Ladies and Gentleman

I greet you all.

Before I begin, I would wholeheartedly like to condemn the xenophobic violence against foreign nationals that has spread like an epidemic in our country. I condemn anyone and everyone who acts violently against another individual. Xenophobia and criminality are abhorrent acts, and should be dealt with, by the fullest arm of the law.

We need to teach one another to love, tolerate and respect each others different cultures and nationalities. We are all children of the same soil which is the African soil. Kwame Nkurumah, Nelson Mandela, Jomo Kenyatta, Patrice Lumumba, Steve Biko who are the forefathers of our liberated countries all spoke of unity and kinship within the African continent, therefore spilling each others blood cannot be the manner in which we honour and remember them. We are in the era where Afrocentricity has become a global inspiration for many popular industries, it is finally the time for Africans to arise and shine in the global community.

Honourable guest

With that being said, let us proceed to the reason that brought us here as woman which is to interact, share, educate each other and most importantly enjoy ourselves as women. The theme for this years women’s month is *“25 years of democracy, growing South Africa together for woman’s emancipation”.*

This years theme is highly important to us particularly as woman. It shows how far we have come in our liberation as women. As we all know women haven’t always had the benefit of the constitutional rights we now have. On the 9th of August in 1956, 20 000 thousand woman of all races marched to Tshwane’s Union Buildings to present a petition against the carrying of passes by women to the prime minister, JG Strijdom. This march sent a public message that they would not be intimidated and silenced by unjust laws. It changed the mindset that “*a woman’s place is in the kitchen”* it declared instead that women’s place is everything. The phrase that “*mosadi o tshwara thipa ka bogaleng”* **was not referring to us chopping onions and carrots.**

However, Programme Director

Women are faced with new challenges and battles to face in the post-liberation era. And I am sad to admit as a female leader that those battles are are much graver than political and economic emancipation. In this era, which they call the 4th industrial revolution. Women are **fighting for physical and psychological emancipation.** We are in an era where young and elderly women are physically violated without receiving any meaningful social-justice and by social justice, I mean **society putting a stigma on perpetrators** who violate women, instead of putting stigmas on women who are violated**.** Our society physically shames our fellow women by comparing apples to pears and hourglasses to ovals, some women become less relevant if we are not slaying.

On the other hand, women in our society are facing psychological battles in the workplace by not getting paid or being treated the same as their male counterparts. The wage gap between genders in this country and on a globally scale has persisted to be an issue for women across all nationalities. I urge all women across all economic ranks to push forward and speak out loud against this issue until it is rectified. In this current era women wear three caps, a mother, a worker and a wife and yet we are seen and perceived as less.

Programme Director

I would like to commend all female police officers who are in the front lines of the fight against crime and injustice. We appreciate your efforts in alleviating Gender Based Violence, your efforts in creating a safe environment for girl children, women and the community alike.

Society cannot do without Mothers, Sisters and Daughters like you. We recognize your efforts and witness your struggles.

In conclusion I say to all women:

Stand together, fight FOR one another, pull each other up and inspire each other. You are the pillars of this nation and this world.

VIVA IMBOKODO VIVA!!!!!