



transport

Department:
Transport
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Closing Remarks by the Acting DG Chris Hlabisa during the
Global Aviation Gender Summit, CTICC Ballroom, Cape Town, 10
August 2018**

Dear Programme Director;

- The honorable Deputy Minister of Transport in South Africa, Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga;
- The Secretary General of ICAO, Dr Fang Liu;
- All Protocols Observed

Ladies and gentlemen,

I guess one will not be totally wrong in assuming that many of you have flights to catch this afternoon still and were therefore banking on this summit finishing right on time.

It is for that reason that I will stick to my assigned task, which is to express gratitude to all concerned.

In that regard, I wish to start by conveying words of appreciation to the head of the South African Civil Aviation Authority, Ms Poppy Khoza for identifying a need and sharing her thoughts with the Secretary General, Dr Fang Liu about the need to start the conversation about gender inclusivity and the need to change the status quo.

Similarly, we have to thank Dr Liu for acknowledging that gender transformation was not in essence a challenge that is affecting South Africa only; and for her desire to see change across many parts of the world.

Similarly, words of gratitude are extended to my principals, the Minister as well as the Deputy Minister of Transport for putting their support behind this initiative.

We must also commend the Board of the South African Civil Aviation Authority as led by Mr Smunda Mokoena for giving the CAA management and team the support and latitude to organise an event of this magnitude.

We also wish to thank the ICAO team sincerely for tapping into their knowledge reserve to help identify the right topics and the most relevant people across the globe to discuss the subjects.

A little bird told me that there were lengthy discussions between the South African and ICAO organising team as there were long lists of

topics and experts to consider. You would agree with me that the finalists were indeed impressive.

Ladies and gentlemen, at this point I would like to thank all speakers and panellists that shared their valuable inputs with us.

I also wish to thank all the sponsors whose contribution has made this event possible.

Let's also commend the United Nations agencies that collaborated with us in making this event a success. I am referring to UNESCO and UN Women in particular.

Gratitude is also extended to the various organisations particularly non-profit organisations that are doing tremendous work on the ground to ensure our little girls are equipped with the knowledge and confidence to remember that they also can become pioneers in aviation.

As we return to our respective homes and work stations, let us be reminded that this session was the planting of a seed or simply building of a foundation.

The actual work of nurturing the ideas we shared into formidable trees that will bear fruit for generations to come starts today. The hard

work of putting the structure on the foundation lies ahead but must start today.

As a country we are grateful that ICAO gave us the latitude and opportunity to initiate and host this summit.

Our wish is for the conversation to continue and hence we would like to officially hand over this project to ICAO and hope that resources within the ICAO structures will be allocated to this project and that time and timeframes will be set aside to regularly meet, in order to monitor progress against the set targets.

This is because we are of the view that the conversation does not end here and now, but it begins here today together with the associated work.

Ladies and gentlemen, I trust that your experience since touching down in South Africa has been pleasant and memorable.

When you take off after our deliberations here in the city of Cape Town, I hope that you will not only be taking home a to-do-list, but also beautiful and delightful memories to share with those that have never set foot in this country.

Most critically, I hope you would take what we in this country refer to as *Pad Kos* – which the verbatim translation means food for the road... or simply some take away food.

There was plenty of food for thought and my wish is for you to take home some of the key quotes that resounded with you. Some of the remarkable ones are these, and I quote, requote, and paraphrase:

1. Nothing can stop an idea whose time has come.
2. When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful.
3. If each one of us starts voicing our dissatisfaction with the current status quo in aviation, very soon all our voices will blend into a powerful chant that the world cannot ignore.
4. The challenges of a female aviator in Chile, is a replica of the challenges faced by a female pilot in China. The pain felt by a female aviator in Vienna, is the same pain felt by the one based in Venda.... and that cannot continue unchallenged.
5. It always seems impossible until it's done...
6. It takes just a very small spark from a single matchstick to start a raging fire.
7. Once at the top, it must be second nature for us all who have made it to the rooftop to hold the ladder tight, to make it easier for the next generation of women aviators to climb up.... hassle-free.

Thank you