



*Under the patronage of the First Lady of the Republic of Zimbabwe
Her Excellency Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa*

Technical Workshop on Dismantling Structural Barriers to Career Progression

Kalundu Room, Elephant Hills Hotel, Victoria Falls, 29 & 30 April 2026

Mrs Lydia Bebe Kum, UN Tourism Programme Officer

Opening Remarks

Distinguished representatives from the public sector, industry leaders, seasoned entrepreneurs, and technical experts, good afternoon!

It is a profound honor to welcome you all to Victoria Falls for this technical workshop. We are gathered here to move beyond high-level advocacy and dive into the practical, technical work required to truly shift the landscape of our industry.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Zimbabwe for their exceptional coordination. A special thank you to the **Honourable Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Barbara Rwodzi**, and her dedicated team for their vision and technical support in bringing this 2nd UN Tourism Regional Congress and technical workshop to life.

My sincere appreciation and thanks to Dr. Lucy Ferguson and Mrs Chipo Mandala our facilitators who will walk us through the workshop. Your commitment to education, innovation, and finance access provides the necessary framework for the sessions we are about to begin.

Dear participants,

Our presence here today marks a significant progression in our shared mission. We began this journey in Nigeria in 2012, in Calabar when for the first time, women's empowerment was inscribed in the agenda of the regional commission for Africa. In **Ghana** during the 1st Regional Congress in 2019 where we first laid the groundwork for women's empowerment across the continent. Today, we take that momentum even further.

"This workshop is a critical component of a larger, global mission. Our efforts here directly support the **United Nations 2030 Agenda**, specifically **SDG 5 on Gender Equality** and **SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth**. We are working to ensure that tourism acts as a true engine for inclusive prosperity.

Furthermore, our objectives are deeply rooted in the **African Union Agenda 2063**, specifically Aspiration 6, which envisions an Africa where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth. By dismantling structural barriers, we

are contributing to the **UN Tourism Agenda for Africa—Tourism for Inclusive Growth**, ensuring that African women are not just participants, but the architects of the sector's future.

This workshop is titled '**Dismantling Structural Barriers to Career Progression**' because we recognize that the hurdles facing women are often systemic. For the private sector and entrepreneurs here today, these barriers represent lost productivity and untapped market potential.

Our agenda is rigorous. Over the next two days, we will analyze the 'hidden fences' in career progression, refine negotiation techniques for higher-value contracts, and sharpen the technical delivery of your business pitches. We are not just discussing empowerment; we are engineering the '**Bridge to Leadership**' through concrete skill-building and strategic networking."

"I want to express my sincere appreciation for your presence and active participation throughout this entire workshop. Whether you are an official shaping policy or an entrepreneur scaling a business, your 'lived realities' are the data we need to create lasting, impactful solutions.

By tomorrow afternoon, the outcomes of our technical sessions will be presented directly to the Regional Congress. Let us ensure that these two days serve as a launchpad for new alliances and measurable career progression.

Tatenda ! Thank you for your attention.