



tourism

Department:  
Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **Speech by Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr F Mahlalela, on the occasion of awarding certificates to Women Entrepreneurship, Pretoria**

**28 September 2021**

I would like to start by quoting Peter Drucker. When he says: “Whenever you see a successful business, someone once made a courageous decision.” Today, I applaud your courage and determination and emphasise your significance in the tourism value chain.

As we celebrate Tourism Month and the World Tourism Day celebrations yesterday, it gives me great pleasure to be with you at this auspicious event today. In fact, I cannot think of a more fitting tribute for Tourism Month than to celebrate this successful programme.

The theme for World Tourism Day is: “*Tourism for Inclusive Growth*.” In the spirit of Charlotte Maxeke, whom we have dedicated this year to, this programme today gives expression to her courage, memory and legacy as she blazed the trail for women. Inclusive growth is incomplete without women empowerment and upliftment.

Following the pandemic, the tourism sector is one of the critical intervention areas that have been identified in the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan as tourism is a key driver of the economic recovery in the country. It supports a vast value chain comprised of mainly women.

The Department of Tourism together with its stakeholders, have therefore collaborated to develop the robust Tourism Sector Recovery Plan. This Plan is anchored on three interlinked pillars or strategic themes: protecting and rejuvenating supply, reigniting demand and strengthening enabling capability for long term sustainability. Recovery is key to the new normal and critical in giving expression to a reimagined industry living alongside a virus that has stop/start cycles.

Small businesses are vital to the success of the economy as it facilitates an inclusive talent pipeline into the industry while transferring skills and creating employment.

South Africa and Turkey have enjoyed sound bilateral relations and continues to explore synergies in areas of mutual interest. Tourism is a people-orientated sector and economic development is not possible without people development.

Most of the women entrepreneur businesses were affected by the pandemic and this training offered by TIKA played a pivotal role in keeping their businesses operational. TIKA also plans to create market access for them even beyond the borders of South Africa as some of these entrepreneurial products will be showcased in Turkey.

I wish to commend TIKA in making an investment towards building emerging women entrepreneurs in South Africa. Together with the Department of Small Business Development, this initiative demonstrates the excellent socio-economic spinoffs that we can realise through partnerships.

This entrepreneurship development initiative will go a long way in alleviating unemployment and catalysing business acumen among small businesses.

Today, we are proud that quite a significant number of women will be issued with certificates because they have successfully completed the programme.

As the Department of Tourism was celebrating World Tourism Day at Clarens in the Free State yesterday, I had an opportunity to feast my eyes on the beautiful products showcased by young people of tourism businesses at their stalls. There I met a young woman who does upholstery. She manufactures beautiful colourful one-seater couches. To my surprise, I learned that she is one of the women who will be receiving a certificate today. That really impressed me.

Women make up a large percentage of the tourism workforce and this programme successfully embraces the ethos of inclusivity, while at the same time growing the pipeline of talent in the tourism value chain.

Tourism has the potential to address the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality through job creation. Apart from generating revenue, tourism provides economic opportunities for women and youth, supports the development of SMMEs and has the potential to foster social cohesion. This strategic pillar of South Africa's economy has an extensive value chain and has multiple linkages with other sectors of the economy which generates significant multiplier effects.

To make tourism as inclusive as possible, an enabling environment is needed in which it can grow and prosper. The Department of Tourism has such enabling structures in place.

Through the Enterprise Development and Transformation Programme, we are introducing new players in the tourism economy and contribute to the competitiveness of tourism destinations.

The Enterprise Development and Transformation Portal will serve as an online supplier marketplace for SMMEs in order to promote sector transformation and job creation. We recognise that technology will drive provision of government services into the future.

Another pivotal enabler is the Women in Tourism Programme which is an initiative that advances and supports the development and empowerment of women in the tourism sector. Since its inception in 2013, the programme has served as a mechanism to elevate the status of women in the sector by providing training, empowerment and networking opportunities.

Premised on the principles of Respect; Recognition; Representation and Reward, this Programme integrates women from diverse backgrounds to converge on a set of common goals and interests that ensure their success in the tourism sector and to ensure that they converge on a set of common goals and interests within the industry.

This platform recognised the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs who are often at the bottom end of the tourism economic value chain. The programme developed an agenda and identified interventions that will assist in realising the Women in tourism objectives. The main focus areas of this programme, have to date, included training on personal development, supporting women to develop a competitive advantage in their businesses and provision of capacity building initiatives. The programme includes entrepreneurs, women working in the sector and students and other women from the informal sector seeking to enter the tourism value chain.

The Women in Tourism Programme is comprised of provincial chapters across all nine provinces to nurture green shoots through to maturity. Women who want to participate in the programme are encouraged to register with the Women in Tourism Provincial Chapters in their respective provinces. This vibrant support structure creates an environment where women can network, empower and support each other while also allowing for the sharing of best practice and a space to sharpen leadership capabilities. Through the implementation of these initiatives, the Department of Tourism remains committed to change the narrative of women in the sector and to realise its mandate of an inclusive and vibrant economy.

In conclusion, allow me to conclude with the wise words of a Brazilian author, Chris Matakas, the words of which I dedicate to the learners, the educators and tourism practitioners alike. Chris Matakas laments that "the best yardstick for our progress is not other people, but ourselves. Am I better than I was yesterday? This is the only question worth asking. As long as you go to bed at night a better practitioner than the one who woke up the previous morning, you have succeeded. Your worth should have nothing to do with how your progress stacks up relative to another."

Congratulations to all the successful participants! You have dared to dream and placed a sword in the hands of your dreams. Well done! I urge you further to become the cornerstone for the next generation of women to look up to and to draw wisdom from. For we rise by lifting others.

I thank you.