


07 August 2026

NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MESSAGE BY THE SPEAKER OF THE FREE STATE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE, HON. MXOLISI DUKWANA, MPL

On the 9th of August 2026, South Africa once again commemorates National Women's Day, a day that carries the memory of more than 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria in 1956 to say no to the pass laws and to the injustice of apartheid. Their courage gave rise to words that still echo through our institutions of democracy today: Wathint' Abafazi, Wathint' Imbokodo, you strike a woman, you strike a rock.

On behalf of the Free State Provincial Legislature, I extend my warmest greetings to the Women of our Province and our Country on this significant day. This year marks the 30th anniversary of South Africa's first official National Women's Day, and the 70th anniversary of the historic 1956 march, a fitting moment to reflect on the distance we have travelled and the distance that still lies ahead.

From the 1913 Women's March, the history of the Free State is deeply intertwined with the courage and resilience of women who stood at the forefront of South Africa's struggle for freedom, justice, and constitutional democracy. From resisting oppression and unjust laws to mobilising communities, nurturing political consciousness and sustaining the liberation movement, women of the Free State made invaluable sacrifices in pursuit of a society founded on equality, human dignity, and human rights. Their legacy is reflected in the democratic values enshrined in our Constitution, reminding us that the freedoms we enjoy today were secured through their unwavering determination and collective action.

In the Free State, we continue to see the imprint of that legacy in the Women who serve as Members of this Legislature, in the women who lead our Government, and in the women who sustain our households, our farms, our classrooms and our clinics. Their contribution to the development of our Province is immeasurable, and it deserves more than words once a year, it deserves policy, budget and action that place women's safety, economic participation and leadership at the centre of governance.

As the Legislature that holds the Provincial Executive to account, we remain committed to ensuring that laws and oversight in the Free State advance the rights and dignity of women and girls. This includes strengthening our response to gender-based violence and femicide, widening access to economic opportunity for women entrepreneurs, and supporting the full and equal participation of women in every sphere of public life.

To the Women of the Free State, thank you for your resilience, your leadership and your unrelenting contribution to our democracy. The rock that our mothers and grandmothers built in 1956 remains unbroken. It is our duty, in this Legislature and beyond it, to keep building on it.

I wish all the women of our Province a meaningful National Women's Day.

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