



Every year, in August, our country marks Women's Month, when we pay tribute to the more than 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 in protest against the extension of Pass Laws to women.

This year marks 65 years since the watershed 1956 women's march to the Union Buildings. The year 2020 also marks the twenty-sixth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, which created a platform for greater gender equality.

This year's commemoration will be held under the theme: "***The year of Charlotte Mannya Maxeke: Realising Women's Rights***". Ensuring and protecting rights for all has been a constant struggle for government and our social partners, as we battle the devastating COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our nation and her people in countless ways. What was initially a health crisis has impacted the economy, health, education, food security and gender equality.

Women also face the second pandemic of gender-based violence, as well as the economic impacts of COVID-19, and the recent civil unrest which engulfed KwaZulu-Natal and parts of Gauteng.

Women's Month allows us to gauge how far we have come in transforming society, particularly the transformation of unequal power relations between women and men. While also focusing on and addressing gender oppression, patriarchy, sexism, racism, ageism, structural oppression, and creating a conducive environment which enables women to take control of their lives.