

9th AUGUST SOUTH AFRICA WOMEN'S DAY 30th ANNIVERSARY

At the 1955 Congress of the People the Federation of South African Women submitted WHAT WOMEN DEMAND

We reprint text in full below

We Demand

Four months maternity leave on full pay for working mothers.
Properly staffed and equipped maternity homes, ante-natal clinics, and child welfare centres in all towns and villages, and in the reserves and rural areas.
Day nurseries for the children of working mothers.
Nursery schools for the pre-school children.
Birth control clinics.
We demand these for all mothers of all races!

We Demand

Compulsory, free and universal education from the primary school to the University.
Adequate school feeding and free milk for all children in day nurseries, nursery schools and primary and secondary schools.
Special schools for handicapped children.
Play centres and cultural centres for school children.
Properly equipped playgrounds and sports fields.
Vocational training and apprenticeship facilities.
We demand these for all children of all races!

We Demand

Proper housing at rents not more than 10% of the earnings of the head of the household.
Indoor sanitation, water supply and proper lighting in our homes.
The right to own our own homes and the land on which we build them.
The right to live where we choose.
Housing loan schemes at low rates of interest.
Lighting in our streets.
Properly made roads and storm water drains.
Adequate public transport facilities.
Parks and recreational centres.
Sportsfields and swimming pools.
Public conveniences.
We demand these for all people of all races!

We Demand

Better shopping facilities, particularly in the Non-European townships.
More dairies and full supplies of pasteurized whole milk.
Mobile vegetable markets.
Subsidisation of all protective foods: bread, meal, meat, milk, vegetables and fruit.
Controlled prices for all essential commodities: Food, basic clothing, fuel.
Fair rationing of essential foods and fuel when in short supply.
We demand these for all people in all places!

We Demand

The right of all people to own and work their own farms.
The development of all uncultivated land.
The fair distribution of land amongst all people.
The mechanisation of methods of food production.
The scientific improvement of land by:
a) Irrigation and intensive farming;
b) Control of soil erosion and improvement of the soil;
c) Supply of seed to all people producing from the land.
Efficient organisation of the distribution and marketing of food.
We demand sufficient food for all people!

We Demand

More and better land for the reserves.
Schools for children living in the reserves.
Maternity, medical and social services in the reserves.
Shops and controlled prices in the reserves.
The abolition of migratory labour which destroys our family life by removing our husbands and which destroys their health through the conditions of their labour and the compound system.
We demand that the reserves become food producing areas and not reservoirs of cheap labour!

We Demand

The transfer of trust farms to the ownership of the African people.
The abolition of convict farm labour.
The payment of minimum cash wages for all men and women working on farms.
The abolition of child labour on the farms.
The abolition of the 'tot' system.
Free, compulsory universal education for all children in the rural areas.
Paid holidays for all farm workers.
The inclusion of farm workers in all industrial education.
We demand these rights for all people in the rural areas!

We Demand

That equal invalidity and old age pensions be paid for people of all races.
Homes and proper care for all aged and sick people.
National medical services for all sick people.
Adequate and equal hospital services for all people.
Increased cost of living allowance adequate to meet the rising cost of living.
That all African workers in all spheres of employment be covered by unemployment insurance and illness allowances.
The consolidation of part of the cost of living allowance into basic wages.
That no person be required to carry a pass or reference book.
Equal rights for all people.
We demand these fundamental rights for all people!

We Demand

For all women in South Africa
The right to vote.
The right to be elected to all State, Provincial or Municipal bodies.
Full opportunities for employment in all spheres of work.
Equal pay for equal work.
Equal rights with men in property, marriage and in the guardianship of our children.

And together with other women all over the world

We Demand

The banning of atomic and hydrogen bombs.
The use of the atom for peaceful purposes and the betterment of the world.
That there shall be no more war.
That there shall be peace and freedom for our children.

These demands were later reflected in the Freedom Charter of the African National Congress of South Africa

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS SOUTH AFRICA