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EDITION

02

Bolanala

TOURISM MONTH

SEPTEMBER 2021

Tourism for Inclusive Growth



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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EDITORIAL

DEAR TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS

Welcome to the Spring Edition of Bojanala Stakeholder Magazine. As a norm, this is no ordinary edition. It is actually one of the best as it takes you through all the Tourism Month activities from various provinces and those taking place at the national level. This is the same edition that covers the World Tourism Day event as well all the build-up activities herein. So, I invite to you please enjoy the ride. In this edition we formally welcome and introduce Minister Lindiwe Sisulu to the sector, this is despite the fact that many of you have already interacted with her during various stakeholder engagements. The sector is extremely happy to have a leader like her and we know that she will steer this ship to greater heights.

There are positive indications that the sector is on road to its recovery. So is the case with the rest of the sectors and by extension, the economy. This calls for a re-imagining of a sector prior to Covid-19.

While this is the case, this is only an imagination and for this to become a reality, we need to pull together and all participate on the vaccination drive, which is picking up momentum, albeit quite slowly.

We all know the greater benefits of a fully vaccinated country. Amongst others, this means that the alert levels will be removed and South Africans as well as travelers from abroad will freely visit our tourism establishments, something we have all been eagerly waiting for.

This edition carries a number of columns, many of which talk to ways which the sector can use to pick itself up. Case in point is one by Sarah Robertson, which looks at some campaigns held to help ease restrictions in

an effort to help the sector to recover.

Read about the Deputy Minister's pledge for growth and support between China and South Africa.

We also profile, the 2021 World Tourism Day host province, the Free State. We further write about the importance of heritage and tourism and how South Africa can fuse the two together to celebrate tourism with its citizens.

Read about how South Africa was recently nominated to serve on the executive council of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) at its 64th Meeting held in the Island of Sal, Cabo Verde on 2 September 2021.

We also give you a glimpse of the Tourism Month activities which were held by various provinces. For example as part of reigniting domestic travel, Limpopo held a 3-day event to ignite domestic travel in partnership with the Kruger National Park, SA Tourism and Department of Tourism at the Phalaborwa Kruger National Park Gate.

Meanwhile, the North West held a Women in Tourism Networking Session with women who own tourism products in Dr. Ruth Segomotso Mompati-Vryburg.

Also, read about how government plans to roll out a national training programme targeting Small, Medium and Micro-sized (SMME) tourism businesses in rural, township and small towns to facilitate implementation of a set of globally benchmarked norms and standards needed for the businesses.

Enjoy the read.

WORLD TOURISM DAY

Staff Reporter



On the right is Acting CEO of Gauteng Tourism Authority Barba Gaogamediwe with tourism stakeholders.



Deputy Minister Fish Mahlalela giving a keynote address at WTD celebrations



Afro soul musician Semito entertaining the crowd.



Community members heeding the call to vaccinate during WTD Celebrations.

Tourism Month closed off in style as South Africa celebrated World Tourism Day on 27 of September 2021 in Clarens (nicknamed the “Jewel of the Eastern Free State”) a small town situated in the foothills of the Maluti Mountains in the Free State province - host of this year’s Tourism Month. Under the theme “Tourism for Inclusive Growth” adopted by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), World Tourism Day has an objective to promote the importance of tourism towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through its social, cultural, political and economic value. To “bring it home” this significant day shines the spotlight on the importance of the sector to the South African economy.

“It was exactly a month ago when we were at Golden Gate a few kilometres from here when the Department of Tourism charged us with the responsibility to host this day, World Tourism Day. We honestly would like to thank the Minister and the Deputy Minister for having that confidence in the province of the Free State. Also affording us the opportunity to revive our ailing tourism industry which has been affected by the pandemic” said Makalo Mohale, the MEC of Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTE). The Department of Tourism together with various Tourism Authorities from various levels of government, Industry Associations, Agencies, and the entire supply value chain for Tourism, joined hands through domestic tourism activations and other related promotional activities across the country leading up to this auspicious day. “Following the successful launch of the Tourism Month for this year, we have embarked on numerous activations aimed at marketing the province, tourism attractions as well as reviving tourism in the Free State...” he concluded.

“Today we join and connect with the world as we mark World Tourism Day and celebrate our resilience, recovery and as we forge ahead towards a rejuvenated and inclusive tourism

sector,” said Deputy Minister Fish Mahlelela in his address during the celebration. Deputy Minister highlighted that the Department of Tourism has been engaging with the Acting High Commissioner of the United Kingdom concerning the issue of red listing. “The Minister of Tourism, Lindiwe Sisulu, has requested the Acting High Commissioner of the United Kingdom to urgently arrange a meeting between her and the Minister of Transportation in the United Kingdom, who is leading the Task Force dealing with transportation and the restrictions. We, however, welcome Germany, the United States of America, the United Arab Emirates and many other countries that have removed restrictions against us,” he stated.

Mahlelela also mentioned that Cabinet is addressing concerns around the vaccination certificate including the digital vaccination certificate. “Government and social partners are engaging on the form of this passport or certificate which should follow international trends. This might simply mean a proof of vaccination in a format which is not easy to forge or be altered, and will be developed specifically to integrate with information of all official vaccinations and test types, including PCR and rapid tests,” said Deputy Minister Mahlelela.

“The COVID-19 pandemic might have brought us to our knees, but it did not topple us. A pivotal economic lever, the tourism sector has proved to be resilient and with the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan in place, it promises to rebound,” Mahlelela emphasised. In addition to the tourism sector implementing COVID-19 protocols to protect tourists, the Government is also rolling out measures to strengthen the quality of tourism offerings. This includes the Norms and Standards approved by Cabinet which will be gazetted on 1 November 2021, in time to prepare for the arrivals of our festive season visitors. To support and ensure that the tourism sector is ready to welcome back tourists to South Africa, Minister Sisulu will launch the tourism sector vaccination programme in Gauteng on 30 September 2021.

The Deputy Minister also announced strategic interventions to attract tourists back to South Africa with South African Tourism launching two global campaigns soon namely a Global Advocacy Campaign and Global Brand Campaign. Mahlelela urged South Africans to support the local tourism sector in its recovery. “As we have said, certainly we will travel again soon, whether it is to gather to host a small get-together with friends or celebrate a party or a wedding. Let us all please book an event venue to support a local restaurant or hospitality venue,” he stated.

“The path to recovery is going to be laborious and tedious, but will require the collective energy of every stakeholder. Therefore, as we build back better, we should do that with a renewed social compact led by government, driven by the private sector, and most importantly, such a recovery must be inclusive to find meaning for all our communities,” Deputy Minister Mahlelela concluded.

The celebrations ended on a high note with an array of entertainment from Afro-Soul singer Monyake Liphoko affectionally known as Semito and local comedian Tieho, who’s also part of an NPO that supports artists from various industries called Qwakanda. Deputy Minister Mahlelela also went on a walk-about encouraging community members to vaccinate at the “pop-up” stations provided within the venue and also engaged with vendors whilst purchasing a few goodies from their exhibition stalls of arts, crafts and various product and service offerings. Guests also received vouchers to buy at exhibition stalls as one of the ways to support small businesses and promote domestic tourism. World Tourism Day celebrations successfully united people from all walks of life and restored traveller confidence with a hope of a better and safer “new normal” post COVID-19.

**#WTD2021 #TourismMonth2021
#WeDoTourisme..**



CAMPAIGN OF CONFIDENCE AND **EASING OF RESTRICTIONS NEEDED TO AID RECOVERY**

By Sarah Robertson

KwaZulu Natal tourism businesses have been hit by a triple blow this month, dashing all hopes for high occupancy levels during the July school holidays. Already dealing with the absence of international tourists, these businesses have experienced a new flood of cancellations relating to the Gauteng leisure travel ban this month, further compounded by safety concerns about the KZN riots. As such, they are calling for support from the government to urgently lift the lockdown restrictions that are hampering travel and to get the message out to South Africa and the world that KZN is open for business and ready to receive guests.

Last week the country was shaken by distressing images of looters attacking, raiding and destroying retail outlets in KZN and some

parts of Gauteng. However, as the days passed, the messages of fear started to change to those of hope, as ordinary South African civilians took a stand against criminality, standing together to protect their local businesses. The looting died down, the highways were reopened, people went door to door to collect stolen goods and community members from every race flocked out of their homes to help clean up the destruction.

"The unrest that we have seen in KZN in the past week has been very unfortunate and we are relieved to see that this has calmed down. We are happy to report that the N2, N3 gateways and other strategic corridors to KZN have reopened. Safety agencies are on full alert on the ground ensuring that KZN and all citizens in the province are safe once

again. We are working closely with other government agencies to ensure that KZN starts rebuilding. We want to assure people that the KZN Government is working around the clock to ensure that the province returns back to what it's known and loved for, its beauty and warmth. Tourism KZN has an open channel with community tourism associations and the tourism trade and through these relationships we will continue to work with our partners to package affordable, family-friendly and exciting specials so that people can start planning their holidays to the province once again," said CEO of KZN Tourism, Phindile Makwakwa.

