



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

TREASURY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

E-DIALOGUE

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HON. NELISWA PEGGY NKONYENI
MEC: FINANCE



FOCUS - WOMEN'S MONTH

MEC Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni and Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma
during the Women in Business Symposium



**GROWING
KWAZULU-NATAL
TOGETHER**

MINISTER DLAMINI ZUMA AND MEC NKONYENI LEAD A BUSINESS SYMPOSIUM FOR EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN



MEC Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni received Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma in KwaDukuza Local Municipality where Women in Business symposium was held.



The session was also attended by students from DUT as part of their empowerment.

The Minister of Women Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma together with the KZN MEC for Finance, Ms. Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni hosted a business symposium as part of Women's Month celebration.

The symposium held under the theme "Knowledge is power, Ulwazi Lungamandla" saw various well-packaged presentations done by stakeholders from government, private sector both from South Africa and Africa alike with the intention of helping women tap into the African markets.

The business symposium focused on Africa Free Trade Agreement and the empowerment of women on how to access business opportunities through public procurement and accessing of African market through African Free Trade Agreement.

In an effort to deepen Acceleration of Socio-Economic Opportunities for Women Empowerment Dr. Dlamini Zuma and MEC Nkonyeni, outlined the importance of

making African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement work to benefit both women and youth. African continent and South Africa, is endowed with mineral deposit and commodities that should benefit all Africans, particularly women and youth.

In her keynote address, Dr. Dlamini Zuma said: "The AfCFTA intends to create a single market for goods and services, facilitated by movement of persons in order to deepen the economic integration of the African continent.

The implementation of the AfCFTA will ensure that we increase intra and inter Africa trade in that it aims to address the tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade.

We should all understand that Africa cannot increase trade without industrialising, manufacturing and benefiting its mineral and natural resources and accelerating investment in economic and social infrastructure."

MINISTER DLAMINI ZUMA AND MEC NKONYENI LEAD A BUSINESS SYMPOSIUM FOR EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN



Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma shares a photo opportunity with speakers and students from DUT at the Women in Business symposium.

Speaking on the African Union Agenda 2063, Dr Dlamini Zuma said that the Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want, we need to ensure that women and youth are the drivers of this agenda, and they participate in all areas of human endeavour equally. Women and youth on the continent should also ensure that they organise themselves to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the AfCFTA and the implementation of Agenda 2063.

The Women in Business Symposium was also attended by the Minister of Transport, Sindiwe Chikunga, who spoke extensively on the Oceans Economy and the opportunities for women and youth in this sector. Addressing the delegates, Minister Chikunga said: "Various government entities have committed R20 billion to to unlock investment opportunities in the Oceans Economy, Port infrastructure and fleet renewal programs in the next few years."

Minister Chikunga further alluded to the Comprehensive Maritime Transport Policy which makes provision for coastal shipping opportunities. This means that cargo may be moved from roads to waters from province to province and city to city where there is

coastal access. She said that this area too needs women to take up these economic opportunities.

She said: "This is an opportune moment for women in business to look for opportunities in the value chain as call for bids to improve the port system are out and it also requires women to organise themselves into Joint Ventures to capitalise on the responses. There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish if we set our minds to."

In her closing remarks, MEC Nkonyeni, said that great things will happen if women come together in forums like this to engage in meaningful dialogues that will contribute to economic development of this country.

Also in attendance was the National Champion for Ilembe District, Deputy Minister of Health Dr. Sibongiseni Dhlomo, Mayor of Ilembe District Municipality as well as various other key and senior leaders both in government and in the private sector.

MESSAGE TO STAFF BY HOD CAROL COETZEE



Head of Department, Carol Coetzee and MEC Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni

Women's Month allows us to gauge how far we have come in transforming society through addressing gender oppression, patriarchy, sexism, racism, ageism, structural oppression, and creating a conducive environment which enables women to participate equally in the mainstream economy and take control of their lives.

