



Message from the SASOHN president on Women's Day 2020

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This has been one of the busiest, different and uncertain years. Despite that, one should not lose focus but rather look ahead and remain positive amidst all the uncertainty. Together, we need to take a stand to be bold, courageous and remain determined to achieve what's best for us as women.

The year 2020 is a milestone moment to accelerate the implementation of the global commitments to gender equality and women's rights. It's a year to achieve transformation and be empowered. Most importantly, it's a turning point for gender equality. We need more women and young girls to start preparing, participating and taking leadership roles in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields, in order to flourish in the fourth industrial revolution and have more women at the forefront. Let's start implementing innovative solutions and driving social change.

Gender equality not only aims to transform the lives of women and girls but to assist in the social, economic and environmental sectors. Our voices must be heard so that we can achieve more. As stated by the United Nations secretary-general, António Guterres, "It is time to stop trying to change women and start changing the systems that prevent them from achieving their potential. Our power structures have evolved gradually over thousands of years and further

evolution is long overdue. The 21st century must be the century of women's equality."

This Women's Day let's celebrate under the theme *Generation Equality: Realising Women's Rights for an Equal Future*. The concept of 'generation equality' is an international theme and campaign that links South Africa to the global efforts to achieve gender equality by the year 2030. During the month of August, let's pay special tribute to all the women who fought, marched, protested, and played pivotal roles in the earlier years when they demanded certain rights for women. Let's also not forget our young girls who have dreams, hopes and aspirations for a better future filled with many opportunities. Here, let's look ahead to a brighter future, one where we are recognised and well represented in leadership positions at our workplace or in the community.

For us to create a truly equal world, we need to shift the social norms and gender stereotypes that limit opportunities for women and girls. Let's create partnerships and widen our minds and scope for knowledge on how to improve and tackle gender and women empowerment issues. Women have the ability to change lives, their communities and the world we live in.

Happy Women's Day to all SASOHN members!

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Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression.”

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Nelson Mandela

