

**SPEECH BY THE FIRST LADY OF LIMPOPO, MRS MAGGY MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE AFRICAN TIMES PHENOMENAL WOMEN IN BUSINESS SEMINAR, HELD AT PROTEA THE RANCH HOTEL.**

**25 August 2017**

Master of ceremonies;

Our host and founder of the African Times Media, Ntate Piet Rampedi;

All the phenomenal women who are part of today's panel interaction;

Members of the audience;

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen:

Let me start first by sending my appreciations and the appreciations from the Limpopo First Lady to the African Times Media for this generous invitation. We also wish to thank you for making time from your obviously busy schedules to celebrate the women of our country.

I am particularly inspired by your chosen theme for this event. The theme 'celebrating women as thought leaders in society' navigates us away from dominate stereotypes which sees no role for women in the intellectual discourse of the society.

I refer to those stereotypes that sees women's role in society as nothing beyond falling bearing kids and making a home for the husband and the kids. Our theme today is built on the appreciation that women too have a role to play in the intellectual make-up of our society.

It is for this reason that I once again wish to say thank you African Times for not only organising this event but also bringing me in such close proximity to this bunch of phenomenal women that I personally so admire.

The successes of these women either in politics, corporate community or business serves as an important affirmation of the Biblical injunction that we are all born equal with inherent abilities to succeed in life.

The truth of the matter is that women were always able but deliberately disabled ideas of patriarchy and male domination. The time now has arrived for women, in particular Black women to take their rightful place in society.

This reminds me of that popular line from Tyler Perry's *Madea's family Reunion* which said something like **"Young black women, you are more than your thighs and your hips. You are beautiful, strong, and powerful. I want more from you. Take your place"**.

What I find significant in these lines is first, the fact that the poet appreciates the unrivalled beauty of a woman – secondly, the poet expresses a concern that as Black women we have been settling for far less than our full potential – the last one is a command, an instruction that we should take our rightful place in the society.

Those of us who are gathered in this hall may have done our best to claim what we consider to be our rightful place in society - but the challenge is not what we have done for ourselves – the real challenge is what we are doing for other women.

Have we done or are we doing enough or even just something to help a fellow Black woman to escape illiteracy, abusive relationship, poverty and related social ills.

Social justice we talk about should be about helping women to enjoy access to wealth, opportunities, and other privileges within a society.

In the context of our society, social justice should also mean the application of the law in a manner that appreciate the historical position of women with a view to balance the scales. This is what politicians would refer to as redress or affirmative action.

When we say certain socio-economic opportunities should be reserved for women it is not because we think women are unable to compete on an equal platform with men. This is simply about writing the wrongs of the past to create what scientists would call equilibrium.

However, this cannot be achieved without the unity of women. There is very little that we can achieve as women if we do not pull together in the same direction.

Let us be the first to support a woman owned business.

Let us be there to a woman whose quality of life is undermined by the fact that she is trapped in some abusive and toxic relationship.

We must be there for those many young girls whose potential to grow up and become really phenomenal women is undermined by the mere fact that they do not have money to pursue university education.

The age for a PHD syndrome should be buried – instead of pulling her down; this is the time to Pull Her Up.

Let the success of a single woman be like a candle that will light a few others which will in turn light a few more others until darkness is totally extinguished.

As I conclude I want to reiterate the points that:

The struggle for social justice is a struggle for the attainment of total socio-economic liberation.

We cannot speak of social justice for as long as some of our girl children are still forced by poverty to bear the indignity of life without decent sanitary towels;

There is no social justice for as long as women and girl children continue to become victims of abusive cultural practices;

We can't speak of social justice for as long as men require court orders for them to support their wives and children;

There can't be social justice for as long as wives continue to suffer economic abuse in the hands of those who are supposed to love them;

Programme Director – it will take the unity of women and partnership with all progressive men to breathe life to the idea of social justice for all.

I thank you!