The concept of Generation Equality is a global campaign which links South Africa to global efforts to achieve gender equality by 2030. The reality is that gender inequality still persists with more women than men mired in poverty and unemployment.

Let me share some interesting statistics on women, more than half (51,1%) of the South African population are female^[1] and, according to the General Household Survey (GHS) 2021, more than 42,0% of households are headed by females.

When looking at the poverty headcount by gender, adult males and females experienced a headcount of 46,1% and 52,0%, respectively. Adult females experienced higher levels of poverty when compared to their male counterparts, regardless of the poverty line used. In 2016, 79.7% of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) had their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods.

The female labor force participation rate (share of women over 15 years who are economically active) in South Africa increased by one percentage point in 2022 to 50.61 percent in 2022. Furthermore, "men still earn 23-35% more than women" for workers at the median of the earnings distribution based on South African labour market report.

Only three African countries were ranked in the top 20 in the 2023 global gender gap report. South Africa was ranked number 20, Namibia was ranked number 8, and Rwanda was number 12. South Africa has notoriously high levels of violence against women. The country has among the highest rape incidences in the world. In the first quarter of 2022 alone, police figures showed that 10,818 rape cases were reported on 08 August 2023.

South Africa has made progress towards gender equality, but there is still more work to be done. The United Nations in South Africa has set a goal of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls through Sustainable Development Goal 5. The country has several gender-responsive laws around reproductive health, sexual orientation, access to justice, customary law, and protection against domestic and sexual violence. However, progress has been uneven.

President Ramaphosa has stated that the rights of women have been advanced and their representation improved in nearly all spheres. However, no country in sub-Saharan Africa has achieved gender parity in both primary and secondary education. In South Africa, legislation forbids schools from excluding pregnant girls, but only about one in three return after childbirth. Those who do return often face negative attitudes and practices from teachers and peers.

South Africa celebrates Women's Month as part of the global movement towards achieving gender equality by 2030. The country has the opportunity to make a real impact on achieving gender equality through its chairing of the Committee on the Status of Women, which it is chairing on behalf of the Africa Group, as well as the role it plays in the Global Generation Equality Action Programme and working groups.

I came across the Keynote Address by Ms. Rhulani Thembi Siweya, Deputy Minister in The Presidency, and wanted to share some of her comments - wherein she stated "Our task becomes even more urgent. As women leaders, influencers, and thought leaders we have a duty to pave the way for others to follow. Our continent is blessed with many virtues and top amongst these is our youthful population. It is a well-accepted fact that large youth populations in emerging economies represents a significant economic resource since a young working population can drive economic growth and offset the social costs of an ageing population.

MESSAGE TO STAFF BY HOD CAROL COETZEE

Our continent has a myriad of benefits and indeed limitless potential, however, we face a reality where many remain mired in poverty and unemployment." I know all of us have faced many challenges and that despite our successes we are still burdened in additional ways merely by being women. Our struggles have however, made us resilient and this same resilience can be found in millions of women on the continent.

The empowerment of women is an imperative but it is also the single most purposeful thing that can be done to build a nation. Women are known to invest in their children's health and education which holds enormous benefits for our fight against the triple challenge of unemployment, inequality and poverty.

In growing our economies on the continent, the empowerment of women can boost productivity, while increasing economic diversification and income equality in addition to other positive developmental outcomes. In doing so, women will be able to take their rightful place in all sectors of society and be empowered to not stay in abusive relationships for financial reasons.

Women who are financially dependent on their husbands, fathers, partners and family members have increased vulnerability to domestic violence, rape, incest, abuse, and murder. By empowering women, we give them financial freedom to liberate themselves from abusive relationships. Empowering women is also one of the important levers in fighting the prevalence of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide.



Head of Department, Carol Coetzee

HOW ARE WE CONTRIBUTING AS A DEPARTMENT TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT?

As a department we have 50% representation at SMS level and 56% overall of the 460 employees are women.

