

FROM NATIONAL LIBERATION TO WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

Introduction:

Leslie Gumbi

Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa

Welcome Address:

Walter Sauer (SADOCC)

Keynote speeches:

Ingrid Gaisrucker, Ruth Mompati, Gertrude Shope

Panellists:

Caroline Gudenus, Ulrike Lunacek

Moderator:

Melita H. Sunjić

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Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue

Armbrustergasse 15 | 1190 Vienna

Ingrid Gaisrucker

Ingrid Gaisrucker studied protestant theology at the University of Vienna, taught religious instruction in Vienna. She chaired the Austrian Anti-Apartheid-Movement in Austria until 1988. 2003 she was ordained as a Lutheran minister, working now in an honorary position.

Caroline Gudenus

joined the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1986, served at Austrian Embassies in Pakistan, Great Britain and as Deputy Head of Mission in South Africa from 1992 to 1996 and from 1999 to 2003, currently Head of Subsaharan Africa Desk at the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ulrike Lunacek

Between 1983 -1995 Ulrike Lunacek did professional and voluntary work at *Frauensolidaritaet* and the Austrian Information Service on Development Policies (ÖIE). Since 1999 she serves as a MP for the Austrian Green Party, and since May 2006 as Speaker of the European Green Party (EGP).

Ruth Mompati

Ruth Mompati has been an ANC activist since 1952, working for Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela. Consequently she had to leave South Africa in 1962, working for the ANC in Dar-es-Salaam, Morocco, and Berlin. She is a member of the ANC national executive committee, was appointed Ambassador to Switzerland from 1996 to 2000, and currently serves as Mayor of Vryburg.

Edit Schlaffer

Social scientist, author and activist, founder of *Women without Borders*. Her research focuses on women in international politics, women as agents of change in politics and civil society, as well as inter-personal relationships in the modern world. Her numerous publications have earned critical acclaim.

Walter Sauer

former Chairperson of the Anti Apartheid Movement in Austria and currently Chair of the Southern Africa Documentation and Cooperation Centre (SADOCC), Professor of Economic and Social History at the University of Vienna.

Gertrude Shope

Gertrude Shope joined the ANC in 1954 and worked for the Federation of South African Women. She followed her husband into exile in 1966, working in Czechoslovakia, and throughout Africa for the ANC. 1981 she became head of the women's section and joined the ANC's national executive committee. 1994 Ms. Shope became a MP in the Government of National Unity.

Melita H. Sunjić

Publicist and political scientist. Since 1994 she is working for the UNHCR and is currently based in Budapest. From 2003 to 2006 she lived in South Africa.

Gertraud Auer

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Guests of Honor. Age of Hope through Struggle to Freedom is the official title of the 50th anniversary of the Women's March to the Union Building in Pretoria in 1956. The Bruno Kreisky Forum is very grateful to the initiative of His Excellency, Ambassador Gumbi, to organise this event in cooperation with us and the South African Documentation and Cooperation Center

and his president Mr. Sauer. Welcome in the Kreisky Forum. I am very honored to welcome two ladies, Ms. Ruth Mompoti and Ms. Gertrude Shope, both witnesses and participants of the 1956 March. Welcome in the Kreisky Forum, thank you for coming. Women contributed a great deal and made unprecedented sacrifices to defeat their oppression. I am glad to continue with today's event a tradition of the Bruno Kreisky Forum its friendship and support to the struggle of the South African people for freedom and democracy. In this sense President Mandela has been awarded the Bruno Kreisky Prize for Human Rights in 1981, and President Mbeki was guest of the Forum in 1995 to give a lecture on South Africa's first year of democracy. Allow me to shortly welcome the guests who will share the panel. Ms. Ulrike Lunacek, Ms. Ingrid Gaisrucker, Caroline Gudenus, and Melita Sunjic who lived in Pretoria from 2003 to 2006 and will moderate the discussion.

Once again many thanks und ein spezielles Dankeschön an Frau Katharina Grascher from the South African Embassy for the excellent cooperation to prepare this event. Now I would like to give the floor to you Mr. Ambassador.

Leslie Gumbi

Secretary General of the Bruno Kreisky Forum, officials of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, leaders and members of women's organisations, ladies and gentlemen. Before I proceed with my introductory remarks I would like to present two of our guests of honor, Ms. Ruth Mompoti and Ms. Gertrude Shope. I was together with them in the trenches during the struggle against Apartheid. The three of us were based at the ANC headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia. Both, Ruth Mompoti and Gertrude Shope, were then members of the National Executive Committee of the ANC that was responsible for the overall political and practical execution of the struggle against Apartheid in all its aspects. They basically gave us marching orders as mothers and as leaders. In spite of their demanding positions and the constant danger they were exposed to these two icons of our struggle could still offer us their motherly love, affection, and care that prompted us to call them Ma which in one of our eleven official languages means mother. Their ability in trying times to stretch out beyond their families and embrace us all with the good motherly attributes we all know of earned this well deserved recognition of being addressed to as mothers when we could have just called them simply comrades. Their ability also served as a great social comfort and inspiration. They were therefore not only reliable comrades in arms but also a motherly shoulder to cry on. Not least I would also like to introduce Ms. Gaisrucker, an activist of the former Austrian Anti-Apartheid Movement. In May Ms. Gaisrucker was a guest of the South African Parliament where she participated in an international women's conference on women and the economic recovery of Africa. Lastly but not least it is also an honor for me to introduce Ms. Sunjic who is going to be moderator during our panel discussion. She has been in the part of our world as an international servant under the auspices of the UNHCR.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered here to first pay tribute to all the generations of South African women for their struggle against Apartheid. Secondly we are here to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the 1956 March by the South African women to Pretoria to protest against pass laws and discriminatory laws of the Apartheid regime. Our two stalwarts here will tell you much better about that event than I can because I was not even there by that time. We will mark these two important historic events through a panel discussion where Ms. Mompoti and Ms. Shope will make keynote remarks. Of course, the third purpose of our gathering is also to thank and celebrate the contribution made by the other women of the world to our struggle for liberation. And to this end Ms. Gaisrucker will deliver keynote remarks for our panel discussion. I am certain that you realise that these keynote speakers are not only the women of yesterday who selflessly fought against Apartheid but that they are also an embodiment of today's women, dedicated to gender equality and the creation of non-sexist societies. As the women of tomorrow they are also in the forefront and decisively dealing with challenges facing women in our common quest for a better life for all.