GM of Drakensberg-based Castleburn Resort, Gwyn Viljoen, told Tourism Update that its occupancy levels had fallen from 95% to only two remaining guests this week. "This is a great

financial loss to us, regardless of the fact that our resort was not physically damaged in the riots. We are doing what we can from our side to individually phone guests and advise them that it is safe for them to travel again but we need assistance to get this message out on a wider scale through the larger platforms. We are calling for an urgent campaign to be put in place by the government advising travellers that KZN is open for business," said Viljoen.

Neil Hughes, MD of Providence Hospitality, spoke about the effects on its KZN South Coast property, San Lameer Resort Hotel and Spa. He said, as a lot of the hotel's business came from Durban and Gauteng, the unrest had had a major impact, with massive reservation movements as guests postponed their stays to August and September. "Even though these are not cancellations, which is positive, we will still not be able to retrieve these lost revenues for the winter months, which are traditionally weaker months already," said Hughes.

He said San Lameer's protected position had meant that safety had been less of a concern for their guests, who had cited concern that fuel shortages would hamper their ability

to make the journey to San Lameer as the main reason for postponing their trips. The food shortages had also created a logistical nightmare for the hotel, which had adapted its menu to serve meals made from ingredients that could be sourced at short notice "I think our hotel has done very well with this and believe that existing guests have appreciated the effort," said Hughes.

"Going forward we expect that our guests will return and stay as currently booked, but this will be determined by how quickly local and national government will react to dealing with the unrest, together with the COVID-19 pandemic. The bottom line is, people want to travel, so I expect that as soon as the restrictions are lifted, San Lameer will once again become a key leisure destination for South Africa," he added.

Red Carnation Hotels' General Manager Sales, Sally Gray, said The Oyster Box in Umhlanga did not have any in-house guests at present but she was hopeful that bookings would start to come back later this week.

"Safety has been the core issue in all of the

discussions that I have been having with stakeholders in our key source markets this week. They are all asking the same questions – is it safe to come to KZN and will guests be impacted by the reported shortages in fuel and food. Without making these reassurances we won't get travelers back. It is vitally important that KZN Tourism and SA Tourism embark on a campaign that reassures tourists that we have food in our fridges, that fuel is available and that we remain open for business," said Gray.

Owner Manager of The Cavern Drakensberg Resort, Megan Bedingham, appealed to the President to make a public announcement that KZN was stable and to remove the travel restrictions on Gauteng residents. This, she said, would allow local businesses some chance to recover during August.

Both Bedingham and CEO of the Restaurant Association of South Africa, Wendy Alberts, appealed for the curfew and alcohol ban to be lifted. They said this would go a long way to encourage people to start travelling again, knowing that they could relax with a glass of wine and enjoy a normal evening dining experience when on holiday.



CLOSING DOWN

'CONSISTENCY IS KEY FOR INDUSTRY SURVIVAL' - FEDHASA

The latest statistics released by Statistics SA regarding insolvencies and liquidations in the accommodation, food and beverage sectors indicate how financially damaged the industry is, according to Chair of FEDHASA, Rosemary Anderson.

Released earlier this week, the statistics show that the total number of liquidations increased by 46.2% in the second quarter of 2021 compared with the second quarter of 2020. An increase of 30.7% was recorded in the first six months of 2021 compared with the first six months of 2020.

While the easing of lockdown restrictions under the current Adjusted Alert Level 3 has brought some relief for the hospitality industry, FEDHASA believes that the industry will remain vulnerable in the 2021/2022 period, especially if there is not a consistent approach when it comes to future regulation adjustments.

"The South African hospitality industry has been bruised for 16 months and, in many cases, received a fatal bruising, with so many repetitive damaging lockdowns and restrictions imposed," said Anderson.

"Many of these restrictions for all intents and purposes make operating not financially viable. Even under the current trading restrictions for restaurants, the number of a max of 50 patrons inside makes it financially unviable for larger restaurants such as 500 or 600 seaters to trade. The same goes for large non-accommodation outside resorts such as picnic resorts with many acres of land – where only 100 people

are allowed outside."

Anderson called on government to try to stop the current massive shedding of jobs in the larger restaurants and non-accommodation resorts, where jobs are currently being lost at an alarming rate.

She suggested that, to achieve this, government could put in the criteria similar to the current outdoor space at hotels, where up to 50% of the usual space can be used. This would allow large restaurants and non-accommodation resorts to trade in a financially viable way and halt the massive shedding of jobs.

"This current one-size rule does not fit all and it is mostly damaging those businesses who employ the highest number of staff. We need to change this urgently, since these large establishments are struggling to hold on under the current criteria. We urge Government to reconsider the legislation so large hospitality operators can trade in a financially viable way, preserve the many jobs and livelihoods they are responsible for, and simultaneously still operate in a responsible safe way adhering to all COVID-protocols," she added.

Anderson pointed out that, in addition to the restaurant sector, within hospitality, a number of SA's top hotels had been closed since March last year, since their main market was overseas tourists.

"And with SA not being in alignment, with regard to our vaccine programme, with our main tourism markets such as the UK, we are red

listed and their entire market has disappeared. These top hotels employ thousands of staff and we urge our Government to expedite the vaccine roll-out even faster, so we can start being aligned to our main international tourist markets and can then be justifiably removed from the red lists," said Anderson.

She noted that the most recent statistics further illustrated that the subsequent on-off cycle of opening, closing and reopening following adjusted alert levels, further burdened the industry in its efforts to recover.

"Consistency is key to the survival of the industry. Behind every closed restaurant or hotel door and 'for sale' sign are the hundreds of livelihoods that hang in the balance or have already been lost."

Anderson emphasised that trading under strict compliance together with mass vaccination of South African citizens was the only solution in the industry's fight against COVID-19.

"FEDHASA has designed a robust set of health and safety protocols for COVID-19, and our members are acutely aware of the importance of adhering to these standards in order to safeguard the public and to be able to continue trading. Despite the looming third wave, there is no sector as cognisant of the direct relationship between adherence to protocols and the recovery of the sector than the hospitality and tourism industry," she concluded.

DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM PLEDGES GROWTH AND **MORE SUPPORT BETWEEN SA AND CHINA**



Deputy Minister Fish Mahlalela

China and South Africa have pledged mutual support to grow tourism between the two countries by deepening their co-operation through the high-level Comprehensive Strategic Partnership from the SA-China Co-operation Agreement, signed 23 years ago.

This included enhancing skills development and ensuring further ease of travel between SA and China, said Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela, delivering the keynote address at the International Forum – South Africa-China Tourism Cooperation, today (August 4).

The International Forum is a collaboration between the University of Johannesburg Confucius Institute, the Centre for Africa-China Studies, and the School of Tourism and Hospitality at the University of Johannesburg.

“China has always been an important global source market for the tourism of South Africa and is a strategic trade partner to South Africa. This symbiotic relationship will definitively drive recovery in the sector,” said Mahlalela, pointing out that pre-COVID-19, China remained the leading growth market for South Africa’s tourism industry. China saw a 38% year-on-year growth of

visitors to SA in 2019, positioning is as the country’s number-one inbound source market in that year.

Skills development

According to Mahlalela, South Africa has prioritised skills development in the tourism and hospitality subsectors. “We are proud of the realisation of the commitments made to assist South Africa through institutions in China.

“The intention is to place the successful students in various vocational training and emphasis is placed in the fields of hotel reception, guiding and cuisine for the development of a sustainable and reliable skills pipeline,” explained Mahlalela.

He added that some of those skills aimed to ensure that South Africa’s tourism sector was well positioned to cater for increasing Chinese tourist arrivals.

The skills development programme includes:

- Specialisation courses on Chinese traditional cuisine;
- Tourist guide and front-line staff training in Mandarin to equip them to better

service the market; and

- Training or upskilling of new entrants on adventure guiding.

Improving ease of travel

“The issue of improving travel freedom through visa waivers for ordinary passport holders has topped the agenda in various bilateral engagements between the two countries to increase tourism and people-to-people exchanges,” said Mahlalela.

He said South Africa and China had created a “historic milestone” in improving the visa regime between the two countries through the signing of the Visa Requirements Simplification Agreement during the State Visit in July 2018.

Consequently, South Africa established 11 visa facilitation centres across China in the following cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Xian, Shenyang, Wuhan, Jinan, Hangzhou, Chongqing and Kunming.

