



## Creating a Future of Safety, Growth, and Economic Independence for Women in South Africa

We honour the women of 1956 and every generation since who stood firm in the face of injustice. These were women who marched, resisted, and refused to be silent, often at great personal cost. They fought for freedoms many of us now take for granted, and their courage paved the way for women to have a voice in our democratic institutions. Their legacy is profound, but our task is not only to remember them; it is to focus our energy on those who will come after us. The daughters and granddaughters who will inherit the South Africa we build today deserve more than symbolic victories; they deserve a country where their safety, dignity, and economic independence are guaranteed.

The current reality for women in South Africa is sobering. Unemployment remains one of the greatest barriers to equality, with young women facing joblessness at a rate of around 57 percent, higher than their male counterparts, despite being statistically more likely to pass matric and more likely to hold a tertiary qualification. Labour force participation among women lags behind that of men, with just over half of working-age women in employment compared to nearly two-thirds of men. Entrepreneurial potential exists in abundance; over half of South African women identify as entrepreneurs, and more than 70 per cent express a desire to start their businesses. However, systemic barriers, including a lack of funding, inadequate mentorship, and low business confidence, hold them back. Compared to the rest of Africa, where self-employment among women averages 58 percent, South Africa's figure of around 5 percent is shockingly low. These are not just statistics; they represent millions of women whose potential is being wasted by structural and policy failures.

The Patriotic Alliance believes that creating an environment where women can thrive begins with a foundation of respect. This respect must be taught from the earliest age, instilled in our boys and reinforced in our men, so that women are treated with love, dignity, and honour. Strong, present fathers and husbands are vital in building a culture where women are valued as equals and partners. Our society cannot flourish if we do not address the reality of gender-based violence with absolute seriousness. We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to GBV, and we speak plainly to women: if you are being insulted, shouted at, or harmed, leave before it escalates. Abusers rarely stop; they escalate. We must ensure that women have safe pathways out of abusive relationships and the community support necessary to make leaving possible.

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Community safety is a non-negotiable pillar of our vision. Many violent crimes against women are committed by individuals who should not be in the country at all. The Patriotic Alliance stands firm in its commitment to the mass deportation of illegal foreigners who commit crimes, as part of a broader strategy to protect women from violence and restore accountability to our justice system. Safety is also inseparable from economic security. An economically independent woman has more power to leave unsafe situations, to provide for her family, and to participate fully in the life of her community.

Economic empowerment, therefore, is central to our agenda. We advocate for increased funding for women-owned businesses, particularly in sectors that will define the future economy, such as the green economy and technology. We will create practical pathways for women in rural areas and townships to access training, mentorship, and market opportunities. Government procurement must be structured to ensure that a significant share of contracts go to women-owned small and medium enterprises, breaking the cycle of dependency and exclusion. In the digital age, we must also address the barriers women face in adopting new technologies, from access to tools to protection against online fraud.

Our approach is not about ticking boxes to satisfy global commitments; it is about delivering measurable change in the lives of South African women. By rooting our policies in the principles of the Women's Charter, aligning them with the Medium-Term Development Plan, and drawing on the 2025 G20 Development Priorities, we aim to accelerate equality, embed sustainability, and ensure shared growth that truly includes women. We believe this alignment is not only possible but essential if we are to correct the entrenched gender bias in our growth and development trajectory.

We do not simply commemorate the sacrifices of the past, we commit ourselves to building a future where women are safe, respected, and economically free. The women before us lit the torch of change. It is our responsibility to carry it forward, brighter and higher, so that generations to come will look back on this era as the moment South Africa finally became the safest and most empowering place for women to live, work, and lead.

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