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ANC call to the women of South Africa on the 35th Anniversary  
of FEDSAW

## UNITE IN ACTION! DEFY APARTHEID LAWS!

17th April marks the 35th Anniversary of the formation of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW). It marks three and a half decades of the organised symbol of our struggling women, a symbol that has occupied a pride of place in the hearts of all struggling women of our country.

From its very foundation, FEDSAW occupied the front ranks in the struggle to rid South Africa of apartheid. It rallied women around their day-to-day grievances; and linked all these issues to the national struggle for freedom and democracy. The militant campaigns of women such as the 1956 actions of defiance gave a spur to the struggles of all democratic forces.

Today, the women of South Africa continue to be harassed, oppressed and exploited. Apartheid makes the lot of the women unbearable!

- \*We have to meet the rising cost of living with miserable wages.
- \*Because of the migratory labour system, our husbands, sons and brothers are separated from us.
- \*We are not allowed to live where we choose; and we are victims of forced removals and regulations against "squatters".
- \*Many women activists and leaders have been detained, sentenced to long terms of imprisonment or restricted.
- \*The violence caused by the apartheid regime in areas such as Pietermaritzburg has brought death and destruction to our families, especially children.
- \*Our white sisters also face discrimination as women within their own community; and they have to carry the burden of separation from their loved ones who are conscripted for long years into the South African Death Forces.

But women have shown that their place is in the front ranks of the struggle. Over the past few years, there has been a resurgence in women's democratic organisation. Women are to be found in other democratic structures: trade unions, youth and students structures, religious bodies, teachers' organisations, and so on. We take active part in the militant struggles of the people. And many glorious fighters are in the ranks of the ANC underground and Umkhonto we Sizwe. We salute stalwarts of the democratic movement: Albertina Sisulu, Helen Joseph and many others; and courageous fighters: Marion Sparg, Theresa Ramashamola, Lilian Keagile....



## **YET THERE IS SO MUCH TO BE DONE:**

**UNITE all anti-apartheid forces:** Create and strengthen broad anti-apartheid women structures at regional and national levels. Let us unite in our common desire to rid our country of apartheid: working women, rural women, teachers, social workers, artists and those in religious bodies - African, Coloured, Indian and White women.

**DEFY APARTHEID LAWS:** We must refuse to pay high rents; fight forced removals; insist on joining our menfolk in the areas where they work; defy Conservative Party regulations to make apartheid even worse in Carletonville, Boksburg and other areas; defy Group Areas and other apartheid laws.

**End conscription and terror:** White women in particular must refuse to send their sons, husbands and brothers to the townships and other countries of the region in the service of the apartheid system. Conscription into the SADF and terror against the people by all arms of the state must be stopped.

**Struggle for peace among the people:** We must be at the forefront of the peace process in Natal and other areas. We must stop our husbands, brothers and sons from being involved in the vigilante death squads. Ensure that the people are united against the common enemy: the apartheid system.

**Demand the release of detainees and political prisoners:** Stand by the hunger-strikers by intensifying the campaign to secure the release of all the detainees. Fight for the release of our children. Demand the release of all political prisoners and an end to the State of Emergency.

**Strike decisive blows against the enemy:** Swell the ranks of the ANC underground and Umkhonto we Sizwe. Strike at the heart of the enemy: in their police stations, arms factories, army barracks, in the electricity, oil, railway and harbour, chemical and other strategic industries.

**Support the women and people of Namibia:** Organise meetings, placard demonstrations, marches and other actions in support of the democratic forces in Namibia led by SWAPO. We must prevent the racist and their allies from sabotaging the independence process. Support the women and people of the Frontline and other neighbouring states in their fight against racist aggression and destabilisation.

**MALIBONGWE!**  
**FORWARD TO PEOPLE'S POWER!**