

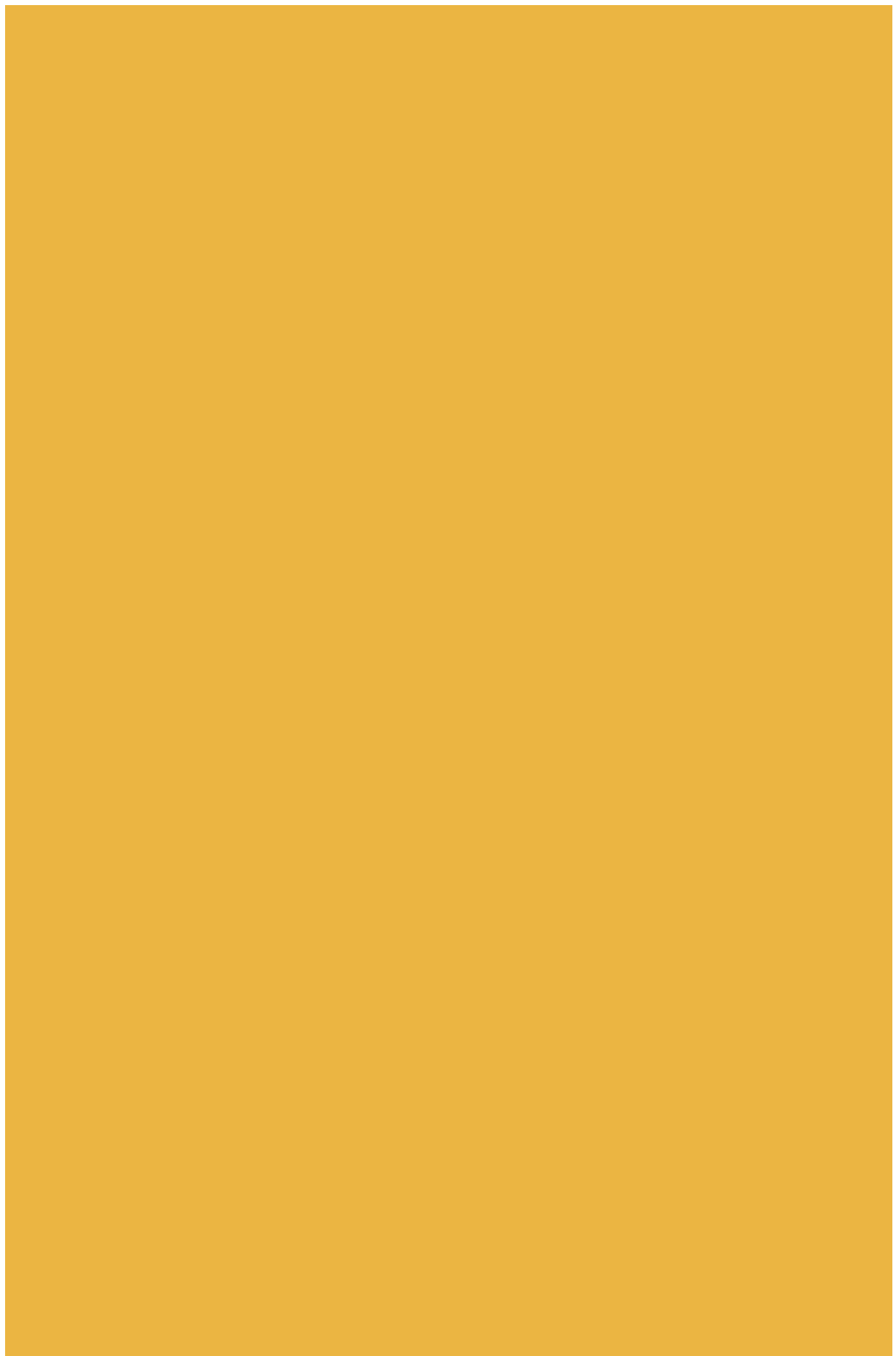
# **DECLARATION: SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN IN DIALOGUE 2008**



SOUTH AFRICAN  
WOMEN IN DIALOGUE



Easy-to-read





## **Declaration: South African Women in Dialogue 2008**



**Easy-to read version**



## South African Women in Dialogue Declaration 2008

SAWID stands for South African Women in Dialogue

### Women come together



We are the women of South Africa.

We came together at a big meeting.

The SAWID Steering Committee invited us.

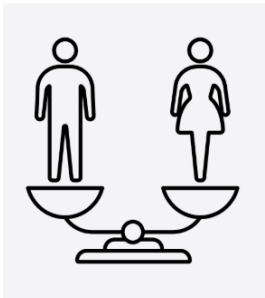
The Isigodlo Trust supported us.

The meeting took place at the OR Tambo Conference Centre.

It was from **28 September to 3 October 2008**.