Back in South Africa two major activities were held to honor and consolidate the role played by our women folk in the destruction of Apartheid for a democratic South Africa and in preparation for dealing with challenges still facing them. On 6th August a conference in Bloemfontain launched the progressive women's movement of South Africa. This new movement is not intended to replace other women's organisations but is meant to consolidated gains made in the area of women's rights. The movement is of

the point of view that women's rights are also human rights and that these rights are interrelated. The challenges still facing women as discussed by the following conference were incorporated into a memorandum handed over to the Presidency during the march re-enacting of the Women's March of 1956. Government commemorated the 50th anniversary of that March with a re-enacting to the Union buildings and an exhibition depicting the struggles of women. Speeches, poetry, dance, and music were used to pay tribute to our fallen heroines and to renew our commitment in the fight against racial, gender, and class oppression of women.

In conclusion, the activities held in South Africa and our gathering here in Vienna are in my view meaningful ways of celebrating the 10th anniversary of the adoption of our democratic constitution which among others holds at the core the entrenchment of gender equality and the creation of a non-sexist society in South Africa. With those few words I would like to thank you for your attention and for honoring our invitation to come here and join us. I will now hand over to Dr. Sauer, the director of SADOCC to welcome you all. Thank you.

Walter Sauer

Your excellency, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this evening on behalf of the Southern Africa Documentation and Cooperation Center. Indeed I felt greatly honored by having been asked to do so, and I decided to prepare my statement a bit better than usual. I went to the national library to find out what actually the Austrian public in early August 1956 knew or was able to know about the Women's March to Pretoria. From retrospect we view this event as one of the most important activities against the implementation of racist Apartheid laws by the then government in South Africa. What could Austrians in 1956 know about this important event? I browsed through four Austrian daily newspapers, important ones at the time. Maybe I have overlooked something, but I tried my best and did not find a single line on the issue in these four important nationwide newspapers. I take this as characteristic example of the lack of interest by Austrian media and public opinion as an example of a wall of silence which existed at that time with regard to a crime against humanity as the United Nations defined it, namely the Apartheid policy of racial discrimination on an institutionalised basis in South Africa. Of course, things became a bit better in the 1970's after the students' revolt in Soweto. But still it was difficult in the late 1970's and early 1980's for the Anti-Apartheid Movement which was established after the Soweto uprising to bring messages on South Africa across, be it on the question of release of political prisoners including Nelson Mandela, be it on organising support for South African refugees, particularly the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, or be it on lobbying in favor of effective Austrian sanctions against the Apartheid regime for example in the field of military cooperation, in the field of finance and of trade. You might remember the fruit boycott campaign, the campaign against the sale of Krüger Rand.

I am very glad to remember, and I hope to remember correctly, that both our South African keynote speakers of tonight were visiting our country. I remember Gertrude Shope being in the delegation of the late ANC President Oliver Tambo who in 1981 met with the then Federal Chancellor of Austria Bruno Kreisky. I also remember Ruth Mompati addressing meetings all over the country in Austria, in Salzburg, in Graz, and in Vienna during the first nationwide campaign which was organised by the still young Anti-Apartheid Movement in 1982. After a long and protracted struggle finally resistance in South Africa supported by international solidarity including sanctions bore fruit when in 1990 political movements, in particularly the African National Congress were unbanned, Nelson Mandela released from prison, and when in 1994 free and democratic elections in an undivided South Africa could take place. As all of you know, since then the African National Congress, Africa's oldest liberation movement, continues to be the main force in South Africa's politics.

I am convinced that our keynote speakers and panellists will describe aptly South Africa's achievements made since 1994, particularly from a gender point of view. The constitution proclaiming South Africa a non-racist and non-sexist democracy, many laws and other measures including educational ones to abolish discrimination against women, and to establish gender equality. For the daily lives of women, particularly in remote rural areas, initiatives taken by the new government to improve standards of living have been similarly important, like connecting villages to electricity, providing millions of people with clean water

within short walking distance, implementing land restitution and land reform. We read little about these achievements in our media. Sometimes it seems to me that today South Africa's achievements are covered by a voile of silence, similar to the one prevailing in the 1950's. It is as if we wanted to know only about Africa's problems but not about her successes. I am confident that the meeting tonight will contribute towards breaking this silence. Therefore I express my gratitude to the Embassy of South Africa and the Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue for organising this event, and to all of you for participating. Thank you.

Melita Sunjic

In my first year in South Africa in February I said to my assistant Pumla, "Shouldn't we start preparing something for Women's Day?" And she said, "Come on, how thorough do you people work? Women's Day is in August." Of course I was thinking of International Women's Day in March. So I am very privileged and honored to be a master of ceremonies today and to be able to make up for that mistake at that time when I still did not know how important the 9th of August is. But believe me, I have read a lot to make up for it and I am very pleased to be here with you today with our guests of honor who came from South Africa to lead you through this evening.

Let me introduce the panellists to you. Ms. Caroline Gudenus has been with the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1986. During her diplomatic career she twice served in South Africa during a very interesting period of time, during the change, during the fall of Apartheid and then later from 199 to 2003. I am very interested and eager what she is going to tell us from her perspective later on. Ms. Ulrike Lunacek is a Member of the Austrian Parliament of the Green Party and is also the Speaker of the European Green Party. She has been dealing a lot during her career not only with women's questions but also with development cooperation.

Now I would like to start with our keynotes.

