



25 January, 2012

Press Statement

NGOs Call on Parliament to Appoint CGE Commissioners who will deliver on the CGE's mandate

This week Parliament holds public interviews to fill the long vacant seats of commissioners in the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE). The CGE has been in disarray for years and has failed to deliver on its mandate to promote gender equality.

Gender justice organisations are coalescing to demand that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Filling of Vacancies in the CGE appropriately apply itself to selecting new commissioners. The following NGOs have come together to monitor the appointment process, including Sonke, Section 27, the Women's Legal Centre, Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Project, The Lesbian and Gay Equality Project, the Medical Research Council's Gender & Health Unit, Nisaa Institute for Women's Development, the Women's Health Research Unit at the University of Cape Town.

Together, we call on Parliament to appoint commissioners who have a deep understanding of gender issues, a track record of gender activism, and vision for capturing the potential of the CGE, and experience to effectively lead the Commission.

It is an institution with a budget of R 60 million and weighty powers vested in it by the Constitution that should be used to advance the quality of life of women. It is essential new commissioners are appointed with the vision, capacity and drive to turn the institution around and ensure that it delivers on its mandate to the people of South Africa. The CGE's wide array of legal powers, including the power to subpoena any person, and to initiate litigation in its own name, could be highly impactful in advancing gender transformation.

Interviews are taking place on 26th and 27th January at the National Assembly in Cape Town. On the 26th, the interviews are in committee room E305, and on the 27th in committee room E249.

For further information please contact:

Ms. Sisonke Msimang, Sonke Board Chair
+27 82 610-6705

Mr. Dean Peacock, Executive Director, Sonke
+27 72 461-7751

Mr. Desmond Lesejane, Deputy Director, Sonke
+27 84 581-6306

Sonke Gender Justice Network (Sonke) works across Africa to create the change necessary for men, women, young people and children to enjoy equitable, healthy and happy relationships that contribute to the development of just and democratic societies.

Sonke Gender Justice Board Members:

Ms. Sisonke Msimang, Chair; Mr Tom Fry; Ms Vuyiseka Dubula; Dr Rachel Jewkes; Dr Kopano Ratele;
Dr Steven Robins; Mr Mokgethi Tshabalala; Ms Lisa Vetten; Mr Dean Peacock (Ex-Officio).