



Press release  
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### **Winner of Miss Earth South Africa 2023 announced at Southern Sun Sandton**

*Sandton, Johannesburg* – Southern Sun Sandton was abuzz with excitement on the evening of Saturday, 9 September as it played host to the prestigious Miss Earth South Africa 2023 winner’s announcement gala dinner. Celebrating its 20th Anniversary this year, the event saw finalists from across the nation coming together, alongside esteemed judges, Zizo Tshwete, JJ Tabane, Abigail Visagie, Leanne Manas to mark this momentous occasion.

Amidst a gathering of environmental advocates, community service enthusiasts, and green champions, the highlight of the evening was the announcement of the 2023 winner. Zabelo Hlabisa hailing from uMhlanga in KwaZulu-Natal, emerged victorious, capturing the hearts of the judges and audience alike with her unwavering dedication to environmental causes. Zabelo, the new green queen, is a social entrepreneur, event planner and digital content creator.

Zabelo Hlabisa is joined by three remarkable runners-up who will collaborate with her in the coming year to further the mission of environmental education, awareness, and community programmes. The 1st runner-up is Belinde Schreuder from Centurion in Pretoria, whose objective is to promote tree plantings, conservation and clean air policies. Duduzile Mbobo and Zama Mbatha are the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> runners-up respectively.

Not only was the auspicious event about celebrating the new titleholders, but it also commemorated a significant milestone for the Miss Earth South Africa Leadership Programme. In its 20 years of activism and service across South Africa, the organisation has made an indelible mark in promoting environmental consciousness, community service, and a greener nation; these being values which are aligned with those of the official home of the Miss Earth South Africa of 10 years, Southern Sun.

Distinguished guests in attendance included Mr. Nelson Muffuh, the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in South Africa, and Sithembile Ntombela, the Acting Chief Executive Officer of Brand South Africa. Both expressed their support and admiration for the work of the programme.

Southern Sun’s Head of Marketing, Candy Tohill, extended heartfelt congratulations to the Miss Earth South Africa 2023 winners, emphasising the group’s continued commitment to environmental education and awareness. She noted, “As we welcome a new Miss Earth South Africa and the 2023 programme ambassadors, we look forward to working alongside them to promote environmental education and awareness as part of the group’s environmental management plan. We also extend our congratulations to the Miss Earth South Africa programme on two decades of tireless dedication

towards building an environmentally responsible country. As a partner for the past decade, Southern Sun is proud to have journeyed alongside this transformative initiative.”

Catherine Constantinides, Executive Director of Miss Earth South Africa and a renowned international climate activist and human rights defender, highlighted the programme’s enduring commitment to empowering young women as active citizens and agents of change. She stated, “Their time to effect change is now!”

As the official Miss Earth South Africa accommodation partner, Southern Sun is proud to have worked throughout the year with the leadership programme and its partners such as Brand South Africa, SAPPI, 321 Systems, Skin Renewal, Europa Art, Over The Top Decor and Events, Lanza South Africa, Newsclip Media Monitoring and Interwaste.

To learn more about Southern Sun, visit the website at <https://www.southernsun.com/>. To learn more about Miss Earth South Africa’s leadership programme visit their website at <https://www.missearthsouthafrica.co.za/>.



CAPTION: As the official accommodation partner of Miss Earth South Africa, the finals were announced at a gala dinner at Southern Sun Sandton on Saturday 9 September 2023. Pictured here are the core team for Miss Earth South Africa 2023, from left to right: Zama Mbatha (3<sup>rd</sup> runner-up), Belinde Schreuder (1<sup>st</sup> runner-up), Zabelo Hlabisa (winner), and Duduzile Mbobo (2<sup>nd</sup> runner-up).

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