Ingrid Gaisrucker

Dear Gertrude, dear Ruth, Excellency Ambassador Gumbi, distinguished friends of South Africa and all our former comrades and friends of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, ladies and gentlemen. It is a great honor for me to contribute to the celebration of the powerful and heroic women of South Africa. And I want to thank cordially for this invitation. As Ambassador Gumbi has said I attended the international women's conference in Cape Town, Women and the Economic Recovery of Africa, underlining the important role of women in the pan-African program of new partnership for Africa's development. When I got the invitation by a miracle I thought these are shoes that don't fit me as a minister and not well studied in economics, but nevertheless it was a great honor to go to Cape Town and to experience the power of African women, their political awareness, their cultural ambitions and high engagement for empowerment and gender equality. As an example I will mention and celebrate the speaker of the South African Parliament Baleka Mbete, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Lebo Mashile with her poetry recitals, Pregs Govender involved in economic analysis, all delegates from South Africa, the famous Professor of Arts and Social Science, Amandina Lihamba, from Dar-es-Salaam with her performance group, and all the other engaged women from Africa. I was the only European delegate. All these exceptional women highly impressed me. Ms Baleka Mbete stated: "During our struggle against colonialism and white minority rule the pursuit for women's emancipation has often been subsumed under the request for national liberation. Today's question is challenging how do we translate women's skills, passion and commitment to public expression and presence in public office. High concern has to be given to the totality of women's space and recognising every space within which women are making decisions."

About 80% of the poor are women. Therefore the conference claimed the strengthening of capacities of women in rural areas being of utmost importance. There can be no recovery unless women are at the center of development. Their wisdom and creative energies must be part of the driving force of development. Women no longer be an object of development but a subject involved in the process of democracy and peace making. In a very passionate way the conference claimed, "The voices of women have to be heard, especially those from rural areas. They should be promoted to talk about their hopes, experiences, their

frustrations, and fears, and even to write herstory.” No longer it is allowed to talk about women. Instead they themselves should be enabled to raise their own voices to play an important role in decision making. Access to water, telecommunication, education and health are the main claims to assist empowering women in the rural areas.

President Thabo Mbeki stated the following important and clear words at the celebrations of women’s day in August, “Together as a nation we must uphold the perspective that none of us is free unless the women of South Africa are free. Free from race and gender discrimination, free from poverty and loss of human dignity, and free from violence.” This statement will give us more impetus to the ongoing liberation for the women and for South Africa.

But quite a lot of disadvantages have to be abolished. High levels of foreign debt, trade and investment agreements are not favoring the poor, don’t contribute to employment. Too high budget allocations for armament instead of spending for social development and valuing life and peace. Now it is time to ask us Austrians, the society and the government, how do we contribute as Austrians. Foreign loans and investments have to be analysed critically to disclose, to dismantle their negative consequences for the poor areas, especially for women. Austria should take these grave consequences seriously. Information on these issues should be spread to the public, including political pressure. The European Union should no longer sell food supported financially to Africa. These cheap products prevent from buying native products causing loss of jobs mainly for women. Austria should present to its mind the former commitment to put sanctions on the Apartheid regime. Austria must not forget South Africa now. Political support, commitment to the programs of NEPAD, assistance to projects for women’s empowerment and gender equality, investments to promote places of employment, the advancement of political awareness in Austria for the economic recovery of Africa.

These are some of the challenges we have to deal with from my point of view. Those who are working at the basis will put in mind again the slogan of the former Austrian Women Against Apartheid. It is a word of wisdom by the Mandinka in Africa. “Many petty people in many little places who do little things are able to change the world.” Thank you.

Ruth Mompati

Dear Ms. Sunjic, dear Ms. Gudenus, dear Ms. Lunacek, Mr. Ambassador. I can’t call you first although I have got that respect because you are actually my child. Dr. Walter Sauer. I hear now that Ingrid is a minister. This sounds like sacrilege because they were law breakers when I came here the first time. They did not do what this country wanted them to do. I am very happy, extremely excited to be with Walter and Ingrid here. In the old days when we came to this country, sometimes I could not get a visa anywhere because my passport was all wrong. Sometimes the invitation was from the United Nations. And when I came here they asked where is your visa. I said I don’t need a visa. They said, of course you need a visa. And I said I have an invitation from the United Nations and you have got the United Nations in your country. And then they looked at me and just wondered. I think they thought sometimes I was mad. But you know somehow most of them understood what the real problem was. When they looked at my papers they realised that she can’t come in here. I am saying this because I think the Anti-Apartheid Movement in this country played a very, very important role. They allowed and made it possible for us to inform the Austrian public about the struggle of the people of South Africa. I don’t think there is a town in this country I did not go to. I travelled by train. You don’t travel by train in a country you don’t know. It is one of the most difficult things. But I did. I went to Graz, to Linz, Salzburg, a whole lot of towns because we had to speak to the people. People were always there to listen to us. I am saying this because it is important to say thank you to a people who took part, who participated in what you were doing. Some of you may say, well, not everybody. Yes, not everybody. It is never everybody. Even in South Africa it was not everybody who participated in the struggle for a new South Africa. These things happen. All I am trying to do is to pressurise you now to begin to do something. Because a lot needs to be done. Not only in South Africa, but in all our countries.

Ladies and gentlemen. Maybe I should first say how very humbled I am to have had this opportunity to come and talk to you. On the 9th of August this year we celebrated 50 years since we marched to Pretoria. You may ask what is so important about a march? We were in fascist country. You know fascism. The fascists came to a country and you ceased to belong to yourself. So you know what it is. That is what happened to us. We were under fascist rule. Our men were not our men, they were not our fathers. They were boys and girls. We saw them arrested. When a child could have run to the house and brought my father's or my brother's pass they could not because they would get into very serious trouble. When they could have been safe from going to prison. But because they were black and they had to carry this document that was called a pass, they could not. They went to prison. Some of them died in prison. You did not know where they were. Sometimes they were sold to the farmers to dig potatoes with their hands. The tractor would go through the field and they had to take all these potatoes out. A number of them died out there. This is not what I am supposed to tell, but it makes sense as to why we as women marched.

