

**MINERALS COUNCIL WOMEN IN MINING  
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2025**

**Ayanda Mvimbi**  
**Lead and Women's Economic Empowerment Specialist, United Nations**  
**Women South Africa**

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Good morning. Happy International Women's Day to all.

Hon. Deputy Minister Steve Letsike, I am standing on the protocol that has been observed. A special recognition to women in mining sustainability heroes.

I want to thank the mining council for inviting UN Women to be in the room with all of you this morning.

This week, as we mark International Women's Day, more than ever, it is a pertinent and critical point of galvanising our energies "For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment."

As you know, this marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), a global agreement adopted in 1995 that aims to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls.

In 1995, the world made a promise: Women's rights are human rights. That promise came to life in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action—a groundbreaking framework for gender equality.

The promise of equality made by world leaders to all women and girls in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was bold, historic, and revolutionary.

Now, in 2025, that promise is slipping away

This year, our message is clear: We Refuse to Step Back—The Year We March Forward for Women's Rights.

Today UN Women released the Beijing plus 30 report. UN Women Executive Director, Sima Bahous, has said "we understand today, as they did then, that a gender equal world is both

possible and within our reach – if we act decisively. Although gender inequality is one of the most pressing challenges of our time, it also presents an unparalleled opportunity to transform societies. The thirtieth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2025 offers a chance to reflect on progress and accelerate action. At UN-Women, we have seized this opportunity to engage with our partners, drawing on their experiences to inform the next phase of our efforts”

The reports highlight the following:

- PIVOTAL STEPS AND MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCKS
- A WORLD IN CRISIS WEIGHS ON PROGRESS
- EQUALITY MUST REACH ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

The question we should all be asking is whether we are making progress in the world and as South Africa in the mining sector towards achieving a world where men and women, boys and girls are equal?

#### **What type of transformation is required?**

- The world today is more equal for women and girls than ever before.
- Women have fought for—and won—the right to vote, to work, to lead.
- There are more girls in school and in STEM
- More women are breaking barriers, rising to power, and reshaping industries.
- Digital activism is stirring global movements for justice.
- distribution, senior and top management, educational attainment,
- However, more relevant to the mining sector;
  - Gender based violence remains a huge challenge, Every 10 minutes, a woman is murdered by someone in their own family; Sexual harassment in the workplace
  - In the mining sector we have seen notable growth over the past decades, yet there are persistent challenges in achieving gender equality in overall representation, occupational leadership representation and access to business opportunities
  - Women owned Businesses have limited access to procurement and market opportunities
  - In 2024, the mining sector contributed to about ZAR 432 billion to GDP, Do we know how much of that amount went into the hands of women and closed the gender wealth gap? What policy mechanisms do we need to enforce to ensure that we do better
- We have not surpassed the 30% mark, although except in education we have just past the 30% at 32%.
- What this means is that there is a lot of work to be done

- The Limited economic power for women is a structural, socio-economic and political challenge that needs to be addressed at the highest level of government and business decision-making. This implies that transformative and systemic changes are needed, moving beyond superficial initiatives to change mindsets, policy, legislation, approaches and budgets.

### **In what areas is progress towards gender equality lagging?**

- The backlash against gender equality is growing. At this rate, the promises of Beijing are being deferred to the next generation. The World Is Failing Women and Girls.
- For 20 years, the gender gap in labor force participation has remained stagnant.
- Women and girls contribute the least to climate change—yet suffer its worst consequences.
- Emerging technologies promise equality but are weaponized against women and girls.
- What should we be doing to accelerate progress as a country?
- Tracking of gender-responsive policies and the advancement of actions to implement commitments on gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE).

## **FIVE PRIORITIES TO MAKE FASTER GAINS AND PREPARE FOR AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE**

The global progress review defined five cross-cutting recommendations fundamental to achieving the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for all women and girls:

### **1.CLOSE THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP**

Fortify institutions to lead and coordinate policy action on gender equality, put gender at the centre of all policies and programmes and improve data to measure change.

### **2.ELEVATE WOMEN’S VOICES**

Achieve equal participation and influence in decision-making at all levels, including for marginalized groups of women and girls, and open and protect spaces for women’s groups to operate.

### **3.CLOSE THE FINANCING GAP**

Make catalytic investments through national measures, such as budgets aligned with gender equality and progressive taxation, and realign global financial systems based on equity and solidarity.

### **4.HARNESS TECHNOLOGY**

Close digital gender divides in access and benefits, ensure women and girls can lead the digital and artificial intelligence revolutions and mitigate the risks of technology-facilitated gender-based violence, privacy violations and bias.

## 5. SHOCK-PROOF SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Establish gender-inclusive crisis prevention and response to avoid sudden rollbacks on the rights of women and girls and prioritize gender equality in humanitarian action.

- The mining sector has put in place a number of mechanisms to drive gender parity
- We need to stay on course and strive for better results in promoting gender transformative economies
- What is the mining council going to do to
  - To Close the gender gap and remove systemic and persistent barriers
  - To provide women with adequate and relevant capacity support to take up existing opportunities
  - To increase investment to accelerate progress and promote gender transformative mining sector
  - To promote and advocate for women's leadership
  - To invest in STEM
- To ensure workplaces are free of violence and discrimination and speak out against gender stereotypes, bias, and discrimination.

How will UN Women be observing this day and how can people get involved?

**We encourage you to join UN Women's global campaign #ForAllWomenAndGirls**

Join UN Women's rallying cry for action on 8 March, International Women's Day:

We will be judged not by our words but by our actions. Because gender equality is the way forward—not just for women, not just for girls, but for the future of humanity.

- Let history remember 2025 as the year we refused to back down. The year we stood our ground. The year we finished the fight.
- We will not stop until we achieve rights, equality, and empowerment for ALL women and girls. And we will win.
- Let us fill up the stadium