Provincial Treasury has a number of current programmes that contribute to accelerating women empowerment:

- **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

HR has the following Development programmes for which females are targeted during the recruitment processes. The intention is for the recipients to acquire workplace skills, knowledge and experience that will equip them to attain permanent employment:

Internship Programme

(Graduates attaining work experience over a 24 month period) Females (Actual) - 76 % of females are employed

Internal Audit Learnership

(Structured programme comprising of formal training and work experience in Internal Auditing over a 3 year period) - 53 % of females are employed

Trainee Accountant Programme (TAP)

(Structured training programme aligned to SAICA's competencies) - 44% of females are employed.

Management Development Programme

(Candidates from the TAP are, after completion, exposed to public sector financial management experience which will prepare them for MMS and SMS posts) - 71 % of employees are employed.

HOW ARE WE CONTRIBUTING AS A DEPARTMENT TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT?

• **SCM SUPPLIERS DATABASE SUPPORT ROADSHOWS**

The SCM Database unit offers advisory support at quarterly roadshows (upon invite) to Suppliers on registering on the Central Database and other SCM related queries. Women Owned Suppliers benefit from this initiative.

• **FOUNDATIONAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING BENEFITTING BENEFICIARIES OF THE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FUND**

KZNPT TAP Trainees, under the leadership of Ms Samuels, conduct basic financial management training which prepares beneficiaries with basic financial management skills to manage the finances of their businesses. The attendees are beneficiaries of the Youth Empowerment Fund which includes females. This is held annually, in quarter 3, virtually.

• **APPOINTMENT OF FEMALES AS CONTRACTORS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY (JOB MASSIFICATION PROGRAMME)**

Provincial Treasury is supporting the development and empowerment of Black Female led enterprises. The approach is capacitating identified Black Female Led Built Environment Professional Service Providers (PSPs) on the Treasury Infrastructure Capacity Support Panel in undertaking facility conditional assessments which have predominantly been male-dominated in the past. Participation in the Mentorship and Enterprise Development Programme involves the execution of facility conditional assessments on KZN Department of Education Schools in the Ugu District, and Amajuba District. The mentees participating in this initiative will benefit from mentorship to assigned service providers who are overseeing the assessments. Three female contractors have been appointed.

It is clear that deliberate, consistent actions are required if we want to achieve the shift in current gender inequality in our country. The introduction of gender based budgeting will also bring conscious decisions during planning on the department's commitment to further empowerment programmes for women in the province.



Thuli Mlawu

HOD'S 8 PRINCIPLE ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

1. **TRANSFORMATION FOR NON-SEXISM**

Facilitate change towards becoming more gender aware and responsive and create an enabling environment for gender equality and the fulfilment of women's human rights including that of women with disabilities.

- Gender mainstreaming training remains as a priority area of training on the 23/24 work place skills plan.

- Quarterly Sexual harassment workshops have been conducted since 2015 to empower individuals especially women on their rights in this area, and to inform them that there is in fact a platform to report such behavior. Sexual Harassment and is also discussed within combined platforms for both men and women and a number of GBV articles have been distributed throughout the Department raising awareness around this social ill that plagues our society.



Female SMS and MMS staff attending the HOD's annual meeting

HOD'S 8 PRINCIPLE ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

2. ESTABLISHING A POLICY ENVIRONMENT

All departmental policies, regulations and procedures are analysed for and brought into line with the criteria and requirements in respect of gender responsiveness

- The Department considers and addresses the different situations, roles, needs and interests of women, men, and youth when developing policies.
- A one size fits all approach can never work in Organisations where gender transformation is being driven.
- Although policies are applicable to all, special circumstances affecting women, for example, are always factored into policies.
- Wellness Policies make it possible to ensure that sessions are always provided for women to balance work and family life.
- The Department encourages improving women's quality of life by ensuring bi-monthly wellness clinics to ensure early detection and treatment guidance of lifestyle and dreaded diseases, with the provision of supplements, considering that working women may not have the time to attend to such issues outside of work.

