

# **SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM, HON. TOKOZILE XASA**

**Dinner in Honour of Ms Nyeleti Mushwana – Winner of Shoprite Checkers Women of the year 2012**

Programme Director

Gauteng MEC for Economic Development, Nkosiphendule Kolisile

Representatives from various businesses

Organisations of women

Honoured Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honoured to be with you this evening. This is a wonderful, timely and very important occasion as we are here to say **Bravo!! Ms Nyeleti Mushwana.**

Indeed, since 1994, a lot of work has gone towards putting in place a progressive legislative and policy framework aimed at promoting gender equality and women empowerment. The pledge made by the Women's League during the struggle of liberation was that – "We will not consider our mission complete and our liberation achieved, if the women of our country are not freed from all forms of oppression."

As a result of our work since 1994, today we are able to boldly say; we have succeeded in bringing dignity to many women of our country.

However, let us not be naïve and think that we have managed to eradicate certain issues that still affect South African women. We still have challenges that still need to be addressed to ensure full emancipation of women across the South African society.

Entrepreneurship has been a leader in offering women the economic expression to start and own their own businesses. Ms Mushwana is one of the few who – against all odds – decided to start her own business and never looked back. It is a fact, starting a business is never easy. But she managed to deal with all sorts of obstacles to become a shining star worth to be crowned - **The Shoprite Checkers Women of the Year 2012.**

Entrepreneurship plays a significant role in allowing ordinary citizens to participate in the economy. It offers opportunities, creates new jobs and eradicates poverty.

We are gathered here tonight to give recognition to Ms Nyeleti as a role model and inspiration not only to her community, but to the country as a whole. It was critical for the Department to put forward the name of Nyeleti as one of the nominees so we could showcase her amazing work and inspire more women to consider starting their own businesses within the tourism sector.

To those who may not know, the award won by Nyeleti identifies exceptional and visionary women who have achieved great things in their own fields. And here we are talking about the first black woman to own a hotel in Tzaneen.

The hotel employs 134 people, of which 78 are full-time employees. She founded Karibu Leisure Resort and Conference Centre/NMN Grand Hotel, which is four-star graded. The establishment focuses almost exclusively on the domestic tourism market.

Not so long ago, Mushwana won the **Emerging Tourism Entrepreneur Award in 2004** for creating jobs and supporting families through her enterprise in her community.

This says to the Department, we have a shining star in the industry and she deserves the kind of honour we are giving her tonight. In doing so, we are also encouraging more and more entrepreneurs to follow in her footsteps and make a difference in their communities.

Domestic travelers account for more than 70 percent of South Africa's tourism volume, injecting R20 billion into the economy and this in turn results in creation of jobs. The Department has set a target of increasing the number of domestic business and leisure travelers to 18 million by 2020. This also says that we are more aggressive in stressing the need to grow domestic tourism in addition to attracting more visitors from other countries.

As government, we will not stop to create a conducive environment geared to unlock opportunities in the tourism industry. We therefore need more of Nyeleti's who will realise these opportunities and run with them.

I was in the Limpopo Province last week invited to participate in their Wildlife Expedition and the launch of a new campaign on Domestic Tourism – “**Tour with us**”. What I said there is that – We have a responsibility to increase awareness about the important economic role that women play in the tourism industry.

The tourism sector provides various entry points for women’s employment and opportunities for creating self-employment in small and medium-sized income generating activities. We therefore need to equip them with necessary knowledge and skills so that the industry may continue to flourish and produce more entrepreneurs.

My dream as the Deputy Minister of Tourism is to see more women graduating from SMME status, to owning internationally renowned luxury hotels and operating major inbound and outbound tour operator businesses.

As I am standing here tonight, I can proudly say that this dream has all the elements of becoming a reality when one has to look at how Nyeleti managed to start her business from nothing and today she is an astute businesswoman who owns and runs a multi-million rand hotel and conference facility in Tzaneen.

Ladies and gentlemen, Ms Nyeleti Mushwana born an ordinary woman, but throughout her life, she has conducted herself in such an extraordinarily virtuous way - that she is - and remains - a great example of goodness in the tourism industry.

We should look to Nyeleti for guidance and inspiration, and keep reminding ourselves to practice what she has shown us.

Thank you for your attention.

**Tokozile Xasa (MP)**  
**Deputy Minister of Tourism**