

**COLLINS CHABANE
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

Since 2016



Keynote Address by the Mayor of Collins Chabane, Her Worship, Cllr Bila Tintswalo Joyce, during the 2018 Women's Day Celebration held on the 6th of September 2018 at Malamulele Stadium.

Acknowledgements:

- **Programme Directors;**
- **The Honourable Speaker of Collins Chabane Municipality, Cllr Lebea ME;**
- **The Chief Whip of Council, Cllr Chauke MG;**
- **Executive Committee Members present here;**
- **Section 79 Chairpersons in our midst;**
- **Fellow Councillors;**
- **The House of Traditional Leaders present here;**
- **Our Municipal Administration led by the Municipal Manager, Ms Ngobeni TC;**
- **Ward Committee and Organised Community Structures;**
- **Faith Based Organisations;**
- **The Collins Chabane Chamber of Business;**
- **Representatives from Sector Departments;**

- **Our brothers from Women and Children formations;**
- **The Youth and our Elderly Citizens;**
- **NGOs, NPOs and other represented structures;**
- **Government agencies;**
- **Distinguished guests;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Good morning!

As I begin this address today, allow me to express my condolences on behalf of the Collins Chabane Council, to the family and friends of the Firefighter who died on duty, while trying to extinguish the fire that broke down in the Gauteng Department of Human Settlement and health yesterday.

Allow me also extend my deepest sense of sympathy to African states for the passing of one of the noble peace laureate and a Ghanaian Diplomat – Kofi Atta Annan – who passed-on on the 18th of August 2018 at the age of 80 after a short illness. He was the 7th Former United Nations Secretary general, and during his time, he selflessly placed others first, radiating genuine kindness, warmth and brilliance in all he did.

May their souls rest in peace.

Program Director,

Let me take this opportunity to greet all the beautiful women and also express my heartfelt appreciation to them for the role they play in a society every day.

Let me also extend my gratitude to all men who took time from their busy schedules, to make this Collins Chabane 2018 Women's Day Celebration a success. I am confident that your presence here is an indication of your support to the complete emancipation of women, and their recognition as equal humans.

Distinguished Guests,

I am honoured this afternoon to join you at this much anticipated event which was supposed to be organised in the month of August when the whole of South Africa commemorates Women's Month in honour of the 1956 women who were both resilient and determined in their conviction.

On the 9th August 1956, it was women of all races from various regions across the country who marched to the Union Building in Pretoria to present a petition against pass laws.

Today as government we are convinced that women are the pillars of our society, and recognise the important role they play in our communities, political biosphere, the business world and in the growth of our country.

Women in our country have always been at the forefront of the pursuit of equal rights during the liberation struggle.

This pivotal role they played in the fight for gender equality was inextricably linked to the fight for racial equality. These heroines were also stalwarts of the political struggle and through the processes of political change; they brought about changes on how society should view women.

Our Women's Day Celebration which is being celebrated in the Heritage Month due to the Presidential Visit in August is themed: ***"Positioning Women Strategically for Social, Economic and Political Emancipation."***

We are deliberately celebrating women under this theme because we have realised the need to place women in the deciding tables for our economic and political potentials as a municipality, and indeed, as a country.

Today, twenty-four years into democracy, our government continues to drive us in the direction of empowering women to position

themselves in building the South African economy and business sphere. It is high-time that we acknowledge that we cannot move forward without the meaningful participation of women.

Since the advent of democracy and freedom, the ruling party – African National Congress – in South Africa has improved on a number of women and youth taking up leadership positions in areas previously dominated by men.

One of the success stories of our democracy as ANC government, is that of the representation of women and youth in political and decision making positions. Involving women in Governance processes constitutes one of South Africa's globally acclaimed success stories.

Fellow Citizens,

As a Municipality we recommit ourself to focusing our attention on issues affecting women as well as raise awareness of the plight of women and girls. We are working closely with many women's groups to ensure that their needs as a stakeholder are known and addressed through our Council programmes. To enhance the role of women in our communities, our Municipality coordinates numerous initiatives to empower women with the knowledge and skills they need to bring about change.

It must trouble our collective conscience as a nation that, twenty-four years since our freedom, the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality still bear a largely black, rural and woman face. It must worry all of us, including the private sector, and move us into a collective radical action to transform our economy so that it responds to the needs of the masses of our people – particularly women.

On the same breath however, **Programme Director**, measures introduced since 1994 by the ANC led government, to promote

women empowerment and uphold gender equality, have drastically improved the position and conditions of women in our country.

The living conditions of the majority of ordinary women have undergone significant qualitative change. But the unpalatable truth remains: Women continue to bear a disproportionate burden of poverty, inequality and unemployment, violence and abuse. Women continue to be marginalized and discriminated against in terms of economic opportunities, the labour market as well as access to land, credit, and finance.

Perhaps – **Programme Director,**

The words of Charlotte Maxeke can be constructive. She could be speaking to us when she said the following many years ago:

“This work is not for yourselves – kill that spirit of self, and do not live above your people, but live with them. If you can rise, bring someone with you.”

We all have a shared responsibility in making sure that women are empowered, and a kitchen is not viewed as a place for women. This needs men to empty their heads of the beliefs that a man is not meant to wear an apron or prepare food for his family. The corporate world must also allow women to take up the driver’s seat and steer this sheep to the direction where we are free from financial woes as a country.

This is indeed a perfect moment for us to reflect on how we can drive the economic empowerment of women. While 15 to 20 years ago women’s rights were seen primarily through a human rights lens, the world has now come to understand that the economic empowerment of women is also a factor of success in business as well as a condition to effective development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is now ample economic evidence that a country's economic prospects are conditioned by how engaged women are in the workforce, how able they are to engage in the C-Suite and in the boardroom, how women entrepreneurs can thrive, etc. In other words, women empowerment is part of the solution to address our economic challenges.

In brief, empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors and throughout all levels of economic activity is essential:

- To build strong economies;
- Establish more stable and just societies;
- Improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities; and
- Improve the performance of business.

As I conclude **Program Director**,

Allow me to indicate that as more women join businesses, we will uncover more products and services to meet the needs of women as a community and the country at large. This means that a country's wealth can be leveraged to rapidly generate the dividends of women economic empowerment. This is an often-untapped strategy, with tremendous potential for acceleration.

To deliver this we need more than lip service to the concept. Change is hard because it requires commitment and resilience! But to benefit not only women, but all members of society, we need this agenda accelerated.

Let us together drive acceleration in the work place, acceleration in the supply chain and human resources, acceleration in the shaping of our norms and expectations and acceleration of the financing into women-led businesses and business demonstrating diversity.

Let us work together to make this vision a reality.

I thank you!