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ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, PATRICIA DE LILLE AT THE LIVGOLF LAUNCH AT STEYN CITY IN GAUTENG ON 29 JANUARY 2026.

Good morning, Sanibonani, Goeie Môre, distinguished guests,
Honourable Minister Gayton McKenzie
Representatives of LIV Golf
Industry leaders
Media colleagues
Ladies and gentlemen

Today marks an important milestone not only for sport, but for South Africa's tourism and events economy.

This comes at the back of the news that between January 2025 and December 2025, South Africa welcomed a record-breaking 10.48 million international arrivals marking.

This is the highest ever, marking a 17.6% increase when compared to the same period last year. This is even higher than the global growth in international arrivals for 2025, which stands at 4%. On top of this, South Africa has been named the Best Destination: Africa 2025, by Travel Weekly Reader's Choice Awards.

So, as we prepare to welcome LIV Golf to South African soil, we are once again demonstrating our country's ability to host world-class global events that deliver far-reaching economic, reputational and destination marketing value.

This moment goes beyond a single tournament. It speaks to South Africa's growing stature as a capable, competitive and attractive host of major international sporting and business events.

Tourism currently sustains 1.8 million direct and indirect jobs. It is estimated that 1 job is created for every 13 international arrivals.

Events of this scale deliver a measurable economic impact for the country. They stimulate demand across the tourism value chain, from accommodation, transport and food services to production crews, logistics providers, event specialists and local suppliers.

High-value visitors travel longer, spend more and extend their stay beyond the event itself supporting jobs, small businesses and community-based tourism experiences.

Importantly, these events contribute to, increased foreign direct spend, job creation across multiple sectors, regional dispersal of visitors and strong returns on destination marketing investment.

This is why business and sporting events remain a critical lever within South Africa's tourism growth strategy.

Golf tourism represents one of the most valuable segments in global travel. Golf travellers are experience-led, high-spend and repeat visitors. They engage deeply with destinations, exploring winelands, culture, nature, cuisine, wellness and luxury offerings beyond the fairway.

Hosting LIV Golf provides South Africa with an exceptional opportunity to position the country within this premium global travel market, while showcasing the depth and diversity of our tourism offering.

Through international broadcast, digital platforms and global media coverage, LIV Golf places South Africa on a powerful international stage.

This visibility introduces global audiences to:

- Iconic and award-winning golf courses
- World-class hospitality and accommodation
- Diverse landscapes and natural beauty
- Rich culture, heritage and cuisine
- Warm, authentic South African hospitality

This is destination marketing at its most effective, experiential, credible and globally amplified. South Africa as a proven global events host.

South Africa's inclusion on the LIV Golf calendar reflects strong international confidence in our hosting capability.

Our country offers:

- World-class venues and infrastructure
- Strong aviation and transport connectivity
- Experienced event delivery professionals
- Proven safety, governance and operational capability

These strengths have positioned South Africa as a preferred host for major international platforms spanning sport, trade, investment and global dialogue.

This includes our growing role within the global business events ecosystem, from large-scale trade shows and conventions to high-level global platforms such as the recent G20 Leaders' Summit and now the World Economic Forum Special Davos, which South Africa will host next year.

In the current financial year, the South African National Conventions Bureau submitted 95 bids, 51 have been secured, generating R894.5 million in economic impact.

Together, these events reinforce our positioning as a country that is not only open for tourism, but open for business, investment and global collaboration.

Business and sporting events play a unique role in shaping how a country is perceived globally. They strengthen the nation's brand visibility.

They attract investors and partners. They build confidence in our institutions and infrastructure.

And they accelerate economic activity beyond traditional tourism. For many visitors, an event becomes the gateway, the first reason to come and South Africa becomes the destination they return to.

As we welcome LIV Golf, we are not simply hosting a tournament. We are showcasing a confident nation. A capable events destination. And a tourism sector that continues to drive inclusive growth and global relevance.

We look forward to welcoming players, fans, media and visitors from around the world and inviting them to experience not only the excellence of the game, but the extraordinary richness of South Africa.

We invite the world to come earlier and stay longer. After LIV Golf, come experience a South African Easter with our diverse offering across all nine provinces, supported by the warmth and professionalism of our people. Our Ubuntu.

Come find your joy.

Thank you.

THE END

For streaming links, images, videos and further information please scan the QR Code and join the Tourism Department's National Multimedia WhatsApp Group.



Media Queries:

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