



**Remarks by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr Fish Mahlalela at the occasion of the National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) 2023 at NASREC on 29 September 2023**

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DDG

Esteemed Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Programme Director, let me express my profound appreciation to all of you for being part of this extra ordinary event, the National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) 2023, which celebrates its 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

This initiative is a collaboration of the Department of Tourism, Culture Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education Training Authority (CATHSSETA) and the Gauteng Department of Economic Development, represented by the Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA).as the host Province and the Implementing Agency.

It provides a critical opportunity and platform to interact with our future leaders, game changers, risk takers, future policy makers and nation builders. These are young people with a penchant appetite for learning and growth.

Our tourism sector provides young and old with multiple employment and entrepreneurial opportunities to transform their lives and communities. As the world's fastest growing employment sector, tourism continues to adapt to new trends positioning it as a significant economic driver.

Tourism comes a long way from the precipice we faced during the days of the Covid 19 pandemic and international travel is making a GREAT comeback, as per the statistics reported by StatsSA.

The optimal rejuvenation of tourism will require an inclusive and transformative approach that ensures that all, in particular the youth and women, enjoy the benefits of the success of the sector.

As government, our approach to skills revolution is to assist people to upskill and future-proof themselves in the light of this fast-changing work environment to mitigate the impact of triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

An empowered and adequately skilled workforce is critical for the success of the tourism sector, economy and global competitiveness. CATHSSETA is introducing young people to its accredited educational programmes that not

only contribute to improved service levels, but will also assure an enhanced visitor experience and the sector's sustainability.

The main aim of NTCE is to promote tourism as a career, profession and business of choice targeting learners from high schools, TVET College and University students, out of school youth and unemployed tourism graduates.

Inversely, the NTCE becomes a platform where 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 NTCE mantra is that "it is not a paper grabbing platform like all other career expos, but a highly interactive platform" driven and informed by TSHRD and NTCE Strategy content.

It is indeed a 'melting pot' where the demand and supply side of tourism education and training meet.

The primary target groupings of the NTCE include high school learners from grade 9 – 12, TVET College students, university students, educators and unemployed tourism graduates. The aim is to provide them with an opportunity to interact with their potential employees.

According to the UNICEF report, governments and businesses are being urged to address global skills gap and decrease youth unemployment. It notes that there is a disconnect between requirements and education and training systems.

I therefore call upon our youth to seriously take up all available opportunities being provided by government as quick fixes and short-cuts to economic

empowerment that has not provided a sustainable solution to the socio-economic challenges facing our country.

Former President Thabo once questioned whether our youth is well organised to play the active role of drivers of progressive change, as they did when they took to the streets for change on June 16 1976.

As a result, as government, we believe that without education, efforts to provide jobs, better health facilities, water, electricity and other needs, will not be sustained. Indeed, our economy needs relevant skills to be stimulated.

Many of our youth today stands at the border-line between the past of oppression and repression and the future of prosperity, peace and harmony. It is therefore in your hands to make this great nation proud again.

In conclusion therefore, the interactive nature of the 2023 NTCE offers grade 9 – 12 learners, FET and University Students, and unemployed graduates an opportunity to voice their opinion, and contribute to the development of empowerment programmes that will enrich their lives.

Themed “Tourism Investment for People, Planet and Prosperity,” I trust that the 2023 Expo will inspire and uplift young people to think outside the box, and pursue sustainable livelihoods in tourism.

Let the EXPO begin!!

I thank you all.