

**ADDRESS BY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY  
RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN, MS BATHABILE DLAMINI,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE WOMEN IN TOURISM  
CONFERENCE.**

Protea Hotel, Restenburg, North West Province

**Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019**

**WOMEN IN TOURISM CONFERENCE**

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**(23-24 JANUARY 2019)**

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR,

DEPUTY MINISTER ELIZABETH THABETHE

ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF BUSINESS COMMUNITY

DIGNITARIES PRESENT

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

Thank you for inviting me to speak on this important occasion  
of the Women in Tourism Conference.

The significance of tourism within the South African economy is now widely recognised by government, business and civil society. In his State of the Nation Address on 16 February 2018, President Jacob Zuma referred to tourism as being “another area which provides our country with incredible opportunities to, quite literally, shine”, and as a sector, it “currently sustains 700,000 direct jobs and is performing better than most other growth sectors”.

Most in this room know the potential tourism has for transforming our economy, especially at microsites like semi-rural areas across SA. However, the focus of my address here today, is to paint a picture of the challenges women face and to express how your work is critical in addressing women empowerment and addressing inequalities that exist in the sector.

Women remain the hardest hit by inequality, poverty and unemployment. While strides have been made to ensure gender equality and women’s empowerment, particularly in the

space of progressive legislation, women have not advanced rapidly enough and continue to bear the brunt of socio-economic barriers making gender equality a moving target.

In a country where nearly 52% of the population are women, women are still seen to be primarily caregivers and housewives, relegated to roles in support of their male counterparts. This 52% struggles to get access to land, credit, and business opportunities due to socio-economic and cultural barriers rendering a strain on the economy we simply cannot afford.

The Department of Women is mandated to champion the advancement of women's socio-economic empowerment and the promotion of gender equality. The Presidential Directive of 22 September 2015 specified that the economic sector, employment and infrastructure cluster Ministers must embed the empowerment of women in their departmental plans and expenditure. Programme Director, I want to believe that The Department of Tourism is doing the same, and this Conference

is evidence of that commitment. On a practical level, the department lobbies implementing departments to be gender responsive in their budgeting and programme design. *You will never mainstream gender unless you mainstream budgets to be gender sensitive.*

Embedded in our daily work is ensuring women are active players in the mainstream economy, and that talks directly to our apex work of developing a women financial inclusive framework. A framework that seeks to guide government departments, state-owned enterprises as well as private sector entities to include women in the design of policies and programmes of government.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

imagine the challenges the vast majority of South African woman must go through to seek employment. *For example:* A mother, desperate to earn a living and feed her child, borrows money, and leaves the North West Province. She travels to Johannesburg with her child to seek employment in Sandton.

This woman has only heard of friends and family being employed here and is committed to making a better life for her child. She is one of hundreds of people migrating to Johannesburg daily to seek employment. However, with a baby on her back, she has no access to the economy. She has no experience. She is committed to work but she cannot be trusted, as she does not have references. She is a nobody. Alternatively, this lady is forced to leave her baby at a crèche in Alexandra, and travel across to Sandton seeking work. If this lady does not get a piecemeal job she will not have money to eat. She will not have money to take a taxi back home, and she will have to walk home, putting her child at the mercy of the owners of the crèche.

Programme Director,

this lady has no choice but to travel with her child to look for work, while the father of her child can leave home to seek employment without the added logistics of a child. The father of

the child is able to offload this burden onto the mother and this is considered acceptable in South Africa.

At the very core of South Africa is the family unit. Healthy families develop healthy communities which, in turn, grow our country. In South Africa, 36% of children live with their biological fathers. This places a tremendous burden on women who are expected to both serve as caregivers and generate an income. This is no different in the Tourism sector where the majority of women are employed in service or clerical jobs requiring long hours, weekend work, as well as working on most public holidays and festive seasons.

Programme Director,

Allow me to take you back to the African Union Agenda 2063 –

Aspiration 6 refers:

*Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children. “The African woman will be fully empowered in all spheres, with equal social, political and economic rights, including the rights to own and inherit property, sign contracts, register and manage businesses. Rural women will have access to productive assets: land, credit, inputs and financial services.*

Our very own National Development Plan 2030 refers to inclusive economies in which women are able to fully participate in meaningful production. Gender responsive regulations in the Tourism sector are key to ensuring the rights of women are protected while the sector is allowed to grow within a conducive environment. Remember, if there isn't gender equality in your ownership, leadership, profit sharing and supplier database, you are not going to align with the country's development goals. Deputy Minister Thabethe, The Department of Tourism must lead in ensuring that there is true transformation within the sector. This extends to the recent

coming into effect of minimum wage agreements, as signed off by President Ramaphosa. I have no doubt that this Conference will engage on this but as The Department of Women, we are clear in our stance that minimum wage determinations are a must for inclusive growth.

