



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MEDIA STATEMENT

ADVANCING WOMEN LEADERS IN TOURISM

24 November 2022

PRETORIA - The Department of Tourism, in partnership with the UNISA Graduate School of Business Leadership (SBL), held a graduation ceremony to recognise women who successfully completed the Executive Development Programme (EDP) for women in tourism.

The EDP is a transformation intervention that aims to upskill women for executive positions, with the view of addressing the skewed management and ownership landscape in the tourism and hospitality industries.

The graduation ceremony acknowledged the achievements of 39 women who enrolled in the 2019 and 2021 legs of the EDP. Women from across the country participated in a 12-month training programme through UNISA's SBL, equipping them with skills to lead and drive innovative organisational strategies in their vocations.

"Today, we celebrate the outstanding performance of dedicated and determined women who against all odds successfully completed the Executive Development programme. As government we rever the heroic contribution of women in all sectors, and we especially look forward to having these graduates entering the sector a leaders and drivers of change," said Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela.

Although women make up nearly 70% of South Africa's tourism workforce, there is an under-representation of women in senior positions. Women hold less than 40% of all managerial positions, less than 20% of general management roles, and between 5 to 8% of board positions in the sector.

Since its inception in 2016, the Department has invested R8 million in the EDP and it has capacitated 120 women in managerial and entrepreneurial skills. A total of 94 women have successfully graduated from the programme with some advancing as entrepreneurs, or being promoted as managers in their fields.

Today's event marked the first graduation ceremony post the COVID19 pandemic for UNISA's (SBL). Speaking at the ceremony, the Deputy Executive Dean for SBL Mr. Andile Nobatyji lauded the graduate's achievements, and called on them to make a meaningful contribution to the sector with their acquired skills.

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“The Executive Development Programme, you have just completed will open a whole new world for you with endless opportunities. I urge you to plough back into the industry as leaders that will champion the advancement of the tourism sector,” added Deputy Executive Dean Nobatyi.

EDP graduate Ms. Zukiswa Quagraine shared her insights on how the programme elevated her career in the tourism over the past five years, and she encouraged the graduates to continue to work together going forward to ensure their success in the sector.

“Through the EDP, I gained a broad knowledge in business management and finance. However, I have learned that having confidence, a leadership style and a network of influential women to is critical to one’s success. This network will offer you insight on how to tackle some of the challenges you will face in the sector as a leader. Embrace the connections you have made during your training, and continue to support each other on your leadership journey,” said Quagraine.

As the world rebuilds post the COVID19 pandemic, women empowerment has been prioritised globally as countries work to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2019 second edition of the UNWTO Report of Women in Tourism highlights the sector’s ability to drive the 5th UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. The report’s action plan calls on the public and private sectors to tailor gender sensitive policies to yield impactful advancements in women empowerment.

“As a Department, we are committed to creating a transformed and inclusive sector that enables all, especially women and the youth to benefit from the gains of tourism.”

“The COVID19 pandemic had a devastating impact on our sector resulting in a loss of jobs, and the closure tourism SMMEs. Women in the sector bore the largest brunt of this devastation as they constitute the majority of the tourism workforce.”

“As we rebuild tourism, we join the global community and take inspiration from the findings of the UNWTO study on women in tourism to review our empowerment programmes. We will also be reviewing the EDP to better meet the demand and skills requirements that will enable women to thrive in the sector,” concluded Deputy Minister Mahlalela.


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