



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Speech by DDG Morongwe Ramphele on behalf of the Deputy Minister of  
Tourism, Tokozile Xasa**

**2012 Imvelo Awards for Responsible Tourism, Monte Casino Ballroom**

**31 October 2012**

Programme Director  
Chairman of FEDHASA, Mr Eddy Khosa  
Partners for the Imvelo Awards  
Mavuso Msimango, Chairman of TBCSA  
Dr Salifou Siddo, CEO of TEP (Tourism Entrepreneurs Programme)  
Mike Tsoetsi, CEO of CATHSSETA  
Clifford Ross, CEO of City Lodge  
Graham Wood, CEO of Tsogo Sun Hotels  
Ms N Mushwana, CEO of NMN Grand hotel & Shoprite Checkers Women of the Year  
Major General Mathebula from the SAPS  
Senior Management of the NDT  
Members of the media  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening. I am very delighted to be invited, to speak and be part of the eleventh edition of Imvelo Awards.

Congratulations to the tourism industry and all finalists for the Awards. Whether you win an award or not, each of you has a right to be proud of your achievements. This day is about celebrating responsible tourism taking into cognisance what we have achieved dating back from 2007 when we entered into partnership with FEDHASA.

Our performance and growth is impressive, the numbers of visitors entering our borders are at all-time high, and the industry's potential is undoubtedly limitless.

Tourism has always been the golden angel of this democracy. The 1996 White Paper made it very clear that we wanted to develop the tourism sector as a national priority in

a sustainable and acceptable manner, so that it will contribute significantly to the improvement of the quality of life of every South African. And we have never changed from that. When this administration introduced the New Growth Path, it identified Tourism as one of the priority sectors to drive the government's economic growth plan.

Through tourism, we continue to yield multiple benefits as we are able to earn foreign exchange, create jobs - particularly for youth and women in rural communities and most importantly - to alleviate poverty. The reputation of South Africa as a tourist destination continues to grow to unprecedented levels.

Allow me to briefly share with you the state of Tourism industry in the country. During the last five years, South Africa has outpaced the growth of all competitor locations in the leisure arrivals category. Foreign direct spend in rand terms has grown faster than arrivals, with an 11% per-annum growth rate. South Africa's tourism industry has also managed to build on the momentum achieved during a record-breaking 2010 by growing a further 3,3% and attracting over 8,3 million international tourists in 2011.

According to the most recent tourism figures, tourist numbers to South Africa increased by an impressive 10,5% during the first six months of 2012, which is double the global tourism growth. The industry experienced particularly strong growth in overseas tourist arrivals, recording 17,1% growth in arrivals from outside of the African continent. A total of 1 163 477 overseas tourist arrivals were recorded for the first six months of 2012, compared to 993 364 tourist arrivals for the corresponding period in 2011.

In response to these figures, this is what President Zuma had to say:-

**Quote:**

"Our tourism strategy is proving to be successful. We congratulate the tourism industry, both the informal and formal sectors, as well as the Department of Tourism, Tourism South Africa and the statutory bodies in the sector in all provinces for this achievement.

We also acknowledge the contribution of all South Africans as we all play our role to make the tourists feel welcome in our country. Without the display of that special South African warmth and hospitality, tourists would not be coming in such great numbers to our country. We have a great country, we must work together to make the world realise its full potential and boost economic growth and job creation through tourism."

**End Quote**

We should be very proud as the country, South Africa. Our tourism role-players must be encouraged to deliver only their very best, raise standards even higher and reach for the highest accolade. The awards must serve to generate publicity for our tourism industry and encourage innovation.

Programme Director, speaking about responsible tourism brings me to the reason why we are gathered here this evening: to present a range of prestigious awards as a way of encouraging the industry to accept voluntary guidelines promoting responsible tourism.

Greater focus and an increasing awareness that responsible tourism should top the industry agenda has contributed to the success of these Awards for the past 10 years.

As the government of South Africa, we are proud to be the first country in the world to include “Responsible Tourism” as a key pillar of our national tourism policy, the 1996 White Paper on the development and promotion of tourism in South Africa.

The Imvelo Awards stress the principles of the triple P bottom line – People, Planet and Prosperity - as outlined in the Kings 111 report and is in line with the country’s National Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism as well as the Responsible Tourism guidelines for the South African hospitality industry.