Why did we march? We marched because we realised that in no time – we were free, we could go anywhere, we could go and have meetings in any part of our country, and the police were getting fed up with us. Many times when we were in a house like this they would be in the windows with their guns. And some of them would come in and say, I give you five minutes to get out of this hall. But this was the reason what we realised would be happening to us very soon. At least they could not arrest us for passes. At least they could not accuse us of not having a permit like that. But we ourselves realised that if we don't do anything about these passes they will be extended to us in no time. And indeed, we started to hear rumours about the fact that we are going to be given passes. So we decided that we are going to organise. The 9th August of 1956 was actually the culmination of a number of years of very intensive and extensive organisation by women. There was no transport, and we did not have cars. You had to use any transport. And the African National Congress did not have money. If you travelled it was from your pocket, or you had to find how to get onto whatever transport you could find. If you were lucky you travelled by train. If you were lucky you travelled by lorry, somebody gave you a lift or you paid for travelling on the back of his lorry. If you were lucky you found somebody with a car. It was usually the old cars you stopped, and you had to pay for him giving you a lift. So it was concerted struggle right through the years. Then we decided we are going to march to Pretoria. From the organisation they said no. Don't go and upset the upper cut. People are going to be beaten up, they are going to be killed, there are going to be put in prison. We said, well, that is what is happening now. So what is the difference? So on the 9th of August we marched to Pretoria. We marched to Pretoria because we realised that in no time we will be carrying these passes like our men, we will be stopped. And again, the nationalist government has just come into power. And they were already saying that women are doing all sorts of things. And in fact they had started in some areas giving passes to women.

But this march actually was something that had started in the 1913's when the women marched in Bloemfontein and burnt their passes in front of one of the police stations. It started when in 1905 Charlotte Manye Mazeke organised the women into a women's organisation. Somehow she had been able to go to school, supported by the Ethiopian Episcopal Church in the United States. When she came back instead of being a very big educated woman, because maybe that is what men would have done, she became an organiser of women. I must tell you a little joke. "Do you know why God created a man before he created a woman? The answer was, God created a man before because God wanted to have a sort of a rough model. And then he creates the perfect human being, the intelligent human being and the strong human being." I don't know if that is true. But I want to believe it. Because I have been working in women's movements all my life. And this is what I have been able to find out.

Then the women went to Pretoria. On that day, women having organised over the years, in the Eastern Cape they actually hired two coaches in a train and paid for them. In other areas they got lorries, they got busses, they got cars, others took the train. And they travelled to Pretoria. Very early, some of them the night before. Of course the police knew this would happen. The first one they went to was the Eastern Cape, the train, and they took them all out of the train and said, get out, you are not going to Pretoria. The women did not fight this. They said, it is okay, we have paid, but it is alright. And from there they did not go home. They went to find the next transport to go to Pretoria. The following day all of them were in Pretoria. Others

were taken out of cars. But the women were determined to go to Pretoria. We arrived in Pretoria in the morning. The leadership wanted us to be there. When we got into the garden of the Parliament. The Union Buildings are very beautiful, especially at that time. Men would have been afraid to go there because they would have been arrested. We just got in and sat there with our children. We found food. We ate our breakfast in the morning. But the most important is the courageous spirit of the women that they were not afraid. They were convinced that life is not about fear. Life is about changing situations which are not good for your nation. When the time came we marched right up to the MP theatre. We were to receive these signed documents. There were over 20.000 of those. We counted and counted, and in the end we said these are 20.000, let's stop counting, and there are still more. It is getting late and our President is beginning you see, what are we still waiting for..

We had four women representing us. We had an Indian woman representing the Asians. We had a black woman representing the Africans. We had a white woman representing the whites. And we had a coloured woman representing the coloureds. Why did we have these four women? Because in 1954 we decided to start an organisation of women which would not be a black women's organisation. This should be an organisation that will bring all the women together. We united them, they worked together. And we succeeded doing that. Even those who were afraid, like the women of the Liberal Party. They used to come to our meetings. They just would not leave their names. A good number of them used to come. Even the women of the Black Sash who afterwards started protesting against what was happening to our constitution. They did not come to our meetings, but they supported what we were doing. We were happy with that. We had given them an opportunity to do that.

These documents of all these women were taken to the President. For some reasons he was not there, he had run away from the women. And our President came back and our delegation came back and said, we are terribly sorry but the President has run away, and we are here. And after that he said we shall stand and observe 30 minutes of silence. Even the babies who had been crying seemd to have been told to keep quiet. You could hear a pin drop. When the 30 minutes ended the women from Natal sang a song. It says, you start the women you will dislodge a boulder, you shall be crushed. When these women sang it was impressive. When they stopped then Lilian Ngoyi told us it is the end, we can begin to go home. But the petition that was given to the women said, we South African women shall not rest until we have won for our children fundamental human rights. We shall not sit down. We shall organise. We shall fight until we are free, and our children have got rights, and we have rights. This is what we promised.

From that day the struggle started. We went everywhere in the world. We did not have passports, but we found them. We found documents to travel with. We felt that the world did not understand. The South Africans have a rich country, what is wrong, we are trouble makers. And that is how we were represented. It was important that people should be told what really was happening. From that day we started building. First of all we started building an army. An army where we as women said, oh no, we don't want to be left behind. And we were enrolled in that army. We went outside to train secretly. We came back. Maybe you can say that was a waste of time, a waste of life. But it is that which shook the government of South Africa. The fact that we could do some of the things that we did. Haven gone out as women we also began to look at what should be our role as women. When we were in some of those battles with the South African regime you depended on the man next to you to defend your right flank. And he depended on me to defend him, too. We depended on one another, not as a women but as somebody whom your whole life depends on. And therefore the women of South Africa demanded respect as women. They demanded positions. They did everything that they could. So our men also realised that there was no way around us. And when we had to come back we called a meeting and discussed with our men, what is going to happen to the women inside the country. Being outside is one thing. But what is going to happen to us inside the country? What is going to be our role? What is going to be our position? They were not happy. But we continued making men realise that we are not going to be women when we go back inside the country. What I mean by this is, we were not going to be the person who cooks in the house, who does your washing. We didn't mind doing those things. We can wash, and iron, and cook for our men. But they must also respect us.

