



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Speech delivered by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa at the close of Women's Month Girls Debate and Gala Dinner, King Williamstown – 30 August 2016

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I want to start off by saying to our women and young girls – you have done our pioneers proud! You have done us proud! You have done yourselves proud! As we celebrate Women's Month and the 60th anniversary of the catalytic Women's march to the Union Building – I can say with pride, the legacy continues! I cannot think of a better way to celebrate as we close Women's Month.

Look around the room tonight – you see a sea of women leaders in their various capacities – be it government, corporate or civic organisation. You are looking at a group of ordinary women that have achieved the extra-ordinary!

We have come far – thanks to the sheer bravery, courage and determination of these iconic women. And they were ordinary women but women with the courage to have made their voices heard. There is a quote that goes “A woman with a voice is by definition is a strong woman.”

Leadership is not a stand-alone concept. I read the book by Manfred Kets de Vries - one of Europe's leading management thinkers and writers - entitled “The Leadership Mystique”. He says that leadership 'never happens in isolation.' There can be no leaders without followers, and all leadership activities take place within a context. It becomes imperative that we comprehend this concept for us to succeed in what we have to achieve - set ourselves a common goal.

For the leaders - the character, values, attitude, beliefs, position, and experience is key.

For the followers - the character type, values, attitudes, beliefs, group consciousness is key.

For the situation - nature of the task, life stage of organization, organizational variables, corporate culture, nature of industry, socio- economic and political environment is key.

The importance of these illustrate why some organisations or programs succeed or fail – because of the silo effect. We need to work together. And the way to do that is to start with first understanding ourselves from the various sectors and responsibilities with which we are tasked. And ask – how can we cross-pollinate? What causes can we collaborate on and champion together? How can we as a collective, uplift and empower others?

I am encouraged by platforms like these where we can network, empower and support each other. These platforms also allow us to share best practice and sharpen our leadership capabilities. These platforms allow us to co-opt each other into mutually beneficial partnerships. As the saying goes: “Behind every successful woman is a tribe of other successful women who have her back.”

The way forward for us is to listen to these young voices – and what loud and boisterous voices these young girls have! Let us listen, for they in turn are shaping the way forward, like our pioneers did for us. Remember, we are the present but they are the future. What we seed in them, will be reaped by another generation. What they allow to be sown in them, will determine their success.

The robust debates that have taken place today clearly demonstrate confidence, insight and not only forward thinking but out of the box thinking. Yes, question everything! Seek answers where none are apparent. Challenge yourselves and others. We are encouraged that you so confidently expressed your views – and were able to defend them too.

Let us complement their youth and confidence with our experience and platforms. We encourage them to make use of the wide spectrum empowerment opportunities out there.

What I would like to say to you is the sky is the limit and the world is at your feet. You are only as big as your dreams. So dream big!

I would like to conclude with the following quote: "If it's meant to be, it's up to me."

I thank you.

Issued by

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