

Consider integrated farming - Makgato

By [Irene Kgakgamatso](#)

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Women have been advised to take advantage of business opportunities in integrated farming. The advice was given by Minister of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs, Dorcas Makgato when officially opening the 19th Women's Exposition in Gaborone on 26 June.



Haytam123258 via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Makgato stated that integrated farming reduced costs and saved time. She explained that it enabled farmers to identify opportunities and threats leading to suitable actions for the business as well as consumer interests.

Such farming, she said, also allowed for critical management as all assets were found in one place, be it home, garden or farm. Makgato pointed out that agriculture was the most growing, hiring and promising segment of the economy. She recommended goat and sheep farming for women in agriculture because it was profit oriented and less costly.

On empowering the girl-child, Makgato said the idea was to help them believe in themselves given that women headed most single-headed families and struggled to raise children alone. She said different programmes were in place to empower the girl-child.

The minister explained that boy-child empowerment was also crucial so that they did not feel neglected and end up seeking empowerment in the wrong way. She lamented that only a few Department of Gender Affairs funded businesses were still surviving while a lot of them were non-operational.

Growing business, sustaining the economy

Makgato explained that businesses were funded in order to help them grow and sustain the economy as well as create employment. She thus encouraged women to refrain from targeting government tenders, saying the government did not offer any better monies and was at times challenged with system failure. Nevertheless, the minister assured exhibitors that the programme would be improved.

The department would loosen regulations adding that with cooperation and consultation, the goal was achievable.

Giving a testimony of how she turned her situation into an opportunity, Suzan Ditshotlo who owns a landscaping business, said she got a P20,000 grant from gender affairs. She encouraged women not to misuse money regardless of how the amount adding that discipline and record keeping were equally important.

The six-day exposition is held under the theme: *Entrepreneurs development: key to transform women's lives. It has attracted women from all over the country with different businesses ranging from landscaping, manufacturing and clothing.*

Businesswomen from neighbouring countries also attend the annual event to benchmark.

Read the [original article](#) on [Botswana Daily News](#).

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