These awards are just one of the ways we can entrench what we started from the dawn of our democracy – positioning responsible tourism as an essential part of the industry’s strategic approach.

The ever-increasing number of entries for these awards – hitting a new record of 234 - says to me we are moving from strength to strength.

Allow me to welcome the entries in this year’s Awards who have demonstrated a wide range of sustainable and responsible practices through their operations and initiatives to contribute to the socio-, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of communities they operate in. This is outlined in the key outcomes of the WSSD (2002) as well as the strategic Vision of the National Department of Tourism’s National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS).

I must say that I am delighted that responsible tourism is gradually gaining ground within every quarter of the industry. We are paying tribute to our finalists that make real, measurable and sustainable contribution to responsible tourism. We have come a long way to be where we are today.

Ladies and gentlemen, there has been a global shift towards defining economic performance in terms of the triple-bottom line which implies tourism growth that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Imvelo awards gives a direct and the most proper response to the above as it gives equal weighting to the economy, society and the environment, as these are the three pillars of sustainable tourism – as reflected through the various categories of the awards.

We all need to work together to insure ourselves against future short-term shocks and capitalise on South Africa’s full potential as a tourist destination.

These awards continue to encourage industry members to accept voluntary guidelines promoting responsible tourism, as they are in line with the National Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism and the UN World Tourism organisation’s code of ethics. They are also supported by the Heritage Environmental Rating Programme.

Responsible Tourism is gaining ground as a newly emerging and growing global trend worldwide. It offers opportunities to develop products that can contribute to national

socio-economic objectives by providing livelihoods for local economics and contributing value to the maintenance of local heritage, culture and traditions. In the same breath, responsible tourism also generates revenues for environmental conservation and management.

As we are gathered here this evening, it is important to remind ourselves that responsible tourism is not a luxury for South Africa. It is an absolute necessity if South Africa is to emerge as a successful international competitor, thus committing the tourism sector to pursuing a policy of Responsible Tourism. The National Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism (SANS 1162: 2011) was launched in order to support all our efforts to improve and harmonise the sustainability certification of tourism businesses.

Responsible tourism is important and remains a focal area for the South African government. Our belief is that - if a responsible approach to tourism is not adopted and the industry is not adequately planned - a number of negative impacts can occur. These include environmental degradation; seasonality and unemployment during the off-season; increased urban/rural polarisation; concentration of wealth in the hands of owners of tourism plant at the expense of population as a whole; and exploitation of local cultures and community groups.

Friends and colleagues, we have all witnessed some momentous developments in the way this industry approaches the issue of responsible tourism, and although there is always more that can be done, we have started on a shared journey towards making it an instinctive consideration in everything we do. We must remain steadfast in our journey towards making South Africa the best destination.

This year marks the beginning of the second decade of Imvelo Awards for Responsible Tourism with FEDHASA as custodian playing a significant role since the Awards' inception at the WSSD in 2002. It is only in order to applaud FEDHASA for its significant role in terms of making a difference in this country.

The Chairman of FEDHSA, Mr Eddy Khosa informed me that plans are underway to consolidate the Awards into a programme to be known as the IMVELO GREEN KEY PROGRAMME that will take form in February 2013. The IMVELO GREEN KEY PROGRAMME is geared to compliment the principles laid down in the NTSS and will look at contributing to youth development and the creation of sustainable jobs. I am also pleased that this Programme carries the support of current Imvelo Awards sponsors.

As the Department of Tourism in South Africa, we are mindful of the fact that sustainable tourism development and growth can only be realised through joint efforts of public and private sector. The department is committed to putting systems in place that will facilitate such collaboration. As we move forward, we maintain our commitment to the principles of sustainable development.

Without a doubt, tourism has an enormous job creation potential. Let us explore our country and become ambassadors in promoting the available opportunities so that we may continue to grow this sector to greater heights.

I also wish to remind all the 39 finalists that there will be no losers this evening. We all win as we re-commit ourselves to work even harder in building our tourism industry to take it to a higher competitive level.

Congratulations to all of you.

I thank you.

Tokozile Xasa, MP  
Deputy Minister of Tourism