Then we had another meeting. We said we think we should begin to have a discussion of how many of us are going to be in Parliament when we go in there. Some of them were very angry. Fortunately we had a very good President, President Oliver Tambo. He said, I don't see anything that we should fight about here, let's listen to them, what do they say. And we told him what we expected when we go. We were not just ordinary people in the struggle. We looked after the children. We looked after the soldiers. We looked after the men. We looked after ourselves. And we did everything that they did. In actual fact we did more. And they had to at least know that when we go in, it is not wives, it is not sisters, it is not children, it is men and women who were in the struggle together. Whenever there were problems I did not push him forward and say go, I am remaining, I am a woman. No. We moved forward together. This is what the women of South Africa were celebrating on the 9th of August. Because they realised that the beginning, what really created this bravery of the women that gave them real lessons of struggle, was marching to Pretoria.

Freedom is something that is so important that many of our women sacrificed their lives. They sacrificed their families. Some of them died in prison. I always remember my mother calling me The Wind because she never knew where I was and she had to look after my children. What we learned was that freedom is not what one receives. That is not freedom. You make freedom when you begin to fall in love with your future. Because if you fall in love with your future it means that you are going to build a new life.

There are challenges facing South African women of poverty and unemployment. But as I said I am supposed to speak about history. My history is the struggle as it affected me as I worked with you people of this country. I again would like to thank you, to thank the Anti-Apartheid Movement. There are people in South Africa who did not participate in the struggle. But they gave us money. Sometimes we went to hide in their houses. But they were not involved. They were clean. So we know that even in Austria it was like that. The Anti-Apartheid Movement did their work. But there were many people who supported some of the things you did in secret. We must all together move forward in building this new South Africa and trying to resolve the challenges facing South African women which are poverty and unemployment. Thank you very much.

Melita Sunjic

Allow me to explain one remark that might not be understandable to those who are not familiar with the details of South African history. Ms. Mompoti said that the men were not fathers and brothers, they were boys. What she meant is that the normal way for white persons to address black people in an African society that is very respectful of old age was not Sir, of course, not Mister. but "boy". Even if the white person addressing the black person was a kid and the black person was 70 years old he would still be the boy. So in a way by addressing them they were taking their pride that comes with old age and with their generation.

Gertrude Shope

Allow me to thank Ambassador Leslie Gumbe and the entire staff of the South African Embassy here in Austria for having invited us to come here and exchange our experiences and share our successes with our sisters of this country. To you sisters of this country and brothers I want to say, most of you have never been to South Africa, but you displayed such activities of international solidarity that you brought the Apartheid regime to its knees. We thank you for that. The same international solidarity which we still need from everybody else was displayed by the women during the days of threat of Cold War when there was the introduction of the neutron bomb, when we used to gather in Vienna and in Geneva discussing the questions of disarmament. Some of the women who are here may have been there. The force of women can carry a very big weight when it comes to fighting for peace for their children.

I will come to our struggle and say some of the things Ruth has not said because I think it **is** important that you should know what we did during those days as refugees in other countries, as freedom fighters in other countries, and, of course, as part of the international women's movement. Our struggle by the Women's League, or it was called the Women's Section then, was divided into different categories called desks. I will just mention a few because I want some emphasis on them. Within these desks there was one that was called the International Desk. It was led by one of our women. The main aim was to liaise with the women at home to get to know what are the latest things that are being done at home because our press was not allowed to

mention or to write down what was going on at home. That International Desk organised women to come secretly into Zimbabwe or into Gaborone in Botswana to discuss with us to give us a briefing on this internal situation at home, and then we would discuss what strategies we would devise. Another desk which was quite important was the International Desk. It played a very important role because it organised the women to go to the different countries where we were invited. It organised delegations to go to the United Nations, to go to the OAU, and to go to all the other places where we needed to interact with other women. Another desk was called Publicity and Information. This desk was specifically meant to produce a little magazine called The Voice of Women of South Africa, VOW. It was very, very important because it has made even as South Africans know what we are expected to do in situations that were facing us. The same desk also arranged for radio programs because we had radio Rwanda, Radio Tanzania, Radio Zambia, Radio Ethiopia and so forth. So it organised all the things which had something to do with giving out information to the people and reporting to our women what is going on and what is expected of them. One desk that was quite important also was called the Political Desk. It also had massive work to do. It liaised with liberation movements of other parties. It sat down to discuss the question that we said, we will be going home, what are we women fighting for, what must we really do. So we sat down to formulate a document which fortunately the ANC leadership endorsed on 2nd May, 1990, whereby we spelt out all the needs of the women of South Africa to get them to the same level with that of men. Because we felt that if he can hold a gun and I can hold a gun, why shouldn't we be the same? Why must he be paid more than me because I am a woman and he is a man? After all, I put a nappy on him when he was a baby. I gave him milk when he was a baby. So there is no reason why all of a sudden the table should turn upside down, and then men should feel that they are superior to women. We were not fighting men. But all we wanted was we should be on the same par, do our work together, get our successes together, face our problems together.

One more thing that this desk did is that we felt as women it does not matter where you are. We shared similar problems whether you are white, you are rich, you are educated or not. Because we were in exile we invited the women who were inside South Africa, mainly the white women. I want to stress that. We had Women for Peace, we had Black Sash, and quite a number of other women, including the women of the government that was in power at that time. Fortunately they came. We met in Harare. We had a four day seminar. And we discussed very, very openly, frankly without fighting each other the situation in our country and how it affects us as women. So we discussed, and discussed, and discussed. On the last day the women said, we have discussed, we are very satisfied, some of us did not even know what goes on in the townships because we never even go to the township, some of us are hearing for the first time when you say that our husbands kill your little boys. We also had a video to show them what goes on. All of us decided let us meet again some other time, after a few weeks or a few months to rediscuss these issues. Maybe as mothers we may come out with a solution in our country. Because they, too, having been white did not really like what was going on. They really felt embarrassed. I was stressing this point because when the time came for them to go to the airport in Harare to go back to South Africa and continue to enjoy their privileges, and the time came for us who were still in exile to go back to Zambia, Mozambique to go and continue the struggle, that feeling of motherhood came to us. So all of them said, before we leave let us hold hands and sing "we shall overcome". We did that shortly before we parted. If you could have looked at the women at that time, she could have been white, she could have been black, she could have been anything else, you could see that there were very few smiles on any women's face, and there were very few dry eyes. So we parted with the hope that we were going to come back again and then do something. But then, as luck would have it, the liberation movements were unbent. So the next thing was to go back home and start a government. So that thing had to be put aside a little bit.

