



INTERNET ARTICLE

Minister Pemmy Majodina urges water sector leaders and managers to uplift other women

07 October 2024

Women in the water sector had an opportunity to engage with the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Pemmy Majodina during a Women in Leadership Dialogue event hosted by the Department of Water and Sanitation on 04 October 2024. The event that took place in Pretoria, was coordinated by the Department's Transformation Management team. Women leaders and managers of the Department and its entities attended the event.

Minister Majodina emphasised that women in leadership positions have the responsibility to support and empower one another. She further explained that women should not feel threatened by other women, as it is the norm these days. "Women in leadership positions will rather pin down their subordinates so that they stay down. They don't want to be matched, and they fear competition", Majodina spoke strongly on how this is ludicrous.

"Stop seeing other women as a threat to you, if you know your work, if you are confident, you will not see any threat," said Minister Majodina. Furthermore, she urged leaders and managers to be considerate, assist their juniors, and to give them opportunities to prove themselves.

The Minister reminded the water sector leaders and managers of the 1956 women who marched to the Union Buildings, fighting for everyone. "Women in leadership, as you rise, are you lifting others to rise with you?" asked the Minister. The advice from the Minister to the women in this regard was that climbing the corporate ladder is not a walk in the park. Minister illustrated that in leadership positions, it is very cold up there and explained that therefore women need other women to support them when the going gets tough up there.

Minister Majodina posed questions to the managers in attendance to ponder on their managerial approaches in dealing with issues of inequality and discrimination in the workplace. "How do you contribute towards addressing inequality and discrimination in the department and its entities. How do you work with the Director-General and Chief Executive Officers towards reaching equity targets. How do you contribute towards education and awareness on gender-based violence and sexual harassment in our institutions." Majodina interrogated.

Minister urged leaders and managers to please always be approachable. This will allow subordinates to be able to speak to their leaders about gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. "As a leader you need to be approachable so that subordinates can come to you when they are abused," said the Minister with sympathy.

The Minister further said women need to celebrate themselves as women because they represent love. She spoke fondly on how women were mostly affected during covid19 and



loadshedding. She explained that women are naturally care givers and as a result they tend to care for others regardless of the situation. “As women, we love, we care, we support, we protect. As women, when we protect, all we think about is saving another person,” said the Minister.

The Minister spoke lengthily on the issue of girl children without sanitary pads. Sentiments from Minister Majodina is that we are not quite free as women until girls are free as well – as they need to have sanitary pads when they are on their periods. Minister reminded leaders and managers that on the 19th of November it will be World Toilet Day and pleaded with leaders and managers to make a difference.

Of course, the Minister spoke about the plight of water shortages across the country. “Our communities want to access clean water and basic sanitation. The Water Services Act is very clear that people must have access to clean potable water. Please do not fail those communities,” pleaded the Minister.

Lack of water in schools is affecting learning. Lack of water in hospitals is detrimental. Lack of water affects livelihoods. Water sector women are tasked with an enormous duty of not failing communities.

Minister Pemmy Majodina concluded by quoting Mama Charlotte Maxeke when she said: *“This work is not for yourselves – kill that spirit of self, and do not live above your people, but live with them.”*

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