“This new measure is extended to business visitors holding diplomatic, official/services and ordinary passports, who apply for visas to visit South Africa for short-term business purposes, and is valid for ten years,” said Mahlalela.



FREE STATE PROVINCE: HOST OF WORLD TOURISM DAY 2021

Staff Reporter

"The human desire to travel and explore is universal, which is why tourism must be open for everyone to enjoy. So too must the many social and economic benefits that tourism brings be available to everybody..." - UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili. The 2021 UNWTO theme for World Tourism Day (WTD) celebrations is "Tourism for inclusive growth" and the international official celebration will be held in Cote d'Ivoire in Africa. The theme links with Outcome 4 and 5 of Government's Programme of Action that seeks to create decent employment through inclusive economic growth, and a skilled and vibrant workforce to support an inclusive growth path. This year the Free State Province is the Host for World Tourism Day celebrations which will be held on 27 September within the Eagle Route.

The Free State Province lies in the heart of South Africa, with the Kingdom of Lesotho nestling in the hollow of its bean-like shape. Lying between the Vaal River in the north and the Orange River in the south, the region is one of flat, rolling grassland and goldfields, rising to lovely sandstone mountains in the northeast. The Free State is the third- largest province in South Africa, but it has the second-smallest population and the second-lowest population density. Almost 2.8 million people live there,

with two-thirds speaking Sesotho, the language of neighbouring Lesotho, followed by Afrikaans and less than 10% speaking isiXhosa. The Free State presents a unique South African culture, which not only reflects this province's historical past, but also the great diversity of its people.

The province boasts of five routes named after popular South African animals and birds, offering a range of attractions that would make your holiday worthwhile; namely Cheetah Route, Eagle Route, Lion Route ,Flamingo Route and Springbok Route. The Cheetah Route, home to Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu, is filled with historical, cultural and natural attractions. Bloemfontein, the legislative capital city prides itself with attractions like the Cheetah Experience. The registered non-profit company offers hope to many endangered and threatened species including cheetahs, leopards, male lions and a Siberian tiger. In this route also lies the Free State National Botanical Garden, which has 400 species of plants, 144 bird species, 54 reptile species and about 32 mammal species. Visitors can set up picnics, enjoy braais or admire the lush views.

The Eagle Route passes through Ladybrand, Clocolan, Ficksburg, Fouriesburg, Clarens, Bethlehem, Phuthaditjhaba, Harrismith and

Memel. Clarens in the Eastern-Free State is the jewel of the Free State and has everything from adventure activities, arts and crafts, hiking spots and delicious food. Places to visit include Clarens Brewery and Golden Gate Highlands National Park. Phuthaditjhaba gives a glimpse into the area's culture.

A Basotho Cultural Village depicts the lifestyle and habits of the Basotho people during the 17th to 21st century.

The Lion Route comprises Deneyville, Sasolburg, Parys, Vredefort and Kroonstad. Located at the wall of the Vaal Dam, Deneyville is an hour's drive from Johannesburg. Deneyville is renowned for water sports and the Deneyville Croc Ranch, with over 2 800 crocodiles. Parys is filled with activities for the whole family. You can interact with the big cats at Dell Cheetah Centre, play a round of golf on Golf Island in the middle of the Vaal River and visit Bon-Af Berry Farm, South Africa's only black raspberries farm. Visitors can also delight in an array of activities including hiking, horse riding, abseiling and canoeing around Vredefort Dome.

The Flamingo Route includes Bothaville, Welkom, Ventersburg, Virginia, Winburg and Brandfort. Bothaville is the ideal town to unwind and be one with nature. The town offers hiking,



HERITAGE AND TOURISM: TOOLS FOR NATIONAL IDENTITY

Staff Reporter

September is a month that shines the spotlight on two significant events in our country, a time that is centered around national identity, nation building, diversity, unity, love, and most of all, people. The month of September marks Heritage Month which is celebrated annually and Heritage Day in particular is celebrated on 24 September to highlight the richness of South Africa's culture, heritage and celebrate its diversity. This year's Heritage Month will be celebrated under the theme "The year of Charlotte Maxeke: Celebrating South Africa's Intangible Cultural Heritage".

Tourism Month also shares in this auspicious month of September as South Africa prides itself with its unique heritage and culture, which has become a selling point to the international tourism market for many decades. Cultural Tourism continues to be one of the main drivers of the tourism economy as South Africa offers a melting pot of different cultures along with its vibrant lifestyle, music, clothing and delicacies. This colourful experience is seen in the lifestyle of the Khoi, Nguni and Basotho people, the South-Asian flair of our Indian heritage and a blend of European descent.

According to the definition adopted by the UNWTO General Assembly, at its 22nd session (2017), Cultural Tourism implies "A type of tourism activity in which the visitor's essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions or products in a tourism destination. These attractions or products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical

and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions".

Tourism Month is celebrated from 1 to 30 September every year with the aim of providing a heightened month-long focus on the importance of the sector to the South African economy. Under the World Tourism Day 2021 theme "Tourism for Inclusive Growth", different activations are done throughout the country in celebration as per the UNWTO theme together with the national priorities for tourism. This year the Free State Province is the Host for World Tourism Day celebrations which will be held on 27 September in Clarens within the Eagle Route.

There are various heritage sites that also double as iconic world tourist sites in our country that narrate the mysteries and wonders of our creation, history and heritage as a people. The Cradle of Human kind which was declared a World Heritage Site in 1999 is one of the historic marvels that attracts people from all walks of life to South Africa. The hominin fossil finds, together with the rich record of other animal and plant fossils, provide us with a window into the past, into a time when our earliest ancestors were evolving and changing, proving that the African continent is undoubtedly the beginning of humankind. Robben Island, a well-known World Heritage Site is most famous as a political prison but has a rich multi-layered history spanning over 400 years. Today, it is one of South Africa's most visited sites, accessed by ferry from the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront. It is a place where former struggle stalwarts such as the late Walter Sisulu

, Ahmed Kathrada and former President Nelson Mandela were detained and mapped the way for the freedoms we enjoy today.

The Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape is another one of South Africa's World Heritage sites and gives us a picture of the rise and fall of the first indigenous kingdom in the sub-continent between 900 and 1,300 AD. The site is situated on the fertile confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe Rivers bordering South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe. A definite must see.

The Bushmansklouf Rock Painting Landscape was declared a National Heritage Site on 20 September 2019. Bushmansklouf encompasses a Rock Painting Archaeological Landscape that bears graphic testimony to the complete social, political, spiritual and economic history of Stone Age hunter gatherers and Khoekhoe-speaking pastoralists, who inhabited the region for at least the past 10 000 years. Young and old can benefit from this rich history.

Let us take this opportune moment, even against the backdrop of COVID-19, to go back to our roots and introspect. In honour of our heritage and history as a nation, we owe it to ourselves and the coming generations to know who we are. This Heritage Month and Tourism Month, take a Shot Left with friends and loved ones in adherence to COVID-19 regulations, to the many gems in our country that will direct us to our identity as a people and forge social cohesion.

"Our rich and varied cultural heritage has a profound power to help build our nation"- Nelson Mandela.

IT IS TIME TO REIMAGINE AND REAWAKEN **AFRICA'S TOURISM INDUSTRY OF THE FUTURE SOUTH AFRICA**



The last time there was a travel trade show on African soil – Meetings Africa 2020 – there was talk of the tourism sector being the economy's last great hope as it boosted the GDPs and created jobs with the trajectory of an Airbus A380.

Fast-forward 19 months, and Africa's tourism sector is reflecting, reimagining a different future and reigniting itself after it was upended by the world-engulfing Coronavirus. And there seems to be no better place to start than with

a fresh event – Africa's Travel and Tourism Summit (ATTS).

The ATTS Media Launch, held on 31st August 2021 at the Maslow Hotel in Sandton, gave tourism and media stakeholders a chance to learn more about the Summit as a platform whereby travel trade across the continent would come together to share ideas on how to revive the industry. With just 50 attendees allowed at the launch, most of the event's audience were virtual, accessing the event live

online.

With the Summit's theme being Reawakening Africa, the event's message urges tourism stakeholders to reflect, reimagine and reignite tourism on the continent. The ideas and solutions that will be discussed will help boost the industry's resilience in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and enable it in adapting to new business norms.

Deputy Minister encouraged by African



Union's proactive approach

Online technology played a part again when Deputy Minister of Tourism, Amos Fish Mahlalela, addressed the audience from a remote location. Mahlalela said the African Union (AU) is also playing its part in trying to support the recovery of the sector. In April 2020, the AU drew up The Continental Tourism Recovery Strategy and called on the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities, the African Civil Aviation Commission, the African Development Bank, UNWTO, WTTC, and international development partners, to provide technical expertise, resources and support for the Continental Tourism Recovery Strategy.

