

**Speech by the Mayor of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality, His
Worship Councillor Gerson Molapisane on the occasion of
the Women in Law Enforcement at Roman Catholic Church in
Tzaneen on 21 September 2023**

Madam Speaker, Councillor Sanie Tiba
Members of the Executive Committee
Chairpersons of Section 79 Committees
PR and Ward Councillors
Traditional Leaders

Our traffic officers from both the municipality and the Provincial
Government.

Corrections Officers
Members of the media
Fellow residents
Distinguished guests

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to everyone present
today for allowing me the privilege to speak.

It is with great honor that I address this wonderful group of
women, particularly those in law enforcement.

The progress that women have made in breaking barriers and
achieving success in what was once a male-dominated field is
truly remarkable.

The bravery and courage that you display on a daily basis are
truly inspiring, and I can only imagine the sacrifices that you
make, leaving your loved ones behind in service to our
communities.

Your commitment to the greater good of our nation is truly admirable. As a nation, we have made significant strides in recognizing the value and contributions of women. Women are no longer confined to traditional roles and have earned positions of power and influence in both the public and private sectors.

This exemplifies the changing times in which we live, and the opportunities that are now available to women.

Despite the traditional male dominance in law enforcement, women have shown themselves to be just as capable as men.

Your work is a testament to the dedication and perseverance that you embody, and for that, we are immensely grateful.

The numerous individuals present in this gathering today bear witness to the feasibility of achieving success in our respective careers.

Our accomplishments and progress will undoubtedly serve as motivation for young women looking to enter the field of law enforcement.

Programme Director

It is concerning to note that crime statistics indicate a troubling trend - over 13 police officers have tragically lost their lives in this year alone. As the first line of defense for all citizens, your safety is of utmost importance. Furthermore, there are officers who have sustained injuries while on duty, with some experiencing significant and debilitating effects.

It is our responsibility, as society in general to ensure your safety and well-being as you tirelessly work to serve and protect our communities.

I would like to address a matter of great sensitivity regarding the well-being of women. Currently, our nation is grappling with a severe pandemic, one that is rooted in gender-based violence. It is imperative that we approach this issue with the utmost seriousness and take decisive action to eradicate this pervasive problem.

As women who serve in law enforcement, it is your solemn duty to pursue and bring to justice those who commit gender-based violence with unwavering determination. Our tireless efforts must be focused on ensuring that justice is served for the victims.

Furthermore, it is of utmost importance that we advocate for the rights and protection of women. By utilizing our positions of influence, we can work towards implementing laws and policies that will safeguard women from violence and abuse.

Regrettably, victims of gender-based violence often face further abuse when they seek assistance at police stations. As women in law enforcement, we must strive to create a haven of safety for these women when they come to the police station. It is crucial that they feel secure and protected, and that they have faith that justice will be served.

As women, you possess a unique perspective and understanding of the pain and trauma that victims of gender-based violence endure. It is essential that we use this understanding to inform our work and provide the most effective support and care for these vulnerable individuals.

It is crucial to keep in mind the wise African proverb that stresses the significance of educating women for the advancement of society at large. “If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family (nation)”

Programme Director

Despite the strides made in promoting gender equality in public institutions, it is evident that women continue to face formidable challenges in various spheres of life.

Unequal pay in sports, for instance, is a weighty issue that underscores the broader problem of gender inequality in our society.

Therefore, we must persist in our efforts to effect positive change and advocate for women's rights to create a more equitable and just world. While it is heartening to witness political parties such as the African National Congress implement policies that ensure equal representation in public offices, we still have a long way to go in confronting patriarchy and promoting gender equality.

Programme Director

It's great to announce that ANC is actively working towards ensuring women are represented in positions of power and influence.

However, it's unfortunate that patriarchy still affects women in many areas of society. Women continue to face challenges with accessing equal opportunities, equal work and pay, navigating

careers and motherhood, and facing sexism, racism, and economic inequality.

Sadly, this inequality is also present in the sporting world, where women representing their countries in the same sport are paid less than their male counterparts. It's encouraging to see change happening, such as with Banyana Banyana being paid the same fees as their male counterparts at international tournaments and competitions. The president of the South African Football Association, Danny Jordaan announced this great development in June this year.

I humbly implore each and every one of you to venture out and seek out young women who may be less privileged than yourselves.

Endeavor to find a young woman whom you can take under your wing, mentor and guide. It is incumbent upon us all to play a role in the creation of a better society, and it is not solely the responsibility of the government to provide social security and guidance for these young women.

As you are well aware, these young women are especially vulnerable in today's society, and many of them have already experienced the harsh realities of life. It is therefore of utmost importance that you make it a lifelong mission to rescue these young women from a life of poverty.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for your presence here today and to thank your leadership for granting you the time off from your daily routines and responsibilities in your respective departments to grace us with your presence on this occasion.

I thank you