



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
COMMUNITY SAFETY

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

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Address by the Head of the Department of Community Safety, Mr V Mapolisa, during the Departmental Women in Management Initiative, East London ICC, (23/09/2021)

*Programme Facilitator,
Fellow colleagues, and in particular
Our sisters,*

1. Introduction

First and foremost, allow me to thank all of you warmly for enabling me and the department to be part of the great movement towards gender equality.

And, thanks to the Special Programmes Unit (SPU) for allowing us here to converge.

2. Political and Strategic Context

Our presence gives full expression to the fundamental importance of this occasion, in honour of the indomitable life of Mama Charlotte Maxeke.

In this regard, we join the country in celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the greatest gender equality activist ever to be produced and witness by our nation. For that reason alone, the country is well behind us as we seek to summit this longest revolution of women with the sole purpose of fulfilling the historical mission of our forerunners.

Our presence here demonstrates how correct our decision is to celebrate the women's struggle for total liberation, and at work place.

In this way, and many others, we want to inspire all in the Public Service to complete the work that was started by heroines of our country, such as Mama Maxeke.

Accordingly, the theme of the day is "**The year of Charlotte Manny Maxeke: Realising Women's Rights**".

It is the long history of the women's struggle that dictates we should accord high respect, honour and pride of place to this remarkable patriot, Charlotte Maxeke, who led bravely the 1913 Women's March. It is her example that I want you to follow.

Mama Maxeke lived, by blood and soul, according to the sacred principles of ubuntu. It is this spirit we all say we want to see in our department and across government, and among all public servants.

We have good reason to celebrate a mother, a woman of her stature whose amazing life, and ahead of her time, belies the myth that the place of women is in the kitchen.

Former Justice of the Constitutional Court, Yvonne Mokgoro, traced defining qualities of Charlotte Maxeke in a 2006 memorial lecture in the following terms: "**Charlotte Maxeke was a woman who, in every aspect of her life, was expressive of her extraordinary intellect, her diligence, competence, her audacity, assertiveness, patriotism, determination, courage and dedication to the highest ideals.**"

Professor D.D.T Jabavu, then at Fort Hare University, said she was "**one of the best known figures in public life in South Africa**" (Sechaba, 1980).

These qualities we want to see among the Department of Community Safety (DoCS) women and men of today.

The department must lead the way in recognising the role of women in the struggle, and in the management of the public affairs. This will be a progressive development for Mama Maxeke whose dream was to see women accorded full rights in all aspects of life including the work place.

In this regard, we salute Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, Madi Hall-Xuma, Dorothy Nyembe, Adelaide Tambo, Albertina Sisulu, Florence Matomela, Amina Cachalia, Ida Mtwana, Ivy Gcina and other giants of the struggle.

3. Our Department and Women Empowerment

Indeed the department has been trying the best it could to recognise the place of women within its space. Through the HOD Principle Action Plan implementation, the department has / is amongst others:

- Rolled out a Provincial Gender Based Violence (GBV) Summit where different stakeholders participated in shaping the thinking and action of the department in particular and government in general.
- Crafted Sexual Harassment Policy which has since been approved and adopted as departmental framework for attending to issues of sexual harassment at work and create an environment that is conducive to women development.
- Established an Employment Forum whose function and responsibility is to ensure that the department is achieving its equity targets.
- Participating in sporting and physical activities such as Aerobics.
- Even though the department is yet to realise the required 50/50 Gender Parity at Senior and Middle Management levels. The department is doing the best under circumstances of not its making. Currently, there is 36% and 39% women representation in both SMS and MMS levels respectively.

Our actions include the entrenched Bill of Rights that extends to all the people, the right to Equality, the right to Human Dignity, the inalienable right to Life and the right to Freedom and Security.

They give a clear expression to the rights in the 1954 Women's Charter, for Effective Equality.

What we want to see, with the collective help, is the translation of our legislative and democratic framework into action. Let's live the values in the Constitution, the relevant Public Sector Laws and others.

4. Women and Corona Virus

The advent of the Corona Virus has and continue to hit women the hardest as its impact is beyond the direct effects of the infection. Women safety and health are at great risk as increased prevalence of domestic violence and abuse is reported and sexual productivity health services are reduced. During unprecedented crisis, women also face an increased burden of care and subsequently of getting risk of getting sick.

To ensure an optimal relief and recovery response without compromising women, as a department and decision makers we must include a gender perspective in all decision we arrive at. Gender sensitive policies that recognises and are responsive to women needs will benefit not just women but the entire department, public service and society in general.

More than ever, the crisis of gender inequality has shown that people's safety and wellbeing is determined by decision makers, both in the private and public space. We are all as vulnerable as the most vulnerable among us.

5. Going forward – What is to be done

For every right, there's a corresponding responsibility. In spite of the work done to transform qualitatively the lives of women, there is still much to be done to sustain the strategic positioning of gender and women's issues high on the agenda of economic transformation and development. Poverty, inequality and unemployment are formidable challenges for the nation, with women being the face of poverty.

If we are to honour Mama Charlotte Maxeke, we have to do more as the department to recognise the central, leadership and strategic role of women at work. I place much hope to the presentation/s to follow from the relevant Chief Director that this matter will be nuanced.

6. In conclusion

Mama Maxeke said in the 1930, when referring to Social Conditions of African Women and Girls, we will know that we have succeeded "**to lift women and children up in the social life**" of the African when even men benefit, "**and thus the whole community, ...**".

Programme Facilitator, I hope I have managed to conceptualise the purpose of our convergence here today, covered and represented our Principal accordingly and accounted on the work being done by the Department of Community Safety. With your permission, allow me to once more thank you all.

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