



For Immediate release:

09 August 2023

National Women's Day

“Women’s Socio-Economic Rights and Empowerment: Building Back Better for Women’s Improved Resilience.”

This day commemorates 9 August 1956 when over 20 000 women from all races marched together towards the Union Buildings in Pretoria on 9 August 1956 in protest against the pass laws that proposed even further restrictions on the movements of women. The march was a resounding success, from which South Africa recognise the bravery of these women who risked arrest, detention and banning by declaring 9 August National Women’s Day. This also includes paying tribute to the pioneers of the women’s movement in South Africa, with the likes of Charlotte Maxeke who led the way to establishing the ANC Women’s League and encouraging women to engage in the struggle for freedom and their involvement in the society.

Contrary to their efforts, Gender-based violence (GBV) and femicide has become a pandemic in South Africa and it has become a betrayal of our Constitution. Women and girls are being abused, assaulted and murdered every day, at the hands of men. The recently released data from Statistics S.A shows that rape and sexual violence has become hyper-endemic. Violent crimes committed against women and children are alarmingly high. “From April to June 2022, 855 women and 243 children were killed in South Africa. Over 11 000 assault cases, with female victims were opened with the police. 1 670 such cases involved children. Police are investigating attempted murder docket for over 1400 women and children who escaped death,” Minister Bheki Cele: Quarter One Crime Statistics 2022/2023.

In honour of the positive and impactful sacrifices made by women, including asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, CoRMSA believes that that we can all reciprocate to such efforts by addressing the challenges of gender-based violence, access to healthcare, education, employment, xenophobia, discrimination among others that women experience every day.

While celebrating this day in 2023 under the theme, **“Women’s Socio-Economic Rights and Empowerment: Building Back Better for Women’s Improved Resilience”**, with an aspiration of promoting and protecting the human rights of asylum seekers, refugees and migrant women and all women in general, CoRMSA calls the Department of Health to honour the health rights of asylum seekers, refugees and migrant women by ensuring their holistic inclusion and access to health care services, including access to free health care by pregnant, lactating women and children under the age of 6.

In light of the above, CoRMSA further calls the Department of Social Development to strengthen the coordinated national response to the crisis of gender-based violence and femicide and protect all women and children including migrant women and children from Gender-Based Violence against men. This includes broadening access to justice for



survivors, strengthening existing GBV polices and promote accountability. CoRMSA also urges the government to empower women and improve their socio-economic rights for women's improved resilience. This will subsequently lead to a gender-based violence and femicide free South Africa and uphold the concept of Generation Equality, a global campaign that links South Africa to global efforts to achieve gender equality by 2030.

Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo!

For more information, contact us on 011 403 7560