



**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MEC FOR HEALTH AT THE PROVINCIAL  
WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION HELD ON THE 9<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2007 AT THE  
COASTLANDS HOTEL.**

Comrades in the Provincial Leadership of SADTU,

Amakhosikazi akwaZulu-Natali

Amakhosikazi aseSouth Afrika

Maqabane,

Malibongwe

I hope you have not forgotten about the heroic struggle and decisive onslaught against the apartheid state that our soldiers in partnership with the revolutionary people of Cuba waged in *Cuito Canavale*. This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of *Cuito Canavale* and we all owe our freedom to the people of Cuba for their revolutionary contribution against the might of imperialists' forces assisted by the United States of America.

**Viva Comrade Castro!**

I'm not exactly a stranger in the union movement and SADTU has been my training ground, and I have been here several times before. I remember that two



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years ago I was invited to address a similar meeting for the first time. And of course I have a lot of comrades who are still in this union, so that SADTU is really something of a second home for me, and I don't feel too much a stranger here this morning.

We take this opportunity to congratulate you on the victories you attained on the protracted wage strike that was necessary for you to be taken seriously as professionals. We all applaud the revolutionary stance you have now adopted as you partake and embark on the recovery plan intended to assist our children to catch up on the workload for the time lost. Keep it up; we know that you are not compelled to do that.

I will implore you to continue nurturing our children in wise ways of the world especially in giving the guidance in terms of career paths they have to follow. Please do talk to them about the help being offered especially for the scientific and developmental courses. We rely on you for that.

So, being here is indeed a pleasure and a privilege for me especially as we celebrate the heroism of our women in the struggle for fundamental change of our society towards the most advanced democratic society.

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Comrades; the struggle for total emancipation of women and that of society in general require that we build a new type of cadres. Some may think that this phenomenon is an inevitable historical fact, that the formation of a new type of woman cadres is linked to a general shift towards the creation of a new, working society, is something that the bourgeoisie cannot and does not wish to recognise. If it were not for the advancement of our National Democratic Revolution, it would still be generally believed that the woman earning her own living is a temporary phenomenon, and that the woman's place is in the family, standing at the back of her husband, the breadwinner. The NDR changed many concepts. This radical change in the evaluation of the tasks and vocation of women in the South Africa has affected the attitude of women far beyond the borders of our country.

We can now meet the new woman everywhere, in every corner. The new woman is a mass phenomenon, with the exception, perhaps, of women in the semi-rural and rural parts of the country, where the development of the productive forces is impeded by the predatory rule of the old patriarchal order. However even there, given the struggle for class emancipation and against capitalism, the new woman is being moulded in the very process of struggle. It is impossible to succeed in the struggle between social groups and classes without the co-operation of women.

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The labour movement in this country bears testimony to this fact. We are already seeing changes in the leadership face of our working class movements. While quotas are just a means to a particular end; we need to congratulate ourselves for the victories we have made within our own movements. The Provincial Chairperson of this union is a woman; and she continues to provide space and political support for women to grow within this heroic union. For that I believe you deserve an applause!

The new woman is essentially an independent labour unit whose energy is used not to serve the interests of a private family economy, but to perform socially useful and necessary labour. She is being liberated from those inner moral characteristics, which marked the woman of the past. Female triviality, conservatism and restricted range of ideas, her envy and malice towards other women as rivals in the hunt for a provider - all these characteristics are no longer necessary in that sphere where she is now struggling to survive.

Just two days ago the Minister of Health and I addressed a Summit of women committed to a partnership against the scourge of HIV and AIDS. I am aware that my department has worked closely with your dedicated cadres in the fight against this scourge. This again is testimony of the advances we are making in building a new woman cadre.

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As soon as the woman starts to live by her own work, she needs to develop different qualities and acquire new habits, and millions of working women throughout the world are hastening to morally re-arm themselves. We must work much harder towards eradicating the economic dependence of woman to their men. This is one of the causes that have caused the spread of sexually transmitted diseases in the country. We must, in the words of **Alexandria Kollontai**; teach the next generation to '*dare to love*'.

In addition to their efficiency and their attempts, by raising their *qualifications* and improving their *health* and physical strength, to increase their value on the labour market, the new working women differ from the women of the past also in their strong feelings for and consciousness of their links with their class.

Women are involved in politics and, once again, if war drew large numbers of women into the political struggle, it was only the Umkhonto WeSizwe which recognised publicly, by its precepts, by the entire practice of the new democratic order, that once the woman is working in and for society, she should be recognised as an active citizen.

The enormous shift in the position of women in the country has encouraged contending social groups to attempt to draw women onto their side. Everywhere,

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in every country, the political activity of women has shown unprecedented growth over the last ten years. Women are becoming members of government; they are entering the diplomatic corps and becoming the inspirational force behind major revolutionary workers movements. Women are arising to head departments, to take charge of economic organisations, and to guide policy.

Would this have been possible without the heroic struggle of women in uMkhumbane, in 1956 and elsewhere? Could the new woman cadre and socially useful worker have emerged without the great whirlwind that blew across our country? Could the working women of other countries have taken such giant strides towards their own comprehensive emancipation without our own Revolution?

Anyone who pauses to think realises that the answer is clearly No. This is why working women throughout the world cannot but feel that this celebration is a celebration of women's struggle and heroism and the great festival of working women of the world.

These celebrations affirm the importance of working women.

Lastly, I am calling upon all of you to make use of the economic opportunities created and made available by our heroic struggle.

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The advancement and deepening of our revolution must create those conditions which will ensure victory for the 'new woman'.

Amandla!

Long Live the Spirit of *Cuito Canavale!*

Malibongwe!