



**27 February 2019**

## **Summary of the Key Decisions Taken at the National Gender Summit**

### **1. Background**

The Presidential Summit on Gender-based Violence and Femicide (henceforth 'the summit') took place on 1-2 November 2018. The summit aimed to strengthen the response to gender-based violence at the highest levels, as well as across all levels of Government and all levels of society.

The summit's sought to reflect critically on the country's existing interventions to gender-based violence and to determine new directions in the development of coordinated responses to the problem, including its prevention. These recommendations are meant to be taken forward by the Office of the President, thus ensuring attention to gender-based violence at the highest level.

The summit had the following objectives:

- To reflect critically on initiatives to date and identify actions of improvement;
- To outline a roadmap to a South Africa free from gender-based violence and femicide;
- To align different initiatives to create mechanisms and processes for effective coordination and planning beyond the summit;
- To establish a commitment to resourcing and accountability.

The summit brought together 1200 delegates. Delegates were encouraged to find solutions and actions to the identified challenges in commissions aligned to thematic areas of work. Each commission produced a document outlining actions to end gender-based violence and femicide in South Africa. The work of all six commissions was used to develop an integrated summit declaration.

The work of the summit was divided into six areas of work:

1. **Prevention:** With a focus on how to best prevent gender-based violence and the role of the state and society at large in this regard.
2. **Laws and policies:** With a focus on the progress and challenges in the implementation of existing laws and policy as well as the policy and legislative gaps.
3. **Coordination:** With a focus on how to better coordinate responses to gender-based violence.
4. **Response and support:** With a focus on enhancing responses and support to addressing gender-based violence.
5. **Accountability and resourcing:** With a focus on how to ensure greater accountability in addressing gender-based violence and ensuring that it is adequately resourced.



6. **Communication:** With a focus on improving communication systems in relation to gender-based violence.

### **Summary of the Declaration Adopted by the Summit**

Some of the key action items adopted by the summit through its declaration are as follows. Notes that these areas of action have been categorised for the purpose of grouping action items in the declaration:

#### ***Structure***

The summit should result in the immediate setting up of an interim structure with the eventual objective of establishing a national, multi-stakeholder Council. The composition of the Council must be inclusive and representative with consideration of at least 51 percent members from civil society. Appointment to the Council must be transparent. The Council should be established within six months of the summit and the President should champion it and ensure its adequate resourcing.

#### ***Plans, Laws and Policies***

- A National Strategic Plan (NSP) on gender-based violence and femicide must be developed within six months of the summit. The NSP should be resourced, implemented, monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.
- Ensure that all laws, policies, programmes and interventions are adequately planned, costed and resourced in line with gender responsive planning, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation frameworks across government.
- Continuously strengthen the information and research base to develop effective, evidence based policy and programming.
- Fast-track the review of existing laws and policies on gender-based violence to be victim-centred and ensure all other relevant laws respond to gender-based violence.
- Implement the decisions that have been identified from reviews and address legislative gaps.
- Revisit and fast-track all outstanding laws and bills that relate to gender-based violence and femicide, including the decriminalisation of sex work.

#### ***Economic development***

- Promote women-centred economic development.



### **Services**

- There should be adequate resourcing of Thuthuzela Care Centres, sexual offences courts and shelters that respond to the needs of gender-based violence victims. These services should cater to the needs of persons with disabilities and LGBTQIA + persons.
- Ensure service optimisation through ongoing capacity building, specialisation and strengthened coordination informed by legislation, norms, standards and protocols on gender-based violence.

### **National Gender Machinery**

- Retain, resource, strengthen and invigorate the institutional mechanisms, including the national gender machinery.

### **Society**

- Political and community leadership must support and champion the eradication of gender-based violence and femicide.
- A targeted social behaviour change programme to address patriarchal values and norms and the structural drivers of gender-based violence must be developed and implemented. This should be targeted at all sectors, including individuals, families, communities, civil servants, religious and traditional leaders, the private sector and the media community.
- Evaluate existing education interventions with a view to strengthen them to ensure a comprehensive response at all levels of education.
- Conduct a meeting of all communicators on gender-based violence to adopt ethical guidelines to cover language used, approaches for sensitivity and social context training for the media sector.
- Consider creating a regulatory framework for religious institutions to curb sexual abuses and crimes under the guise of religion.

