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MEDIA STATEMENT

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GAUTENG PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE WOMEN UNITE ACROSS PARTY LINES TO STRENGTHEN THE FIGHT FOR GENDER EQUALITY

On 27 and 28 March 2025, female MPLs from across the political spectrum gathered in Melrose for a crucial engagement focused on deepening collaboration and accelerating efforts to tackle systemic gender inequalities.

Putting aside their political differences, female MPLs from the ANC, DA, Mkhonto weSizwe Party, EFF, ActionSA, Patriotic Alliance, Rise Mzansi, and Build One South Africa, united under the banner of the Multi-party Women's Caucus (MPWC) in a shared commitment to advocate for gender equality, women's rights, and meaningful representation in decision-making structures.

The MPCW was established in 2015 after Parliament directed that all legislatures establish structures where female public representatives would champion the rights of the women they serve. Over the years, the Caucus has grown into a formidable force, ensuring that women's issues remain front and center of the legislative agenda.

Chairperson of the MPWC, Dr. Nomathemba Mokgethi, emphasized the significance of this gathering, stating:

"We may come from different political backgrounds and hold diverse perspectives, but before anything else, we are women. We are not immune to the realities faced by millions of women across South Africa, from gender-based violence to economic exclusion and systemic discrimination.

"The struggle for gender equality is not a partisan issue—it is a human rights issue that demands unity, commitment, and action. We must stand together to challenge the toxic masculinity and entrenched patriarchy that continue to hold women back."

The engagement demonstrated a collective resolve to put women's interests ahead of political rivalries. It also placed a strong focus on tangible solutions, with discussions

centered around legislative reforms, policy interventions, and economic empowerment programs aimed at improving the lives of women and girls in Gauteng.

A key highlight of the session was the announcement that Dr. Mokgethi, alongside the MPWC Executive Committee—comprising Hon. Lindiwe Masilela (EFF), Hon. Nomthando Meso (MKP), Hon. Emma More (ActionSA), and Hon. Ayanda Allie (BOSA)—will soon lead a delegation of women to Italy for an advanced training program hosted by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

This training will focus on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB), an essential tool for ensuring that government budgets and spending initiatives actively promote gender equality.

By equipping female MPLs with the knowledge and skills necessary to assess budgets through a gender lens, the MPWC aims to enhance its oversight role and push for policies that are both inclusive and transformative.

The delegation will also engage in strategic discussions on how best to institutionalize gender-sensitive budgeting across various sectors, ensuring that women's needs are adequately prioritized in resource allocation.

The MPWC remains committed to ensuring that women's voices are not only heard but also actively shape the policies and laws that impact their daily lives.

As the Caucus marks a decade of existence, it remains steadfast in its mission to push for legislative frameworks that address gender disparities, strengthen women's participation in governance, and safeguard their socio-economic rights.

The engagement concluded with a renewed call for action, urging all stakeholders—government institutions, civil society organizations, private sector partners, and communities—to work together in dismantling barriers to gender equality. The Caucus expressed deep appreciation to all individuals and organizations that contributed to making this milestone gathering a success.

The fight for women's rights continues, and the MPWC is determined to ensure that no woman in Gauteng is left behind.

ISSUED BY GPL'S MEDIA SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE MPWC, DR. NOMATHEMBA MOKGETHI

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