Mahlalela also spoke of the Coronavirus' impact on the Southern African Development Community's member states, saying that it could cost the region up to 4.5-million jobs and up to US\$40-billion in GDP.

"The Costed Action Plan for the SADC Tourism Programme has found that countries that significantly rely on tourism and services sectors will experience a downturn in their GDP due to Covid-19 and the resultant restrictions on travel. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises will be most vulnerable to the impact," he said.

Mahlalela said that the pandemic has given the tourism sector the opportunity to reinvent itself, to reflect and reimagine its role in the world. "Where there is adversity, there is opportunity. One of the ways it can adapt is by leveraging off of digitisation. Africa has the youngest population, most of whom are digital natives. We can leverage off of youth digital culture and knowledge so as to access new business opportunities within tourism."

Mahlalela added that most developed nations have adjusted their travel restrictions and suggestions so as to protect their people against Covid-19. "The UK has developed a traffic light system that indicates which countries are safe for travel. It is alarming to see that most African countries have been placed on the UK's red list for travel destinations. This is partly because of the slow rollout of Covid-19 vaccines across the continent and negative reports in the media."

This, he said, is despite the number of combined Covid-19 cases in Africa being fewer than the US, India and Brazil. Africa as a whole has reached 7.7-million cases as of this Sunday afternoon according to the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

Governments supporting tourism revival

According to South African Tourism Acting CEO, Sthembiso Dlamini, the tourism sector still has the potential to create jobs and its importance to the economy has not relinquished. "Governments are committed to supporting the tourism industry's revival. In South Africa, this is evident in its Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, where tourism is listed as one of eight interventions for rebooting the economy."

She added that the Department of Tourism has developed the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan, which looks to preserve the industry's R189-billion and save as many as 125,000 jobs.

Pre-Covid-19 statistics show that Africa's tourism industry was robust. The World Travel & Tourism Council reported that tourism generated in excess of US\$200-billion – accounting for 6.9% of Africa's GDP – and had supported 24.7-million jobs. In 2020, after the Covid-19 outbreak, statistics show a marked decrease of US\$83-billion and a loss of 7.2-million jobs. This downturn trend was experienced by all tourism sectors across the globe.

Dlamini lauded the AU's efforts to secure more vaccines for the continent. In July this year, it had launched the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) Consortium for COVID19 which aims to bring together global vaccine developers, funders, and African organisations that conduct clinical trials. "It is also championing the use of a Pan-African bio-surveillance technology called PanaBIOS that can track the spread of the Coronavirus and connect testing centres across the continent," she said.

Hybrid event a sign of things to come

Speaking about the future of the meetings, incentives, conventions and events industry, the Chief Conventions Bureau Officer of the

South African National Conventions Bureau, Amanda Kotze-Nhlapo, said that business events on the continent would need to adapt to what will be a hybridised environment.

The Summit is the first event on the continent to be hosted physically and virtually. "The Summit also welcomes global community delegates who are curious to understand how tourism has shifted on the African continent in order to reengineer their packages to their clients based on what is on offer while preparing to do business in the future."

Kotze-Nhlapo added that the Summit exists to address the perception that travelling and doing business in Africa is not safe due to Covid-19. "This was driven mainly by the heightened global media focus on the continent. On the contrary, Africa is ready and open to do business. With our vaccine roll outs underway in many different countries on the continent – we are proactively regaining our credibility."

About Africa's Travel and Tourism Summit

Africa's Travel and Tourism Summit will take place from 19th to 21st September 2021. It will be the African travel trade's first hybrid conference, whereby tourism stakeholders can access events physically and online. And in an unprecedented move by South African Tourism, the Summit will be held in five venues across Africa, including Johannesburg and Durban.

The event opens with a SMME Workshop that will focus on best practices, collaboration for transformation, changing perceptions of small businesses. The event's focus will then focus on the industry's macro-level issues such as how tourism can build a resilient post-Covid-19 business events Industry, how it can create a growth path for the recovery of airlines and how the hospitality industry navigates the regulatory environment in creating sustainable investment opportunities in Africa.

About South African Tourism South African Tourism is the national tourism agency responsible for the marketing of South Africa as a preferred tourist destination. It is headed up by Acting Chief Executive Officer Ms Sthembiso Dlamini.

ACCOLADE FOR AFRICA- SOUTH AFRICA GETS READY FOR SEAT ON UNWTO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

South Africa was recently nominated to serve on the executive council of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). At its 64th Meeting held in the Island of Sal, Cabo Verde on 2 September 2021, the UNWTO Commission for Africa (CAF) nominated South Africa for one of the five seats available for the Africa region for the UNWTO Executive Council for 2021-2025. This is in line with the provisions of South Africa's foreign policy which supports the development of the region and the continent. Other countries nominated include Zambia, Mozambique, Morocco and Cabo Verde.

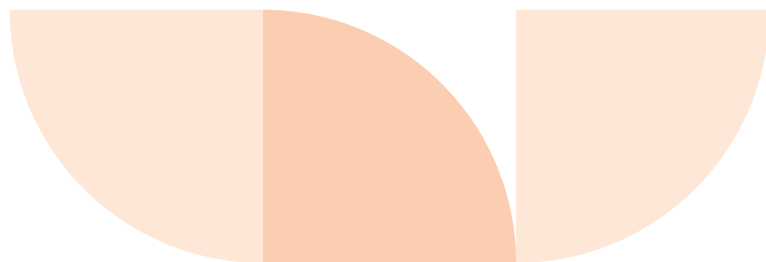
The UNWTO is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. As the leading international organisation in the field of tourism, UNWTO promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.

As the Executive Council is the governing board of the UNWTO and is responsible for ensuring that the organisation carries out its work and adheres to its budget, the four-year term on the Executive Council will strategically position South Africa in the global system of tourism governance to enhance international response to the needs of South Africa and African countries. The term on the Executive Council will also intensify South Africa's cooperation with the global tourism sector to position tourism as a key driver for economic recovery from COVID-19 pandemic, job creation, poverty eradication and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. South Africa's nomination also promotes the principle of rotation within the UNWTO Executive Council and will enable South Africa to contribute capacity given its track record of having served on the Executive Council for three terms (1996-1999, 2010-2013 and 2014-2017).

South Africa's nomination will be approved by the 24th Session of the UNWTO General Assembly to be held in Marrakesh, Morocco on 30 November to 3 December 2021. The UNWTO General Assembly is the supreme organ of the Organisation and meets every two years to inter alia approve the Programme of Work and Budget and elect Members to the Executive Council.

"Our membership of the executive council, will assist to reposition Africa, establish our continent as a destination of choice and highlight our tourism offerings for travellers. It will be a great honour for us to serve Africa in this way, advancing Brand Africa and unlocking growth for the continent. Through this, we will intensify our cooperation and contribute to the global tourism sector," says the Director-General of the Department of Tourism, Mr Victor Tharage.

Tourism is a significant economic pillar and lever for job creation and income generation in South Africa. It directly accounts for 2.9% of South Africa's GDP and 8.6% indirectly and this industry supports about one-and-a-half million direct and indirect jobs. It supports a vibrant and complex value chain and it generates foreign direct investment and significant export earnings.



WOMEN AT THE HELM MINISTER SISULU LEADS TOURISM PORTFOLIO

Ms Sisulu became Minister of Tourism on 5 August 2021. She was Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation from 30 May 2019 to 5 August 2021. She was Minister of International Relations and Cooperation from 27 February 2018 to 25 May 2019. Ms Lindiwe Nonceba Sisulu was the Minister of Human Settlements of the Republic of South Africa from 26 May 2014 until 26 February 2018.

She has been a Member of Parliament since 1994. She has been chairperson of the Inaugural of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development since 2005. Ms Sisulu is member of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress (ANC) and a member of the National Working Committee of the ANC. She was a trustee of the South African Democracy Education Trust; trustee of the Albertina and Walter Sisulu Trust; and a member of the Board of the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

Ms Sisulu completed her General Certificate of Education (GCE) Cambridge University Ordinary Level at St Michael's School in Swaziland in 1971, and GCE Cambridge University Advanced Level in 1973, also in Swaziland.

She holds a Master of Arts degree in History from the Centre for Southern African Studies of the University of York and an M Phil also from the Centre for Southern African Studies of the University of York obtained 1989 with the thesis topic: "Women at Work and the Liberation Struggle in South Africa."

Ms Sisulu also holds a BA degree, a BA Honours degree in History and a Diploma in Education from the University of Swaziland. Between 1975 and 1976, Ms Sisulu was detained for political activities. She subsequently joined Umkhonto we Sizwe

(MK) and worked for underground structures of the ANC while in exile from 1977 to 1978. In 1979, she received military training specialising in military intelligence.

