



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Address by Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom for the ringing of the bell to open the trade floor at Africa's Travel Indaba in Durban

8 May 2018

Ministers of Tourism from our sister countries in Africa,
Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms Elizabeth Thabethe
Acting Premier
eThekweni Deputy Mayor,
Exhibitors, Buyers, members of the media,
Guests and visitors,

Good morning to all of you.

This is not quite a stock exchange, but welcome to Africa's tourism stock exchange.

We are about to ring the bell that signals the start of trading at Africa's Travel Indaba, and what makes this significant is that it symbolises that our continent is open for tourism business.

Africa's share of the global tourism pie has not yet reached its potential, so, buyers, you are ahead of the curve and I have no doubt that you will reap rich rewards from your buying decisions in the next days. And, sellers from all over the continent, we know that increased demand is the engine for growth of the tourism economy in our different countries.

President Ramaphosa identified tourism as one of three priority sectors stating in his first State of the Nation address in February, *"we will enhance support for destination marketing in key tourism markets and take further measures to reduce regulatory barriers and develop emerging tourism businesses."*

Buyers, all 1747 of you from countries all over the world, while you are here you will experience the spirit and soul of Africa, the opportunity to immerse yourselves in the culture and traditions of no less than 22 exhibiting African countries. Sellers we are here to capture the interest of buyers with our unique products allowing tourism to double, treble and quadruple its contribution to economic growth and job creation.

African Travel Indaba is the result of collaboration between the bid parties, South African Tourism and the South African Government at all levels, and the owners and operators of attractions and facilities.

All the hard work that everyone has put in behind the scenes for the past year, all the meetings and planning – it's about to pay off.

Exhibitors, you are about to meet qualified buyers who are really interested in selling Africa.

Buyers, you have access to the biggest variety of products on the continent, from our hidden gems here in South Africa, to luxury experiences across Africa.

The media, as you portray the reality of Africa with all its challenges, include the story of how tourism is changing our continent and benefitting its people. Thank you for your invaluable contribution.

Visiting Ministers of Tourism on behalf of my South African colleagues, including Deputy Minister Thabete, MEC Zikalala and Executive Mayor Gumede, we are honoured to host you in our country, and we are proud of the exceptional variety of tourism experiences that our continent offers the world.

It gives me great pleasure to declare that the trade floor at Africa's Travel Indaba is now officially open!