



Press Release – Tsogo Sun – 05/11/2017

**A Whirlwind Green Adventure
Miss Earth South Africa 2017 departs for the Philippines**

With a passion for people, planet and education, it is not hard to see why Irini Moutzouris scooped the prestigious appointment of Miss Earth South Africa 2017. Taking the title no less than a month ago, Irini is in the heart of a whirlwind as she is already on her way to the Philippines in South East Asia where she will represent SA at the international Miss Earth 2017. She will be in the Philippines for close to a month and competes for the coveted international title on the 4th of November in Manila. Irini truly has had a taste of South Africa as she has already called many parts of SA home; born in Joburg, grew up in Klerksdorp in the North West and has completed her studies in both the Free State and now Pretoria.

At a farewell hosted by Tsogo Sun's Palazzo Hotel, Montecasino earlier this week, Irini showcased her national costume designed for her by none other than Sonwabile Ndamase of Vukani Fashions. Sonwabile has been the head designer of the winning national costume design for Miss Earth South Africa for the past six years and each year his design wins international gold awards abroad. Irini will also be dressed by renowned couture designer, Jose De Canha from Klerksdorp where her glamorous evening dress will be sure to dazzle the international crowds.

The international Miss Earth event is a powerful platform where over a hundred participating countries have the opportunity to send these young women to learn from each other, open their minds to climate challenges and to also share best practices from their individual advocacy work in their respective countries.

Ella Bella Leite, Director of the programme said; "It's rewarding to see the growth and influence of the Miss Earth South Africa programme, over a period of more than fourteen years. The international event has always been an exciting showcase of the work we are doing here at home and we are excited that Irini will share the powerful impact the #WasteStopsWithME campaign has had in communities around South Africa on waste management with partners such as Pikitup, the City Of Joburg, Tsogo Sun, SANBI and SAPPI. This campaign is just one of the projects Irini will be presenting to the international body as to what she is advocating in her home country. Along with this campaign she will also be sharing the City of Joburg's recently launched #AreSebetseng monthly clean-up initiative; getting the community to help clean-up and keep Joburg City moving forward.

The 22-year-old Joburg born beauty who is one of a set of twins, is a final year Education student at the University of Pretoria and with her passion for education she has found many ways to thread through the theme of waste in the classroom on a daily basis. Irini says; "I studied education not only because of my love for children but I believe that your education is an intangible asset that nobody can ever take away from you."

The platform of Miss Earth South Africa has given Irini an opportunity to engage children, youth and community members on the issues we face as a society when it comes to the creation of waste and the manner in which we have traditionally discarded of waste. With an energetic focus on waste, Irini has done weekly school visits and classroom activities that all aim to not only create awareness but educate.

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Both the #WasteStopsWithME and #AreSebetseng projects will be taken to the Philippines to share with the larger international delegation of Miss Earth Ambassadors from around the world as they delve into environmental, climate, waste and water issues faced by the young women's individual countries and how they are striving to have an impact working with local authorities, departments and municipalities.

The Miss Earth South Africa organisation is endorsed by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Department of Tourism with Minister Molewa stating that; "Through your work locally and internationally, you continue to make our country proud. I wish you success in the future and thank you for partnering with government and business, to make a better world."

Says Candy Tohill, General Manager Corporate Affairs for Tsogo Sun, "Our sincerest wishes to Irini on a successful trip to the Philippines representing South Africa on the global environmental stage. As an environmentally conscious organisation Tsogo Sun is extremely proud to be associated with Miss Earth South Africa and the work it does through the #WasteStopsWithME and #AreSebetseng projects and are delighted to have played a part in taking these initiatives to the world."

Executive Director of Miss Earth South Africa, Catherine Constantinides says; "Climate Change will be the biggest challenge we face in our lifetimes, and it's up to us to realize that we will be the catalysts for change that will push our countries towards a greener tomorrow. Planting a tree might seem like a simple act, but in effect it's about being part of a global movement to secure a future for the generations to come."

The programme is proud to work in association with Pikitup and the City of Joburg alongside Tsogo Sun, the official home and venue partner of Miss Earth South Africa and strategic partners SANBI, SAPPI and Newsclip Media Monitoring.

Follow Irini's journey abroad on twitter and Instagram: @missearth_sa

**For interviews contact Georgina on 082 505 0664 or email safusion@mweb.co.za
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