3. MEETING EQUITY TARGETS

Gender balance in programme/ project team and beneficiaries

- The Department is committed to meeting targets ie 50% women at SMS and 2% PWDs.
- The Department is currently at 48% women in management and 1.6% people with disabilities.
- The Department has an approved Employment Equity Plan – recruitment strategies to achieve an adequately represented workforce is made possible;
- We are continuing to Target advertise – only females and Persons With Disabilities (PWD) for SMS positions;
- In respect of PWDs we are ensuring that all youth development programmes are inclusive of a minimum of one PWD per program. This ensures a pipeline of trained PWDs into entry level posts. Going forward, in respect of of entry level posts, all PWDs MUST be interviewed provided they meet the minimum entry requirements for a post and irrespective of the score obtained in the case study;
- Fully implemented Human Resource Development Strategic Framework – Paves the way & fast-tracks women empowerment into skills development and career pathing. The Department has successfully implemented the Succession Planning Program within the Department, as well as Coaching and Mentoring;
- HR is adequately funded to ensure gender specific programs like diversity training; GBV empowerment workshops; and programs to support no violence against women and children
- Monthly Employment Equity stats are provided throughout the Department to guide recruitment processes as well as provide transparent information on Employment Equity progress made in the Department to social partners as well;
- All youth development programmes in the Department ensure a higher intake of females which encourages developing a female workforce, creating decent jobs for women, support their working in and outside the home, and creating work places where gender equality is guaranteed.



HOD'S 8 PRINCIPLE ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

4. CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Programme/project management tools and methodologies are gender responsive

- Creating a harmonious work environment for all women
- Building team spirit in the workplace to ensure a conducive work environment for Treasury women
- Creating open communication platforms where information cascades to all levels of staff from SMS to lower levels
- Building a strong workforce where female employees are not prejudiced nor marginalised.

5. GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The relevance and value of gender mainstreaming as a strategy to achieve gender equality

- All Recruitment and HRD initiatives support gender mainstreaming.
- SMS positions target females and succession planning programs target female MMS for SMS succession planning.
- All youth development initiatives such as Internships; learnerships; external bursaries etc ensures that the intake percentage of females are far greater than males.
- MTSF targets for vulnerable groups pertaining to RET set asides, and employment targets have been incorporated into the 5 year Strategic Plan of the Department and into the Annual Performance Plan of the Department.
- 22/23 focus was on facilitating training of SMS members on gender responsive budgeting and gender awareness to contribute towards mainstreaming of all Departmental programmes.

6. EMPOWERMENT

- Succession planning initiatives for scarce skilled SMS posts have been put in place for female MMS and SMS members ensuring employability into such posts.
- Annual economic empowerment sessions are incorporated into Women's Day events to ensure economic sustainability.
- Partnerships with private establishments like Cell C and Tracker have been forged to ensure commitment to youth development in the Province.
- Entire Department commits at least two hours to show support during the annual candle lighting ceremony against violence on women and children; and to also show our support and commitment to people with disabilities and those living with HIV & AIDS.
- All youth development programme intakes have a higher percentage of females over males.
- Outreach programmes empowering women to ensure economic empowerment includes Supplier database assistance and training; Financial management skills provided to beneficiaries of the Youth Development Fund by our SAICA training programme & Job massification program for women in the built environment introduced by Infrastructure Unit.

7. PROVIDING ADEQUATE RESOURCES

All gender related issues are managed within the HR Policies and Strategies Unit that is capacitated with 1 X DD; 1 X AD and 2 X Practitioners.

HR budget allocation is ± 27 million including COE, which is utilised to fund all internal projects and programs including those relating to Gender mainstreaming and women empowerment.