I want to jump and just tell you what are some of the achievements that we made. When we got back home we asked all these different parties, let's come together and discuss issues that are affecting women. You have got children, we have got children. Our problems are very similar. So we got together. We said to the women it is time that we as South African formulated the Charter for Women's Rights. Indeed, they were very happy. Some offered their offices, some offered their administration. But in the end we all drew the Charter for Women's Rights which was for all South African women and done by the South African women. Fortunately that Charter found its way into the constitution of South Africa today.

We took part, we made it a point that we are coming together as women. We want to take part in the planning committee of the discussions that we are going to bring about the government of national unity. So women were definitely represented there. Not only from the ANC. We made it a point that all parties should send at least one woman to represent them. Because it is the women who must guide this country, who must guide this nation. Because after all we gave them this and they have got to follow up.

In our country we have around 400 Members of Parliament, and of these 131 are women. In our country we have nine provinces, and of these nine provinces four of them have women premiers. We also have a lot of women ambassadors who are about 30% of all the ambassadors of South Africa. We also have cabinet ministers who are definitely moving to being 50%. I want to say that our women are not just there as a front or to decorate the cabinet. They are doing exceptionally well. I am sure you know our foreign minister. I am sure you always read about her, whatever she says. And, of course, all her male colleagues respect her very much.

Lastly the First Lady of our country has opened up a committee which is called SAWED. It is an organisation. It is South African Women in Dialogue. That one is mainly meant to keep in touch with women of other countries, especially those who have conflicts within their countries. As our President said, South Africa can never be an island. South Africa is part and parcel of the whole continent. And therefore, if South Africa is going to succeed it should take the whole continent along with it. And then we all march together to our successes. Thank you.

Melita Sunjic

I would now like to turn to our panellists. I would like to ask Ms. Gudenus, we have been hearing now about the impact the Anti-Apartheid struggle outside and the international solidarity and the support that was given to the struggle of the ANC. These days with a new democracy in South Africa you were able to witness that. You were there as a representative of the Austrian Government. Maybe you can tell us a bit which role the Austrian government today is playing. Which projects are being funded by Austria these days? And maybe you want to add some of your personal experiences from being there in this important time.

Caroline Gudenus

I will start with a few personal impressions on South Africa. I spent nearly 8 years as I was posted there twice. The first time was from 1992 to 1996 which was the very exciting historic time of change in South Africa. And the second time was from 1999 to 2003. When I came there the first time I knew what was going on in South Africa from the books, from university, from the newspapers. But I must say I was not prepared for what really was going on on the ground there. That was quite a learning experience for me. But I would like to focus on the experience that I found there concerning women. One of the first things that I was told by somebody who has lived there a long time and is very much involved in developing work in South was, if there is one thing that can save South Africa it is the women, and mainly the women in the rural areas. But what I saw on the political arena at that time, 1992 going into 1993, was that the people who were negotiating the constitution at the time were mainly men. But very soon this changed. There was one point which sticks in my mind very clearly. At one point when the negotiations were taken up for the second time there were negotiating committees formed, and the ANC insisted that in every delegation to this committee there had to be at least two women. That was quite a revolutionary thing at the time. The problems that arose were not so much for the ANC or the black groupings there because there were a lot of active women already. But it was the Conservative Party that had problems finding two women in every committee who would negotiate for this party. That was something that I remember very well as symptomatic for the engagement of women at the time.

To come to the present. I have always been incredibly impressed by the women in South Africa, those who are active, who are engaged in politics, in social work, in cultural work, in economic work. But I do find that there is still a huge gap between the active group and the mass of people on the ground, mainly in the rural areas where there is still such a lot of oppression and disadvantage for women. One thing that I remember is there was always a big discussion on rape, date rape, and violence against women. There was

an opinion poll that found out that a very high percentage of girls, of women don't have the feeling that they can escape male violence, that they are allowed to say No, that they cannot keep men at arm's length. If you, for instance, see the numbers of HIV-Aids infections in South Africa there are 25% of women between the age of 20 and 24 years are HIV infected. That is one in four. Every fourth person in a room would be HIV infected. This is horrendous. I think there is still a lot that needs to be done on the educational basis.

To come to the Austrian development cooperation. It developed from projects which were given to the ANC in exile. There was the support for a college in Tanzania. Then when the ANC was unbanned and exiles came back to South Africa we supported schooling and the integration of exiles into society. From there on voter education and preparations for the first free elections. And finally when the new South Africa was established we concentrated our efforts to support the capacity of civil society to participate in the democratic process. There, of course, women were a main focus because it is them who needed the support most. In all our projects that we have the gender issue as a very, very important factor. We are supporting a women's network so that women can exchange information, exchange activities, get support amongst each other. We are supporting projects to build capacities on the municipal level. We think that one of the main deficits in building up a new state or a new country is the capacity to administer what needs to be done. You can throw money at problems, any amount of money. But this money needs to be administered, needs to be spent properly, needs to be accounted for. All this needs capacity. And I think this is one of the big, big deficits that we need to address in South Africa. We have also projects in rural reform. Ms. Mompoti mentioned the importance of rural women being empowered. The women are those that work on the ground. They need to get support. They need to have rights. They need to know their rights. They need to be involved in developing plans and to develop the future. Another project that we are supporting together with UNOCD, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, is houses for women that have become victims of domestic violence. This is a big problem in South Africa. We are financing a point where women can go to seek support how to deal with the police, how to find a doctor, how to get legal support. But these centers have a lot of other projects around them. There are courses for the police themselves how to handle women that have become victims of violence. There are courses for the violators themselves. There are radio programs for schools. So there are a lot of accompanying projects. Those are the main issues that we have.

At the moment we are working on a strategy for the future which will also fit into the program which the European Union is developing towards South Africa and also towards NEPAD which is becoming more and more important. We want to fit all our programs into all these initiatives.