As both active participants and beneficiaries of South Africa's National Development Plan 2030 those working in the tourism sector **must** ensure that the rights of women are enshrined in all labour practises. This is non-negotiable.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) equality is an essential component of a sustainable tourism industry. Yet, as a whole, the sector has paid scant attention to the rights and status of women, especially to those in poorer countries, and to the impact that tourism has on their lives and livelihood.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am often asked: Why is there a need for The Department of Women? It is simply because Capitalism is a deeply patriarchal system but it is within this system that the tourism sector must find representation and room to grow. As an example, Oxfam recently released its Inequality Report titled *Public Good or Private Wealth* – In it, research states:

- Today, in 2019, 262 million children do not go to school, the majority of them are girls.
- 16.4 Billion hours of unpaid care work will be done by women, the majority of whom are living in poverty, and,
- If all the unpaid care work done by women across the globe was carried out by a single company, it would have an annual turnover of 10 Trillion US Dollars.

It is evident that the economy is deeply misogynistic. It is within this space that I appeal to role-players, stakeholders and those with the power to change the lived experience of women in the

tourism industry to empower women, by elevating the status of women within the sector.

It is also important to ensure that this is all done in a financially inclusive manner so that we progressively add value to the lives of women by encouraging greater access to personal financial management information and skills, access to enterprise development information and skills, for individual and/or social/cooperative ownership, access to loans and/or grants from banks and development finance institutions, access to jobs, wages and salaries, access to secure and regulated savings schemes, access to financial services comprising short and long term insurance products, as well as life / death policies, access to productive assets and resources.

The ANC's Manifesto, launched by President Ramaphosa just over a week ago, focuses on economic growth and job creation as one of its pillars. The Tourism Sector is able to tap into the country's natural resources and beauty to rapidly grow into the biggest employer in the tertiary sector. For this to happen, the

sector needs to regulate access to opportunities for women, and in particular, young women.

It is my opinion that training in tourism at a tertiary institution only half-prepares you for what lies ahead. True training comes through experience. The Department of Tourism needs to create tax incentives for businesses that creates spaces for young women to work and train.

Programme Director,

South Africa has one of the most unequal societies in the world. In The Department of Women's *Status of Women in the South African Economy Report*, published in 2015, it is well noted that poverty is gendered, and women will continue to be subjected to inequality and vulnerability, as long as there is a lack of gender sensitive planning to attain the goals of the NDP2030. I hope that your deliberations over the next two days continues to discuss gender sensitive budgeting and regulation of the sector with a view to respond to inequalities women face.

Ladies and gentlemen,

with the above in mind I compel you to raise questions around women's access to land, credit and property rights, which we already know are nowhere close to sufficient as highlighted in the *Status of Women in the South African Economy Report 2015*.

Nature-based tourism, Cultural based tourism, Special interest tourism – which cover ample industries such as: [Eco-tourism](#), Geo-tourism, Agro-tourism, Cultural, Historical, Traditional and Rural Tourism, Sports or even Mixed-Tourism are areas where South African women can, and should be shining.

Programme Director,

Chapter 7 of South Africa's NDP speaks to positioning South Africa in the World. This year, South Africa honours its commitments to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action + 25. In 1995 seventeen thousand participants and thirty thousand activists from around the world travelled to Beijing to demand global equality and peace for women worldwide. South

Africa will also deposit its report at the UN at the Commission on the Status of Women. Therefore, President Ramaphosa has commissioned a 25 Year Review on the progress South Africa has made in realising the rights of women. I sincerely hope that The Department of Tourism is able to make a meaningful contribution to this assessment by highlighting strides the sector has made in responding to gender inequalities. 70% of the Tourism sector comprises of women, however, I request that this forum be used to look at real women empowerment and development within the sector since 1995.

**In conclusion:** Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting must become an institutional mantra across all sectors of our economy, meaning that policies, plans, programmes etc. must therefore be geared towards the socio-economic empowerment of women, continuously being monitored and evaluated for impact at all times to give ourselves ample opportunities to proactively intervene where necessary.

This all together would assist the Department of Tourism's efforts in trying to achieve effective initiatives that seek to drive programmes that support the development and empowerment of women in the tourism sector, while also focusing on the fundamental issues of personal development and competitive advantage within the economic sphere.

The women empowerment agenda must at the core address the gender oppression, sexism, ageism, patriarchy, and all structural oppression which delay our gender development and gender equality programmes. We want more programmes that will help us in creating a conducive environment which will enable women to take control of their lives.

I believe that women's empowerment is something that simply cannot wait. Women in our country cannot wait.

As The Department of Women we humbly request that The Department of Tourism works with us to develop programmes to ensure women empowerment is one of the core pillars of the sector. I guarantee you: Women empowerment is important for a better humanity and a better tomorrow.

Ngiyabonga

I thank you.