

## **Women's day debate**

**Theme : Working together to enhance women's economic empowerment through skills development and sustainable job creation.**

**UCDP : Hon MN Matladi**

**Tuesday, 23 August 2011**

South Africans are a nation not afraid to sing their own praises, probably this is a good trait but it is sometimes overdone and overrated such that important issues are left unattended while we immense ourselves in our own glory. We are the first ones to point at our very progressive constitution which has been hailed as the best constitution in some circles. We count a number of pieces of legislation that are intended for women emancipation, we look at this house and count the number of women here, and we start, yet again to sing our own praises. But the picture on the ground level says something contrary to this. Poverty in South Africa still has a woman's face; and as such the theme for women's parliament this year could not be more suitable.

The majority of the 24 or more per cent that is unemployed are women. Those women that do have jobs continue to earn less than their male counter-parts doing the same job. Whenever there are discussion on the balance between career building and raising a family, the discussion is gendered and its women who are supposedly to find such a balance. The majority of single parent headed households have women as heads. It is absolutely sickening to learn that an average employed

woman earns 33 cents of every R1 that a man earns in a similar position.

In order to effectively solve the issue of economic empowerment pertaining to women we ought to look at encompassing issues such as the glass ceilings that women face at the workplace. How many of the JSE listed companies are headed by women? In government and in political organisations, how many times has a suitably qualified woman been overlooked in favour of a male candidate? I say again, the continued rhetoric on our progressive laws has somehow deviated our attention from facts; for instance, if we are so progressive, has the number of women MP'S increased or decreased in this current administration? How many Director-Generals are female? How many mayors are female? Why do we still have only two women at the constitutional court against eleven males?