

SUBMISSION OF THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS TO THE 2025 P20 WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT -August 2025

1. Background

On the 1st December 2024, South Africa assumed the G20 Presidency and by extension, the South African Parliament also assumed the responsibility of hosting the 11th P20 Speakers Summit. The P20 is a gathering of Speakers and Presiding Officers from G20 member countries. The group of twenty (G20) is an international forum of both developing and developed countries for economic cooperation, whose aim is to develop policies and strategies to tackle current and future global economic and financial challenges.

The 2025 P20 Women's Parliament is a platform established to elevate the voices of women's representation in parliament and empower women MPs, strategically aligned to the priorities and objectives of the G20 Presidency and P20 Priorities. The Meeting of P20 Women Parliamentarians is convened to broaden women's participation in politics. The forum fosters dialogue between public representatives, civil society, academia, and government to surface gender-based concerns and shape Parliament's contribution to the G20 agenda through a gender-responsive lens.

The 2025 P20 Women Parliamentarians will take place on the 13th- 14th August, in Cape Town, South Africa, under the theme "*Accelerating Equality, Sustainability and Shared Growth: Correcting the Gender Re-distributional Bias of Growth and Development-through the Women's Charter, the MTDP and the 2025 G20 Development Priorities*". Women parliamentarians from G20 member countries, summit guests, and international organizations will debate the group's priority themes for the year, with a focus on the impacts on girls and women, such as entrepreneurship and financial inclusion, the care economy, gender-based violence and femicide, climate justice and the environment, Education, stem and the digital divide, health equity and women, land and agriculture.

2. Purpose

The P20 Women's Parliament advocates for the expansion of female participation in the global agendas of the G20. It seeks to engage women parliaments to strengthen global collaboration and ensure the practical implementation of international agreements in the Group of 20 member countries. As parliamentarians play an essential role in guiding their respective governments, the P20 is a powerful and unique platform for the parliaments of the G20 countries to contribute to the debates on global issues.

3. Women in Parliament

The EFF recognises the important role that parliament plays in promoting gender equality. It therefore supports the participation of women in law making processes as the inclusion of women in decision making is a fundamental human right. The EFF

further moves from the view that there should be maximum participation of women in parliament, as the implementation of legislation and government policies have an impact on their daily lives. Moreover research has shown that when women take part in decision making, it leads to an increased focus and allocation of resources that improve the quality of life of all. An increase in the participation of women in law making can by extension lead to an improvement in access to basic services such as housing, education and welfare.

4. Constitutional Provisions Enabling The Participation of Women

The South African Constitution provides a framework for the promotion of gender equality and therefore the participation of women in law making. The Bill of Rights Chapter 2, Section 9 (1) guarantees equal treatment for all South Africans and further prohibits unfair discrimination on the basis of race, gender or sex. The Constitution also makes provision for institutions that support democracy, as well as for the participation of women. These include, among others, the Commission on Gender Equality and the South African Human Rights Commission.

In addition to the provisions made in the Constitution, South Africa has committed to gender equality through its ratification of international conventions such as, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Platform of Action, which was established by the Beijing Conference on Women. South Africa is also part of several African programmes of action and the advancement of women, e.g. the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocol on gender and development.

5. Consolidated Women Development Agenda Submission

While South Africa has made some progress in entrenching the rights of women through constitutional guarantees, legislation and policies grounded in equality, the lived reality for many women across the country, and the African continent, remains starkly different. Black women, in particular, continue to face deep-rooted inequalities, including poverty, economic exclusion, gender-based violence, and systemic sexism.

The Economic Freedom Fighters submits, under the banner of the P20 Women's Parliament, that this forum must not be reduced to another symbolic gathering of well-dressed politeness and empty resolutions. This must be a platform of reckoning, where the structural oppressions that keeps black women landless, voiceless, and excluded from wealth, power and dignity are confronted.

The EFF further submits that gender equality cannot be achieved under capitalism. There can be no women's liberation without land. There can be no justice without power in the hands of the oppressed.

5.1 Entrepreneurship And Financial Inclusion

As the EFF, we assert that addressing economic disparities and poverty is pivotal in fostering a society where all individuals can thrive. There can be no debates about entrepreneurship while the majority of women in this country, especially black women in rural and township communities, do not own productive land, do not have access to affordable credit, and are deliberately excluded from high-value economic sectors.

We submit that the financial system in South Africa is rigged in favour of the elite. The commercial banks do not serve our people, they serve white monopoly capital. And government development finance institutions are captured and inaccessible to poor women. The EFF calls for the establishment of a State-Owned Women's Economic Development Fund, with no loan conditions, no red tape, and no gatekeeping. This fund must support women-led cooperatives, manufacturing businesses, agro-processing ventures, and community economies.

We also call for a People's Bank — one that does not ask for collateral when black women want to start a business — but sees her dignity and potential as collateral enough.

5.2 The Care Economy

The care economy includes raising children, cooking, cleaning, looking after the elderly and the sick, is the invisible engine of our society, with women spending three and ten times more time than men on unpaid care work. Globally, women are responsible for the majority of care work because of gender inequality and gender norms and practices. However it is concerning to note how this work is not counted, not compensated and not respected. This unpaid care work is often not acknowledged and is often not counted as part of economic activities. This contributes to economic gender inequality and limits the economic empowerment of women.