In 1981, Ms Sisulu taught at Manzini Central High School in Swaziland and in 1982, she lectured at the Department of History of the University of Swaziland. From 1985 to 1987, she taught at Manzini Teachers Training College and she was a chief examiner of History for Junior Certificate Examinations for Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. In 1983, she worked as sub-editor for The Times of Swaziland in Mbabane.

Ms Sisulu returned to South Africa in 1990 and worked as a personal assistant to Jacob Zuma as head of the ANC's Department of Intelligence. She also served as Chief Administrator for the ANC at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa in 1991 and as administrator of Intelligence at the ANC Department of Intelligence and Security in 1992.

In 1992, Ms Sisulu became a consultant for the National Children's Right Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation. In 1993, she worked as director of the Govan Mbeki Research Fellowship at the University of Fort Hare and from 2000 to 2002, she served as head of the Command Centre for Emergency Reconstruction.

Ms Sisulu was a member of the Management Committee, Policing Organisation and Management course of the University of the Witwatersrand in 1993; a member of management of the Sub-Council on Intelligence, Transitional Executive Council in 1994, and chairperson of the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence from 1995 to 1996.

Prior to her appointment as Minister of Public Service and Administration, Ms Sisulu has served as Deputy Minister of Home Affairs from 1996 to 2001. She was Minister of Intelligence from January 2001 to April 2004; Minister of Housing from April 2004 to May 2009; and Minister of Defence and Military Veterans from May 2009 to June 2012.

She was Minister of Public Service and Administration of the Republic of South Africa from June 2012 to 25 May 2014.

Ms Sisulu has published the following works:

- South African Women in Agricultural Section (pamphlet). York University in 1990
- Women at Work and Liberation Struggle in the 1980s
- Themes in the Twentieth Century South Africa, Oxford University Press. 1991
- Women Working Conditions in South Africa, South African Situation Analysis. National Children's Rights Committee. UNESCO. 1992
- Housing Delivery and the Freedom Charter: the Beacon of Hope, New Agenda and Second Quarter. 2005.

Ms Sisulu was awarded the Human Rights Centre Fellowship in Geneva in 1992. Her project for the United Nations Centre resulted in the University of the Witwatersrand School of Business setting up a training course to upgrade the policing skills of MK members.

She received a Presidential Award for the Breaking New Ground in Housing Delivery Strategy by the Institute for Housing of South Africa in 2004. In 2005, she received an award from the International Association for Housing Science in recognition of outstanding contributions and achievement towards improving and solving the world's housing problems.



MINISTER SISULU MEETS WITH EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT AT THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT



Minister of Tourism Lindiwe Sisulu, and Deputy Minister Fish Mahlalela, today met with the senior management of the Department of Tourism as she takes over the portfolio to provide leadership on tourism.

Although the tourism sector continues to be heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Minister Sisulu is confident that the Department will provide the necessary support that will drive recovery and protect jobs in the sector.

“The tourism sector is the worst affected by COVID – 19, and I want to ensure that we give them all the support we can immediately. We must work together to protect the current tourism jobs as well all the businesses in the sector,” said the Minister.

The Minister added that all black and

white-owned businesses in tourism will be supported as the sector navigates its way to recovery amidst the pandemic.

“I have requested the Director-General, with the support of the Deputy Director Generals to recommend actions to support businesses as a matter of urgency guided by the health protocols,” stated Minister Sisulu.

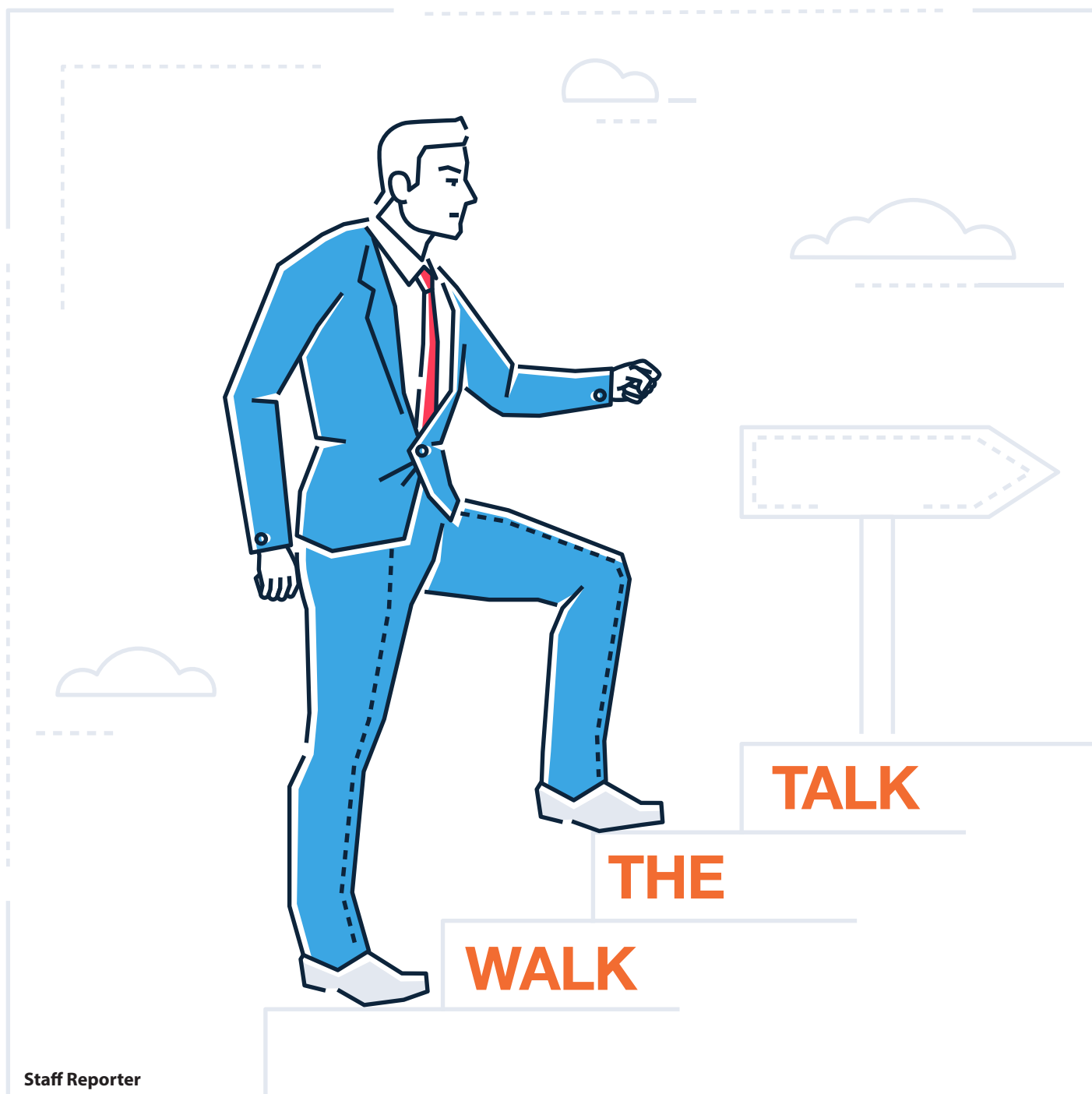
The Minister expressed her appreciation to the Director-General and Team Tourism on the work already done in ensuring a seamless transition in her new role and committed to consider all matters as speedily as possible, to ensure that the industry, stakeholders, and all partners remain confident on the prospects of the recovery of the sector.

“The tourism sector is counting on all of us to reboot the sector urgently. This is a beautiful country and we must get all South

Africans to explore it, and also extend it to our international visitors”.

“Among other, the pandemic resulted in the closure of tourism businesses; businesses operating at drastically reduced capacity; massive job losses; the collapse of supply and demand on the domestic and international markets; persistent pressure on the destination brand due to the country’s association with the 501.v2 variant of the COVID-19 virus; and regression of transformation in the tourism sector,” added Sisulu.

The Minister said that the progress in the vaccination, education, and awareness of the COVID-19 virus, is giving confidence that we can start opening our tourism sector as South Africans have done well in the vaccination programme



Staff Reporter

"Public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation" - Margaret Chase Smith. Against the backdrop of COVID-19 and the ongoing battle to overcome the pandemic, public servants have been and continue to be at the helm to hold the country together. In a time where uncertainty and fear of the unknown grips the hearts of our people, public servants continue to work tirelessly to be a beacon of hope that reassures the nation that working together, it is possible to conquer adversity.

September is Public Service Month (PSM) in government. As the expression says "Give people their flowers, whilst they can

still smell them", PSM serves as a month set aside to honour men and women who serve the nation in the government's spheres. This year the theme for Public Service Month is "The year of Charlotte Maxeke - a resilient public service responsive to the coronavirus pandemic".

