

WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF MATJHABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, ME. MATHABO MOKAPO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE WOMEN CONFERENCE HOSTED BY “RIVERS OF LIVING WATER MINISTRIES”

Programme Director

Madam Premier

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to greet you all in the name of the Almighty God, who afforded us this opportunity, to be gathered here today. Allow me to quote the famous verse from the Scriptures, “**Jeremia chapter 10; verse 12**” and it reads thus, “**He made everything with his power**”. This important verse calls upon us to acknowledge the might of the Lord, and always remember that everything under the sun is of his own creation and power, including us.

Over the past month, the role of women was highlighted from different angles and across the broad spectrum of our society. It gives great pleasure, satisfaction and fulfillment on my part, that the congregation decided to host a conference of this nature, under the theme “**Power and position of women**”

It has been our contention that the project of building our country does not only lie with government alone. And it therefore gives much pleasure, when our spiritual leaders embrace the project to transform our country. A gathering of this nature demonstrates in no uncertain terms that, you are conscious of your role to act as glue that binds our society together, in terms of restoring our moral fibre.

Today, we are gathered here just two days after the lapsing of Women’s Month. I am convinced that this conference was occasioned by the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the women’s march to Pretoria in 1956, in terms of its timing.

The march to Pretoria in 1956 has important lessons for us today, as we are engaged in the process of reconstructing our country.

In this light therefore, I call upon all of us to emulate the women of 1956, who were engaged in a fight against the extension of passes to women and apartheid laws in general. The aspirations of those gallant fighters, some of whom are still in our midst today, was the establishment of a truly non racial, democratic and nonsexist South Africa.

As a country, we have now entered the second decade of our liberation, and indeed our democratic government has made serious strides in the realization of a non sexist South Africa, through enactment of various pieces of legislation that address gender discrimination, the creation of institutional frameworks and policies to address the plight of women.

Despite the achievements made to date in addressing past gender imbalances, we must all acknowledge that the road to a non sexist South Africa will be long, and this will demand that we act steadfastly in ensuring that the role of women remains in the mainstream of our transformation agenda.

As women we need to ensure that we take full advantage of the opportunities that have been created in the new dispensation. And I hope this conference will be pitched at the correct level, so that it addresses pertinent issues relating to women empowerment in the current conjuncture.

On this note, I therefore wish to welcome all of you to Matjhabeng and good luck in your deliberations today.

Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR MATHABO MOKAPO
EXECUTIVE MAYOR**