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9 August 2026

To: SASCOC Membership

RE: NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY — 9 AUGUST 2026

Dear Presidents and SG's,

On 9 August we mark National Women's Day and honour the 20 000 women who marched on the Union Buildings in 1956. In our movement, that history is not a ceremony we observe once a year — it is a standard we are measured against every day. Women are not a category we accommodate in South African sport; they are a force that carries this nation, on the field of play and in the boardroom. This week I want us to recognise the women athletes, coaches, technical officials and administrators who hold your federation together.

Recognition without action is hollow, so let me be specific about what SASCOC expects of us. We remain committed to meaningful gender representation on federation boards and selection panels, to safeguarding that genuinely protects women and girls in our care, and to investment in women's programmes that reaches the athlete and not only the balance sheet. Lara van Niekerk's gold in the 50m breaststroke at Glasgow 2026 was not an accident of talent — it was the product of a pathway that someone chose to build and fund. I am asking every federation to audit that pathway in its own code and to close the gaps.

My request to you is simple: do not commemorate Women's Day, act on it. Set a measurable target for women in leadership in your federation, name the person accountable for it, and report progress. SASCOC will do the same and will support you.

If we get this right, the next generation of South African women will not have to march for their place in sport — they will already hold it.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Hendricks
President
South African Sports Confederation, Olympic and Paralympic Committee

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