The theme of the meeting was:

**“Financing for Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality – Toward a Fair Economy for All.”**



**Empowerment** means helping someone gain more power and control in life.

**Gender equality** means women and men are treated fairly.

### Who was there?

Women from all **9 provinces** joined the meeting.

We came from many places and roles in society:

- Older women
- Young women



- Women with disabilities
- Women from rural areas
- Women working on farms
- Faith-based groups
- Youth groups
- People in civil society
- Businesswomen
- Researchers and development workers



### **We came to:**

- Share our experiences
- Celebrate our differences
- Talk about poverty and unfairness
- Plan for a better future



### **What we celebrate**

We celebrate the work our democratic government has done.

Many good changes have happened in the last 14 years.

We now have:

### **A fair Constitution**

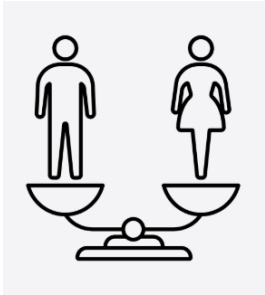
South Africa's Constitution promises fairness for everyone.

Clause 9 says women and men must be treated equally.



## **Women leaders in politics**

- 38 out of 100 members of Parliament are women
- The Speaker of Parliament is a woman
- We have women councillors and women party leaders
- A woman leads the Electoral Commission



## **Gender equality offices**

We have special groups that focus on women's rights:

- The Commission on Gender Equality
- The Office on the Status of Women
- Gender Focal Points
- A special committee in Parliament that looks at women's lives

These groups help make plans, do the work, and check progress.



## **Important agreements signed by South Africa**

South Africa has signed and agreed to many important rules that protect women:

- The Convention on the Rights of Women
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Beijing Platform for Action
- Southern African Development Community Declaration on Gender and Equality

- United Nations agreements to stop crime and protect women from trafficking (being sold or moved illegally)

These documents are called “**gender instruments.**”

They help make sure women and girls are safe and supported.

## **Women in business and civil society**

Today, many women:

- Lead businesses
- Sit on company boards
- Work as CEOs
- Run their own companies
- Raise families and work at the same time

Women are also strong leaders in civil society.

They help others in their communities.

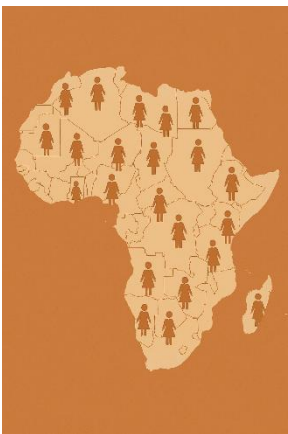


## **Working with Africa and the world**

South Africa works with others in Africa to support women's rights.

We celebrate the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

They help protect women through important laws.





South Africa has signed and supports:

The **African Protocol on the Rights of Women**

The **Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa**

The **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325**

**What do these mean?**

These agreements ask governments to:

- Treat women and girls fairly
- Include women in decisions about peace and safety
- Stop violence against women



**SAWID Support for Women**

SAWID helps women speak and heal

We thank SAWID for the work it has done.



SAWID has:

- Helped the South African women's movement grow
- Helped shape government policies
- Helped improve the lives of women in South Africa and other countries





SAWID gives women a safe place to:

- Speak about their pain
- Share their dreams for the future



SAWID gives women a voice in democracy

SAWID started in 2003.

Since then, it has helped women to be heard in building our democracy.

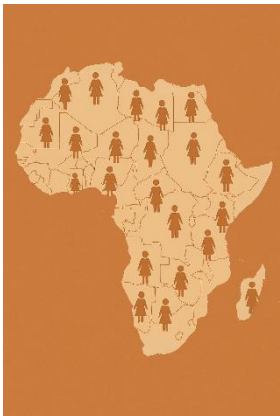
We now celebrate 5 years of SAWID.



We continue to believe in and support SAWID's vision and mission values.

These include

- Unity
- Honesty
- Respect for each other's differences
- Kindness and understanding



We stand with all African women

We support the women's movement in South Africa and also all women in Africa.

We stand together with women who:

- Are leaving war and conflict
- Still live in poverty and pain



## **We want to work together**

We will continue to work with:

- The government
- International partners
- Local organisations like Non- Governmental Organisations, Community Based Organisations and Faith Based Organisations



## **We want to:**

Work together

Avoid working separately

Share our strengths and support one another

This helps us solve problems in our communities.



## **What we came for**

In 2003, we agreed that development and ending poverty is our biggest goal.

SAWID did research. SAWID visited other countries like Chile and Tunisia

We created a programme.

We called it the Development Caravan

It helps poor families with Services

It also helps with infrastructure like roads and buildings

In this programme, we work with:

- Government
- Businesses

- Schools and training centres



SAWID has made a difference.