8. ACCOUNTABILITY, MONITORING & EVALUATION

Accountability for mainstreaming gender in the programme/project has been established. Facilitation and M&E of all programs relating to gender issues, forms part of the D: HRM's performance agreement and work plan.

Meeting of equity targets, and the awarding of contracts to female owned businesses has been escalated to an APP level for HR & SCM, respectively, with indicators and targets per quarter.

Quarterly monitoring and reporting of achievements against targets is managed through our quarterly implementation reports on HR strategies contained in the Departments MTEF HR Plan, which forms part of HRs quarterly performance reporting evidence.

At a very strategic level HR reports annually to the DPSA on progress made on the implementation of the Job Access Strategic Framework and the Gender Equality Strategic Framework.

Employment Equity Reporting (EEA2 and EEA4) is submitted annually to Department of Labour.

MEC NKONYENI PAVES WAY FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF NONGOMA THROUGH WOMEN EMPOWERMENT



MEC Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni addresses the audience during the Women in Business outreach programme in Nongoma.

The MEC for Finance, Ms Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni, along with a strategic contingent of government stakeholders partnered to create impetus on women empowerment in business with a view to entrench a continued self-employment, innovation and creativity among business women in Nongoma area.

The objective of Women-in-Business Outreach is to bring KZN Treasury-housed strategic programmes such as Operation Pay On Time which assists with payment of suppliers within 30 days and supply chain protocols that need to be followed if one needs to do business with government. The desired outcome is to see women empowered and developed in business so that they can assist in the creation of employment and improving regional economy.

Stakeholders that came together to facilitate receipt of comprehensive services by Nongoma community include Office of the Premier's Women Desk, Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, South African Revenue Services (SARS), Moses Kotane Institute, KZN Film Commission, KZN Liquor Authority, Department of Social Development, SASSA, Department of Health as well as Agribusiness Development Agency (ADA).

Part of the highlight of the outreach was the commitment by the Office of the Premier to donate more than 20 speed points for business women in Nongoma as well as KZN Treasury's Database Help Desk that assisted close to 100 business women with registration into the Central Suppliers' Database so that they can be able to do business with government.

Mayor of Nongoma Local Municipality, Councillor Clifford Ndabandaba said Nongoma is in des-

perate need of government services and they were grateful that MEC Nkonyeni and a myriad of important stakeholders brought such a critical programme that will empower business women and availed needed services from various government departments that were part of the event.

"When we took over as the new leadership for Nongoma Local Municipality, we committed ourselves to developing and bringing service delivery for the people of Nongoma area. We remain committed to this mission and we know that we cannot do it alone. We need the help of provincial government in order to improve our socio-economic conditions", he said.

Speaking during the event, MEC Nkonyeni said the people of Nongoma have asked for various services which include the building of a shopping mall and a well-performing tourism sector that will facilitate in-bound investment and development of Nongoma in general.

"Through District Development Model, we need to encourage joint planning implementation of programmes that are meant for this area. We also need to create an entrepreneurial mindset. Over and above that, we need to encourage a culture of self-development, self-employment and zeal to succeed despite all odds," said MEC Nkonyeni.

MEC Nkonyeni said Nongoma has a serious agricultural potential and there is a need for locals to take agriculture as a serious business and go as far as exploiting international markets.

Xolile Zwane's Journey Successfully Completes the KZN Provincial Treasury's SAICA Training Programme



Miss Xolile Zwane shares her journey about the Treasury SAICA Programme



My name is Xolile Nompilo Zwane. I am 26 years old and I've recently completed a SAICA Training programme with KZN Provincial Treasury. I was born and raised in a small village called Khokhwaneni area in KwaNongoma. I matriculated in 2014 from Mchitheki High School located in KwaBazini, another village in KwaNongoma. I am the second of five siblings and was raised by a single mother with the help of my maternal uncles and aunt.

