



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Keynote address by Deputy Minister Tokozile Xasa at the official opening of the  
Women in Tourism conference, Sheraton Hotel, Pretoria**

**5 October 2016**

Programme Director,  
Our distinguished guests and sisters from the continent,  
The chair of the Select Committee on Trade and International Relations  
Tourism industry decision-makers and role-players,  
The local and foreign media contingent present here today,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

We celebrate this event on the back of Tourism Month which had the theme of Tourism for All. This campaign focussed on inclusivity and universal access. Tourism is indeed for all! In that vein, I bid you a hearty South African welcome! I wish to also greet you with the sentiments that resonates from our invigorating roundtable discussion yesterday - Tourism is indeed a growing space and we have to claim it! We have joined hands in advancing Africa together. Malibongwe!

Thank you to all the delegates that have managed to grace us with their presence as we continue our resolute march towards the realisation of the aims and objectives of the vision for Africa as expressed in the Agenda 2063. The full and total emancipation of women in all spheres of life is slowly becoming a reality but we need to accelerate that process! Because not only do we want to see Africa free but more importantly, united! We want to see Africa rising!

Yesterday we got just a glimpse of the women's contribution towards the pursuit of freedom in South Africa as we took in the sights and stories of some of our rich history. Of course 98 years of the women's struggle for freedom in South Africa could never fit into a 3-hour tour but at least one got a sense of the determination of women to see all of us, regardless of race being free. But it is our responsibility in roles of leadership to pay it forward – to ensure that their struggle is honoured.

We are of course confident that the Africa of 2063 would see fully empowered women with equal access and opportunity in all spheres of life. This means that the African woman would have equal economic rights, including the rights to own and inherit property, sign a contract, register and manage a business. Over 90% of rural women would have access to productive assets, including land, credit, inputs and financial services. The Africa of 2063 would see the attainment of full gender parity. It would see women occupy 50% of elected offices at state, regional and local bodies, and 50% of managerial positions in government and private sector would be women. The economic and political glass ceiling hindering women's progress would finally have been broken. But we need to work together to realise this reality. We have to stop operating in silos and share best practice. Do not let our differentness supersede our sameness. When we visited Freedom Park, we saw the gallery of leaders. Those were not only South African leaders but fellow African leaders. We are because of each other.

So let us take that principle into our tourism space. A good starting point is the equal and fair representation of women in the various spheres of government and private sector decision-making levels, of particular interest to me of course is to see the skewed ownership and management landscape in the hospitality industry. We will continue to make the point that although the tourism and hospitality sector has become an economic and social phenomenon, demonstrating above average growth since the 2009 economic crisis and being set to create 70 million new jobs over the next 10 years, women continue to be marginalised in this lucrative sector. It is our responsibility to go back home from these networking and think tank sessions and actively agitate for change. We need to

vigorously engage with legislation that is not conducive to our growth. We need to be part of policy making. And where there are none, we need to draft White Papers. These deliberations produce tangible proposals that we need to take back for implementation. It also provides impetus for enabling legislative expression for our growing niche tourism markets like culture and heritage tourism, rural tourism, liberation tourism and social tourism.

I am pleased that some of you in this room today are industry captains in this very sector and we salute of you as trailblazers and pioneers that have paved the way for other women to follow in your footsteps and that have created an enabling environment by mentoring and uplifting. The reality today however is that as far as the hospitality sector is concerned, women make up nearly 70% of the workforce, but sadly there is a marked under-representation of women in senior positions, with women holding less than 40% of all managerial positions, less than 20% of general management roles and between 5-8% of board positions in this very industry.

As a result of the size and relevance of the sector within the global economy, there are a wide range of stakeholders that have a strong commercial interest in enabling its continued growth and development, and associated with this, in enhancing the talent pipeline in order to unlock the potential of women in the workplace. These stakeholders encompass private and public sector players, education and training providers as well as the communities in which the sector is active. Women represent about half of the available talent to organisations and economies in most countries. Effectively managing the talent pipeline is essential for meeting companies' human capital and enables them to better produce, distribute and deliver their goods. We thank you and look forward to your continued support in this. 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 and sustained. The partnership between the department and Travel Massive is meant to let women interact, motivate and encourage each other in Tourism across the country and the African Continent, to start talking and working together, for their own success.

The Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 is committed to achieve full gender equality and significantly empower African women by 2023 at the national, regional and continental levels, which echoes the global objective of Sustainable Development Goal Number 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Moving forward on implementation it will be important to ensure that a gender perspective is mainstreamed across both agendas.

While we are focussing on tourism – let us not neglect the value chain that enables this growing industry. Tourism cuts across most economic sectors. Let us look at how we position women in SMMEs in this value chain. Subsequent to the launch of our Tourism Incentive Programme (TIP) in March of 2015 – with the overarching policy rationale rooted in the National Development Plan (NDP) and the New Growth Path (NGP) - that recognises tourism as a labour intensive and tradable service sector and a catalyst to support 'faster and more inclusive economic growth', The Department of Tourism has established an Enterprise Development Project Management Unit (PMU). This year at Indaba, I launched our SMME programme. There were 70 exhibiting SMMEs present at INDABA 2016, selected for their uniqueness and authentic representation of South Africa. We look forward to welcoming your SMMEs at Indaba.

Indaba is the Pan African Tradeshow and what better opportunity for us to make great things happen. Let us use this convergent point not only as an exhibition opportunity but more importantly as a platform where we can meet as thought leaders in the industry. Let us talk about how we can invest in each other's countries, how we can effect skills transfer and how we can collectively build capacity in this industry. For example, The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) met on the fringe of Indaba last year and recognises that substantial benefits could be accrued by member states through the enhancement of tourist linkages and marketing within the region. IORA recommends that member states should strive towards regional cooperation in tourism, especially to achieve sustainable tourism growth in the region. The previous year – 2014 – Indaba hosted the inaugural AU Tourism Ministers meeting. Seychelles hosted the African Ministers Working Group. One of the outcomes was the development of the Blue Economy. Africa shares a vast coastline - let us look at how we can unlock economic opportunities across borders through these fora.

Let us continue to use the partnerships we have created with others like WOVSA, RETOSA, Travel Massive, the provincial Chapters, Africa and others for further networks beyond our provinces and country. That way, our efforts and plans will link up to the broader agenda of the world which is contained in the Women Agenda 2063.

I am confident that by the end of this conference we will emerge as an irresistible force because we don't see our challenges as problems but as obstacles because an obstacle can be surmounted. Let us be each other's light bringers, magic makers, game shakers and world shifters. Africa is rising on the backs of its daughters! Malibongwe!

I thank you.

**Issued by:**

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