



**destea**

department of  
Economic, Small Business Development,  
Tourism and Environmental Affairs  
FREE STATE PROVINCE

## **WOMEN'S LUNCHEON**

### **SPEECH BY HONOURABLE MEC MAKALO MOHALE**

**DATE: THURSDAY 26 AUGUST 2021**

**VENUE: MAKARIOS COUNTRY LODGE**

**THEME “#HelpeachotherGrow”**

**Honourable Premier Sisi Ntombela**

**DESTEA HOD Dr. Mbulelo Nokwequ**

**Honourable Guests**

**Women entrepreneurs and in different professions**

**Our women colleagues in DESTEA**

**And thank you to all who have logged on to different online platforms to share this special day with us**

Bomme dumelang!! We are gathered here today albeit at this late stage of women's month to pay tribute and salute women of our generation, who continue to make a difference in the lives of the people of our province. This year we remember one of our pioneers in the fight for women rights umama Charlotte Manny Maxeke, a courageous women's rights activist and also a leader who was born 150 years ago. In remembrance of her heroic uncompromising stand against discrimination of women, the premier instructed that, business as well as professional women in our province deserve special mention and accolades as they continue to inspire us with the work they do despite economic and other social difficulties they face in their everyday life.

Like the women of 1956, the present generation of women must continue to lead the fight for a society that is free from abuse of any form or shape. As our country continues the fight against the invincible enemy, the Covid-19 pandemic, the nation,

particularly women are dealing with a Secondary Pandemic, a crisis of Gender Based Violence. According to Rose Gawayana, a gender adviser at the Social Policy Network, the government GBV and femicide command centre alone, recorded more than 120,000 victims in the first three weeks of lockdown. That is frightening if not sickening!

Women around the world are disproportionately impacted by gender-based violence including sexual harassment and assault in the workplace. Millions of female workers are forced to work in an intimidating, hostile or humiliating environment, and experience various abuse in the hands of men, mostly those who purport to love or protect them. This week, the country was once more shocked by the news of gruesome murder of the Fort Hare University law student Nosiselo Mtebeni allegedly by her boyfriend or live in lover. We also learned about the assassination of an official of Gauteng Department of Health, in front of her house. We have to reflect and ask ourselves as a nation, why so much violence and brutality against womenfolk. It can only be a sick society that treats its women like this. All men should stand together and condemn this barbaric acts.

As our contribution to fight this scourge, we sought to bring women from all walks of life together under the theme **#HelpeachotherGrow** to create an environment where they can support, inspire and encourage each other to grow and thrive in their chosen careers and businesses. We celebrate women today under this theme, which is drawn from the notion of 'collective individualism' because we are all part of a whole. Our individual actions, conversations, behaviours and mind sets can have an impact on our larger society.

Bomme, we are indeed encouraged to see the fight to claim your rightful space in fields which were previously known as belonging to men only, which is occupations in management, finance, law, leadership, etc. The time is now, rise above your limits...the sky is the limit. It is a known fact that societies that empower women to participate fully in civic and economic life are more prosperous and peaceful. Women make up half the human population and can act as key drivers of global growth and national security.

We challenge women to push for significant space in the strategic sectors of the economy. As part of our contribution towards the transformation of the economy, we call for meaningful participation of women in the mainstream economy. We refuse to accept that the role of women in our economy should be restricted to employees or subsectors like, beauty, cleaning, secretarial, catering, supply of stationery and assistants.

Our department would like to change this belief. To this end we are introducing value chains transformation. We are currently developing the Master Plans for specific sectors of the Free State economy to open our economy for new entrants. Work has already started in the development of the Master Plans for the following economic sectors;

- Agro processing
- Communications and Digital Economy
- Clothing, Textile, Leather and Footwear
- Automotive
- Biodiversity economy
- Financial Services
- Steel and Metals
- Mining and Mineral Beneficiation
- Chemicals, Energy and Green Industries and
- Land and Property Development.

We therefore challenge women to wage a brave and unrelenting fight to find a seat in the table for these economic initiatives. Statistics have shown that more women than men enter tertiary education, therefore have all the ability to break down any discrimination door for more meaningful involvement of women in owning the economy.

As we lay firm foundation for this economic takeover, we agreed that today women present here and those participating virtually should tackle the following topics;

- Helping each other grow and the advancement of black professionals
- Women in science demonstrating how different the future will be
- Current state of gender inclusion and what impedes equality
- Humbling yourself & trusting the process

- Women in business

These will be in a form of a five (5) panel discussions.

While many employers are making strides in the right direction in terms of gender equality, breaking the glass ceiling and improving inclusion & diversity, women are often still at a disadvantage in the workplace. The 2019 *Women in the Workplace* report by [McKinsey & Company](#) and [LeanIn.org](#) – the largest study based on data from almost 600 companies – found that only 1 in 5 women are in executive positions and only 1 in 25 are women of colour. In addition, for every 100 men hired into entry-level positions, only 85 women are hired. The report states, “In the last five years, we’ve seen more women rise to the top levels of companies. Yet women continue to be underrepresented at every level. To change the numbers, companies need to focus on where the real problem is. We often talk about the ‘glass ceiling’ that prevents women from reaching senior leadership positions. In reality, the biggest obstacle that women face is much earlier in the pipeline, at the first step up to manager. Fixing this ‘broken rung’ is key to achieving parity.”

Our objective with the commemoration of women’s day, is to redress the balance and push for gender parity. We have to acknowledge the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women and also make a call to action for accelerating women's equality. We are encouraged to see women excelling in sectors such as Education, Health and Social Work, Human Resource, Information and Technology, Media, Tourism and Customer Care. In the same breath, women are now starting to gradually enter the following industries which are known to be male dominant, which is engineering, transport, construction, green economy, energy, wildlife, digital economy and green economy.

The statistics of unemployment are so worrying and women are the most vulnerable ones. If we support women to be independent, we would be contributing to poverty reduction and better livelihoods. Collectively, we can make change happen. Collectively, we can help each other to create a gender equal world. This luncheon today will explore how women should support each other in order to progress

in professional careers and business and discuss how inclusion, leadership development and education can promote more opportunities for women and girls.

Bomme tomorrow we will be launching Tourism Month in Qwaqwa. The tourism industry was the worst affected industry by the national lockdown and many women were culprits. This industry is dominated by women both in the ownership, management and employees. We therefore have to work together to revive this sector in the best interest of women.

In conclusion, we must make it a point that we teach the girl child from an early age that education is the key to success and a better life. They should take lead from the women of 1956 and the current generation of women, the chain must be unbreakable. Recently, we supported a young model and pageant contestant from Bloemfontein by the name of Zandile Masia who has a Teen Universe Crown in her sights. She counts among the 40 finalists from five continents vying for this sought-after title. She was shortlisted after being crowned as Teen Universe South Africa last year. The pageant has been hosted in Nicaragua, Central America, from 20 – 26 August, with the crowning ceremony tomorrow the 27<sup>th</sup> August 2021. This, ladies, is what the Free State province needs for its young girls...support, focus, encouragement and determination in order to fly our Free State flag high. We wish her well.

**I THANK YOU!!!**