Growing up in a small village where higher education was considered a privilege rather than a norm, I never had good role models or examples of what to aspire towards. I had more examples of what not to do than what I should do. The only role models I had were my teachers and one of my uncles who was also a teacher and always encouraged me to do well. I come from a poor background and that has always been my motivation to ensure that I make something out of myself. I wanted to do better for myself, for my family and for my community's sake. I wanted to ensure that I was in a position to inspire my younger siblings, and other younger people in my community, to ensure that they have a bit more role models to look up to than I did when I was growing up.

From a very young age, I knew I wanted a career in finance since I did well in Mathematics and I was always encouraged by my teachers to one day work for a big company or bank. My interest in the Chartered Accountancy profession started when I heard my Grade 5 Mathematics teacher talking about Chartered Accountants (CAs) and how they analyse big companies' books. At the time, I didn't know what a CA is and what they do exactly but it just sounded sophisticated enough for me to be interested. When I did my research during my high school years, I realised that the profes-

sion can open so many doors for me and would provide me with the appropriate platform to be an inspiration to my younger siblings and younger people in my community, which was a passion of mine. Therefore, I became even more interested.

I currently hold a Bachelor of Accounting Science Degree and a Post Graduate Diploma in Accounting, which I obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), in 2017 and 2019, respectively. I was very fortunate to have been awarded the Thuthuka Bursary from 2015 when I started varsity. The bursary funded me from undergrad through to my postgrad studies which I completed in 2019 due to an unsuccessful attempt in 2018.

In 2020, I joined KZN Provincial Treasury as a first-year trainee accountant under the SAICA Trainee Accountant Programme (TAP). My journey to become a CA(SA) has certainly not been an easy one contrary to what I had hoped and expected. I have faced hurdles and made some mistakes along the way, both in academics and the training contract at KZN Provincial Treasury. This included unsuccessful attempts at my postgrad – Certificate in the Theory of Accounting (CTA) at Wits in 2018, the first SAICA board exam – the Initial Test of Competence (ITC) in 2020 and the second SAICA board exam – the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) in 2022, as well as an extension of my training contract. I have since been able to successfully complete the ITC at the end of 2020 and have started preparing for my second attempt at the APC which will be written in December 2023.



Miss Xolile Zwane shares images of herself in the work space.



The drawbacks in my training contract were influenced by several factors including health and other personal issues experienced throughout my journey. These struggles led me to perform at less than the expected levels and not being able to achieve the required level of competence in the prescribed three years. As a result, my contract was extended by a period of 12 months. Fortunately, through hard work, persistence, as well as support and encouragement received from different parties at KZN Provincial Treasury, I was able to overcome my hurdles and completed my training contract in July 2023, 5 months ahead of the extension period. I was then appointed to the Management Development Programme on 01 August 2023 and I am currently serving as a Budget Analyst under the Public Finance unit.

As I was reflecting on this article, I realised that the majority (approximately 90%) of the people who assisted me closely when I was facing hurdles in my training contract were women. These were women from different units within Treasury including Accounting Services, Municipal Finance, Public Finance, the CFO's Office, as well as Employee Wellness. This has made me respect and admire the power and strength that women possess even more, especially when working together to reach a common goal. It has also reignited my passion for inspiring others and actually taking the necessary steps to assist them in their respective journeys.

My motivation had always been my background and the drive to ensure that I achieve a better life for myself and my family. However, the struggles encountered along the way led to a loss of self-confidence in my capabilities and the possibility of ever achieving that became very blurry. What assisted me during such tough times, was the support and encouragement I received from these wonderful women who held my hand and carried me when I was on the verge of giving up. They

reminded me of the magnitude of what I've already achieved and made me believe in my potential and capabilities again. Therefore, what keeps me going even as my journey continues, is realising how far I've come and also getting frequent reminders of the magnitude of what I've already achieved.

