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154 Regent Street,  
Observatory,  
Johannesburg.  
17th April, 1954.

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Dear Friend,

On the 17th April, 1954 (Saturday) a National Conference of Women will be held at the Trades Hall, Johannesburg. This is the first Conference of its kind ever to be held in this country.

The Conference has been convened by a number of women from different parts of South Africa, and from various political, social and racial groups. Among the signatories from Johannesburg are: Mrs. D. Twala; Miss N. Sita; Miss Ida Mtswana; Mrs. N. Mandela, Mrs. Helen Joseph, Miss Betty du Toit, Mrs. J. Rose-Innes, Miss Sarem Mseko, Mrs. Lucy Mvubele, Mrs. Sybil Hedley, Mrs. N. Naidoo, Mrs. M. Cachalia, Miss Hetty du Preez, Mrs. D. Nokwe.

The purpose of the Conference is to discuss the position of women in South Africa today, their disabilities, their struggle for rights, their role in the struggle for liberation; to draw up a Charter of Women's Rights; and to form a Committee, representative of women's organisations and groups, for the purpose of furthering work among women, linking up with the International Women's Federation, and of helping to build and strengthen women's organisations.

The agenda of the Conference includes: Position of Women in South Africa, and their role in the struggle for liberation; Position of Indian Women in South Africa; Women in China (paper to be read by Mr. W. Sisulu); Women in the Struggle for Peace; Charter of Women's Rights.

Delegates to the Conference are expected from Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban, East London, and other parts of the country.

The Conference will be open to all women's organisations, and to delegates or representatives of women from factories, trade unions, church bodies, etc; as well as women elected by meetings in towns, suburbs, locations, or other areas. Individuals are invited to attend as observers.

The success of this Conference depends in a large measure ~~taxing~~ on the politically more active and advanced women who at present belong to the Women's section of the A.N.C. (Tvl), to the Transvaal Indian Congress, the Congress of Democrats, and similar bodies.

We are requesting the assistance of your Committee in organising for this Conference. We would like to hold meetings all over Johannesburg and the Reef, to have the opportunity of speaking to African women about the Conference, and getting them to elect delegates. We hope that all branches of the Tvl. A.N.C. will have at least one or two representatives at the Conference. If it is not possible to organise special meetings for this purpose, in view of the many other activities at the present time, then we would like to have a speaker about the women's Conference at every meeting that your organisation holds between now and the 17th April. We will supply speakers for this purpose.

We would also like you to inform all branches about the Conference, and urge them to give it support. As there is only a month in which to organise, we hope that you will consider this question as urgent, and let us know what you can do.

Yours sincerely,

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support?

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We are requesting the assistance of your Committee in organising for this Conference. We would like an opportunity of speaking to members of Congress branches both in Johannesburg and in other areas of the Transvaal. We can supply speakers, provided such meetings can be arranged. If your Committee is arranging meetings for other purposes, perhaps we could have a speaker at each meeting. We would also like your Committee to give a lead to Congress members and branches in publicising the Conference and sending delegates. During the Defiance Campaign, Indian women played a notable part. Let us now go a step further, and begin a new movement that will bring women out of their confinement to their homes and kitchens, so that they can play a full and free role in the fight for equal opportunities for all. While realising that the greatest disabilities suffered by women in South Africa are in many cases the same as those suffered by men - apartheid, and racial oppression - at the same time the fight for freedom will never be won until women play their role in the struggle.

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Yours sincerely,



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## FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963

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