Melita Sunjic

What you said brings me to the question I would like to pose to Ms. Lunacek. On the one hand we heard that South Africa is a glowing example when it comes to women's representation in politics. It is the highest representation of women in government and in the parliaments in Africa, and it is ranking fifth or sixth in the world with women's representation. On the other hand we heard about the problems that affect women, especially violence, high incidence of rape. Every six hours a woman is killed by her male partner in South Africa. From your work on the empowerment of women, having female representation in politics which obviously is very important is not the end goal. What else needs to be done?

Ulrike Lunacek

Let me start first with thanking the Bruno Kreisky Forum and the South African Embassy for doing this evening tonight and for inviting me to participate in this panel with so respectful and honorable women who have really written herstory in the world. Not just for South Africa, but for the world. For me it is always a great pleasure to meet women who have begun their struggle a long time before I even was born. I think it is so important to make them and the struggle of women visible. For that it is also very important to have you here. And I am very much honored for being here. Also the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Austria for me has been an important not just source, but also where I learned a lot about what is going on in South Africa, and also to see how important trade relations, economic relations are and what harm they can do, but also where they can help, how you do investment and with what kind of standards you do investments. It is something that we even have to look in now in Austrian investments abroad.

Let me come to your question. No, it is not enough to have women in important positions. It is very important for visibility, for the same thing I said before. Because as women we grow up, and still we do, in an environment where we do not have very many role models. We do not see a lot of women. They are more now than they were 20, 30, 50, 60 years ago. But still, there are not that very many. Mostly it is men in politics and economy who run things, who have the power to change things. For women it is always one step more. We have to transgress gender barriers in order to be able to be effective in what we do, and that others believe that we can do things. We always have to be a little better than men, usually. No, it is not enough to have women in parliaments, in government. It is very important to have us there. But, of course, it is not the only thing we need. We need structural changes, the importance of being economically independent. The dependency between women and men is important. But on the other hand economic independence for women still is the basics. If you do not have your own money, your own income, then how are you able to do the things you really want to do. That is something that all over the world is still something that we have to look at. And, of course, levels are different. Relatively speaking women in Austria are well off if we compare it to levels of poverty in other parts of the world. But for even poor women in Austria it is difficult to have their own outcome to do things on their own. Money does not make it all but it is very important. And social security, access to public services, to health, to education, of course, is something that is necessary in order for women really to be able to not just participate in society but also to change things, to make it better for women. What I have learned in my time not just in party politics but in NGO and civil society politics I was doing before is that when you make the world better for women then you make it better for everybody. It is not necessarily the other way round. If you make the world better for men it does not necessarily help all the women. That is something that not just development cooperation but also foreign politics should focus on. If you have women in equal terms in delegations it really means that change comes about.

Ms. Gudenus you mentioned the fact that for negotiating the South African constitution the ANC demanded that at least two would be on each team of the delegations. That is so important. At the moment the negotiations for Kosovo are going on. One thing that Mr. Athisaari and the others demand from the Kosovo Albanians and the Serbs to have at least one woman on each delegation. I think one of them managed by now. But still it is not enough. There is always the question, well, we can't find the women. I told them, come on, you always find enough men to do things, so just go ahead and maybe you might think that the one or the other woman is not educated enough or might not be the best one, but just try it. This is still a struggle. The demands have not become less over the last years or decades. They are still there.

Another aspect that I find so important is budgets, money. This term that has been coming about over the last years because of women's, of feminist organisations demanding it is gender budgeting. If I remember correctly South Africa has been doing something on gender budgeting. The issue that you look at budgets and see what effects do they have on men and on women. And you will be very surprised that if you look at all of it a bigger amount goes to men than goes to women. Also on quality. So this is something that all governments all over the world should look into and look what can you do exactly to have a fair share, a just share of money going to women and to men. Of course, some then say it does not matter. It should go to the poor. Well, if it goes to the poor then even more should go to the women because they are the majority of the poor. So this is a very important aspect. Before I worked as a parliamentarian I have been active for more than 20 years in a women's NGO called Women Solidarity here in Vienna. I am still the president of it. I remember when 15, 20 years ago when we negotiated with the Foreign Ministry as NGO's to demand that they have a gender line, that they include gender issues in development cooperation, at the beginning it was rather difficult. By now it has changed a lot. I am just saying how important it is to have pressure.

The last thing, domestic violence. It was mentioned. Violence against women from harrassment to rape is something that also is still happening all over the world. It is not just true in South Africa. It is true there to a very high amount. But it is something that societies do not take into account as much as they should. An example of Austria. I was part of the founding group of the house for battered women there 25 years ago. At the moment they are still struggling with financing because the regional government is saying, why do you need to have a 24 hours service, why do you need to have special treatment for the children there, you could work voluntarily. All these kinds of things that we have been discussing for so long. Why is it not clear that

these institutions need funding? Maybe this is like the saying, a woman's work is never done. I would say it also applies to women's struggle. Unfortunately at the moment it is not done, and it will take us some time to get it done. Thank you.

Melita Sunjic

It was our plan to have half an hour left for a discussion with the audience because we had this unique opportunity to listen to Ms. Mompati and Ms. Shope I did not want to interrupt them. So we have only 10 minutes left.

Question

I am from Ghana. I would like to know what is being done about the educational system in Africa in general and South Africa in particular because the curriculum is not gender oriented. They are always favoring studies like the sciences and the technologies and things like that, and women are generally not interested in mathematics or things like that. Sometimes we try to force them to do the maths or encourage them to do the mathematics or the sciences, but they don't. What happens is that those parts of education are held in high esteem. And women who go into vocational training or skills are looked down upon. So in a way those women feel like they are second hand or second class citizens. Why don't we try to promote those areas that women are in so that we have more role models?

Question

The issue of role models. There are two kinds of issues that have been presented. The women who fought in the struggle for independence in Africa. And I honor those women, and I think they are important. My mother, all the women who have made us what we are today. But then on the other hand I have just heard stories about the women who are suffering, oppressed, HIV and all that. There was a comment about the hidden stories of Africa. And I am sitting here thinking I am the modern generation, the modern women of Africa but nobody is talking about their role models. So where am I supposed to draw my inspiration from? The women who struggled in the past or the women who are violated, beaten up? And I think it is very important that we also focus on the few role models there are because that is where the future is for us. Because you can't expect me to keep drawing from negative experiences all the time.

