

Press Release - International Women's Day 2024

08 March 2024

"Invest in women: Accelerate progress"

Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA) joins the United Nations Women and the rest of the world in celebrating under the theme "*Invest in women: Accelerate progress*". This is a global day of celebrating the social, gender equality, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women proclaimed by the United Nations in 1977, the UN General Assembly invited member states to proclaim March 8 as the UN Day for Women's Rights and World Peace.

UN Women reported that gender inequality still persists everywhere and stagnates social progress amongst women globally. It further indicates that at the current rate, it will take an estimated 286 years to close gaps in legal protection and remove discriminatory laws and 140 years for women to be represented equally. In augmentation of the UN Women report, in 2021, Statistics South Africa released a report, Crimes Against Women in South Africa, indicating that one in five women (21%) had experienced physical violence by a partner. These statistics are an indication of high reported numbers of gender-based violence cases against women which calls for concern. This report is a clear indication that women continue to suffer and are living in constant fear of being abused both emotionally and physically.

Building on the above, one of the world-renowned feminists, journalists, and activists, Gloria Steinem, once reported that: "*The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organisation but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights.*"

In light of this, CoRMSA takes this important opportunity to join the world in elevating and amplifying the focus on women's equality through promoting and protecting their rights for a just and equal society. CoRMSA also believes that we can all commit to *Investing in women and accelerate progress*. This can be achieved by fighting collectively for the advancement of the human rights of all women across the globe while ensuring women inclusivity in this day and beyond. Together, we can forge women's equality, safe and a better world for women. In addition, CoRMSA argues that "*When women are empowered about their rights, they feel inspired to be included, which creates a sense of belonging, relevance and empowerment.*"

In honouring the respectable achievements of women and promoting the protection of women's rights, CoRMSA calls everyone and all states to adhere to and respect the rights of women by refraining from and eliminating all forms of violence and against all women and girls, including trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation. We further call all heads of state to uphold the human rights of all women regardless of their nationality status or race in their respective countries and bring all perpetrators to book.

CoRMSA believes that collectively, we can build a world that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive, a world where difference is valued and celebrated and human rights respected.

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