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Department:
Economy & Enterprise Development
North West Provincial Government
Republic of South Africa

NORTH WEST PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SET ASIDE R100 MILLION FOR COOPERATIVES



MEC Nelson addressing women at the symposium in Klerksdorp

Whilst consolidating the gains made politically by women who marched to the union buildings in Pretoria City to bring an end to the pass laws enforced by the Apartheid government, we have to work towards achieving true economic emancipation for women, said MEC for Economy and Enterprise Development, Wendy Nelson.

Nelson met with women in Klerksdorp, Protea Hotel in Dr. Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality on Tuesday, 26 August 2014. The meeting forms part of women's month interactive sessions which were aimed at encouraging women to make use of government opportunities to empower themselves economically and create decent employment for people of the North West Province.

The interactive session was attended by approximately 500 women from creative industries, mining and constructions, sewing and other sectors of the economy. MEC Nelson started with women engagements at Danville in Mahikeng. Cllr. Pinky Moloi, Executive Mayor for Dr. Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality urged women to participate in industries that are not considered traditionally female such as mining and construction.

Amongst women who attended the event was Ms. Lucy Ngwabeni, Chairperson of South African Women in Mining Association (SAWIMA). Ngwabeni said they are moved as women in province and believe that this 5th administration of government will bring not only hope to women in business but it will break the ground so that women can be pioneers in mining and construction. Ngwabeni emphasized that she is positive that both young and old women will start to have ownership of mines, they will participate in local procurement and beneficiation in mines as part of celebrating 60 years of women charter in the province.

Women's economic empowerment is fully supported by the Small Business Act and the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Act and other legislation and policies of government.

Koketso Sedumedi of Ketso-Koi Creations indicated that the low participation of women in small business and cooperatives is due to, amongst others, lack of access to business opportunities, information, financial markets and lack of skills and knowledge of how to start and run their businesses. Koketso, who is creating and manufacturing products from organic and waste material, highlighted that government need to assist by forming partnership with them so that they can transfer skills to young people to create decent jobs for youth and people with disability as part of **renewing, rebranding and repositioning** of the province.



Nelson further emphasized that cooperatives allow the benefit of bulk-buying and joint marketing which improves women's bargaining power in the markets. Countries such as India have already demonstrated that it is possible for women in co-operatives to supply top retailers in the formal economy and thus entrepreneurs. Local cooperatives can succeed with the assistance from programmes that government departments have put place to assist emerging and existing cooperatives in the province.



Women in business listening attentively to the presentation of MEC Wendy Nelson

MEC Nelson viewing one of the women co-operatives' products

