



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Tourism House, 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside. Private Bag X 424, PRETORIA · 0001
Tel + 27 (0) 12 444 6000· Fax + 27 (0) 12 444 7000. Call Center: 0860 121 929**

Exploring Opportunities For Women

19 November 2015

The Department of Tourism, in partnership with The City of Tshwane, vowed to be at the forefront of women empowerment in the tourism sector during the Women in Tourism (WIT) Conference held at Premier Hotel in Pretoria on 18 November, under the theme “Tourism Business Trends and where are the opportunities for Women?”

The guests list comprised of key players who are strategic decision makers in their organisations and industries, tourism industry stakeholders, avid travelers, and students in the tourism field. The conference was a forum for women to brainstorm ideas on how they can help each other in addressing issues such as skills shortages, entrepreneurship, funding, and lack of representation in top positions in the sector.

Ms Tembeka Mhlekwa from the City of Tshwane said the municipality has undertaken to support women in the tourism sector, especially young women. The city has the highest percentage of students and academic institutions hence it has changed its strategic focus to young people. “We have several programmes and projects set aside for 2016 which will support women in the sector by empowering them with knowledge,” said Mhlekwa. Some of the programmes will be taking women from the city to attend training, and tourism fairs across the world.

The Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms Tokozile Xasa, expressed her gratitude as women headed her call and came in numbers to the event. “The WIT agenda is centered on ‘Commanding Respect, ascertaining Recognition of women contribution in the sector, encouraging Representation in economic activities and leadership, and producing Results which will enhance the supply and demand for domestic tourism,” said Xasa during her keynote address.

Xasa said the focus of the conference is to collectively determine a strategic direction to advance the cause of women development in the tourism industry and create clear and actionable plans. The department has been successfully partnering with both public and private sector to advance the WIT agenda. This was evident in the partnership with Ekurhuleni Metro Municipality during the hosting of the 2014 launch conference, as well as the City of Tshwane WIT Strategic Conference earlier in 2015.

“Since the launch of WIT in 2014, progress has been made to address issues faced by women in the sector. The Department of Tourism has engaged other organisations such as Tourvest, Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa (FEDHASA), Provinces, and Municipalities, which will enhance and drive the agenda of the forum. A partnership with Regional Tourism Organization of Southern Africa (RETOSA) was established to consolidate the WIT effort at both local and regional levels in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region”. “Sustainable Tourism Partnership Programme has demonstrated their support for the initiative and committed to contribute in appealing to women through their programmes,” said Xasa.

During the panel discussion Ms Lindiwe Sangweni Siddo, Division Director of Operations – City Lodge Hotel Group said that as much as women don’t get the majority of opportunities, they shouldn’t wait in vain but have a will and determination to do things themselves. “I went knocking to all banks until I got funding to start my business - Soweto Hotel. If you want something, find a way to get it,” said Sangweni. She said that it’s not always about financial support, but that women have to also source operations support in order to deal with the management of the business.

The Department of Tourism will be participating at the 2015 regional Women in Tourism in Malawi, where the Deputy Minister of Tourism will represent South Africa. The event will be held from 22 to 25 November 2015 in Lilongwe, Malawi.

Enquiries:

Mr Trevor Bloem - Chief Director - Communications

National Department of Tourism

Telephone: +27 (0) 12 444 6607

Cell: +27 (0) 82 771 6729

Email: tbloem@tourism.gov.za