

## **Statement by the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Country Team in South Africa on the Passing of Ms. Mandisa Monakali**

It is with profound sadness that we, the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Country Team in South Africa, acknowledge the passing of Ms. Mandisa Monakali, a courageous advocate, a pioneering figure of her generation, fierce and unwavering, a transformative leader, and a treasured partner in our shared mission to advance the rights and dignity of women and girls.

Ms. Monakali's legacy is deeply woven into the fabric of South Africa's struggle against gender-based violence and her commitment to social justice. She is the Founder and President of Ilitha Labantu, an organisation she started in 1989 in Gugulethu, Cape Town. Through her work at Ilitha Labantu, she created spaces of healing, protection, and empowerment for women and children who faced unimaginable hardships. Her dedication extended beyond national borders as she represented and amplified the voices of grassroots women on global stages, including at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. By bringing forward the lived realities of women at the margins, she influenced policies and inspired leaders worldwide, embodying the principle of "leaving no one behind."

Ms. Monakali was not only a valued partner to the United Nations; she was a mentor and a friend to many of us. Her passion, resilience, and vision were a constant reminder of the power of compassion and the impact of determined advocacy. Her presence in our work illuminated the path forward, and her absence will be felt deeply.

She leaves behind a legacy of achievements and invaluable lessons in advancing women's human rights. Her impact will continue to guide and inspire future generations.

As we mourn the loss of Ms. Monakali, we also celebrate her life and her contributions to a fairer, more inclusive world. We extend our heartfelt condolences to her family, her colleagues at Ilitha Labantu, and all those who were touched by her life and work. The United Nations in South Africa remains committed to continuing her legacy and advancing the rights of women and girls in the spirit she embodied.

May her soul rest in peace, and may her legacy inspire us all to pursue justice with the same courage and conviction that she displayed every day.

**Nelson Muffuh**

United Nations Resident Coordinator in South Africa

