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Marcina Majid, Southern African Shipyards shareholder the Deputy Minister of Transport Dikeledi Magadzi and CEO Prasheen Maharaj at a "Women in Maritime" dialogue at SAS' yard on Thursday. Picture: Supplied

## WATCH: Minister praises Durban shipbuilding company for empowering women in maritime

By Bukeka Silekwa  Aug 29, 2019



Durban - The Deputy Minister of Transport, Dikeledi Magadzi has praised the Durban based Southern African Shipyards (SAS) for making giant strides in empowering women in maritime.

Speaking at a dialogue to celebrate "Women in Maritime" at SAS' yard on Thursday, Magadzi said that maritime was no longer the domain for males.

She pointed out that SAS as a company was 67% owned by women and 12% its employees which was a true example of empowerment.

"We are here to see what we are doing as government in relation to Operation Phakisa. With the manufacturing and maintenance of ships, we are looking at what can be done to create jobs. As a department we appreciate what you are doing. This is about growing the economy as much as it is promoting equality. You are not just building ships but building the nation," said Magadzi.

Magadzi, accompanied by MEC for Transport in KwaZulu-Natal, Mxolisi Kaunda was taken on a tour of SAS by its CEO, Prasheen Maharaj.

Organisations invited to participate in Thursday's dialogue included Women in Maritime Eastern and Southern Africa (WOMESA), Women in Maritime-Africa (WIMA-Africa), Women's International

Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA) and the South African Network for Women in Transport (SANWIT).

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*Deputy Minister of Transport Dikeledi Magadzi praises Southern African Shipyards for its women empowerment at an event on Thursday.  
Video: Bukeka Silekwa*

The dialogue comes against the backdrop of the ship building and repair company's own commitment to empowering women in maritime with a substantial portion of its workforce comprising females in engineering, boiler making, welding, shipbuilding, marketing, finance and human resources.

SAS is a 67% Black Women Owned Company, with the Women Shareholders being Gabisile Nxumalo and Marcina Majid, along with the Female Employees of SAS.

In a major milestone for women in the industry, SAS's own Chief Financial Operator, Trishna Misra was recently appointed to the Ethekewini Maritime Cluster board.

Maharaj commended the Government for identifying the Maritime Economy as key driver in alleviating the ills South Africa is experiencing as a result of the global recession.

"While these are trying times, it is comforting to know that the development and upliftment of women in the industry has not fallen by the wayside," he said.

Placed high on the agenda on Thursday are Operation Phakisa, and Maritime in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Through Operation Phakisa, the South African government aims to unlock the economic potential of South Africa's oceans to create between 800 000 and 1 million direct jobs by 2033.

This bold government initiative is looking to access the Blue Economy which has the potential to contribute up to R177 billion to the gross domestic product (GDP).

SAS was recently awarded a multi-billion Rand contract to build a Hydrographic Survey Vessel (HSV) for the South African Navy which represents one of the most complex projects to be undertaken in the African continent in recent years.

The ship building programme also signals one of the largest jobs creation projects in the country.

“The hydrographic survey project will create employment for more than 500 people, including apprentices, artisans, technicians, engineering interns and engineers in different disciplines, directly in the shipyard and more than 1500 jobs in the supplier and subcontract value chain.

“With the experience of having built such technically-advanced ships, and with the aim of becoming a global force to be reckoned with, SAS is looking to become the Marine Technology partner of choice to the rest of Africa,” said Maharaj.

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