



MINISTRY IN THE PRESIDENCY FOR WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X 931 Pretoria 0001: Tel: 012 3590013

**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY MS MAITE NKOANA-
MASHABANE, MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY
RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES TO THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
OF WOMEN IN THE GREEN INDUSTRY: LAUNCH OF THE
POLICY ASSESSMENT RESEARCH REPORT**

20 JULY 2021

Programme Director, Adv. Joyce Mikateko Maluleke

Ms Nomalungelo Gina, Honourable Deputy Minister of Trade,
Industry and Competition

Mr Khaled El Mekwad, Representative of United Nations
Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)

Ms Anne Githuku-Shongwe, Representative of UN Women

Your Excellency Dr Rudiger Lotz, Charge d' Affaires of German
Embassy in South Africa

Ms Valerie Geen, National Coordinator of the Economic
Empowerment of Women in Green Industry Programme –
UNIDO

Dr Anneline Chetty, Chief Operating Officer at the DTIC

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning !!

At the outset I wish to express my sincere gratitude to UNIDO and other partners for the collaboration with South Africa on women in the green economy.

This work on the Policy Assessment has been undertaken with the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities; the Department of Trade Industry and Competition (DTIC) and other key stakeholders.

I believe it is an important contribution in advancing women's economic empowerment in the country.

One of our priorities as a Department is the inclusion of women into mainstream economic activities. The emphasis is not just on women's employment, but on their participation, representation, ownership and control within the economic sphere.

We are strongly focussed on promoting women into different areas of economic opportunities, mainly those which were previously considered male areas of work. Therefore we welcome this assessment on looking at women in the green economy.

Programme Director

Investing in women is critical. Gender equality boosts the economy, reduces poverty and increases the overall well-being of the population.

It is highlighted globally that the gross domestic product could increase by more than 25 % by 2025 if women played the same role in the labour market as men!

There is also evidence that shows when women are economically empowered, it decreases their vulnerability to gender based violence.

Sustainable development is at the forefront of the development agenda. And with current challenges such as climate change, one of the major strategies for this form of development is through the concept of facilitating a green economy.

A green economy improves human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.

Absence of a green economy would translate to degradation of natural resources and ecosystems, loss of biodiversity and

cases of increased poverty. This would affect everyone but women are more prone to bearing the biggest brunt.

In the absence of appropriate social policies, the green economy may exacerbate existing gender inequities to the detriment of overall sustainability.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Specific and gender-sensitive policies and interventions are necessary to ensure that women and men can equally benefit from the green economy.

Women are largely invisible in mainstream economics. All too often women are treated as passive ‘resources.’

Gender equality is rightly seen as crucial to the green economy, with its own Sustainable Development Goal focusing on Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality).

Yet the interconnections between environment sustainability and women’s empowerment have often been overlooked in practice, particularly in the environmental movement.

It is very important for women to be part of the movement championing a green economy. This is because gender equality is a moral imperative, whether you're in the government, business, NGO sector or a research institution — it's simply the right thing to do.

The findings of the research undertaken in South Africa on whether gender is mainstreamed in the policies and practices in the energy, wind and waste management sectors indicates how much more needs to be done to this end.

This highlights that more women need to be involved in these sectors, not only as beneficiaries, but as central participants within the green economy.

Women need to participate in decision-making within the sectors, as well as be given opportunities to enter these fields as entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses.

The opportunities the green economy potentially holds for women's participation in green growth relate to:

- green production and manufacturing processes (eliminating (chemical) inputs and hazardous working conditions),

- green consumerism (creating new business opportunities and markets),
- micro, small and medium enterprises development and
- female entrepreneurship (including new professions, product development and use of green technology).

Gender gaps extract high economic costs. They contribute to social inequities and environmental degradation. At present, we are confronted with economic, environmental and social crises on a global scale.

Yet women are relegated to taking a back seat to the men who are driving these unsustainable trends.

The green economy affects women in different ways. As workers, women can be excluded from the green economy due to gender segregated employment patterns and discrimination.

Women are often more directly dependent on natural resources. They have the responsibility for the unpaid work of securing food, water, fuel and shelter for their households.

Women are key managers of natural resources and powerful agents of change. Women are not just victims. They have been

and can be central actors in sustainability and green transformation.

Until these are taken on board, with women empowered to play a full part in decision-making at all levels, environmental sustainability will remain a distant goal.

Programme Director

I want to once again thank all the partners in this collaborative research on women in the green industry. These are UNIDO, UN Women, GIZ and the German Embassy; DTIC, and other stakeholders.

I am informed by my Department that the National Steering Committee established for this research has been able to develop a well-constructed and detailed work plan to take forward the work.

This includes:

- popularising the research and its findings widely in the country;
- mainstreaming gender across the work of the different government departments in the sector;
- reviewing policies in the sector that are gender blind;

- training and capacity building of women, youth and persons with disabilities to take up opportunities in value chains in the sector;
- establishment of women, youth and disability led enterprises, cooperatives and SMMEs in the green sector.

I welcome this collaborative work-plan, and assure this meeting that my Department in collaboration with DTIC will take the lead on this initiative.

In conclusion, I welcome this research report and the policy assessment and declare it launched!

I look forward to the work on women in green economy in the country going forward.

I thank you!!