Therefore, even though I am not yet a registered CA(SA), I acknowledge and celebrate each milestone I've achieved thus far and I continue to strive and work towards the fulfilment of my dream of adding those four letters next to my name and all the opportunities that come with that. I am very confident that my persistence, hard work, and the support I have received along the way will yield great results. I am confident that the technical and professional skills I have accumulated during my training contract, which exposed me to different business units within KZN Provincial Treasury and allowed me the opportunity to work with various departments, municipalities and public entities, will assist in ensuring that I excel in my current duties as a Budget Analyst.

The message I would like to impart to young people is that you shouldn't let your past, including your background, your mistakes, drawbacks and experiences, limit the possibilities of what you can achieve. You can achieve anything you set your mind and efforts towards, no matter the hurdles you may encounter. It all starts with believing in yourself and your capabilities. Be your own cheerleader and also try to surround yourself with people who want to see you succeed as much as you do, this is especially important when faced with tough times.

I look forward to serving our communities through the duties I perform at KZN Provincial Treasury, as well as the personal initiatives I have always had the heart and passion for.

TREASURY OPENS A NO-MEANS-NO LINE TO PREVENT GENDER-BASED-VIOLENCE (GBV) IN THE WORKPLACE



Provincial Treasury has put in place measures to tackle GBV in the workplace to protect female employees.

We have written articles covering gender-based-violence (GBV) in the workplace for the benefit of both the employer and employees. July is men's month, and August is women's month and it is therefore appropriate that an article on GBV be written as it affects both males and females; however, females of all ages are those mostly targeted. The problem of GBV has even caught the attention of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Trade Union Confederation, and other international formations domestically and globally. It is imperative to clearly understand what the term workplace refers to. Workplace refers to work-related trips; work-related training or social activities (team building exercises); work-related communications; employer-related accommodations; when officials are commuting to and from work in employer-provided transport; or the location where employees are amongst others, required to work virtually (Mather: 2022). GBV is a phenomenon related to and deeply rooted in gender inequality and constitutes human rights violations (European Institute for Gender Equality). Sex or GBV is the physical, sexual, psychological, or economic violence against a person on the basis of gender or violence that disproportionately affects those of a certain gender (Commercial Enterprise: 2021). GBV in the workplace, as sourced from <https://gbv.itsilo.org/index.php/briefing/show-paragraph/id/63.html>, includes: bullying, physical and verbal abuse from work colleagues, supervisors or managers (which in our view includes favouritism of a staff member at the expense of another); violence, sexual harassment and unwanted sexual advances; sexual abuse and sexual violence – including 'coercive' or transactional sex, rape and sexual assault; verbal and sexist abuse; abuse and harassment around

pregnancy; physical abuse and intimidation including assault, battery, attempted murder and murder; psychological abuse, intimidation and threats of violence; threats and acts of physical and sexual violence; economic and financial abuse; abusive working conditions such as poor health and safety (including building and equipment safety); inadequate or inappropriate sanitary facilities and rules about their use; and involuntary excessive long working hours and unpredictable or less demands to work overtime.

It is imperative that the employer takes action in addressing GBV in the workplace, as such, the Department has zero tolerance for GBV and harassment. The biggest challenge faced by employers is that the GBV victims do not report incidents of GBV and harassment for one or more reasons, for example, fear of reprisals. Since the negative effects of GBV include poor work performance, lateness, decreased job retention and inhibiting career advancement (ILO:2007); employee's physical and mental health and well-being, leading to stress, anxiety, loss of self-esteem and motivation (Business Fights Poverty: 2019); and low morale. The negative effects of GBV do not only affect the employee's directorate specifically, but the Department generally.

The Department therefore, has a dedicated email address namely, NO-MEANS-NO@KZNTREASURY.GOV.ZA where victims of GBV and harassment can report such incidents. Initially, the reason for this initiative by Department was to try and create a confidential platform for employees/officials to report the incidents of sexual harassment which now includes general harassment and GBV in the workplace.

TREASURY OPENS A NO-MEANS-NO LINE TO PREVENT GENDER-BASED-VIOLENCE (GBV) IN THE WORKPLACE



Treasury Female colleagues can use the NO-MEANS-NO@KZNTREASURY.GOV.ZA e-mail to report cases of abuse.