Question

I am working for Horizon 3000. I was very happy to hear Ms. Shope saying that South Africa is not an island and that other women's organisations should be supported and they must liaise. I am just thinking of Zimbabwe. On Valentine's Day this year a few women were arrested just for marching with one piece of bread in their one hand and a flower in the other hand. I would like to know what is the South African women's movement doing to support other women's movements throughout Africa.

Ruth Mompati

I want to answer the question which was asked before about women representation in South Africa and yet at the same time we find that women really are very poor, they are not able to do anything for themselves. And yet, we are saying that we have made a difference, women are in all high committees. Yes, it is so. But then we refused to accept the fact that she is not able, she has not got a degree, or she is not very educated, and so she can't go to a committee. Our representation is in most cases symbolic, but it is also very good. Because these women are not stupid. In fact they don't really have a high education, at the same time they understand their problems, they understand their sufferings. So it does also mean that we have to empower our women. We have to begin to train our women. We have got to begin to teach them. So that in future the woman that goes into these positions is as good as the men. And the reason why it is so is because the male child has always been the one who gets the highest education. My father would say, she will get married. Or her father would say, she will get married, and she will go to the next family and will have to work for the children of this family.

The first question in connection with education. Particularly our present Minister of Education who is a woman is doing everything to look at the type of education that is being given to our people, not just the women, our people in general, and changing it because before the education that you were given was

preparing us for our place in the South African society. And we have rejected that place. We are part of society. So we would like the type of education that would be good for all of us. So something is definitely being done about education.

To the second question. Who is really our role model? I personally feel that the role model is not that woman who is up there, who everybody is talking about, and who is a star. I think the role model insofar as we understand it in our organisation as women of South Africa is a role model we have come to respect and understand. It is the woman whose work is the interest not only of women, but of her own people. She may not even be working. She may just be growing potatoes, or growing pumpkins, or growing sorghum. But this work is done in such a way that it leads her people somewhere. It demonstrates to her people that although I don't have money, I am able to encourage people or my children, or other people's children to move forward as women. To be that is a role model. My role model is not Ruth Mompati who everybody is talking about. A role model is somebody who is really somebody in our society irrespective of where she is. Maybe just a woman in the church. She may just be one of the women who is in a sewing club. But she encourages her women to do the sewing they do. They are now beginning to make patterns. They are now beginning to move forward. And they are now beginning to sell their clothes to some shops in town. She is leading. I think it has happened even in Ghana that there were women who although they were not particularly known were role models in their little societies, who are interested in teaching women to build these small businesses to move forward. Even though sometimes there are a lot of negative experiences. Usually we are able to look at and address negative experiences and move forward. The woman who is able to address these negative experiences is able to deal with them, for me is a role model because she shows me that I can pick up my people from adversity.

Well, Zimbabwe. We have worked with Zimbabwe before. We all became free. They became free first, and they assisted us. When we became free we worked with them. Our President has been criticised for not standing up and criticising Zimbabwe. The reason is that we feel that is not the way to help Zimbabwe. If we stand up and say, look at what you are doing, we will never get them to listen to us. And consistently our President has had discussions and bilaterals with the Zimbabwean President and the people there. I think it is beginning to pay. I think the Zimbabwean President is beginning to listen. But you must know that the Zimbabwean experience was a very terrible experience. There were farmers who owned about three huge farms where they had taken the black people out of the country to some corner. When the President of Zimbabwe took over he had made up his mind that he was going to help his people to get back their land. And some of the mistakes he made – he maybe did more than he should have -, but the fact is that we are trying to show him that we were bitter about some of the experiences of Apartheid, but we know that if we kill them all it will not bring peace to our country. Neither will it bring development. So this what we are trying to do. To people who are far away it may seem not enough. The majority of the exiles who were in South Africa are from Zimbabwe. So we have that problem, unfortunately. They are sent back but they come back. So we have to provide for them. But I understand your question. It is a very important question. We are doing quiet diplomacy.

The South African Women's Movement actually has relationships with the Zimbabwean Women's Movement. Because if we can keep this relationship we will be able to influence them, maybe to influence their President.

Gertrude Shope

My colleague has already covered quite a number of questions. All the questions about the role model. Somebody was a bit confused, she does not know which one she could call her role model. I want to encourage our youth of today to write about what goes on in their countries. We have a lot of women who took part in the struggle, not in the army, but who were working at home. Some of them were working underground. Others were keeping activists who were running away from police. Because they are not in the leadership nobody says anything about them. Even their children don't know what role their grannies played. I am saying especially to the South African women, please write down these very small things even if the old lady did not even know how to write her name. But the role she played had made us what we are

today, has given South Africa the dignity it enjoys today. Therefore, to know your role models you must write down the little things that they did. Then you will get to know them better.

The question about Zimbabwe. While my friend has already said that we were sitting together with the people from Zimbabwe. In fact, we had a Zimbabwean representative at our conference that we organised on August 9th. But, we want to do things properly. It is not the women of South Africa who must go to Zimbabwe and either demonstrate or do anything else. We do our things through the right channels which is through our government. That is all I wanted to say on that issue.

My friend talked about the conference that she attended which was held in Cape Town. That conference was about the economic recovery. It is another way whereby we are trying to bring together women of Africa, especially as you know that none of us have got professions in our continent. It used to be regarded as the Dark Continent. Now, we are encouraging women to come together to think of what they would like to do by ways of projects and then have them funding these little projects of theirs. We are trying to make everybody else in the country to be able to fend for themselves. We do not want to see people who will permanently remain dependent on somebody else. As you will recall, these days it is very common that partners get married, they stay the first five years, then they part. Because she is dependent to this man she finds it very difficult to go away. But we want our women to be able to stand on their own and do something. Today we have women in our countries who are mining, they are going down to dig whatever. We have women who are doing diamonds. All I am saying is, our women have got be empowered. But they must help people to empower themselves. They must not expect people handing out whatever. I think the time for handouts is over. We have got to stand now and fend for ourselves.

Melita Sunjic

What a wonderful final sentence: We must stand up and fend for ourselves. Thank you.