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**Address by MEC Mahlakeng Mahlakeng during the lunch organized for women of  
Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport in celebration of Women's  
Month on Monday, August 31, 2009 ....**

**Date:** Monday, August 31, 2009

- Programme Director:
- Head of Department: Nic van Staden
- All Senior Managers of the Department Present
- Our very distinguished guests: All women and colleagues of the department of Public Works Roads and Transport

Good day to all and my special greetings to all of you, especially to women across all levels in my department.

It is indeed a great honour for me to be presented with this opportunity to address and join you for a sumptuous lunch on the last day, as the curtain is about to fall on what has been an eventful Women's Month.

I will not, at least for the purpose of this occasion, bore you with the historical and political significance of Women Day which was officially celebrated country-wide on August 09.

It is common knowledge to all of us here what happened 50 years ago. Suffice to say, it was a turning point in our history for the liberation of our country, which amplified the role women played in the struggle for freedom, for a non-racial and non-sexist society.

We have brought you under one roof today, to reflect on the role you as employees of my department, continue to play and also in raising and caring your families. Of paramount importance for me is the critical role you continue to play in our daily operations as a department.

I specifically make this point to the women who make us tick as a department, yet their efforts are seldom acknowledged by their respective senior managers.

I am talking also here, about women, some of them elderly, who wake-up at dawn when some of us are still fast asleep to clean our offices.

The women who make it a point that hot water is ready, cups are clean and tea is served in our offices and during our meetings.

I am talking also about women, who are shouted at by senior managers, because the bath rooms which they never use because they are meant for their bosses, were not properly cleaned or the furnisher properly dusted.

In fact, some of the very same women, who have made it their passion to ensure that we work in a clean environment, hurry to get what you ask for, hardly get a thank you, as a compliment from us.

We as managers hardly exchange prolonged greetings with them.

We never ask them how their families are doing. To rub it in, we hardly support our own even during the time of bereavements yet we expect them to be at work and on time.

I am raising these issues, to change the mindset so that you as women should feel part of the extended family in this department.

This occasion for example, has presented me an excellent opportunity to make an earnest appeal to women, especially those in the lower levels, to please make it a point that you are part of the team.

I am of the view that you are the most important component of the engine. Without you our operations will be grounded.

To our women secretaries too, no amount of shouting or screaming from some of us, should make you feel inferior. You are the most valued employees in the whole chain of service delivery.

Continue to answer those telephone calls promptly and politely because with that courtesy, you are good ambassadors for the department.

Deal efficiently and promptly with whatever correspondence that lands on your desks because in doing so, you may not realize at that point, it improves service delivery.

As women in the department, also make an effort to understand what is going on in the department.

Make it your responsibility to know firsthand any major or minor development in your work environment.

If you know, you are better informed and if you are better informed you can make an input which could help improve on our service delivery.

In conclusion: Programme Director;

As a result of the reconfiguration of departments announced early this year, we have a complement of 10 women in the senior management team of this department.

It is not discouraging, but we can do better. We have to make it our task to open space for women to make contributions and influence decisions at the highest level, not just talk numbers.

The challenge too that we need to address too, is find the answers why is so difficult for us to recruit and or hire women with disabilities.  
If indeed they do not apply for the vacancies advertised, we need to ask why.

To all our women gathered here, including all those in our districts and sub-district offices, your contributions to our daily operations are worth the praise and fully acknowledged.

Together we can do more.

Enjoy your lunch. Bon Appetit

**Ke a leboga.**