



MINISTRY
TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X 424, PRETORIA, 0001, Tourism House, 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside, PRETORIA, 0002. Switchboard: +27 (0)12 444 6000, Fax: +27 (0)12 444 7000, Website: www.tourism.gov.za

**ADDRESS BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM, MAGGIE SOTYU AT THE
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AT EMPANGENI, KZN**

DATE: 17 OCTOBER 2024

Programme Director,
All Deputy Ministers present today,
MEC for Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs, Rev. Musa Zondi, MPL
Executive Mayor of City uMhlatuze Municipality, Cllr Xolani Ngwezi
Executive Mayor of uMkhanyakhude District Municipality, Cllr S Mdaka

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee for Tourism, Hon. Ms Lungi Mnganga-Gcabashe (MP)
Whip in the Portfolio Committee on Tourism, Hon Ms. Thembeke Mchunu, MP
MMs, DDGs and Senior Managers
All Executives of Government Institutions Members of the Media
Tourism stakeholders Community Members at large

I am honoured to be in this incredible corner of our country to engage with you about tourism.

Community engagements are profound as they give us a platform to engage and collaborate with our regional stakeholders, community leaders and civil society.

The purpose of these engagements is to facilitate open communication, address pressing issues, and create solutions that will serve the interests of all of us.

Programme Director,
This engagement is not just an exchange of ideas but it is an opportunity to strengthen relationships and propel us towards our shared goal of strengthening the tourism sector.

I take these engagements very seriously and hope to return in the near future to review the actions that we agreed upon today.

Programme Director, despite our achievements of 30 years of democracy, unemployment is still affecting the whole country and this district is no exception.

Our people are still living in poverty and under severe circumstances. To address this, the Government of National Unity under the leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa, has made a commitment to dedicate the next five years to actions that will advance three strategic priorities:

- to drive inclusive growth and job creation
- to reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living, and
- to build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

This commitment is in line with the calls of South Africans who gave us a mandate during the May elections to work harder to grow the economy faster, create more jobs and improve the lives of all South Africans.

This municipality's main economic sectors are; agriculture, community services, manufacturing and finance. This can be attested to by what the local exhibitors showcase here today.

When looking at the demographics of this district, we see that tourism has huge potential here. Most people who visit this area do so to visit friends and relatives. This is followed by leisure and holiday tourism as the main reason for visiting the area.

Although domestic and international tourist numbers increased prior to the pandemic, we believe the King Cetshwayo District has great potential as a destination and should continue to build on its strengths.

Programme Director, colleagues, and stakeholders,

We must not forget that the tourism industry is the critical contributor to our country's GDP and maintain thousands of jobs.

It is our duty to enhance skills, improve health, create a safer city, plan and accelerate rural development interventions, promote and maintain spatial equity and transformation, use ICT system and adhere to good governance and strive to a developmental municipality.

Bear in mind that this district is a premier tourist destination and must take more advantage of developing adventure tourism, signature events and culture and heritage attractions.

Please allow me to also mention a few of our departmental programmes in KZN and some in this district:

In the Department we have a Market Access Support Programme that offers financial support to small tourism enterprises to exhibit at tourism platforms.

From April 2024, a total of 42 KZN enterprises were supported under this programme to participate at trade platforms including the World Travel Market (WTM) Africa (9 supported to attend), Africa's Travel Indaba (28 supported to attend), IMEX America (3 supported to attend) and the WTM London (2 supported).

Out of the 28 KZN enterprises supported to participate at this year's Africa's Travel Indaba, three were from King Cetshwayo District Municipality and one from uMhlathuze Local Municipality.

There are currently two call outs to support tourism businesses to participate at the South African Tourism pavilion at the Internationale Tourismus-Börse 2025 in Berlin, Germany in March and another to participate at the World Travel Market Africa 2025 exhibition in April in Cape Town.

We encourage SMME's within this region to take advantage of this opportunities and apply.

We also want to encourage those who qualify to apply for our Green Tourism Incentive Programme as I was disappointed to see that there are no beneficiaries of this programme in this district.

This programme is a resource efficiency programme which aims to support tourism enterprises to reduce the cost of investing in energy and water efficient solutions.

The window period for this programme is open until end of February 2025 and will greatly assist a tourism establishment to reduce their electricity and water bills in the long term.

The Department also established a Tourism Transformation Fund and Tourism Equity Fund to support the transformation efforts in the sector.

The Transformation Fund offers a combination of debt finance and grant funding for new and expansion tourism development projects with majority black shareholding.

Currently there are no beneficiaries of these two programmes in this district, but hopefully this will change soon.

For tourist guides, the Department has a number of programmes including language training.

The intermediate level of our Mandarin language training programme took place in the 2022/23 financial year.

Out of the 34 guides that participated, five were KZN-registered tourist guides. Currently, Phase Three of this programme is taking place as 16 tourist guides from all provinces are visiting China for a three-week cultural tour to sharpen their mandarin as well as their understanding of the Chinese market.

In the long term this programme will greatly support our efforts in increasing visitors from China. A similar German Language programme will soon commence to address the shortage of German speaking guides in the country.

The Department launched a Tourism Technology Grassroots Innovation and Incubation Programme (TTGIIP) which is a collaborative initiative with Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) an agency of the Department of Science and Innovation.

This programme empowers technology and innovation businesses in tourism. Out of 20 innovators that benefitted from the two-year programme, we have three innovators from KwaZulu-Natal, one female and two males.

We also have two community Based Tourism Incubation Programme (CBT) in KZN namely the Thandanani Arts and Craft Centre based in Ukhahlamba District Municipality and the St Lucia-Khula Village which is based in Mtubatuba Local Municipality.

In the case of the St Lucia- Khula Village, the programme supports three homestays in partnership with the local Community Tourism Organisation.

Interventions include business plan development, mentorship sessions, needs assessments and growth-plan development.

For youth in tourism, the Department offers annually a bursary programme and learnership programme focussing on professional cooking, wine appreciation and hospitality targeting youth with an interest in tourism.

I urge all the young people here to visit the departmental website and social media pages regularly for these opportunities.

Programme Director,

This platform for engagement becomes a feedback mechanism which aims to proactively keep our people up-to-date with interventions and plans outline by our government to address socio-economic challenges facing the country.

I want to emphasise that these mechanisms ensure that communities and government work together to accelerate service delivery and promote a culture of social partnerships that give everyone a chance to play its part.

Lastly, I want us not to forget that much has been achieved in the past 30 years of freedom, but also note that government realises that there are still many challenges that need to be addressed that include, poverty, inequality and unemployment.

To address these, government departments and municipalities have created programmes to support South Africans, and their businesses and communities. I encourage you to learn more about these opportunities so that we address these challenges together.

I thank you all.