

This year, we

Women's March, 9 August 1956

On 9 August each year, South Africa celebrates National Women's Day.

On this day in 1956, some 20 000 women from all over the country marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria. They protested against the unjust pass laws of the apartheid government.

Today, 50 years later, South Africa is a democracy with a non-sexist and non-racist society. To mark the 50th anniversary of the women's march, the Office of the Status of Women in the Presidency is organising special celebrations.

Adoption of the Constitution, 8 May 1996

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa was adopted on May 8, 1996. On December 10, 1996, it was signed into law.

Before it was fully approved to become law, the words were revised and changed to be in line with the Constitutional guidelines negotiated at Codesa (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) in 1991.

Many people were involved in the process of writing the Constitution. It was the largest public participation programme ever carried out in South Africa. After nearly two years of consulting with various groups, the final text was written. It includes the ideas of ordinary citizens, as well as organisations and political parties, thus representing



the combined wisdom of the country's people.

The Constitution calls on all South Africans to embrace a non-racist, non-sexist, open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom.

100th anniversary of Bambata Rebellion, 4 April 1906

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Bambata Rebellion. In 1906 Chief Bambata led his people in protest against poll tax. The tax was introduced by the colonial government of the province that was then called Natal. Chief Bambata believed that the £1 (one pound) tax was unfair because his people could not afford to pay it.

The tax was introduced to force people into working for wages to get cash to pay the tax rather than living off the land.

The colonial government reacted against the protest with force and Chief Bambata was killed.

Soweto Uprising, 16 June 1976

On June 16, 1976, schoolchildren in Soweto protested against the apartheid government's unjust education laws. Their main problem was that it was compulsory for black learners to be taught in Afrikaans, but there were also other racial problems and frustrations with Bantu Education.

The uprising started peacefully, but became violent when the police fired shots at the young protestors. Some 575 people died and over 3 000 were injured. Through this uprising, resistance spread to more communities.

