

ADDRESS BY DEPUTY MINISTER TOKOZILE XASA ON WOMEN'S DAY ON 26 AUGUST 2010 IN GAUTENG

Programme Director

Colleagues in the Tourism Sector

Members of the media

IGAMA LA MAKHOSIKAZI MALIBONGWE!!

BACKGROUND

It gives me great pleasure to be addressing you today when we as South Africans are celebrating and acknowledging the role that South African Women played in the liberation of our country. Our focus is to work together to strive for equal opportunities and the advancement of all women and the youth.

In 1956, women from all walks of life united against a common enemy. The recent successful hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup Soccer Tournament has shown how the country united behind Bafana Bafana and how the country achieved what people never thought we could.

CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS (GAPS & PLANS)

Tourism has been identified as one of the sectors which has the potential for growth as well as the ability to create jobs. However transformation in this sector is moving at a very slow pace. The current workforce demographics show that the majority of employees in the sector are women, and yet their participation remains at the lower levels especially in management and decision making. So long as participating in Board and Executive decision making processes, their development in the sector will remain stunted.

Our objective is to ensure that the benefits of tourism are equitably shared amongst the people of South Africa. In terms of broad based BEE, we seek to broaden participation to include rural communities especially rural women. Whilst these women may face different challenges from those in the corporate world, their challenges are no less significant and need to be addressed. These challenges amongst others are cultural barriers. For an example women decline positions in tourism facilities in rural areas to avoid collision with their spouses or their paternal relatives.

However on a positive note we should applaud the type of women leadership that we have in our sector. Although the number of women in leadership positions is less we are being led by very strong and powerful women. **Viva Tourism Sector Women Viva!!**

We need to continue to empower women even in positions of management and leadership. As a sector we need to ensure that we promote excellent people development with specific focus on women and the youth. We should not be seen as a sector that provides menial jobs.

Through the National Tourism Sector Strategy that was launched in May this year, the sector wants to achieve 70 percent compliance with the tourism charter by 2015. As part of the short term milestones, we are in the process of conducting a study to measure the tourism sector transformation. This study will also look at the involvement and empowerment of women.

On a Global scale, women and children become victims of unintended consequences of a growing tourism sector, as women we need to advocate against exploitation of women and children.

CLOSING

Fellow women in tourism, we can do more to improve the status of women in tourism, let us engage and share experience and expertise. I now declare this session open,

Thank. You.