



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa. Tel. (+27 12) 444 6780, Fax (+27 12) 444 7027
Private Bag X9154, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa. Tel. (+27 21) 469 5800, Fax: (+27 21) 465 3216

Keynote address by the Deputy Minister of Tourism at the occasion of the Women in Tourism Conference

18 November 2015

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests.

I would like to start by saluting the women of this amazing country. Whatever situation you find yourself in, know you are not alone. You have a legion of support. This month we recognize the 16 Days of Activism against Women and Children. And when I look across this room I don't just see professionals. I see mothers, grandmothers, sisters, aunts, cousins of friends, and of course our enlightened male colleagues. I urge you as professionals to use your respective platforms to speak out against this scourge that we face. We can change the world – one person at a time. May you take whatever you have drawn from this inspirational conference home with you to your neighbourhoods. Let your strength bear testimony that there is hope.

I am extremely honoured to be here with you today. What I see inspires me. It signifies growth. The establishment of the Women in Tourism (WiT) forum is aimed at addressing the economic inequalities and challenges faced by women within the sector. The WiT agenda is centred 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.

So what do we expect from this conference? The theme is "Tourism business trends and where the opportunities are for women."

The theme for this year's conference is "Tourism Business Trends and where are the opportunities for Women"? The focus of this conference is to collectively determine a strategic direction to advance the cause of women development in our industry and come out with clear and actionable plans. We have targeted mainly key players who are strategic and decision makers in their organisations and the industry at large and focusing on the entire value chain of tourism inter alia accommodation, travel, hospitality, transport and attractions. The hosting of this conference is a continuation of the hard work already put in to advance the agenda of this forum. Meaningful participation of the delegates is encouraged to ensure success of this conference.

One of the key success factors in economic development and excellence is benchmarking. The UNWTO's Women In Tourism Empowerment Programme is a great programme to be associated with; it addresses women empowerment issues at a global scale, giving an opportunity to learn global tourism standards and norms, as well as enhancing the country's comparative advantage. A pilot opportunity was presented to any willing country, and by assessing the credibility, added value and benefit attached to the UNWTO, it makes it a suitable vehicle to advance the agenda of WiT forum.

The inaugural WiT conference was held last year in Benoni, followed by Networking Cocktail held at the 2015 Tourism Indaba. The Indaba event was graced by the presence of both the Minister and myself, which illustrates the commitment and support of the economic emancipation of women by the National Department of Tourism (NDT). The department has been successfully partnering with both public and private sector to advance the WiT agenda; this was evident by partnering with Ekurhuleni Metro Municipality to host the 2014 launch conference, and City of Tshwane to host the 2015 WiT strategic conference. So what did this inaugural conference mean? What was the end result?

The key outcomes for the 2014 conference included:

- Online visibility – development of the website is in progress through Flow Communication
- Women in Tourism Empowerment Programme – Proposal drafted and consultations with industry in place
- Provincial mobilization – in progress,
- Skills development database – in a process of developing database to share with the women in the industry

Progress to date:

Partnership

- NDT has engaged other organisations which will enhance and drive the agenda of the forum. The various associations are within the space of the industry, Tourvest, FEDHASA, Provinces, Municipalities, etc.
- RETOSA: A partnership with RETOSA was established to consolidate the WiT effort at both local and regional levels in the SADC region. As part of the strengthened relation with RETOSA, NDT will be participating at the 2015 regional Women in Tourism in Malawi and I am honoured to represent my county at this auspicious event. I hope South Africa will demonstrate its readiness in the very near future.
- STPP (Sustainable Tourism Partnership Programme) - has demonstrated their support for the initiative and committed to contribute in appealing to women through their programmes. This is a non-profit company established to assist smaller tourism businesses to implement Sustainable Business Practices. Their vision is for South African businesses and communities to work together more meaningfully towards a prospering society, using tourism as a catalyst to achieve their goals

Continued mobilization

WIT networking cocktail was hosted at the 2015 Tourism Indaba. I met with some of the hotel chains in the country, MEC of NW Ms Desbo Mohono, board members of tourism agencies (Gauteng, Free State) to discuss the proposed UNWTO Women in Tourism Empowerment Programme proposal for SA to partake in this pilot programme, as well as rallying for support for the industry role players. The WiT Empowerment Programme focuses on four components, namely:

- Employment Skills
- Supply Chain
- Career Advancement
- Gender Awareness

Provincial chapters

The Women in Tourism forum has successfully engaged with provinces to establish provincial chapters. Commitment and interest of the provincial chapters was shown by chapters such as KZN, Gauteng, North West, Eastern Cape as well as Western Cape and Limpopo. The Western Cape WiT Chapter was formally established in June 2015. This in itself is an amazing achievement since its inception.

The launch conference was succeeded by the launch of the Tourism Incentives Programme on 10 March 2015 in Gauteng. We would like to make sure that more women-owned tourism enterprises are aware, and benefit from available government support. We urge you to make use of this programme to enhance your product.

It is to be ensured that the national BBBEE programme is implemented across to have women participating in boards, in executive management, mentorship support and business ownership. Out of these the tourism sector has set up focused codes to ensure that women indeed are supported to play their part. The importance of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises is undisputable. Obtaining full participation of women requires overcoming deeply entrenched discriminatory attitudes and challenging existing power structures. We urge you to soldier on!

As a country, we have moved quite a bit in terms of these areas and we require strategies for the implementation of policies and sustainability of such. These policies should be able to create an enabling environment.

All strategies need to be reviewed in order to take emerging into consideration within the country and world-wide. Some of the targets already achieved ahead of time hence to relook are we still in the right track.

The NTSS is undergoing a mid-term review process in the current financial year (2015/16). Because this is a fairly new strategy, we have not determined proper baselines. The review process involves a number of phases including the undertaking of a detailed travel and tourism environmental scan, drafting/revision of the strategy, gazetting, stakeholder consultation and approval of the revised Strategy. The Department is undertaking consultations with the relevant stakeholders with the view to solicit inputs on what has worked/has not worked with the current NTSS and what in their perspective should be the strategic objectives for tourism in the next five years. We invite you to participate in this review. We as women should promote the agenda that is biased towards women with measurable deliverables.

It is imperative that we all get involved and play our part. All of this starts with the individual making a concerted effort to be involved. Be part of the policy and legislation development and implementation in support of women at all levels. Ensure that we all are part of encouraging access to information by all, clean and safe places, resources, basic services, transportation, decision making processes, adequate income and employment opportunities, personal development opportunities, respect for diversity. This will lead us gradually to being a social integrated society.

My message to you today is, make your voices heard. Make use of the platforms that you occupy to help transform this industry and in turn the country. As women, we need to network and share resources. We have to present a united front.

I would like to conclude with a quote by author JK Rowling – “It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.”

OR

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, ‘Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?’ Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us; it’s in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.” – Marianne Williamson (Author)

I thank you