



**Address by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela at the opening ceremony of the National Tourism Career Expo In NASREC, Johannesburg, 25 March 2022**

I look across the room today and am so awe-inspired by what I see for I see the future of South Africa before me today! I welcome you all to this event today.

Tourism is so much more than generating revenue – it is a people-orientated sector. It is about experiences and an exchange of cultures and foremost, it is about people at the heart of its brand.

There has been much excitement and anticipation as we readied ourselves for this event. You are on the cusp of making life-changing decisions – to plot your career path. What is it that ignites the fire in your soul? Where does your passion lie? Today, we invite you to take a glimpse into the world of tourism and hospitality. Join us as we take you on an adventure to ignite your passion and to find your place and space in the tourism value chain.

The Department of Tourism in partnership with Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education Training Authority (CATHSSETA) and various provinces have since 2008 hosted the NTCE annually (except in 2010 and 2020) over three consecutive days over a three-year period in one province. The NTCE Partnership is regulated by a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) as the three partners contribute funding towards hosting the event.

The NTCE is hosted in one province over three consecutive days annually in three consecutive years to ensure that an impact is created, so as not to just to have a “hit and run” situation without impact. As a national event that is Tourism Sector Human

Resource Development (TSHRD) content driven, it is also designed to be a culmination of smaller annual career exposition events that provinces and municipalities are respectively encouraged to host as preludes to the NTCE. This is with the view that not all prospective participants may be able to attend the NTCE over the three days.

I thank our gracious host – the province of Gauteng – for hosting this auspicious event this year. Kudos to you for an amazing event!

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.

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 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 a ‘melting pot’ where the demand and supply side of tourism education and training meet.

What can you expect from this event? The various exciting platforms that invariably form part of NTCE activities include the Chefs Corner, Mixology Corner, Hospitality Arena, Virtual Classroom and Recruitment Arena, Adventure Corner, Conservation Corner, Youth Business Zone, etc. After experiencing these platforms, learners go through an Edutainment Platform where they get entertained through educational activities whilst having lunch. This process is repeated each day over the three days with the exception of the opening ceremony to different groups of learners and participants.

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.

Why do we need this platform? The Department of Tourism's 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. This dovetails with the Department's Social Responsibility Implementation Expanded Public Works Programme to deliver on its job creation and skills development target.

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.

A career decision is a significant turning point in the life of a young adult. You are mapping the path that you will follow with passion for the rest of your life, so choose wisely. Career opportunities in tourism are limitless. The hospitality and tourism industry present a unique career path for professionals who specialise in creating the finest guest experiences. Indeed, tourism is a conduit for people to learn new things and discover the world through its diverse cultures.

Today I invite you to find your niche in our value chain. Discover your purpose, ignite your passion and position yourself for endless possibilities. I would like to conclude with an anonymous quote that says: "Put a sword in the hands and your dreams and dare greatly!"

Welcome to the NTCE!

I thank you

**FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES:**

Ms Susan de Bruin

Director: External Communications

Department of Tourism

Cell: +27 (0) 82 921 7303

Email: [sdebruin@tourism.gov.za](mailto:sdebruin@tourism.gov.za)