This significant Public Service Month also coincides with Tourism Month. In celebration of our selfless and continuous dedication to the tourism sector in particular, we are reminded to deliver services in line with the eight Batho Pele Principles, which are outlined as follows:

1. Consultation
2. Service Standards

3. Access
4. Courtesy
5. Information
6. Openness and Transparency
7. Redress
8. Value for money

This month calls on us to "Walk the talk" in the sector in the spirit of patriotism. To lead by example by supporting SMMEs, buying proudly South African brands, cultivating the culture of domestic travel in our families and sharing information on how to enjoy tourism safely. It all starts with us, doing our part, to soften the blow and effects of the pandemic as well as building a solid foundation towards helping the sector on its path towards recovery.

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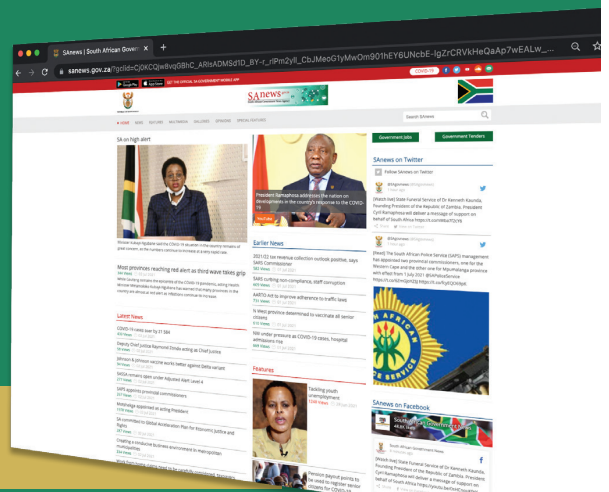
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Septi Bukula

REGULATORY CHANGE IS KEY TO TOURISM RECOVERY, TRANSFORMATION

Cape Town-based tour operator Faith Mabureki, owner of Click and Drive, enquired at a recent TBCSA-Wits Business School Tourism Dialogue on tourism competitiveness and growth, “Vehicle operating licences – when is this going to be solved? It’s been years of the same song, but no one wants to deal with this.” A simple enquiry, but one that goes to the heart of what has turned into a complicated issue and a protracted nightmare for the tour operating segment of South Africa’s tourism industry.

The issue is multi-year backlogs for the issuance of new tour vehicle operating licences and renewal of existing ones, and has, most surprisingly, remained unresolved for years.

Mabureki, whose business is part of Seeza Tourism Growth Network, joins a long line of fellow tour operators large and small who have expressed anguish over the ongoing situation, which comes at significant cost to their businesses. Within the Seeza network, SME tour operators, Rushdi Harper of Wow Tours and Travel, and Velile Ndlumbini of Imonti Tours, have also expressed their pain over the impact of their tour vehicle licensing woes. So have numerous others within the SATSA stable who have witnessed this unresolved situation take a heavy toll on their businesses.

In close to two decades of professional work in regulatory and business licensing simplification, both in South Africa and countries such as Kenya and Rwanda, I have not seen such an eminently resolvable problem persist for so long, despite determined efforts both inside the government (right up to ministerial level), and within the industry, to overturn it. This is especially puzzling, given that the real issue is not even the legislation – namely the National Land Transport Act and associated regulations per se, both of which are supported by industry – but the implementation thereof.

What makes the situation all the more

difficult to comprehend is that it runs directly counter to the government’s clear and consistent stance, held since the dawn of our democracy, on the paramount importance of creating an environment wherein businesses, especially SMEs, can thrive and create much-needed employment, unencumbered by burdensome regulation.

From its 1995 White Paper on National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Business in South Africa, right up to its latest Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP), the government has repeatedly acknowledged, correctly so, that inappropriately restrictive legislative and regulatory conditions are often viewed as critical constraints on the access of small enterprises into the business sector and as obstacles to growth. It has also repeatedly committed itself to rectifying this situation by means of consultative, transparent processes, with national economic growth and job creation the overriding objective.

There is no lack of appreciation by government of the importance of eliminating unduly restrictive regulations as a means to create an enabling business environment. Indeed, most recently, the government’s ERRP identified “regulatory changes to enable growth” as one of the key enablers to support the reconstruction and recovery of the country’s economy.

With all these clear commitments both in policy and action, one would have thought that resolving this pressing and often-raised issue within the tourism industry, would have been accorded the attention it warrants. It is impossible to speak of commitment to small business development, general industry growth and an enabling environment, and at the same time not act as a matter of priority to resolve so devastating a regulation-implementation problem.

No economy – least of all ours, which has been characterised by weak performance long before COVID-19 – can afford the impact of inappropriate or poorly implemented

regulation:

- Creating unnecessary barriers to trade, investment and economic efficiency
- Slowing down business responsiveness to market changes and opportunities
- Diverting resources away from productive investments
- Hampering entry to new markets
- Discouraging entrepreneurship
- Reducing innovation and job creation
- Potentially threatening the legitimacy of regulation and the rule of law

It should be patently obvious why South Africa (projected by UNCTAD to be facing a staggering 8.1% GDP loss due to a sharp fall in international tourism receipts induced by COVID-19), needs to up its game in creating the right conditions for recovery, competitiveness, and growth.

It therefore comes as great encouragement that the ERRP identifies fostering tourism recovery and growth as one of the priority interventions and, alongside that, ‘regulatory changes to enable growth’ as one of the key enablers. It is equally comforting that in its Tourism Sector Recovery Plan (TSRP) the Department of Tourism sets 2021/22 (hopefully sooner than later), as a specific timeframe within which, working with the Department of Transport which is the custodian of the NLTA and its regulations, it will improve turnaround times in the issuing of tour operating licences.

Recognising, as the TSRP does, that one of the most devastating effects of COVID-19 has been the regression of tourism transformation, there can be no doubt whatsoever that any action that has the unintended effect of impeding independent tourism entrepreneurship and SME growth, sets tourism transformation back. That’s too high a price to pay.

Septi Bukula is the founder of Seeza Tourism Growth Network and Acting Chair of the TBCSA Tourism Growth & Transformation Committee. He writes in his personal capacity.



THE PROVINCE OF THE FREE STATE HOSTS WORLD TOURISM DAY CELEBRATIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA AGAIN

Staff Reporter

The announcement was made today by the Director General of the Department of Tourism Mr Victor Tharage at the Golden Gate National Park outside of Clarens as the province launched its Tourism Month Campaign and began its 30-day countdown to the annual celebration.

World Tourism Day is a United Nations designed day celebrated annually across the world to focus and advocate for the centrality and contribution of the tourism sector towards the attainment of the global development goals for sustainable development and the fight against poverty. Speaking at the announcement of the Free State as the feature province for the 2021 national celebrations, the Director General stated that the choice of the Free State was well aligned with the adopted global theme of "tourism for inclusive growth".

"We could not have chosen a better host than this province as we navigate the economic and social wrath of the pandemic and importantly as we begin our voyage to recovery and rebuilding our sector to its acclaimed glory and development impact.

"The theme for this year is about tourism for

all. And by all, it is about the rural women and the innovative youth, it is for the villages, towns and the less visited part of our country. "This theme is about the cultural diversity of our offerings and travel tastes of the millennials. Importantly, growth is about the broad-based benefits and support for small enterprises that continue to bear the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic" said Tharage.

Accepting the offer to host, Free State MEC for Economic Development, Small Business Development, Environment and Tourism, MEC Makale Mohale said that the province was honoured to host the celebration in 2021 in the aftermath of the pandemic.

"We have put together a programme for the month which will reflect the beauty and offerings of our province, but it is this programme that should make everyone want to visit our province," said Mohale.

"This is an opportunity to once again take an unwavering shot at radical transformation of the tourism sector. In the midst of adversity, we must ensure that our small businesses are resilient and agile where possible and start thinking of disruptive approaches in the SMME sector," added Mohale.

Today's announcement also included the unveiling of the 2021 Sho't Left Travel Week.

Travel week is a domestic campaign aimed at promoting cheaper and affordable travel, while providing product owners and tourism trade an opportunity to re-attract South Africans back into the culture of traveling.

"Through Sho't Left Travel Week, which will commence from 06 to 12 September, we call upon South Africans to book these massively discounted packages, and use them for the next year," said Ms Sthembis Dlamini, Acting CEO of South African Tourism.

"It is a practical response to the challenge of affordability by many South Africans and an opportunity for travel operators and product owners to promote their offerings through our various platforms," added Dlamini.

As the country begins to open up, the appetite for domestic travel must be reignited and South Africans should be encouraged to travel their country - The month of September is known as Tourism Month, alongside Heritage Month and Public Service Month, in South Africa.

