



Governance and Monitoring cluster

African National Congress

Office of the Chief Whip

Women Youth and Persons with Disabilities

P20 Submission

19 June 2025

**Harnessing Parliamentary Diplomacy for Realisation of Global Solidarity,
Equality and Sustainability**

Overview

The African National Congress is known for its historic mission of fighting for gender equality and advancing women's emancipation. This has been evidently displayed through progressive policies that place women's empowerment at the centre to build an inclusive and prosperous society. We have come a long way as a country in shaping the Women's Development Agenda which aligns with the vision and the principles of the African National Congress expressed in the Freedom Charter. The struggle for women's emancipation has been met with progress and action by ensuring that women are represented in all spheres of government.

P20 offers powerful women who hold esteem positions within policy echelons to meet, share ideas and create lasting solidarities that would shape the place and role of women in the world and global politics institutions. The African National Congress has long held a view that diplomacy and international solidarity are important for an equal world that treats itself and its partners with respect. As the world grapples with increased authoritarianism and undermining of sovereignty the P20 offers a chance to condemn those tendencies and bring the world together to mutual respect.

Women in the world continue to experience challenges, they are the most affected by global diseases, most affected by climate change, are excluded in economic opportunities and their status in society has not yet been fully transformed. Making these challenges worse is the growing global conflict especially conflict in Africa

which fuels migration, displacement and xenophobia threatening health rights of women and children and their families. South Africa, as the only African member of the G20, plays a critical role in shaping global discourse on gender equality, social protection, and sustainable development. Our participation aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly:

- SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
- SDG 10: Reduce inequalities within and among countries.

Furthermore, as a country we continue to lead legislative and policy reforms aimed at supporting women's economic and social justice issues, these are contained and guaranteed in our 1996 Constitution:

- Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998) — promoting equal opportunity in the workplace.
- Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (No. 4 of 2000).
- Gender-Based Violence and Femicide National Strategic Plan (GBVF-NSP).
- National Policy Framework for Women's Economic Empowerment.
- White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2015).
- Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (BBBEE) with gender inclusion measures.

Beyond these frameworks we have a fully functional department dealing with Women, ensuring that gender issues are mainstreamed and that all government departments in their strategic plans have programmes aimed at uplifting women.

African National Congress Position on the P20's Medium Term Plan

South Africa's G20 theme is "**Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability.**" This theme summarises South Africa's commitments and longstanding international foreign policy since its founding in 1994. This theme sparks a very necessary conversation of inequality in our country because we are witnessing that despite the many efforts to ensure equal representation between men and women, the economy is still in the hands of a white minority. We are still battling with women representation in economic sectors and that further perpetuates inequality.

One of the high-level deliverables that the G20 working groups will be focusing on is Inclusive Economic Growth, Industrialization, Employment and Reduced Inequality. It is important to note that for us to see if we can advance the Women Development Agenda or not, we need an economy that is functional and allows equal participation of all genders. We need to work together in ensuring that we dismantle the

patriarchal stigmas that still exist which prevents women from participating in the mainstream economy and in the politics of their countries. An exclusive economy creates inequality which in some cases has a directly proportional relation with Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. Studies show that women dependency on men has been a cause of many reported cases of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide and we believe that we must work together in ensuring that we create an economic environment that empowers everyone equally.

Education and skills development are crucial in the empowerment of women. We need to create more opportunities for women to acquire skills and education that will be responsive to the needs of the economy of our countries. We acknowledge that there have been many deliberate efforts by our governments to prioritize women empowerment and we have witnessed a lot of women taking up space in some strategic sectors of the economy, but we believe that we can do more. African countries and those in the global South are still lingering behind on many advances needed to uplift the status of women. In particular women in decision making spaces are not yet represented. It is evident that the world is evolving with the emergence of new technologies, and we must take advantage of these innovations to create more inclusive, gender sensitive and sustainable solutions for a better world for women. This will not only empower women, but it will allow women to feel included and heard.

We also need to strengthen the inter-continental relations and bring Africa into the world as an equal player not an observer. This is crucial in levelling the global world to see women as part of broader governance and policy making. We must continue participating in the Commission on the Status of Women(CSW) and other international platforms to contribute in shaping the global gender mainstreaming. Our view as the ANC is that institutions of global governance are as important as the institutions of global solidarity, the P20 is important but must be strengthened to ensure that its decisions are recognised by countries and are acted upon.

In summary, we believe that specific emphasis should be given to the following priorities that are key for greater impact on the Women's Development Agenda:

- ✓ Inclusive economic growth to allow women to equally participate in the mainstream economy. Including in the digital economy
- ✓ Increase women's access to skills training in agriculture, entrepreneurship and to sector-specific skills.
- ✓ Encourage women to participate in digital innovation spaces, tech and related.
- ✓ Strengthen all gender mainstreaming initiatives to advance the fight against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide.
- ✓ Prioritize Women's health and safety.
- ✓ Foster resilient strategies against climate change and create social cohesion and international solidarity.

- ✓ Review existing legislation to close loopholes undermining women's rights, particularly in economic participation.
- ✓ Establish Sustainable Women's Economic Hubs in rural and township areas.

Conclusion

The African National Congress see the P20 as crucial a platform of ideas, strategies and policy sharing that will transform our countries as safe spaces for women. Making it easy for women to travel from one country to another, access to health services without difficulty as South Africa continue to demonstrate that health has no citizenship. Countries in P20 can lead a formidable from South Africa's progressive policy positions, resilience and democratic practices that allows women to be active in a democracy. Our parliament is populated by a significant number of women members including our cabinet and other leading structure of our parliament and the Speakers office of our parliament.

While institutional fundamentalism is a challenge the world over, South African has demonstrated the advantages of institutionalisation. We have over the years established Commission for Gender Equality, Public Service Commission, National Youth Development Agency, South African Human Rights Commission and the soon to be established National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. These institutions are crucial as watchdogs of women issues, enforcing accountability and ensuring women's rights are protected.