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## **Speech by Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille at the Women in Tourism breakfast at the Africa Travel Indaba**

**11 May 2023**

***NOTE TO EDITORS: The following speech was delivered by Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille at the Women in Tourism Breakfast at the Africa Travel Indaba held at the Durban ICC today.***

Representatives from the Departments of tourism, national, provincial and local

Women business owners and employees

Women in Tourism Chapter heads and members

Good morning, goeie more, molweni, sanibonani. It is my great pleasure to be here with you all, my sisters in tourism.

I came across a quote the other day by author, Diane Mariechild who said: "A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform". END QUOTE

It reminded me of the greatness, the fullness, the power, the caring and strength of women.

For many years, most women felt like victims and that they needed others to provide them with a platform or a space. I have always been stern about this and I have always said that there are no rules for women and rules for men.

If we want to succeed as women, we have to play by the same rules.

Without a doubt, the journey is sometimes harder as a woman, but which woman ever shied away from a challenge?

The second thing I always say about women, is we can do and be anything we want to be and if you want something done right, ask a woman to do it.

Then very importantly, as women, we have rights but those rights are only words on paper, unless we claim those rights and act on it.

With that, I look around this room and I see women who have dared to be, you have stood up and said, you will do it your way. You are businesses owners and leaders in the tourism sector and for that I commend you.

As women, there is always the big transformation word we are confronted with in business and in society and I used that quote in the beginning for a reason: women have the power to transform.

I want us to remember, that transformation, claiming our rights and eradicating inequality is no one else's job but ours. We know best what and we must stand up and make that happen.

As the Department of Tourism, we have this programme - Women in Tourism - to bring us all together so we can work together and collectively move whatever is standing in our way, out of our way.

The department initiated the Women in Tourism Programme to drive the inclusion of women entrepreneurs in the industry.

To enhance the development and empowerment of women in the tourism sector, initiatives under the programme includes training on personal development, supporting women to develop a competitive advantage in their businesses and provision of capacity building initiatives.

I am pleased to see that the Women in Tourism has established chapters in all 9 provinces to mobilise women in the industry along with various relevant government departments at national, provincial and local levels, to address identified challenges and gaps in the tourism value chain.

I understand that each chapter also has to present its Programme of Action to the Department and provide their annual report to their members.

This is something I am very interested in seeing and engaging you on because this will tell us how sisters are doing it for themselves by connecting various women tourism businesses with government to conquer mountains and succeed as we know we can.

Many of the women here today are established and successful but there are many women still facing barriers or who do not have access to the same resources as more established women business owners.

One of the key areas of work, I appeal to you all to enhance is to nurture more top leaders, entrepreneurs and industrialists in the sector because we only rise by lifting others.

I am sure that many of you are aware that in 2010 the United Nation World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) released the Global Report on Women in Tourism.

The report highlighted the value of the sector as an engine for economic development through foreign exchange earnings and the creation of direct and indirect employment.

The report further explained that this value however does not translate into an equitable distribution of economic impacts between men and women in the sector, especially in the developing economies.

The key findings from this report were articulated as follows:

- Women make up a large proportion of the formal tourism workforce;
- Women are well represented in service and clerical level jobs but poorly represented at professional levels;
- Women in tourism are typically earning 10% to 15% less than their male counterparts;
- The tourism sector has almost twice as many women employers as other sectors;
- A large amount of unpaid work is being carried out by women in family tourism businesses.

It was on this bases that Women in Tourism was established to address these problems which we know exists all too well in South Africa.

The department of tourism understand the difficulties SMEs face and we also understand the immense value of SMEs in our economy.

This is why we have established the Women in Tourism programmes to support and uplift SMEs especially.

We have established this programme to identify and tackle the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs within the tourism value economic chain.

Together, we are here to ensure that changes and mechanisms are put in place to drive transformation in the tourism and hospitality sectors aligned to the targets set out in the B-BBEE Tourism Sector Code.

Through the Women in Tourism Programmes, the Department of Tourism, together with partners has achieved the following:

Business Management Training and mentorship for 225 women.

The purpose of this project is to implement a programme that will provide non-financial support to women-owned tourism sector businesses for a period of one year.

The training covered the following areas:

- Business Planning and Financial Management;
- Marketing Strategy and Sales;
- Human Resources, Operations and Risk Management;
- And Planning and managing in a crisis including building resilience; preparing for a crisis, managing in a crisis and recovering from a crisis.

This training was conducted in all provinces between June and August last year.

Through Women in Tourism Capacity Building Initiatives, the department in partnership with SA Tourism and the private sector, has also assisted 450 Women-owned tourism SMMEs.

The Department of Tourism is also implementing the Enterprise Development Support Programme as one of its strategic programmes that facilitate the growth and sustainability of tourism SMEs.

Under the department's Tourism Business Incubation programme, during the programme's intake: preference is given to women, youth and persons living with disabilities.

Other success for Women in Tourism with the help of the department has been:

- 34 Women in Tourism Food Service Incubation Programme;
- Women were supported through Enterprise Development incubation programme and the Tour Operator Incubation Programme;
- 10 Women were beneficiaries of the Green Tourism Incentive Programme and
- 6 Women benefited from the Tourism Transformation Fund.

I appeal to you all to exploit this the Women in Tourism platform and integrate women from the different backgrounds and spectrums within the travel, tourism, hospitality and related sectors around common goals.

There are a number of Women in Tourism programmes which have already helped many of you and I urge you to go out there and find more women, especially in rural areas, that we can support and empower through these programmes.

Let us bring more women to these workshops on skills development, financial management, marketing, operations management and business models and strategy development.

Women make up more than 50% of the world's population and the most effective way for us to bring parity into the tourism business is for women to lead the charge.

I want to encourage the Women In Tourism chapters in all provinces, together with the national, provincial and local tourism authorities to go out there and make more women in tourism aware of the support we have such as:

- International Market Access Support Programme (IMASP);
- Hidden Gems Initiative/ Domestic Market Access Support;
- Tourism Grading Support Programme (TGSP);
- Tourism Transformation Fund (TTF); and
- Green Tourism Incentive Programme (GTIP).
- Business advisory services and training;
- SMME's Financial Support Instruments.
- Tourism Incubators programme

I also look forward to seeing more success and visiting beneficiaries of the Women in Tourism project in Limpopo which is being done in partnership with the UNWTO.

Following the completion of the baseline study of the needs analysis for women tourism businesses in Limpopo, the next phase will see empowerment, training and business support programmes being implemented at a number of these businesses in Limpopo.

This empowerment programme, in partnership with the UNWTO, will focus on four key areas based on the UNWTO 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Global Report on the Status of Women Empowerment in the Tourism Sector.

The Key focus areas are:

- Leadership and Skills Development
- Supplier Development
- Market Access
- SMME Development and Mentorship.

The overall goal of the UNWTO Women Empowerment Project is to promote women's economic empowerment in tourism through partnerships with NGOs, national departments of tourism, hotel chains and other sector-related stakeholders.

This will involve improving employment/entrepreneurship opportunities for women by facilitating their access to jobs and/or participation in supply-chains, and by creating possibilities for career advancement.

In closing my sisters, let us get to work and uplift more women and claim our rightful place as leaders. You don't need anyone's permission to do you!

I look forward to seeing you all again throughout the year and especially at this year's Women in Tourism Conference to be held in Limpopo in August.

Thank you all for your hard work and contribution to the tourism sector. God Bless.

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