



2022 VOICES OF CHANGE

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

OPENING ADDRESS BY DR NTOMBI MHANGWANI

DRAFT AS OF 11 AUGUST 2022, 08:50

YES, WE CAN!! YES, WE WILL!!

YES, WE HAVE STARTED A MOVEMENT, AND IT IS GAINING MOMENTUM!

It was the summer of 2018 when a young new intern took a chance to call me and USE her voice. Her name was Lerato. Lerato was a junior and possibly five to six levels below me as a Director. I had never met her. I did not know her. She did not know me, but she took a chance and dared to call me on my mobile phone. Many of you believe calling an executive on their private mobile phone could be a career-testing moment. I would be so bold as to argue that many of you would find 101 excuses NOT to make that call... NOT to take a risk and... NOT to use your voice... AND WHY... because it is safer not to take chances. We deem it safer not to risk being reprimanded. We find comfort in our comfort zones and choose anonymity overexposure.

My question to you is, how do you think women's rights were achieved? The public holiday we all enjoyed on 9 August – how was this day granted and passed onto women as a constitutional right?

THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE.

WOMEN WHO WALKED THIS ROAD BEFORE US STARTED A MOVEMENT, USED THEIR VOICES, STEPPED OUT OF ANONYMITY AND CHOSE TO BE VISIBLE AND POWERFUL.

MOST IMPORTANT, THESE WOMEN WORKED TOGETHER TO START A MOVEMENT!!

WE HAVE THE POWER INDEED!!

Allow me to share a few examples.

Encouraged by the universal female right to vote movement that had begun in New Zealand, IWD ORIGINATED from labour movements in North America and Europe during the early 20th century. The earliest version of Women's Day" was organised by the socialist party in New York on 28 February 1909.

This inspired German delegates at the 1910 International Socialist Women's Conference to propose a special Women's Day be organised annually. The following year saw the first demonstrations of International Women's Day across Europe.

After women gained the right to vote in Soviet Russia in 1917, IWD was made a national holiday on 8 March. This day became a mainstream global holiday following its adoption by the United Nations in 1977.



In South Africa, on 9 August 1956, Lilian Ngoye and other woman leaders led 20 000 women to the union buildings in Pretoria. They were protesting the much-hated pass laws against women. But the outcome was Women's Day - dedicated to commemorating women's cultural, political, and socioeconomic achievements. This day brings attention to gender, equality, reproductive rights, violence, and abuse against women.

Allow me to repeat my opening statement:

**YES, WE CAN!! ... YES, WE WILL ... AND...
YES, WE HAVE STARTED A MOVEMENT!!**

The Voices of Change movement was born out of a young, naïve Lerato – who took a chance and made THE call to change her life and the lives of all the organisations supporting the Voices of Change Movement.

Today we celebrate five years of a movement that started with 200 delegates in 2018 and grew to over 5000 delegates in 2021... AND are we done – I would say we have ONLY JUST BEGUN OUR MOVEMENT.

Like our previous Women Leaders in New Zealand, New York, Germany and South Africa – we TODAY need to recognise the journey that started in the 1900s. This journey is incomplete, and we, in 2022, have a part to play in building a legacy that will change the female narrative for our children and their children.

This year's Voices of change speakers and leaders will focus on sharing and empowering you with practical skills to develop YOU as a woman and a leader. We are intentional about helping women use their voices AND developing women to sit at the decision-making table with other men and women. Voices of change is about GROWING women leaders who believe in themselves and want to be the change.

Make no mistake, voices of change are NOT a talk shop. We are determined to walk the talk and deliver results. Through our Voices of Change CSI Pillar, we are upskilling young men and women to understand and know about right and wrong behaviours.

We are educating these young people about being scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and lawyers. We impress upon them that – your background and social upbringing CAN and WILL CHANGE – if you have the will to change. The SOAR book distributed to over a number of schools is a testament to Voices of Change's work at a grassroots level.

The Voices of Change Leadership Coffee Sessions are our attempt to always be on throughout the Women's year. Women's Day may only take place on 9 August.

BUT here at the Voices of Change Movement, we say Women are always on, forever ready and consistently learning to build a better future.

As Voices of Change partners, we should ALL be proud of the movement we have started. We should also acknowledge and celebrate the MEN walking this journey with us. We cannot achieve equality without women collaborating with men.

To all the corporates joining us as partners today – I salute you. You are leading in an environment that CAN and WILL ONLY Deliver positive and profitable results.

**YES, WE CAN!!... YES, WE WILL ... AND ...
YES, WE HAVE STARTED A MOVEMENT!!**

To all those young specialists, analysts and managers – I challenge you to be the LERATO in your organisation.

Take a chance, make that call, share innovative ideas, take risks, be visible and CHANGE THE WORLD. WE ARE GATHERING THE MOMENTUM FOR THIS CHANGING WORLD!

VERY IMPORTANT – remember that it starts with you.



YES, YOU CAN!!

YES, YOU WILL!!

AND YES, YOU TOO CAN START A
MOVEMENT!!

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