



**REMARKS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM, MR FISH MAHLALELA AT
THE AFRICA TRAVEL INDABA NTCE NETWORKING SESSION IN DURBAN ON
15 MAY 2024.**

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HOD LEDET

Esteemed Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to extend my sincere appreciation to all of you for gracing this 2024 Tourism Africa Travel Indaba during the Africa Month, where we celebrate the rebooted future of tourism industry and Africa's excellence.

Let me also thank all stakeholders for their support in the planning towards the preparations of this event. This year's programme is intertwined with the graduation ceremony which is the official handing over of competency certificates to the 123 graduates from all over KZN.

The whole purpose of the NTCE is to bridge the information gap between industry, government, learners and educators. The main aim of the NTCE is to promote tourism as a career, profession and business of choice targeting learners from high schools, TVET Colleges and University students, out of school youth and unemployed tourism graduates.

The Department of Tourism through its Tourism National Tourism Sector Strategy has, amongst others, identified a need to address skills shortages in the tourism sector by training and building capacity of unemployed youth and graduates in especially critical and scarce skills in the hospitality and tourism services sector.

Hence, the NTCE was birthed to intentionally create a talent pool for the sector.

Inversely, the NTCE becomes a platform where the tourism industry can sell itself as a business and employer of choice, as they interact with young people through exhibitions, as speakers and on other interactive platforms hosted at the event.

The purpose of the NTCE 2024 is to provide a platform for the sector to create awareness on the available careers and professional opportunities in the tourism industry and give the learners an opportunity to interact with their potential employers. The primary target groups include high school learners from grade 9 – 12, TVET College students, university students, educators and unemployed tourism graduates.

Indeed, this should be a great start for all our graduates to build a better future for themselves and their families, let me join the rest in wishing you a great future with many prospects.

We all believe that education has all the necessary ingredients to holistically develop an individual to be an accomplished human being.

Our mission over the past 30 years has been to restore both social and economic justice to our nation, and to decisively address the inequality that was the hallmark of systemic discrimination and dispossession.

Over these years, we sought to use education as a tool to create equality, employment and fighting poverty, having witnessed the worst injustices of apartheid of using education as a tool to perpetuate inequality.

Our basic education outcomes are steadily improving across a range of measures. The latest matric pass rate, at 82.9%, is the highest ever. And with each new year, learners from no-fee schools are accounting for more and more of the bachelor passes achieved.

At the same time, fewer learners are dropping out of school. We have increased funding for poor and working-class students in universities and TVET significantly over the past five years.

Our government has been investing enormous efforts and resources to stimulate, transform and grow our economy so that it can create jobs, grow new and old industries, and create business opportunities for millions of young men and women who are the hardest hit by the scourge of unemployment and lack of access to funding.

The eradication of the legacy of apartheid and colonialism has been a critical priority of the past 30 years of democracy and it is still kept alive by its remnants which are the triple challenges - poverty, inequality and unemployment.

In order to mitigate the vicious impact of these, our government over the years has driven a deliberate and impactful programme of skills revolution essentially to empower all South Africans with the knowledge and *skills* to participate in the socioeconomic activities.

Today, we all gathered here to witness one of the interventions by our government, through the Tourism Sector Human Resource Development Strategy which has successfully implemented the Food and Beverage Training Programme in KwaZulu-Natal

Let us all congratulate all the students who completed their Food and Beverage Training Programme here in KwaZulu-Natal.

These achievements are indeed a by-product of a great partnership between ourselves as Department with Limpopo Department of Economic Development,

Environment and Tourism (LEDET) as a host province and the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA)

We therefore, do not have to spare any effort in addressing and achieving the outcome of successfully placing these learners in various establishments for them to carry on with their lives.

Tourism is the world's fastest growing employment sector that continues to adapt to new trends. South Africa is therefore rebuilding the sector to ensure its sustainability for future generations. We have to therefore ensure that the talent supply meets demand.

To drive growth and recovery of the tourism sector, we need to boost the talent pool. A robust recovery plan needs to be firmly anchored in bold strategy that will position the economy on an upward trajectory and growth path.

A demand-led skills supply in the sector is therefore pivotal. While tourism is a significant economic lever, it is so much more than generating revenue. Tourism is a people-centric sector with people at the heart of its brand.

Tourism is a significant pillar in the South African economy. Over the years, tourism has experienced continued growth and has undergone such a diversification in our country to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors.

Modern tourism's success depends on, and is closely linked to skills development. These dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress.

Recovery drives growth and the tourism sector is one of the critical intervention areas that have been identified in the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan as tourism is a key driver of the economic recovery in the country.

The Department of Tourism together with its stakeholders, have collaborated to develop the robust Tourism Sector Recovery Plan. This Plan is anchored on three

interlinked pillars or strategic themes: protecting and rejuvenating supply, reigniting demand and strengthening enabling capability for long term sustainability.

At this platform, we give expression to the essence of this Travel Indaba - Shaping Africa's tomorrow through connection today. Let us use this connection to advance and drive networks for a most successful NTCE.

Let us make meaningful connections today. Let us forge potential partnerships and enjoy the fruits of collaboration. We look forward to your active participation in NTCE 2024!

I thank you all.