



International **A**ssociation of **W**omen **J**udges
advancing human rights and equal justice for all

S.A Chapter:

WOMEN'S DAY 2021 MESSAGE

Today we mark an important day on our calendar, Women's Day, and pay tribute to all the brave women who stood against injustice and marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 in protest against the extension of the repressive pass laws to women, thus charting the path to a just, equal and inclusive South Africa. We also celebrate the hard work and achievements of a countless present day South African heroines, in rural villages, townships and every nook of our society, who, six decades later, continue the struggle for dignity and equality for all in our country; a struggle of global proportions as not a single country in the world, in this age of unprecedented technological advances that include space tourism and fabulous wealth and privilege for some, has achieved gender equality.

We honour our icons during the most challenging and volatile time since the birth of our democracy as the debilitating inequality in our country, aggravated by corruption and maladministration, and now the Covid-19 plague, cuts deeper with each passing day – the shrinking economy, unabated job losses and unemployment (especially of a majority of our young people), escalating food and fuel prices and lawlessness among other grave challenges which threaten the well-being of our society. And the brunt of it all is felt the most by women, as even in the Covid-19 meltdown they have lost the most jobs and suffer the most from poverty and hunger and the rampant gender based violence and other social ills.

It is a sombre day. But all is not lost and we draw courage from our brave mothers who, in the darkest days, did not give up and took the fight to the enemy. We pause, take stock and seek more ways to forge equality and a better society.

I also take this time to congratulate our Association, the South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges, for its hard work and for successfully hosting its first virtual Annual General Meeting and election of a new Executive Council comprising a formidable team of women. This indeed proves once more that no hurdle, and certainly not the Covid-19 virus, will impede the tide of woman power. A lot more of that strength, resilience and creativity will be needed this term into the future to turn things around. But we are the SAC-IAWJ and nothing will defeat us. Very best wishes,

Mandisa Maya – President

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