In 2007, government said in its State of the Nation speech that it would work harder to end poverty.

They are using some of SAWID's ideas to:

Fight poverty

Stop poverty from coming back

### **What we have learned**



We have learned many things about women and money:

Giving money to women helps their whole communities

Some government and international money rules can make women poorer

Real development must include women's voices and needs

### **Government must work together**

To end poverty, government must:

- Work together, not in silos
- Share ideas and resources
- Help the poorest people first



### **Financing for Development.**

Money is important to reach big goals like the:

- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- Gender Equality and Poverty Eradication

Economic growth is not enough.

Women must be included in the economy.



### **At the 2008 meeting;**

At the 2008 meeting, we spoke about how money can support women's empowerment.

We wanted to make this discussion stronger.

We said that women need better support from government.

We asked for:

- A Minister for Women's Empowerment
- A Ministry for Planning
- A special fund to support better services and buildings



### **Honouring older women**

We wanted to thank older women for their work in caring for our communities.

So on 1 October, the International Day of Older Persons, we had a special lunch to honour them.



### **What we wanted to do at the Forum**

These were the main goals of our meeting:

- Look at ways to plan money for women's empowerment

- Make women's empowerment strategies stronger
- Find money for the South African Women's Movement
- Suggest ways to fund women's projects; including a Women's Research Facility and a Training Centre
- Support women's projects in poor communities



## Challenges

Poverty affects everything

We see that government has done a lot.

The government has many good plans to support the poor

But many challenges still remain.

These challenges make it hard for women to fully take part in democracy.

## Poverty is still a big problem



Many women are still poor.

They do not have what they need to live well.

Women still experience:

Exclusion from their community

Hunger

Living in crowded homes  
Unsafe energy or too expensive  
No jobs, or jobs that do not pay well  
Families that are breaking apart



Some women suffer more than others  
These problems are worst for:

- Women in farming communities
- Women in informal settlements
- Children
- Older people
- People with disabilities



Women do a lot of unpaid care work  
There is no single, joined-up plan to support women.  
Because of this, women carry most of the responsibility  
for caring for;

- Children
- Young people
- Older people
- People living with HIV and AIDS
- People with other illnesses



### **Women cannot access the right support**

Women do not get the right support and resources.  
Some of the challenges are:

No special fund to support women's empowerment

- Little or no access to land

- Not enough training in farming or small business
- Not enough support to earn income
- Not enough access to good jobs



Many people do not have enough food or basic resources.

This problem is called food insecurity.

It can lead to fighting in communities

It can lead to fear or hate of people from other countries, called xenophobia

Also unfair treatment of women



### **Elections and peace are not always protected**

In some countries in the region, democracy and fair elections are not always respected.

This creates:

Violence during and after elections

Less peace and safety for all people

Even less power for women to take part in politics



### **Women need more support from institutions**

Institutions are formal groups like government departments, ministries or commissions.

Right now:

Women do not get enough support to grow their skills

Important laws and rules for women are not well followed

Example: the rule that says 54 out of every 100 out of people trained in new skills should be women



## **No joined-up peace and safety plan**

There is no clear peace policy, a full plan to make and keep peace.

There is also no proper funding to support peace work with civil society.

Because of this, we are not ready to face:

Local violence

Big risks in the region

African-wide threats to people's safety and survival



## **We therefore recommend**

### **1. Better structures and more funding**

We need these solutions:

A Planning Ministry with power to lead and bring together all work on ending poverty

A Ministry for Women with its own budget and decision-making power

A National Centre for Women's Research to guide government programmes

Funded organisations that work with civil society to bring all people into poverty reduction plans

A Special Fund to support development in poor areas

This fund must also:



Help poor communities connect with local towns and cities

Be supported by government, private business, and citizens



**We call on government to:**

Keep its promises made at the Beijing Platform for Action

Review economic policies that ignore women's unpaid care work

This means when women care for others without getting paid

**2. Proposals to end poverty and inequality**

We propose these ideas:

Work with government to involve communities in all decisions

Make sure women's development is key to ending poverty

Make poverty reduction the main goal of all economic and social programmes

Focus on helping the most vulnerable families first

Use one shared meaning of poverty across all government departments

Deliver support using a joined-up plan with many parts working together



A National Framework, this is a big plan to guide all policies and actions.

It must include:

- Government departments
- The private sector -business
- Community Based Organisations

Direct ways to help families with care and support, for mind, emotions and everyday life

We will go back to our communities through our arranged ways.

To end poverty, we promise to work together using; Projects, Community organisations and non-government organisations

We want to be part of the big work to end poverty in South Africa.

We will work with:

Government

The private sector (businesses)

We will be strong partners in this important work.





This declaration was written by South African Women in Dialogue



National Council of & for  
Persons with Disabilities

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and for Persons with Disabilities



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