

**MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA ON THE
OCCASION OF THE 2020 WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT
28 AUGUST 2020**

Speaker of the National Assembly, Ms Thandi Modise,
Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Mr Amos
Masondo,
Deputy Chairperson , Ms Sylvia Lucas
Honourable Members of the National Assembly and the National
Council of Provinces,
Women of the 6th Democratic Parliament,
Invited Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address the 2020 Women's Parliament, which
takes up the global 'Generation Equality' call for an end to gender-
based violence and femicide.

South Africa is proud to be associated with the United Nations
Generation Equality campaign, and to be of two action coalitions –
one on economic justice and rights, and the other on gender-based
violence.

These coalitions will drive the global effort to achieve true gender equality by 2030 and are key to our own national agenda.

Through Generation Equality, we are part of a wider movement that brings together governments, world leaders, civil society organisations and the private sector.

As a country, we have made tangible progress in advancing women's rights in society, in political representation and decision-making and in improving women's access to economic opportunities

But we also know our progress is undermined by the scourge of gender-based violence and femicide.

Violence perpetrated by men against women and children is a stain on our national conscience.

This year's Women's Parliament is being convened to gauge our progress in the fight against gender-based violence and to identify concrete measures to intensify our existing efforts.

Through the Emergency Response Action Plan that we launched last year, we have managed to redirect substantial resources to combat gender-based violence.

We have been able to increase the number of shelters and care centres for survivors, to improve the capacity of our police to deal with crimes of sexual violence, and to improve services to women and children who have to go through the criminal justice system.

We have made important progress in reforming our laws to afford greater protection for survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Since the beginning of May, we have been implementing the National Strategic Plan to combat gender-based violence and femicide.

I am pleased that the 2020 Women's Parliament will be addressing the critical issue of women's economic inclusion.

Far too often, women's financial circumstances force them to remain in abusive relationships and makes them more vulnerable to violence.

Women-headed households are more likely to be poor than male-headed households.

Women are also more likely to be in the lowest-paying jobs or to be unemployed.

We have made a number of commitments under Generation Equality, such as increasing public procurement for women, supporting women-owned SMMEs, eliminating gender disparities in pay for men and women, and prioritising women in the land reform process.

Working together as government, the private sector, labour and civil society, and indeed as political parties, we will be able to give real effect to the rights of women.

I congratulate the 6th Democratic Parliament for its continued commitment to advance gender equality in all areas.

May you carry high the torch of freedom that was lit in 1994, and ensure it continues to light the way to a future that is free from discrimination, persecution and violence against our country's women.

I wish the 2020 Women's Parliament well.

You carry the hopes of the women of South Africa and their common aspiration to live in peace, security and dignity.

You carry our best wishes for your success.

I thank you.