



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Deputy Minister's Address to Women in Tourism**

**Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban and Johannesburg**

**24 August 2016**

I greet women in all provinces by saying **“Wathinta’abafazi, wathint’imbokodo.”**

South Africa commemorates women’s month in August as a tribute to the thousands of women who marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 in protest against the extension of the Pass laws.

The historic march was a turning point in the role of women in the struggle for freedom and society at large. Since that eventful day, women from all walks of life became equal partners in the struggle for a non-racial and non-sexiest South Africa.

Our government has since made strides in empowering women in the political, public and educational spheres, but the marginalisation of poor women severely compromises progress. It was pertinent for us to organise ourselves to advance the cause for women empowerment in the tourism space.

In 2013, the Department of Tourism (NDT) in partnership with the Tourism Business Council of South African (TBCSA) hosted a Women in Travel and Tourism seminar. A coordinating forum was established which resulted in the hosting of the first networking session at the 2014 Tourism Indaba. These events were a precursor to the full launch of the Women in Tourism Conference in October 2014.

The conference rallied women behind the importance of commanding “Respect” in their field of work, encouraging “Representation” in economic activities and leadership, and ascertaining “Recognition” for the contribution made by women in the sector.

Organisations that focus on empowering women, especially the youth, are still lacking. According to the 2010 Global Report on Women in Tourism released by the United Nation World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), women make up a large proportion of the formal tourism workforce, but are poorly represented at professional level.

In response to this, our department launched the Executive Development Programme for Women. The programme is a pilot initiative that will capacitate women with management skills, giving them the confidence to start and grow their own tourism businesses. Twenty black women from across the country have been selected to participate in the programme that is not only set to change the skewed patterns of business ownership in the sector, but also create a pool of black industrialists. We are confident that the pilot will be a success, and the programme will benefit more women in the sector.

Women need to be exposed to professionals and entrepreneurs that have become a success in the industry. In order for more women to be involved, support structures need to be established. These are some of the reasons why we are gathered today as the 4 provinces taking advantage of the partnership by the NDT and Travel Massive to let us interact, motivate and encourage women in Tourism across the country to start talking and working together, for their own success.

As we are gathered in the country, Women in Tourism are also gathered in Kenya and we hope this movement will spread throughout Africa.

Tourism has demonstrated its potential for creating jobs and encouraging income generating activities to benefit local communities in destination areas. The tourism sector definitely provides various entry

points for women's employment and opportunities for creating self-employment in small and medium sized income generating activities, thus creating paths towards the elimination of poverty of women and local communities in developing countries. This requires collaboration of all stakeholders. We have to fight to increase the use of the tourism potential whilst safeguarding the natural environment and cultural heritage and increasing social and economic justice. As we are gathered here today, there is more we can do to achieve the broader goal in areas like:

- Income generation and poverty elimination through tourism development
- Participating in Tourism Planning and Management
- Sharing experiences and networking

As a united front, we need to develop a plan of action for all of us across the country still respecting the diversity that exists in our provinces to start a focused effort to attain our goal. The national department shall organise a workshop during the last quarter of the 2016/17 financial year for this to be achieved, that is all of us have a guiding plan of action. Please ensure that your province is represented. In preparation therefore, women are encouraged to mobilise and establish themselves in Women in Tourism chapters in their provinces so they can be represented as we take our agenda forward.

In October, we will continue to host our Women in Tourism Conference in Gauteng as always. If ever there needs to be a change, our workshop will determine. Please come in numbers, encourage all women in your Chapters to attend. We are encouraged to notice the efforts in various provinces to establish these chapters.

Continue to use the Travel Massive for further networks beyond your province and country. We are hoping that finally our efforts and plans will link up to the broader agenda of the world which is contained in the Women Agenda 2063. All women should get familiar to this call so we in South Africa and in particular, the tourism sector, can play our part. Priority areas of the agenda are;

- Empowered women and girls and provision of equal access and opportunity in all spheres of life
- End of all forms of violence and discrimination (social, economic and political) against women and girls and ensure full enjoyment of all their women rights

We have an important role to play.

In conclusion, I wish to honour you all for making the time to be part of the great movement **“Women in Tourism” Wathint’ abafazi, wathint’ imbokodo**. Viva the spirit of Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, Sophie de Bruyn etc.

Women, we are the agents of change! Also, you all look stunning with your doeks.