



Address by Mr Tseliso Maqubela on behalf of the Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy during the Women in Energy Roundtable Discussion, 30 August 2019, Webber Wentzel, Sandton, Republic of South Africa.

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Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to address you today on this special occasion as a nation when we are concluding women's month celebrations. As the nation celebrate 25 years of democracy, we should be mindful of the fact that freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. South Africa commemorates Women's Month in August as a tribute to more than 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 in protest against the extension of Pass Laws to women. Let the achievements of those who went before

you inspire you to unlock your own strength and motivate you to make a difference in your family, your community and your country.

Women's month is an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on women's achievements, as well as the problems they have faced in the struggle to be free and the important role they continue to play in society. Apart from their traditional roles as mothers, wives and caregivers, women are making great progress in business, politics, academic and economic careers with more and more women reaching top positions. Women of South Africa, be proud of what you have achieved.

As we hold this discussion during women's month and in line with the National theme **“25 Years of Democracy: Growing South Africa Together for Women in Energy Emancipation”**. The event brought together government, private sectors and development institutions and explored challenges that limit women owned companies participation in the energy sector with the intention to address access to opportunities, finance and capacity building. The empowerment of women is a global imperative. Yet despite important progress in promoting gender equality, there remains an urgent need to address structural barriers to women's economic empowerment and full inclusion in economic activity.

South Africa and the global community have defined and committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs have highlighted the strategic importance of gender equality, SDG 5 in particular. Goal 5 states that we need to “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. Integrating women into all levels of the energy value chain will lead to more and greater return on investment. The public-private partnership has the potential to offer many opportunities for women to formally participate in the sector. Today's discussion is an example of such partnerships. As the energy sector we strive to create the enabling environment for you.

For women entrepreneurs to thrive, they need an enabling environment with enhanced opportunities for participation. Women's economic empowerment is the right and smart investment South Africa needs. Women active participation in energy business will lead to poverty eradication, inclusive, sustained and rapid economic growth, reducing inequality and leaving no one behind and for the sustainable development of all as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

According to 2015 issue 66 of *Energia* article “*Boiling point*” encouraging women to become energy entrepreneurs offers multiple development benefits, such as an expansion of economic activities for women, a diversification of productive options and the creation of new sources of wealth and income to support family investments in education and health.

Studies show that if women played an identical role in labour markets as men, they could contribute an additional between US\$12 trillion and US\$28 trillion to global annual GDP. To put these figures into perspective, this means that the advancement of women’s equality in labour markets could contribute to the global economy at a value equivalent to the combined size of the Chinese and US economies today. In addition, gender diversity in high-level decision making is shown to correlate with improved business performance and investment. This is supported by evidence that companies with more women on their boards perform better with regards to their return on investment, sales and equity. Therefore, investing in the advancement and participation of women in the energy sector labour force is not only the right thing to do, but also the smart thing to do. The USAID 2018 report, “*Making the case for Women in the Energy Sector*” confirmed that integrating women into all levels of the energy value chain will lead to more effective and efficient clean energy initiatives, unleash greater return on investments and expand emission reduction opportunities.

I would like to highlight some challenges that are faced by women entrepreneurs and how to navigate those challenges:

1. Defying social expectations - Most female business owners who have attended networking events can relate to this scenario. You walk into a crowded seminar and can count the number of women there on one hand. When women entrepreneurs talk business with primarily male executives, it can be unnerving. As women, I urge you to stand your ground under such difficult situation. Speak your mind.

2. Dealing with limited access to funding - Women are more conservative and don't overstate projections. Women are often pitching realistic numbers when looking for funding. But men so often overstate and exaggerate that investors often discount the numbers off the bat. Investors, who are often men, will assume that the women entrepreneurs are operating just like the men and inflating their numbers. Therefore,

they will provide funding at lower levels than requested. Women need to understand this dynamic and approach their pitches accordingly.

Special funding instruments should be developed to assist women entrepreneurs. I understand that my officials are in consultation with financial institutions who have now initiated a discussion group which focus on exploring mechanism to support financial needs for emerging economies. I further note that the Department of Women is also exploring ways of unlocking funding for women in business in general. We need more innovative funding models to accommodate women and new entrants in the business sector.

