



POLICE

MARCH 2025

YOUR OFFICIAL FREE SAPS MAGAZINE

Special Issue



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Celebration
ACCELERATING ACTION



ON A JOURNEY TO A SAFER SOUTH AFRICA



"On this International Women's Day let us always remember, where you come from must never determine where you are going."

Deputy Minister of Police
Ms P Boshielo, MP



POLICE

The POLICE magazine is published by the Publications and Broadcast Section of Corporate Communication and Liaison.

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WOMEN IN BLUE COMMITTED TO ACCELERATE ACTION

By Lt Col Veronica Mahlaba

Photographer: Capt Ndanduleni Nyambeni



Women in blue from different provinces gathered together to celebrate International Women's Day at CSIR on 08 March 2025.

Our gathering here today as women in the SAPS is of utmost importance towards achieving the objectives we have set for the advancement of women in law enforcement and SAPS in particular." These were the sentiments shared by the Acting Deputy National Commissioner for Support Services, Lt Gen Lineo Nkhua as women in blue joined millions of women across the globe in celebrating International Women's Day on 08 March 2025.

The women in blue celebrated this day under the theme: 'Accelerate Action' at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), following the United Nations theme: For All Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment. These themes call for action that can unlock equal rights, power and opportunities for all and feminists' future where no one is left behind.

Starting the celebrations, Lt Gen Nkhua explained that International Women's Day (IWD) is a worldwide celebration that honours the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. IWD shines a light on women's contributions, advocates for gender equality, and encourages growth and empowerment at all levels. "By embracing IWD, we send a clear message that as management, we are committed to fostering an environment where every woman feels inspired, supported, and empowered to grow," stated Lt Gen Nkhua.

She further indicated that they have also gathered to celebrate the role of women in policing. "We take pride in the work of SAPS women in various areas of our organisation. We also remember the women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in serving and protecting the people of this country. Furthermore, we honour the women who came before us, the pioneers who laid the foundation for us to be standing here this morning. To them, we say: salute."



Acting Deputy National Commissioner for Support Services, Lt Gen Lineo Nkhua complimented the women on how beautiful they look in their rainbow coloured attires.

A LONG WALK TO EQUALITY

Deputy National Commissioner for Policing, Lt Gen Tebello Mosikili reiterated Lt Gen Nkhua's words by stating that there is something special about a woman who dominates in a man's world. "It takes a certain grace, strength, intelligence, fearlessness and the nerve to never take no for an answer. To all the women who are gathered here today, let us continue to take charge and lead with excellence in what people perceive as a 'man's world'. Tap each other on your shoulders and say: 'You're not only shaping your future but paving the way for others. We're proud to have you on our team!'"

She highlighted that one of the Deputy Ministers is a female, two Deputy National Commissioners in the police are female, and she is proud to be one of them. The Chief Financial Officer, Divisional Commissioner for Human Resource Development, Detective and Forensic Services, Visible Policing and Operations, and the Provincial Commissioners for Free State, Northern cape, Limpopo and until recently the Eastern Cape are all headed by women.

She proudly continued explaining that thousands of competent and capable female employees are in management positions in various environments of the organisation. There are women in previously male dominated environments like the Special Task Force Unit (STF). "In 2023, we produced one of the first STF female police officers in the history of the organisation. The said police officer, whose identity we continue to keep to our chest for security reasons, successfully completed the elite STF Selection Training Programme without any amendments made to suite females. She became one of only 11 members of the Selection 36 group who were bestowed with STF parachute wings in January 2023 by the National Commissioner of the South African Police Service, General Fannie Masemola after they completed their training," Lt Gen Mosikili explained.

DON'T BOX YOURSELF

Gracing the event was Deputy Minister of Police, Ms Polly Boshieho who encouraged the women gathered to never allow anyone to classify them. Women must refuse to be boxed. She shared the following pearls of wisdom with the women in blue:

1. **Leave the victim mentality** – put your head high. Let people wonder about you. Stand up for yourself.
2. **Let's stop pulling each other down** – you find women gossiping about other women. You find women gathered together against one woman. We all have our flaws. You just need to understand the environment that a person works under and provide them with support.
3. **Where you come from must never determine where you are going** – don't let people determine who you are. You must cut negativity from your life. Block people who want to destroy you, because you will absorb that negative energy and you will never go anywhere.
4. **Forgive yourself, so you can forgive others** – whatever you have been through, try to forgive yourself to appreciate all the good things that coming into your life. So that you can live.

