



SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM, MR FISH MAHLALELA AT THE WOMEN EXPLORE EVENT IN GQEBERHA ON 19 AUGUST 2022

Representative from Nelson Mandela Bay Metro

Hannelie Du Toit	COO SATSA
Phakamile Hlazo	CEO of Zulu Nomad
Mark Rogers	from SARS
Lara Dendy Young	Co-Founder of Conservio
Zandi Ndlovu	from Black Mermaid
Mandisa Magwaxaza	CEO Molo Mhambi

Esteemed Guests

Programme Director, the theme for 2022 Women's Day is "Women's Socio-Economic Rights and Empowerment: Building Back Better for Women's Improved Resilience"

Which clearly reaffirms women rights as equal stakeholders in the socio-economic trajectory of our country. They deserve equal share to the wealth of this country.

Women's month is a tribute not only to the multitudes of women who took to the streets on that fateful day in 1956, but also a tribute to the pioneers of the women's movement in this country dating back to 1913, when women like Charlotte Maxeke led the way in encouraging women to participate in the struggle for liberation.

Programme Director, our efforts to drive transformation in the tourism sector that is aligned to the targets set out in the BBB-EE Tourism Sector Code and the UNWTO Sustainable Development Goals will be in vain, if we fail to facilitate access to business resources, information and opportunities for women entrepreneurs in tourism.

So far, a number of projects have been implemented to ensure that we protect and rejuvenate the supply, through publishing the Norms and Standards for Safe Operation as well as providing training within the sector.

We are tirelessly implementing the tourism infrastructure maintenance programme in key tourism assets, rolling out the sector skills development programme to ensure that relevant skills are available as the sector recovers.

We provide investment to ensure that as the world re-opens, DestinationSA remains top of our mind in our key markets and beyond through the launch of the Global Advocacy Programme which ensures that consumers, trade partners and the global media remained informed about Destination South Africa as well as the Global Brand Film, inviting everyone to "Live Again".

We will continue to host Meetings Africa under the theme "Advancing the African Agenda Together", and conduct various campaigns focused on the domestic market to encourage South Africans to enjoy the beauty and heritage our home has to offer.

Together with all the stakeholders within the value chain, we shall also continue to implement the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan to facilitate amongst others, protection and creation of jobs, greater diversification of the supply side of the tourism market; increased quantum and focus on infrastructure investments in the tourism sector; build greater confidence in South Africa as a safe destination and an improved South African Brand; increased international arrivals and most importantly turning domestic tourism into an anchor of the tourism sector.

We have in conjunction with Provincial Tourism Departments and Tourism Agencies assisted with the establishment of several WiT chapters.

These chapters are formed to drive the objectives of the WiT programme related to the empowerment of women in the Tourism and Hospitality sectors. The primary beneficiaries of this initiative are all women in the sector as entrepreneurs, employees, tourism and hospitality students in a specific province. The Eastern Cape WiT Chapter was established on 22 August 2018.

We have also developed a new approach to the provision of support to Small, Micro to Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) in tourism. The purpose of this project is to implement a programme that will provide non-financial support to women-owned tourism sector business for a period of eighteen months: 12 months of business support and 6 months of mentorship. The project will cover 25 women-owned tourism sector SMMEs per province across the country.

Moreover, the Department has implemented the Tourism Technology Innovation Incubation Programme (TTGIIP) in conjunction with Technology Innovation Agency (TIA). Twenty incubates/ innovators have been enrolled and are receiving business development support through TIA's Grassroots Innovation programme and its network of Technology Parks and Labs across the country.

Ms Talita Giqo, a 29-year-old female black innovator is the only candidate from the Eastern Cape. She has developed an App that will have an online food ordering system and guests will be able to make other requests using their Apps while residing at the hotel. Her company name is EMBODGTECH.

The App will allow a client to book on the system, locate the place, give you an opportunity to check-in on your own, and open their room using their own cellphone. It will serve the customers till their check out date.

Meanwhile the establishment of the Tour Operators Business Incubator in the last financial year was meant to capacitate tour operators with necessary knowledge, training and skills to ensure sustainability, competitiveness and growth of their business operations. The project is implemented through a virtual model by providing business development and

support services to forty (40) emerging tour operators (as stipulated in the signed SLA) across the country.

The appointed Service Provider added four (4) more beneficiaries at no additional cost. There is a total of 5 (five) Tour Operators in the Eastern Cape Province currently in the incubation programme

Let me echo the words by President Cyril Ramaphosa that the first action is to expand the access of women to economic opportunity. Among other things, by setting aside 40% of public procurement for women-owned businesses, and government now expect all national departments to monitor and report on how many women have participated in each public procurement process. We will have to develop clear plans on how we will broaden women's participation over the next 12 months.

Currently there are five (5) funds that the department offers through Tourism Incentive Programme (TIP) to bring about greater destination competitiveness, transformation and accelerated tourism and enterprise growth.

The Market Access Support Programme (MASP): offers partial financial support (contribution towards the cost of exhibition space, return airfare and hotel accommodation) to qualifying small tourism enterprises to participate and exhibit at selected tourism marketing platforms.

The Tourism Grading Support programme (TGSP) offers discounts of between 80% and 90% on grading assessment fees for accommodation and meeting venues that apply for star grading by the TGCSA.

While **Green Tourism Incentive Programme (GTIP)** offers partial grant funding support (50% to 90% up to R1 million) on the cost of retrofitting tourism facilities with energy and water efficiency equipment and systems based on the outcome of a resource efficiency audit.

Again, the **Tourism Transformation Fund (TTF)** offers a combination of debt finance and grant funding for smaller new and expansion tourism development projects with majority black shareholding. However, the programme is administered through the NEF on behalf of the department.

Lastly, the **Tourism Equity Fund (TEF)** is a new support programme to facilitate accelerated sector transformation through offering a combination of grant funding and debt finance to larger tourism acquisition and development transactions by majority black-owned investors, it was launched in January 2021. The TEF was designed and is being implemented by SEFA on behalf of the department.

At the moment, in the Eastern Cape close to 100 beneficiaries both youth and women have been recruited, 63 of these are still on the programme, while 47 are women participating in the skill development Programme.

In terms of the status of the training programme, participants just completed their theoretical training and are currently at the workplaces (month nine of experiential learning). The training programme is significantly achieving the intended deliverables of the business plan in line with the signed Service Level Agreement (SLA). The project end date is 31 December 2022.

The implementer's contractual obligation is to ensure that 80% of candidates secure confirmed permanent employment at the end of the programme. While 80% of candidates selected were previously retrenched due to Covid-19 and the initiative is to assist capital recovery for business as a result of COVID-19. An observation made shows the enthusiasm that this programme instilled in the beneficiaries, not just learning a life skill, but potential permanent employment.

To conclude, let me revisit what the President said during the Women's day celebration that the reality for millions of South African women is at odds with the promises contained in the Constitution. Women need to be empowered, adding that the opportunity exists to build a country where women's rights are not negotiable.

One way to deal with the vulnerability and scourge women and children face is to enable women to become financially independent.

I thank you all

