unto challenges facing women.

To mention but few, leadership, literacy, poverty, abuse of women and that of children. These challenges are affecting the economy, social and political relations. We are able to make statements on women empowerment are mostly we are not seen doing anything significantly to address these challenges as a nation, that is why it is important for us to begin developing practical programmes to combat poverty and unemployment, capacity building and engage on massive awareness campaigns.

I must say that, the nation might believe that women are given more advantage in this government compared to their male counter part; but the look of things in terms of placement in position of authority, leadership and

economy, this is not true hence we speak of challenges facing women and society today.

If I may make reference, we may all look in private companies, women are very few in high echelons of power and even in government, most women are placed in middle and lower management positions, this simply shows the need for us to begin striving towards leadership positions and furthermore ensure that we support each other every step of the way.

The significance of this month is for us as women to look back where we come from and where we are and shape the future. It is at this time of our history, where our struggle has taken a turn to being both confrontational and complementary in nature, we need to be more focused on the future as to where we would like to see ourselves as women in five (5) to ten (10) years both socially, economically and politically.

I also have to say, every one of us has a potential to grow and we only have to work hard towards our success much as the society we are part of, is mostly steered by men and we need to close the gap if we really want to realize our fair representation at all disciplines of life not because we are women, but because we have a capacity to deliver.

We need to manage our ambitions in line with our potentials, capacity and career path. We need to boldly say, we must be firstly viewed as human beings before we could be regarded as women. This analysis is the one that has demeaned women for many decades and must come to an end.

Programme Director, In conclusion, I would like to call upon all of you in this hall to join all activities in this month as convened by women in celebration of the women's month and remember, the struggle is not yet over. I would further like to remind the audience that, the women's struggle is not only waged in this country but in the world. I believe we all remember the case of Aminah Lawal (Mama) whom because women were united in action, the outstanding case of Constable Rasuge which still has to be resolved as to whether is missing or dead, the truth still has to come out.

As we celebrate this month and day, we need remember all women who were killed, raped and continue to suffer domestic violence and put them on our prayers as well as children who continue to suffer all these forms of abuse.

Thank you!