Any official/employee reporting these incidents, are assured of empathy, urgency and strict confidentiality in handling their matter. The main purpose of this email is to reverse all those negative effects referred to in the preceding paragraphs. They can only be reversed if the Department acts objectively and decisively against the perpetrators of GBV and other forms of harassment in the workplace.

GBV and other forms of harassment can be dealt with either informally or formally. An informal approach requires that the victim tries to speak to the perpetrator and tell him/her that they do not like the treatment to which they are being subjected. If the treatment continues nevertheless, they need to report it to the head of the directorate/chief directorate/head of the branch. If it still continues unabated, the victim can report to the Director: HR or Employee Relations Sub-directorate for urgent and immediate attention.

A formal approach involves reporting the incident in writing either to the head of the directorate/chief directorate/head of the branch or directly to the Director: HR or Employee Relations, otherwise, through the dedicated email address, NO-MEANS-NO@KZNTREASURY.GOV.ZA for urgent and immediate attention. The victim can also approach the Department's Employee Health and Wellness Sub-directorate for professional attention should such be deemed necessary.

The Employer (Department) is legally and duty-bound to protect its employees from any form of harassment including GBV, by taking corrective actions against any perpetrator in the workplace. Harassment cases have come before the courts including the Supreme Court of Appeal for decisions with severe consequences on employers who were found to have done nothing when harassment incidents were reported. For instance, in *Ntsabo v Real*

Security CC (2003), Ms Ntsabo ended up resigning rather than being subjected to sexual harassment by her senior. The Labour Court found that her resignation constituted constructive dismissal and awarded her R12 000 as compensation (which she was paid by the employer), R20 000 for future medical costs, and R50 000 for general damages. In *Media 24 and Another v Grobler*, the appellants (Media 24 and the perpetrator) were held jointly and severally liable to pay a total amount of R776 814 to Ms Sonia Grobler by the Cape High Court. She had been subjected to sexual harassment by her trainee manager. The said payment was awarded for damages she suffered, and also by virtue of the fact that her employer did not take appropriate actions against the perpetrator despite the fact that she had been reported those incidents to the Employer.

The Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Harassment in the Workplace of 18 March 2022, at clause 10, provides for employers to address (prevent and eliminate) incidents of harassment and GBV in their workplaces. Thus, an employer in whose workplace cases of harassments and GBV are taking place, has a duty and an obligation to decisively deal with such incidents; otherwise they will be deemed to have condoned them (such incidents) and will consequently suffer similar consequences as the employers referred to in the preceding paragraphs. Employers therefore, have a legal duty not only to create and maintain work environments that protect employees from any form of harassment and GBV, but to ensure the existence of a harassment-free and GBV-free work environments.

**(An opinion from the Labour Desk
Q2 employee relations article for 2023/24 Financial
Year)
MH Ngcobo**

GALLERY: MEET THE SPEAKERS: WOMEN IN BUSINESS SYMPOSIUM



**Minister in the Presidency:
Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma**



Ms. Sindisiwe Chikunga: Minister of Transport



Prof. Thea Van Der Westhuizen: UKZN, Academic



Ms. Ntokozi Ngcobo: Innobiz DUT



**Ms. Nontokozi Gxumisa: Founder & Managing Director
MCV International Forwarders**



Captain Makhosi Mbokazi: Maritime Industry

GALLERY: WOMEN IN BUSINESS SYMPOSIUM



Ms. Gwen Mwaba: Afreximbank



HOD, Carol Coetzee, MEC Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni and Madhavi Bhaw



Exhibitor: Dr. L.N. Baloyi-Bhengu: Umbhelethi



Exhibitor: Miss Sibongile Mtsape, makes amadumbe and sweet potato chips.



Some of the invited women in business and students listening attentively to the presentations during the symposium.