The EFF calls for states to formally recognise and remunerate care work. Early childhood development workers, home-based carers, and domestic workers must be paid as essential workers. The state must invest in community care centres that are led and owned by women. We must destroy the lie that care work is women's responsibility and not a collective societal obligation.

5.3 Gender-Based Violence And Femicide

The EFF recognises that the struggle for women is no longer that of equal rights and gaining recognition, but that the new struggle facing women is violence and gender-based violence (GBV) which exists on every level of our society: within the family, workforce, organization and at the hands of the state. GBV is one of the most widespread human rights violations in South Africa. And although it has been recognized that GBV can be perpetuated and suffered by all population groups, its occurrence is significantly more documented in women rather than men.

The EFF believes that gender-based violence and related antisocial activities are reinforced and even sustained by the deplorable general conditions of our people; therefore, a key to female emancipation is the emancipation of all. GBV is rooted in patriarchal power imbalances and carried out with the intention to humiliate and make a person or group of people, feel inferior and/or subordinate because of their gender.

The EFF further submits that child marriage is a human rights violation and a form of gender-based violence. Child marriage denies girls the right to make decisions about their lives, including education, health, and marriage. It risks intimate partner violence, forced pregnancies, emotional and psychological abuse and reinforces harmful gender norms and perpetuates inequality. Progressive legal frameworks are therefore needed to respond and successfully address child marriage.

And despite legislative commitments put in place to promote gender equality, South Africa still has a very strong patriarchal culture. The high levels of GBV in South Africa, demand new ways of addressing and understanding the problem. A proactive rather than reactive stance must be developed and implemented to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

- The EFF calls for a fully funded GBVF Command Council, located in the Presidency, with the authority to direct police, prosecutors, and government departments.
- The EFF calls for progressive legal frameworks to eradicate child marriages.
- The EFF calls for domestication and amendment of all legislative powers to align with global statutes on defining an adult as 18 years of age.
 - Specialised GBV courts, fast-tracked and trauma-informed
 - The firing and criminal prosecution of any police officer or official who mishandles GBV cases.

5.4 Climate Justice And The Environment

The climate crisis is not gender-neutral. When floods destroy homes and when crops fail during droughts, it is rural women who are left without food, shelter, or compensation. Multinational corporations are looting our minerals and poisoning our communities, all in the name of profit, while our government signs onto greenwashing policies that do nothing for our people.

The EFF calls for:

- An end to mining in communal land without the direct consent of affected women
- Investment in women-led agroecology, water conservation, and green industries

- The redistribution of land and resources to enable women to lead in climate resilience

We cannot speak of sustainability while black women remain landless and voiceless.

5.5 Education, Stem, And The Digital Divide

In terms of educational attainment people in South Africa are generally more equal in gender. However, it is disheartening to note that this does not necessarily translate into employment opportunities. Women, regardless of their level of education, remain underrepresented in the labour market across all age groups.

Digital inclusion will remain a myth unless we deal with the underlying poverty and infrastructure inequality that keeps rural and township schools in crisis.

The EFF calls for:

- Free data and laptops for all girl learners
- Free, decolonised education for all women and girls in STEM fields
- Government procurement in ICT and innovation must allocate at least 50% to black women-owned companies

We are not begging to be part of the digital economy. We are here to own it.

5.6 Health Equity

Access to adequate healthcare mirrors the inequalities found in contemporary South Africa. Women in South Africa are faced with various health challenges such as sexually transmitted illnesses, HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) and GBV which often leads to health complications. Women die giving birth, clinics run out of ARVs and contraceptives, mental health care is non-existent in certain parts of the country and sanitary products remain unaffordable to millions. This is not just a health crisis — it is a political crime.

The EFF calls for:

- Free universal healthcare, led by a publicly owned and publicly controlled system
- All clinics to be open for 24 hours and 7 days a week
- Free sanitary towels in all schools, clinics, and government buildings
- The establishment of mobile women's health units in every municipality

We reject a two-tier health systems where the rich live and the poor die.

5.7 Women, Land And Agriculture

There has been an overall failure to redistribute land to the majority and there has been a particular failure in this regard when it comes to women. Landlessness is the foundation of all oppression in this country. And no woman can be free, economically

or socially — without access to land. Customary systems continue to deny women inheritance and land rights. Government land reform is slow, elitist, and corrupt.

The EFF calls for:

- The immediate amendment of customary laws to guarantee women equal rights to communal and inherited land
- 50% of all expropriated land must be redistributed to black women
- Women-led farms and cooperatives must be prioritised in state procurement of food and agricultural produce

Land is not just about farming. Land is dignity. Land is power. Land is freedom.

6. Conclusion

In the past decade, the plight of women parliamentarians has not changed in any fundamental manner. Socially, economically, politically and culturally, women are more often at the receiving end of the most brutal forms of oppression. The challenges facing women are multifarious, multipronged, and require a coordinated, strong and radical women's parliament to obliterate. We do not come here to celebrate. We come here to confront. The continued economic, social, and political oppression of women is not accidental. It is designed. And what is designed can be dismantled — if there is political will.