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Women should be recognised more in society

[The Namibia Economist](#)

The second National Women Conference which was held end of April, and ran under the theme, 'Empowering Women in Leadership and Achieving Real Gender Equality', saw women from around the country converge to celebrate their achievements.

At the event, Hilly Shamulele, Vice Treasurer of the Metal and Allied Namibian Workers Union (MANWU) said that, "the status quo should change for the better and women should be recognised as the most important personalities in our society because they are mothers, wives, sisters, children and most importantly our everything".

Shamulele said even though she is impressed that female representatives in trade unions, companies and political parties is on the rise, their male counter parts are still heading all the trade unions, most companies and political parties.

"Are we as female's prepared and ready to challenge the status quo?," she asked.

She added that trade unions should fight convincingly for gender equality and they should be the game changers. "They too must undergo an internal transformation and simultaneously fight for gender parity in the workplace and in the country," said Shamulele.

Petrina Haingura, Secretary of the SWAPO Party Women's Council (SPWC) was given the task to launch MANWU's new gender training manual which will be used for courses across the country. She said since the union set up its own education centre, gender sensitisation become one of the key areas of emphasis. She informed that the manual covers topics such as the difference between sex and gender, gender roles and gender stereotyping as well as gender violence.

Justina Jonas, General Secretary of MANWU advised the women to take what they have learned from the conference and put it in to practice to help them move forward as an organisation.

"Let us create teamwork within our MANWU women community, let us create solidarity, let us develop self confident as individuals and motivate, support one another, and appeal to our male counterparts to support us as we embark on this journey," she added.

The MANWU education courses complement existing worker education programmes and lay the foundation for a much broader and more systematic approach to union

education. The education centre also experiments with innovative and participatory methods such as action research on challenges faced by workers and members and leaders of other trade unions are encouraged to join the unions school courses.