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND MTPA HOST SUCCESSFUL HOSPITALITY AND NEW VENTURE CREATION GRADUATIONS



New Venture Creation graduates with delegates from the department, MTPA and Church on The Hill

The Department of Tourism in partnership with Mpumalanga Tourism Parks and Agency (MTPA) hosted a successful Hospitality and New Venture Creation graduation ceremony that took place in Mbombela, Mpumalanga province, from 14 to 16 September 2021. MTPA was an appointed service provider for the implementation of the Hospitality Youth and New Venture Creation training project. The project comprises of three different training programmes such as Accommodation Services, Food and Beverage Services and New Venture Creation programme. The programme was modelled along the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) – Working for Tourism and is funded through EPWP programme.

The objectives of this training project were;

- To provide skills and practical work experience to unemployed youth, utilising the vehicle of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), to enable them to be employable;
- To provide entrepreneurial skills to unemployed youth;
- To train 500 unemployed youth to

enable them to acquire skills and gain work experience to enhance their employability in most sectors and;

- To assist in bridging skills gap in the tourism industry and intervene in the challenge of youth unemployment.

Youth unemployment in South Africa is alarming as it is constantly on the rise. According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) of the 1st quarter of 2021, the burden of unemployment is concentrated amongst the youth as they account for 59,5% of the total number of unemployed persons. The unemployment rate among the youth is high irrespective of education level. This speaks to the necessity of this training project, amongst other interventions by the department, and the value it brings in mitigating unemployment as one of the “triple challenges” South Africa still faces today.

After the completion of recruitment and induction process; learners commenced with their training in January 2020 (three months of classroom training and nine months of work place experiential training) and they

completed their training in April 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The learners also received a stipend during this process. From the intake of 150 Accommodation Services learners, 140 managed to complete the training. Meanwhile only 120 learners from Food and Beverages completed their training, out of a total number of 150 learners. When coming to the New Venture Creation programme, 163 learners completed the training out of a large group of 200.

The department boasts that a total of 419 learners were deemed competent both from their classroom and work place experiential training and graduated. Within the Accommodation Services Training programme a total of 21 learners have been offered permanent employment in different hospitality industries after the project came to an end. Whilst in the Food and Beverage Training programme a total number of 19 learners have been offered employment, some on permanent and others on temporary basis in different hospitality establishments around Mpumalanga Province. In the New Venture Training Programme some learners (7) managed to start their own business



MTPA Tourism Ambassador and Award Winning Gospel Artist Pretty Mhlongo singing

which are currently operational such as Tour guide ,4x 4 accommodation trails, Make- up artist and Spa Massage.

On the respective graduation days, the joyful graduates from various districts in Mpumalanga province graced the occasion proudly dressed in their uniforms and graduation regalia. Ms Hloni Thabethe, Managing Director of Ndalo Hotel and Conferencing, shared her experience as she spoke on behalf of all the host employers . "We are all aware how the pandemic has affected our industry, especially the Hospitality and Tourism Industry. Through the support of this program it has really sustained some of the establishments. As an industry we request that these programs continue as we still need the support so that it can revive us" she highlighted.

She also offered a message of support to the graduates. " You are one of the groups that withstood it all. Know that the sky is not the limit. If you want to go far, that is where you will go. How much you put in will determine how much you get out. We wish you all the

best and remember that it's all up to you" she concluded.

In his keynote address to the graduates , Chairperson of MTPA Board, Victor Mashego said " Your dreams must be realistic. When you start planning for your future, be realistic on the facts that are happening at that current time and what will happen tomorrow". He encouraged graduates to also apply for funding at the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) in order to open a business, create employment and especially for women to benefit from these opportunities.

"We are grateful as parents because you awarded our future leaders an opportunity to have a skill. On behalf of the parents, we are grateful that in such a difficult time you have given our children something that they will take, use and teach others. Thank you to everyone who contributed" said Ms Tsakane speaking on behalf of the parents .

Ms Lwazi Gwebu, who is a New Venture Creation graduate and an owner of Peaceful

Escape Mobile Spa, offered words of gratitude on behalf of the graduates. "We are wonderful business owners because of the efforts you have invested in us. May the Lord bless you and help you to continue changing lives. Even during the pandemic there was support and hope throughout the programme. We found more than just a qualification, we found a family to rely on. Our lives will never be the same" she concluded.

The graduation ceremony ended on a high note as multi-award-winning Gospel Artist and current MTPA Tourism Ambassador Pretty Mhlongo rendered an uplifting musical item prior to the awarding of certificates. "Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. Empowered they can be key agents for development and peace. If, however, they are left on society's margins, all of us will be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies" – Kofi Annan.



PROVINCES GEAR UP FOR WORLD TOURISM DAY 2021

World Tourism Day is a United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) initiative, celebrated annually on 27 September. World Tourism Day has an objective to promote the importance of tourism towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through its social, cultural, political and economic value. In line with this objective, South Africa celebrates Tourism Month from 1 to 30 September every year with the aim of providing a heightened month-long focus on the importance of the sector to the South African economy.

Under the WTD 2021 theme "Tourism for Inclusive Growth", different activations are done throughout the country as per the UNWTO theme together with the national priorities for tourism. All roads lead to Free

State Province, the host of WTD 2021, as provinces gear up for this highly anticipated time in the sector's calendar. In the build-up of WTD celebrations, this event will be preceded by a 2-day media tour (25-26 August 2021) around key tourist sites in the Free State by journalists from all eight provinces, followed by a grand Media Launch on 27 August 2021 at Phuthaditjhaba. This will serve as a vehicle to promote the benefits of tourism to the country, specifically Domestic Tourism. Also, to showcase how tourism has contributed to job creation for the sector and the value chain collectively.

Below are some of the activations the provinces will be doing for Tourism Month and WTD:

Limpopo Province

- Reigniting Domestic Travel Campaign - A 3-day event to ignite domestic travel in partnership with the Kruger National Park, SA Tourism and Department of Tourism at the Phalaborwa Kruger National Park Gate.
- Limpopo Holiday Fair - Creation of a marketing platform for SMME's to promote summer specials as part of LTA Summer Campaign at Savannah Mall – PLK.
- National SANParks Week - Encourage all South Africans with free entry into national parks for domestic tourism drive at Kruger National Park, Marakele National Park and Mapungubwe National Park.



Mpumalanga Province

- Hidden Gems Drive - During the month of September MTPA will participate in a drive to showcase hidden gems in the province. This activity is aimed at promoting the less known and less visited attractions in Mpumalanga. Social media influencers will be roped in to run this activation to ensure maximum exposure on all social platforms.
- Small-Town activations - Social Media Influencers will be roped in to create hype through social media platforms on series of small-town activations as part of Tourism Awareness drive. This is one of the best ways to promote small towns that are striving to be known and attract domestic tourists such as Wakkerstroom Kaapsehoop and Dulstroom.
- Launch of Manyeleti Restaurant - The newly appointed Operator will launch the Manyeleti Restaurant at Manyeleti Nature Reserve as they will be now operating fully at the restaurant and it will be open for business.

Gauteng Province

- Rooftop Launch (Tourism Hub) - Launch of Leonardo rooftop as a tourism hub. The tallest building in Africa – The Leonardo, a 234-metre mixed-use property development in Sandton, Johannesburg.
- Berry Picking attractions promotions in GP – Family day out - Promotion of the Organic Strawberry Picking season. The season extends from approximately late-September to early-December every year in Gauteng's Strawberries Farms.
- Gauteng Eats Launch - The intention to create a GP lifestyle experience showcasing Gauteng's offerings and products through a curated food, fashion and lifestyle experience at Suikersbosrand.

North-West Province

- Women in Tourism Networking

Session - Women who own Tourism products will host a Networking and Benchmarking Session with women in other economic sectors in Dr. Ruth Segomotso Mompoti-Vryburg.

- Social Tourism Programme- The programme seeks to inculcate a culture of travel and consumption of tourism products among designated groups (youth, retirees, communities etc). Activities will include an educational game drive in Pilanesberg National Park).
- Ultimate X Sport - This is a Sports Tourism showcase with adventure enthusiasts across the continent participating in skate-boarding and BMX competition in Sun City.

Free-State Province

- Kasi Tourism - Promotion of Kasi/ Township Tourism economy in the Eagle Route.
- Know your routes Campaign - Educating communities through Lesedi FM on different routes offerings and giving away a weekend away to lucky listener.
- Maoto Mpepe Heritage Hiking Extravaganza - Hiking experience and adventure in the Eagle Route.

