



**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

Women in Tourism graduate from Executive Development Programme

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Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa accompanied by Deputy Minister of Telecommunications, Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams officiated the graduation ceremony of 16 women who completed the Executive Development Programme (EDP) through UNISA Graduate School for Business Leadership (UNISA SBL) in Pretoria.

The Executive Development Programme for Women in Tourism is an initiative of the Department of Tourism in partnership with UNISA to empower women and build an inclusive, highly competitive and sustainable tourism sector.

“Women make up nearly 70% of the workforce within the industry, however 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”

“According to the South African UN representative, women in Ghana contribute almost 56% to the GDP, whilst South Africa is at about 30%. Among priorities no longer negotiable in the country are the economic empowerment of women, the 50/50 representation beyond 2030” said Minister Xasa.

The Executive Development Programme is a response to research indicating that there is a low percentage of women at the board and executive management levels due to the unavailability of women managers with the required profile within the tourism industry.

The aim of the Department of Tourism is to capacitate women and redress the skewed socio-economic landscape of the tourism industry. The participation of women at decision-making level in tourism is incredibly low especially considering the high participation levels at lower and entry level.

“Our Women in Tourism Programme is anchored on the pillars of representation, recognition, reward and respect. The promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment is central to government’s efforts to combat poverty and stimulate sustainable development” said Minister Xasa.

The programme has yielded visible outcomes as five of the women received promotion to senior management positions at their respective companies since being part of the course.

Through UNISA, graduates participating in the Executive Development Programme were equipped with management skills to have the confidence to start and grow their own tourism businesses and create a pool of black industrialists for the future.

The programme was launched in 2016 and in the recruitment of its first intake, attracted hundreds of eligible women from around the country. After recruitment, twenty women were selected to partake in this programme.

“The Department of Tourism will give support to Higher Education Institutions as well as private providers who seek to add more value in the so needed capacity by women. We must endeavour to

be in line with the 2063 agenda for African Women, the Sustainability Development Goals, hence we need to ensure our agenda as women in tourism is on par”

“Many of the skills development programmes offered by the department especially through the Social Responsibility Implementation funding and these programmes remain open for women in Tourism to tap in. We encourage women to look into funding options available and targeting women in tourism like the National Empowerment Fund and many others” concluded Xasa.

Enquiries:

Mr Thamie Mthembu

Media Liaison Officer: Office of the Minister

Department of Tourism

Teephonel: +27 (0) 12 444 6772

Email: tmthembu@tourism.gov.za