

## COMMENT

Progress in negotiations has been very slow. All the same, it is clear democratic elections have to be held soon.

It is important to start preparing now because this will be the first time all South Africans have the chance to vote for the government of their choice.

The growing violence against women is shocking. If women are under threat of attack in the home and on the streets, how can they take part in building a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa?

In the Mdantsane magistrate's court in Ciskei, at least four rape cases are heard every day.

In Johannesburg it has been reported that a 14-year-old girl was gang-raped by traffic cops when she asked them for directions.

Political violence gets a lot of attention, but violence against women is usually ignored. This is because politics is still treated as a male territory.

The government has suddenly introduced new laws which it says aim to stop discrimination against women. It did not consult women and gave a ridiculously short time for people to react. SPEAK thinks this is obviously a trick to win women's votes, not a real concern for women's rights.

The Women's Charter Campaign, launched on March 8 - International Women's Day, aims to find out what women want in a new South Africa. In this campaign, women can organise and work together to win their demands.

Let's reach out and make sure every woman's voice is heard! ☺

# Talk back

### Wake up, women!

Your magazine touched my emotions. It left me with a mixture of hope and fear. Fear that if women can wake up and gain consciousness men will be driven into shame.

I appreciate and have a deep love for the women's world. It always breaks my heart when I see many men and even women feel misfortune when a girl is born.

When I read about Lavonia Pule in SPEAK (September 1992) I was so pleased. It is wonderful to know there is at least one woman referee on the soccer fields in Soweto! I shall be happy if all women are mobilised and become productive, the same as men.

I invite pen-pals from your readers. I am 26. My hobbies are reading and writing poems. Crocodile smile to all SPEAK staff and grins to all men readers. I call all women to be active.

*Ms Ananius Lesotho  
P O Box 178  
Richie  
Kimberley*

### I am lesbian

I am a woman who likes other women. This means I am lesbian. I am afraid to tell people I am lesbian because many of them will say I am not a proper woman.

Does SPEAK know other lesbian women? Is there an organisation I can belong to?

Please tell me. I am lonely and would like to talk to other women who feel the same as I do.

*Lonely woman  
Soweto*

### You can contact:

**The Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (Glow)**  
Telephone: (011) 403 4254

### Skin lightening creams

I used skin lightening creams and luckily stopped. Afterwards I developed a rash on my neck and face. For about two years I have been using ointments given by doctors but to no avail. The rash on my face would go away for a while, but it always came back. It never went away on my neck. A pharmacist told me to use aqueous cream and it helped. The rash on my face seems to have gone away but it is still on my neck. It becomes really bad when I'm in the sun. Please give me advice on how to get rid of the rash. Is aqueous cream good for my face?

*Emeleinah S Shongwe  
Swaziland*

**Ochronosis (the rash on your neck) is unfortunately a condition which can't be reversed. You are lucky the rash on your face has gone away. I suggest you use high factor sun block cream - anything above number 20 during the day. The sun block should be applied every four hours. Use Retin-A cream at night. It might help to peel off some of the black marks.**

**Wear a hat or cover your neck to avoid the sun.**

**Aqueous cream is an excellent moisturiser to use. - Dr Zubi Hamed**

### Botswana women call for support

In July 1992, the Court of Appeal of Botswana ruled in favour of Unity Dow when Dow challenged