



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa. Tel. (+27 12) 444 6780, Fax (+27 12) 444 7027  
Private Bag X9154, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa. Tel. (+27 21) 469 5800, Fax: (+27 21) 465 3216

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY:**

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**Mr M S F de Freitas (DA) to ask the Minister of Tourism:**

(a) Who was invited to the meeting with tourism stakeholders on 9 March 2020 to discuss the impact of Covid-19 on the tourism sector, (b) what criteria were used when inviting invitees, (c) who attended the meeting, (d) what (i) was the outcome of the meeting and (ii) resolutions were agreed to and (e) by what date is a follow-up meeting set to take place? NW1047E

**REPLY:**

**(a) Who was invited to the meeting of 9 March 2020**

On 09 March 2020, The Minister of Tourism, Ms. Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane convened an extended Tourism Leadership Forum (TLF) to discuss the potential impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector. The Tourism Leadership Forum (TLF) is a platform that was established to allow the Minister and the Deputy Minister to discuss and deliberate with the captains of the industry on tourism related matters in order to ensure that tourism grows and contribute to the overall socio-economic development. The rationale for the TLF flows from the NTSS which states that the successful implementation of the NTSS is dependent on the commitment of all stakeholders to adopt an integrated approach in implementing the identified strategic priorities and actions. Hence, the engagement of the private sector and other stakeholders, alongside government, at a national, provincial and local level is crucial.

The following members who are the original members of TLF were invited.

- Ministry of Tourism
- Department of Tourism DG
- South African Tourism CEO
- Chief Quality Assurance Officer of the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa

- CEOs of Major Hotel groups
- CEO of Board of Airline Representatives of South Africa (BARSA)
- CEOs of Major Tour Operators
- CEOs of Tourism Associations.

In addition to the original TLF members invited, invitations were extended to amongst others, the following:

- Members of the Conference industry (Convention Bureau's and Conference Centers)
- Provincial Tourism Marketing Agencies;
- SANParks;
- Domestic and International Airlines;
- Rail Operators (Rovos Rail, Blue Train etc.)
- The Restaurant Association of South Africa (RASA); and
- Private product owners.

**(b) What criteria were used to identify invitees?**

Acknowledging the potential negative impact that COVID-19 could have on the tourism sector, the Department extended invitations beyond the traditional TLF database in order to reach a wide range of tourism players and audiences. Invitations to the TLF was sent to 107 members of the tourism industry. The meeting was attended by 120 guests.

**(c) Who attended the meeting?**

In addition to the private sector representatives mentioned in answer (a), the meeting was also attended by the:

- Minister of Tourism: Ms. Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane
- Director-General of the Department of Health (Acting): Dr. Anban Pillay
- Director-General of the Department of Tourism: Mr. Victor Tharage
- Deputy Director of the National Institute for Communicable Disease (NICD), National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS): Prof Professor Lucille Blumberg
- CEO of South African Tourism: Mr. Sisa Ntshona.

**(d) (i)What was the outcome of the meeting?**

The main focus of the meeting was to discuss the expected impact of COVID-19 on South Africa's Tourism Sector. The Department of Health also provided a status update on the number of cases, and how the NICD is managing the outbreak from a health perspective. In addition, the following issues were discussed:

- Mitigation efforts to reduce the impact of the virus on the tourism sector.
- The importance of protecting the safety and health of the citizens.
- Increase in cancelations of bookings.
- The future of the Tourism Indaba.

- The importance of considering the staff in the tourism industry and how to protect them against the decline in business.

**(ii) what resolutions were agreed to?**

The meeting agreed that the spread of the pandemic in South Africa was still in its early stages, however, the Minister of Tourism committed to the following:

- To engage National Treasury to assist businesses in distress to access the employment incentives that have been put in place.
- To negotiate with various meeting and events owners to postpone to future dates based on scenarios so that we minimise cancellations.
- To further engage with the Minister of Labour and Employment who has agreed to look at relief measures for those registered with the UIF.

Subsequently, the Department of Tourism has embarked on a range of activities to support the Tourism Sector in dealing with the effects of COVID-19. Interventions by the Department of Tourism include amongst others:

- The establishment of the Tourism Relief Fund (TRF)
- Engagement with the Minister of Labour and Employment to develop relief measures for those tourism companies registered with the UIF.
- The compilation of a list of accommodation facilities, i.e. public, community and privately owned, that can be utilised as quarantine facilities.
- Working with DIRCO in the repatriation of South African Citizens stranded in foreign countries;
- The readjustment of the Department's budget to support the Tourism recovery plan; and
- The development of the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan.

**(e) By what date is a follow up meeting set to take place?**

The outbreak of COVID-19 and the declaration of a National State of Disaster prevented the Department of Tourism to host a follow up meeting. However, since the beginning of the lockdown, the Minister held virtual meetings with various sub-sectors in the tourism sector. These meetings include, amongst others, the Tourism Business Council South Africa (TBCSA), the Restaurant Association of South Africa (RASA), tourism guides, tourism operators, and Women in Tourism.

On 29 April 2020, Minister Kubayi-Ngubane participated in a webinar hosted by SA Tourism and attended by more than 2 000 people. The purpose of the webinar was to provide an update on the state of tourism and the various support measures that the Department of Tourism and Government as a whole are providing to the tourism sector.