

**ADDRESS BY THE MAYOR OF ELIAS MOTSOALEDI  
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, MME. WINDY MATEMANE AT  
THE EVENT OF THE WOMEN INDABA, ELIAS  
MOTSOALEDI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY –  
AGRICULTURAL HALL, GROBLERSDAL.**

**23<sup>rd</sup> August 2012**

**Programme Director;**

**MAGOSHI A RENA**

**Councillors present here;**

**Representatives from National and Provincial**

**Departments and SALGA;**

**Ladies gathered here today;**

**Comrades and friends;**

**Ladies and gentlemen;**

On 9<sup>th</sup> August 1956, a small group of courageous women  
marched up the steps of the Union Buildings, carrying with

them thousands of signed petitions against the Pass Laws - oppressive laws that were dehumanising women in South Africa and tearing families apart. They also carried with them the hopes of thousands of women gathered humbly, at the highest authority of government. They also carried with them the hopes of thousands more women, who were not able to join them on that particular day, but who were with them in spirit. When the group of women, carrying these petitions, tried to meet with the Prime Minister, they were literally met with only CLOSED DOORS.

My sisters gathered here today: it has been a long and painful struggle from that historic day in 1956, until the dawn of our true freedom on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1994. And yet, we are far from done. We need to continue and in fact double our efforts to ensure that the women of South Africa, today, experience no more CLOSED DOORS. The “doors of learning shall be opened” to them. The doors of executive boardrooms shall be opened to them. The doors of their own enterprises and the overall right to a better life, shall be opened to them!

## Programme Director

This year's Women's Month theme of "Together contributing towards the progressive future of women" has left me wondering what exactly it is we are doing for the progressive future of women in South Africa?

It is true that we have seen many of our sisters rise to the top. Most recently, a beloved mother of the nation even became the leader of a continent! We celebrate each and every accomplishment of a South African woman, as a victory for all. We marvel at their strength and tenacity and encourage our daughters to do the same. But how can we truly celebrate, when so many of our sisters are still living in abject poverty? When so many of them are being violently abused in their own homes? When so many of them still suffer forms of oppression and prejudice?

It is only once we have rid our nation of these ills, that we can replace protest marches with dances of joy. We dare

not stand by idly, where South African and indeed African women are suffering!

We can truly share in each other's successes, if we take up the responsibility of correcting socio economic imbalances. Wherever possible, we need to try and uplift our sisters and give them the skills they need to better their own lives. It is true that when you give a woman a fish, she will eat for a day, but when you teach a woman how to fish, she will feed her family for a week. In this room alone, there is abundance of talent, skill and knowledge. What is it that we are doing to impart this skill and knowledge to women who can use it to improve themselves, their families and their communities? I implore everyone here today, to explore the ways in which to enrich the lives of women in the Elias Motsoaledi.

We can take inspiration from the women who participated in the Women's March of 9<sup>th</sup> August 1956.

Peaceful, organised and diligently they gathered to make their voices heard. They proved once and for all, what can

be achieved, when we all stand together and realise that one woman's plight is a plight shared among all of us - irrespective of race, colour or creed.

Programme Director

Progressive women are those who leave a lasting legacy for her children and for her children's children. The progressive future of women in South Africa is a future free of abuse and violence; a future free of young women falling pregnant at a young age; a future free of uneducated women. The progressive future of the women of Limpopo and indeed of South Africa, therefore lies in our own hands – today.

In our endeavours of true emancipation of South African women and OPENING DOORS for our sisters in Limpopo, let us not exclude the men of this Province.

We need the cooperation of all and a deeper understanding for the need to emancipate women in this country, given the diverse cultural landscape of our rural Province and the

various cultural practices that exist today. We usually go about all our endeavours with a spirit of consultation and dialogue. Let us broaden this dialogue to include men and to make them understand that the progress of women does not mean the digression in stature of our male counterparts!

Programme Director

In closure: let us draw inspiration from those who came before us; who have touched our lives and left a precious legacy. I am referring, of course, to women such as Charlotte Maxeke, Lillian Ngoyi, Ida Mtwana, Ray Alexander, Helen Joseph, Sophie du Bruyn, Bertha Gxowa, Amina Cachalia, Albertina Sisulu and many more.

They are our role models. These women who stood steadfast and fearless to ensure that today, we can experience freedom in our lifetime!

Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo!

I thank you!