3. Women struggling to be taken seriously - Women mostly find themselves in a male dominated industry or workplace that does not want to acknowledge their leadership role. As a female entrepreneur in a male-dominated industry, earning respect has been a struggle. To overcome this you have to learn to build your confidence and overcome any negative talk. Develop professional support network for each other and learn to lift each other up.

4. Building a support network - Having a robust support network is essential for entrepreneurial success, so it's no surprise that most women entrepreneurs report a lack of available advisers and mentors and this limits their professional growth. It is important that we identify mentors who can handhold you in business and these can be man, successful man. We should learn from them.

5. Access to business opportunities is a major hurdle. As discussed here, women still have challenges to access opportunities. I am pleased that the discussion has moved away from complaining to finding a collaborative way of addressing this perennial problem.

As government we are developing an enabling environment to ensure that business both government and private sector accommodates women. In the public sector, National Treasury has promulgated regulations that have specific set asides for women and it is now up to departments and different spheres of government to implement and you women to take advantage of the opportunities. Furthermore, the Cabinet approved National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, the Strategic Framework for Gender Equality in the Public Service with Implementation Guidelines and Plan of Actions.

In line with the Women's Empowerment overarching policy framework, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, has made a commitment to build a lasting, transformative partnerships that will lead to a transformed, re-industrialised, sustainable and inclusive economy that brings women, youth and people with disabilities into the energy sector to play a meaningful role and benefit through participation in the whole value chain of the energy sector.

The women in energy strategy focuses among other things on the four important issues that affect women in energy namely: access to opportunities especially through procurement, ownership and employment, access to capacity building, finance and information. Once approved that strategy together with some of our sector codes also being finalised like the Petroleum and Liquid Fuels sector code will strengthen government ability to monitor and evaluate inclusion of women in the sector.

Furthermore, The Department is finalising the B-BBEE Petroleum and Liquid Fuels sector code to be gazetted public comments by end of October 2019. As part of the objective, the code has designated targets for women, youth and people with disabilities. In terms of women the code also distinguish between women in the rural and urban areas so that all women benefit for the transformation agenda, The sector code aims to address: Under-representation of black women, youth and disabled across the Oil and Gas value chain ; their lack of meaningful operational involvement and active participation by Black Africans and coloureds; Lack of set-asides (import of crude and finished product) for independent non refining wholesalers; poor monitoring, evaluation and enforcement of compliance targets; Untransformed petroleum site and retail networks; inadequate access to Market, Financing and Terms of Credit by black people; and Inadequate petroleum industry entrepreneurship training for new entrants. We should now advocate for Energy sector code.

It is also the responsibility of industry leaders to ensure that we have opportunities that are meaningful afforded to women, and youth. I am aware that sometimes we focus on what are called low hanging fruits but are excluded from the core business. For instance in the liquid fuels sector trading in products is great but providing services to the companies themselves to provide maintenance services, engineering services etc is more profitable but not accessible to women and black owned companies. Let us understatement the value chain and begin to specialise and also compete for more lucrative

opportunities. Companies present here I will appreciate if you could also commit to open up and accommodate more women. They can come as partners with your established service provider but with experience they can be grown into competitive companies.

I am pleased that private public partnership is the relationship we want to grow the economy is epitomised in this roundtable discussion initiative. We are Growing South Africa Together for Women in Energy Emancipation and both industry and women have forged a strategic partnership that has enabled us to hold this event. This is the support we need to develop women and to ensure that we transform the country. I am proud that our partnership with Women in Oil and Gas South Africa (WOESA), BP South Africa and Webber Wentzel has made today possible.

In conclusion, I urge you to note that the vision of non-sexism and gender equality cannot be realised, unless we see in practical and visible terms that the condition of women are radically changed for the better.

It is an honour to be here at this esteemed Roundtable Discussion and I am inspired to meet and speak to so many champions of gender equality and women who have taken up the challenge to participate in this man dominated industry globally. The Public – Private sector discussions provide us an ideal platform to strategize on how best we can join hands and contribute to unlock “women power” in the energy space.

I thank you