

**THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CCMA**

**FEDUSA**

**GENERAL SECRETARY SPEECH: CCMA WOMEN’S DIALOGUE:**

**Challenges South African Women face in the Workspace.**

**August 2023**

**DISTINGUISHED GUESTS**

**FELLOW SPEAKERS**

**ALL THE COURAGEOUS WOMEN WHO FORM PART OF THIS SPECIAL OCCASION!**

**A RESOUNDING GOOD MORNING TO YOU ALL!**

**TODAY, AS WE GATHER IN UNITY AND PURPOSE, I STAND BEFORE YOU AS THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE FEDERATION OF UNIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA (FEDUSA) TO ADDRESS A PRESSING ISSUE THAT DEMANDS OUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION AND CONCERTED EFFORTS – THE CHALLENGES THAT SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN FACE IN THE WORKPLACE. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE SHINE A LIGHT ON THESE CHALLENGES, UNDERSTAND THEIR IMPACT, AND COLLECTIVELY WORK TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE FUTURE FOR ALL.**

**FIRST AND FOREMOST, LET US ACKNOWLEDGE THE STARK REALITY OF THE LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTING WOMEN IN OUR WORKPLACES. THIS GAP IS MORE THAN JUST A PHYSICAL ONE; IT ENCOMPASSES THE ENTIRE ECOSYSTEM THAT SHOULD ENABLE WOMEN TO THRIVE PROFESSIONALLY. FROM ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE FACILITIES TO ADEQUATE CHILDCARE PROVISIONS, WE MUST ADDRESS THESE DEFICIENCIES TO ENSURE THAT WOMEN ARE NOT HINDERED IN THEIR CAREERS DUE TO STRUCTURAL OBSTACLES.**

**JOB SECURITY REMAINS A PERSISTENT CONCERN FOR WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE. THE PRECARIOUS NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT, COUPLED WITH SYSTEMIC BIASES, OFTEN LEAVES WOMEN VULNERABLE TO EXPLOITATION AND UNFAIR TREATMENT. THIS UNCERTAINTY NOT ONLY AFFECTS WOMEN'S FINANCIAL STABILITY BUT ALSO HAMPERS THEIR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND ADVANCEMENT. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE ADVOCATE FOR POLICIES AND MEASURES THAT SAFEGUARD JOB SECURITY AND A HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL, IRRESPECTIVE OF GENDER.**

**ANOTHER GRAVE ISSUE WE MUST CONFRONT IS THE PREVALENCE OF PRE-TRAUMATIC STRESS AMONG SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE. THE BURDEN OF UNEQUAL EXPECTATIONS, BIASES, AND GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION CAN LEAD TO HEIGHTENED STRESS LEVELS AND ANXIETY EVEN BEFORE A POTENTIAL TRAUMATIC EVENT OCCURS. THIS CONSTANT STATE OFANXIETY TAKES A TOLL ON WOMEN'S MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING, HINDERING THEIR ABILITY TO PERFORM OPTIMALLY AND ENGAGE FULLY IN THEIR ROLES.**

**FURTHERMORE, THE LACK OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT EXACERBATES THE CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE. THE ABSENCE OF A CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT WHERE WOMEN CAN OPENLY DISCUSS THEIR EXPERIENCES, FEARS, AND ASPIRATIONS CREATES ISOLATION AND INHIBITS THEIR SENSE OF BELONGING. EMOTIONAL SUPPORT IS NOT A LUXURY; IT IS A FUNDAMENTAL NEED THAT ALLOWS INDIVIDUALS TO NAVIGATE THEIR PROFESSIONAL LIVES WITH RESILIENCE AND CONFIDENCE.**

**AS WE GATHER TODAY, IT IS CRUCIAL THAT WE RECOGNIZE THE URGENCY OF ADDRESSING THESE CHALLENGES. FEDUSA IS COMMITTED TO DRIVING CHANGE, CHAMPIONING EQUALITY, AND ENSURING THAT THE VOICES OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN ARE HEARD AND AMPLIFIED. WE MUST PUSH FOR ACCESSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT CATERS TO WOMEN'S NEEDS, ADVOCATE FOR POLICIES THAT ENSURE JOB SECURITY AND FAIR TREATMENT, AND WORK TOWARDS DESTIGMATIZING DISCUSSIONS AROUND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT.**

**LET US REMEMBER THAT THE PROGRESS OF A NATION IS INTERTWINED WITH THE PROGRESS OF ITS WOMEN. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO SQUANDER THE TALENTS, ASPIRATIONS, AND POTENTIAL OF THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN OUR POPULATION. AS FEDUSA, WE STAND RESOLUTE IN OUR DEDICATION TO CREATING A WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT WHERE WOMEN ARE NOT JUST TOLERATED, BUT ACTIVELY EMPOWERED TO EXCEL AND LEAD.**

**IN CONCLUSION, LET US APPROACH THESE CHALLENGES WITH EMPATHY, DETERMINATION, AND A SENSE OF PURPOSE. LET US BE THE AGENTS OF CHANGE, THE ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE, AND THE ALLIES OF WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE. THROUGH OUR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS, WE CAN RESHAPE THE NARRATIVE AND ENSURE THAT SOUTH AFRICAN WORKPLACES BECOME HAVENS OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND SHARED PROSPERITY.**

**THANK YOU.**