



Press Release – Tsogo Sun Hotels – 13/09/2019

A Green Warrior with her Head, Heart and Hands in the Game

The Miss Earth South Africa has always advocated for the development of young women in South Africa as Environmental Ambassadors or Warriors.

A beautiful Spring inspired announcement was held at Tsogo Sun Hotels' Rosa venue at the Palazzo at Montecasino where the 2019 Miss Earth South Africa finalists from across South Africa gathered for an afternoon filled with sharing their journey, engaging and sharing their views on the current climate crisis we find ourselves in both locally and as a global community.

Celebrating 16 years of Environmental Advocacy, Community Service and another generation of Green Leaders which form part of the strong fold of young women; 22-year-old Lungo Katete from Midrand was crowned Miss Earth South Africa, followed by her three ambassadors: L'Oreal Magro from Zakariya Park in Johannesburg, Moratwe Masima who resides in Stellebosch followed by KwaZulu Natal's Victoria Soutar from the Midlands. The newly appointed Miss Earth Ambassador; Lungo Katete is a Gauteng born earth warrior who recently completed her Bachelors in Architectural Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand and hopes to complete her Honours and Masters degree in Architecture over the next few years. L'Oreal Magro is the 2019 first runner-up and currently busy with her PhD in Sociology at The University of Johannesburg, she tutors and lectures part time in the field of Clinical Sociology and Population, Health & the Environment. There is clearly no shortage of academic excellence amongst this remarkable group as second runner-up; Moratwe Masima who originally hails from Midrand but is currently based in Stellenbosch where she is in her final year of Medicine at the University of Stellenbosch. And completing the winner's platform is KZN's Victoria Soutar whom is currently studying for her Master in Agricultural Science, at the University of KZN.

In a video message to guests; Professor Thuli Madonsela said; "It is all our responsibility to understand a small inaction can have grave consequences for the country, continent and the world." She went on to say that; "These young women of the Miss Earth programme have the greatest commitment to create change."

It has been an intense few months for the finalists who have been hard at work, with a mission to change the perception and understanding of climate change, the impact of environment degradation and the crucial waste, water and food security paradigm. Through the #WasteStopsWithME Campaign, finalists have been on the ground in cities and communities including, Johannesburg, Tshwane, Tembisa, Hartebeespoort, Cape Town, Soweto, Edenvale, the Midlands in KZN and Zakariya Park, Midrand and Bosmont, to name but a few; communities were engaged, clean-ups were hosted and communities gathered to understand and engage the topic at a local level. The primary objective being to create awareness and more importantly to educate on the issue of waste management and the catastrophic affects of a lack of waste-consciousness for our country and the globe - with a core focus on taking the issue of waste to the individual and connecting ordinary South African's to their own waste generation and footprint.

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Just a week before the world takes to the streets in the global Climate Strike set for Friday 20th of September 2019 and after the world was pained to see the burning of the central African belt and the Amazon rainforests, the Miss Earth South Africa heeds the call now more than ever to ensure that civil society own their voice in the climate emergency we are faced with. Young women from across the country apply to the programme each year and by so doing they commit themselves to a year of service to their communities, the cities and townships in which they reside as they embark on a journey that certainly does change them forever.

Ella Bella Leite, Director of the programme said; “Finalists demonstrate clear leadership qualities, creative thinking, strength of the mind and a character, most importantly a passion for making a sustainable difference in their communities. Each year it is immensely rewarding to see the growth and influence of the Miss Earth South Africa programme, over a period of fifteen years we can confidentially say that we have empowered, educated and encouraged young women from around South Africa to become Environmental Ambassadors and role models in their communities as they continue their own journey as conscious minded citizens who will have impact wherever they go because this programme equips them to do just that.”

The Miss Earth programme is proud to have worked throughout the year with partners such as TsoGo Sun Hotels and TsoGo Sun Gaming - particularly Montecasino, the official home and venue partner of Miss Earth South Africa and strategic partners such as SANBI, The Department of Environmental Affairs, UN Environment, Newsclip Media Monitoring, Servest, Samsonite and Inhouse Venue Technical Management.

Candy Tohill, TsoGo Sun’s GM of Corporate Affairs, congratulated the Miss Earth South Africa 2019 winners on the announcement of this prestigious title. “We extend our warmest congratulations to the newly announced ambassadors and winners, all of whom have demonstrated their commitment to promoting environmental consciousness and improving conditions in their communities. TsoGo Sun’s environmental management policy commits our companies to observe best practice and we strive to uphold this at all our properties. Our partnership with the Miss Earth South Africa development programme forms part of our effort to support environmental education and awareness to help to reduce our impact on the natural environment.”

Finally Executive Director of Miss Earth South Africa, Catherine Constantinides, also an international climate activist and human rights defender said; “Heroes don’t live in story books they live amongst us and we as the Miss Earth Leadership Programme have to ensure we empower and inspire these young women to be active citizens and be those heroes we need in society to allow us to change the problems we face on a social, community level and linking that to the environmental impact we are faced with as a society. We are faced with a climate emergency and we have no time to lose; it is our belief that these young women will take the #GreeningMinds into every sphere of their communities and platforms of influence as they set the agenda and shift behaviour, mindsets and the future we strive for. Their time is now!”

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