Deputy National Commissioner for Policing, Lt Gen Tebello Mosikili saluted all those front-line police officers who work tirelessly to keep our communities safe.

“It takes a certain grace, strength, intelligence, fearlessness and the nerve to never take no for an answer. To all the women who are gathered here today, let us continue to take charge and lead with excellence in what people perceive as a ‘man’s world’

Lt Gen Mosikili said the police have come a long way since the first women were accepted into the then South African Police over 50 years ago to perform administrative and so-called 'soft' duties. Today women are taking their rightful place in the police force and security services, and the women present at the celebrations are among them.

The Deputy Minister also appealed to the top management of SAPS to make it possible for officers to access bursaries, so they can improve their skills. "It must not have individuals or it must not be that I know the Deputy Minister. It must be able to be accessed by all our members and our work will be a little bit easier. We don't come from well off backgrounds and one realised early that the only way to make it is through education. One thing I've learned is that as you pick up people, you will also go up."

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHECK-INS

Representing POLMED, Ms Nokuthula Bhuthelezi, a Senior Specialist for Wellness took to the stage to inform the women that POLMED is passionate about health and well-being, particularly preventative programmes. She stated that wellness is a journey to understanding one's health. Wellness looks different for each person. In the journey, the challenge for the medical aid is assisting the members in improving their own health and health outcomes.

She motivated the members to constantly be in tune with themselves, to check in with how they are emotionally and mentally, to basically check their mental health. "Mental wellness really starts on a day to day. To check if there are any changes in your behaviours while driving on the streets, when you are interacting with their children, are you shouting more or become more impatient? Those are all the signs that something is wrong. When I say something is wrong, it doesn't mean you must start medication. Just a simple check in with a therapist. Once every three months, check in with a therapist. Check in that you still happy, check in that you are still processing as you should because sometimes we destroy our own happiness with the things we have not dealt with. So check in that you are still okay. There is no need to wait until you face a traumatic incident," Ms Buthelezi emphasized.

She also touched on obesity as an illness that people don't usually consider as a sickness. Obesity can carry other issues in the background that you might not be aware of. You will find that you can only treat those conditions with a proper weight management programme. "

The aim is to improve the quality of lives for our members. Members need to know where they are in terms of numbers. When we speak about numbers, we speak about your blood pressure, weight and all these uncomfortable numbers that are at the start of the journey, for some it can be shocking and for some scary. However, you are empowered when you know the numbers, because once you know your numbers you know where you are going. You have your starting point, you have your baseline and you have a point of comparison.

"One of life's greatest metaphors is to be in the driver's seat in our own lives or life will drive you. In this instance ill health will drive you, if you don't begin to drive your own health. When it comes to weight management, we have a programme that was implemented in 2002. It is a 12 week programme, which I must say those members who have gone through it, we've seen significant clinical outcomes. Weight has been reduced by at least by 5%. They come out with a waist circumference improvement in about 83% of those members. Decreased BMI, cholesterol, as well as blood pressure," mentioned Ms Buthelezi.



Ms Mmamohau Lebete from Metropolitan Life; Ms Nokuthula Buthelezi from POLMED; Deputy Minister of Police, Ms Polly Boshieho; Deputy National Commissioner for Policing, Lt Gen Tebello Mosikili and Acting Deputy National Commissioner for Support Services, Lt Gen Lineo Nkhuoa dancing to kick start the day.

“One of life's greatest metaphors is to be in the driver's seat in our own lives or life will drive you.”



Deputy Minister of Police, Ms Polly Boshieho encouraged women in blue invest in themselves to grow in the organisation.



Opening the celebrations in prayer was Brigadier (Rite Rev) S Shobede-Nkosi who preached to each woman that God didn't create a mistake when He created them. He created them for a purpose. Women need to be themselves.



Ms Mmamohau Lebete from Metropolitan Life pleaded with women to try by all means to be financially independent and to teach their children about financial literacy.



Women came out in numbers, respecting the traditional attire theme for the day at CSIR.



Women were inspired by the different guests invited to motivate them on their various paths as employees, mothers, wives, friends, and the role they play as community members.



Men for Change stepped in to support their fellow colleagues and women in the organisation on International Women's Day.