Northern-Cape Province

- Namaqua Quest MTB stage Race - The Namaqua Quest 3-day Trail Run and Mountain Bike events takes place in the famous Namakwaland. They will cycle and run in 3 different areas over the 3 days, showcasing the different landscapes of the area.
- Schaap Ultra Trail Run- Run along the river bed of the magnificent Schaap River as it meanders through a majestic canyon carved by the hands of time. Run on jagged trails that guided old copper wagons up Spektakel Pass. These activities takes place in Okiep.
- Heritage Weekend at The Petting Zoo- Celebrating heritage day at Kimberley

Petting Zoo.

Western Cape Province

- Tour of the Overberg- Minister Maynier's Overnight Overberg Tour focusing on activities linked to affordability, meeting with some businesses and TPDF projects site inspections in Elgin and Hermanus.
- Minister Maynier to visit Aslina Wines in Stellenbosch. Possible launch of their tasting room.
- Minister Maynier to launch the !Khwa ttu - Food from the Ancestors Tourism product funded by the Tourism Product Development Fund. Minister can thereafter (or before) enjoy and participate in the !Khwa ttu Heritage Festival that is also taking place.

Eastern Cape Province

- Open Days- Eastern Cape product owners who have experiences open to the public will be encouraged to waive their entry fees for a period of one week during the month of September. This is to encourage locals to experience activities on their doorstep. This is via ECPTA website and social media platforms.
- Charity Hike- A charity hike will be held at Island Nature Reserve with the purpose to create awareness of the nature reserve ,Tourism Month and to raise money for rhino conservation. The Island Nature Reserve has recently been granted green flag status which makes it one of the best hiking trails in the country.
- Walk and See More- An East London walking tour for two groups of 8 people will be hosted by Velile Ndlumbini from Imonti Tours who will guide the groups and will showcase some of the key city attractions in Buffalo City.

#WeDoTourism #TourismMonth2021

STAFF SUGGESTION ON TOURISM RECOVERY PLAN

The Covid-19 pandemic has left the tourism sector in a dismal state, which has led to various businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector struggling to recover and re-open their doors to the public. There are many different ways in which businesses can approach a recovery plan, but in the tourism sector the approach may be more complex than other sectors because of the association between tourism and other industries. Therefore, a sustainable recovery plan in the tourism sector may also bring some stability in the private and public sectors associated with the tourism sector.



The continuation of the National Department of Tourism's support towards businesses and destinations in the tourism industry is not only essential, it also provides sustainability even beyond the pandemic. These efforts will ensure that service providers in the tourism industry meet the demands of their customers. Therefore, I would suggest that a recovery plan for tourism should involve the synchronized action across all spheres of government, the private sector and the public, which will diversify and strengthen the resilience of the tourism economy in order to be better prepared for future catastrophes. The pandemic has not only exposed structural shortcomings in the tourism system but also its vulnerability.

Domestic tourism is providing a much-needed boost to benefit many tourism destinations and businesses, and will continue to be a key driver of recovery in the short to medium term. The synchronized approach will ensure that clear communication and information on policies is shared at national, provincial and local level, and between public and private organisations. The partnerships

between tourism stakeholders and local communities will promote responsible tourism and strengthen domestic tourism. The restoration and enhancing of attractions in communities and villages will create new target markets, attract more visitors, create job opportunities and provide exposure to local businesses.

Digital platforms on tourism offerings can contribute to limit the negative impacts by addressing the information needs of tourism stakeholders in an efficient and responsible manner. The utilisation of digital platforms as a communication and marketing tool to promote tourism and send clear and concise information to users at local, provincial and national level will assist in ensuring sustainability and stability in the tourism sector. Social media platforms proved to be of great value to many tourism destinations, not only to promote tourism campaigns but also as an influential tool in mobilising relief efforts during the pandemic. Therefore, more content should be shared on the various social media platforms to generate greater interest in participating in the tourism sector -

By Glenda Esemang



The tourism sector has been severely affected by the pandemic, with the recovery plan that was developed by the department, it is also important to put systems in places that will assist tourism businesses to recover. Since the beginning of the pandemic various restrictions were imposed and are still being imposed in the country and more specifically in the tourism

sector.

The National Department of Tourism should develop an operational plan on the awareness and importance of Covid-19 vaccine, focusing specifically on the tourism sector. Currently with the statistics shows a significant decline in the administration of the vaccine, it is important for South African citizens to understand the safety and necessity of the vaccine should they plan on traveling both domestic and internationally. This awareness in the tourism sector will ensure that tourism establishments understand that their establishments must be safe for their clients even for those who are vaccinated. These awareness campaigns can be achieved by using different media platforms to engage with their intended audience.

The department should create a database which focuses on the tourism businesses and the vaccination programme. Which will assist business owners access to vaccinations in a much easier manner and the department will have access to factual information regarding the establishments which have complied with the vaccination programme should the government make the vaccine mandatory in the tourism industry and the country. This will also create a safe environment for local and international tourists. -

By Julia Masemola



There has been many changes in the different sectors in South Africa, specifically in the tourism and hospitality sector during the pandemic and the different restrictions. With the 'new normal' in terms of working remotely, restricted physical contact and

the increased utilisation of various online platforms.

The Department of Tourism should consider getting with the times and migrate to a more practical platform given the recent normal by creating an official South African government platform for Online Tourism. This online platform should be able to accommodate the following industries; food and wine, fashion and culture, wild life and local arts.

Online users should be able to view the different companies which offers these products and services. The online service should further provide users with a pleasurable experience; such as viewing online shows of chefs displaying their skills, storytelling podcasts on the history of the different cultures and languages in South Africa, access to reviews and services provided by hotel and leisure facilities, visual tour guides for tourists and access to purchasing local art by using an online pictorial presentation portal.

This will provide users with a greater scope of what the tourism sector has to offer, and all they need to know about the different tourist destinations in the different provinces and the country. It will also promote small businesses in the tourism and hospitality industry, as well as the different industries associated with the tourism sector. The implementation of this online platform will grow the tourism sector as tourists will have better information when planning to visit destinations in the different provinces. –

By Elijah Mokgehle





From left is facilitator of the discussion Lehlohonolo Mokoena with panelists Soza Simango, Keamogetswe Thole and Nthabiseng Molongoana.

2021 TOURISM PUBLIC LECTURE

The World Tourism Day and its related activities are aimed at raising awareness among the international and local community about the importance of tourism and its social, environmental and economic values. "Tourism for Inclusive Growth" has been adopted by the United Nations Tourism World Organization (UNTWO) as the theme to celebrate the 2021 World Tourism Day and Tourism Month.

Globally, tourism stakeholders and organizations, as well as government agencies with a special interest in tourism, celebrate Tourism Day on the 27th of September each year through organizing and coordinating of special tourism activities.

To foster stakeholder engagements and partnerships as well as to gain expert industry insights, Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTE) together with the Central University of Technology (CUT) hosted the Tourism Month Public Lecture on 17 September 2021 at CUT in Bloemfontein.

"The year 2020 was a year unlike any other with unprecedented events sweeping across the globe. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound adverse impact on the global tourism sector and directly restricted the movement of people, as well as goods and services globally, with a concomitant adverse impact on the tourism sector. Our sector is arguably one of the most impacted in the world, being at the

forefront of this epidemiological storm which has highlighted the need for interventions to keep the sector afloat." Said Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela.

The lecture by Professor Leslie Bank of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) promoted transparent and open dialogues between government and its stakeholders. Stability and support for the tourism sector was established to get back to its glory days whilst operating under the new normal.

The expert panel members included Lehlohonolo Mokoena facilitating the discussions, Soza Simango, Keamogetswe Thole and Nthabiseng Molongoana they unpacked this year's Tourism Month theme "Tourism for Inclusive Growth" as well as discussing and deliberating on the impact of COVID-19 in the Free State tourism sector.

The tourism sector is resilient and will bounce back. With the move to Adjusted Level Two, it is with confidence that tourism growth is on the uptake. The implementation of the Recovery Plan will lend impetus to this and Tourism Month is perfectly positioned to reignite demand that will accelerate growth to rest the sector and to position it on a growth trajectory. The Department of Tourism has developed Norms and Standards aligned to the protocols in support of ensuring a safe and compliant tourism and hospitality sector.

Mahlalela further emphasized that, "A robust

vaccination programme is essential to restoring consumer confidence. The proportion of travelers vaccinated will be an indicator for tourism revival and the possibility of increased tourist numbers. We continue to urge our people to vaccinate as well as to observe non-pharmaceutical procedures, which are mask wearing, sanitization and social distancing."

"Tourism is so much more than generating revenue. It also promotes goodwill, social cohesion and nation-building. South Africans are the best proponents and ambassadors for brand South Africa. Let us take ownership of this beautiful country as tourism is everybody's business. It's ours to travel, it's ours to do tourism and it's ours to enjoy. While we welcome the world back to our shores, we also welcome all South Africans to travel in their country. We invite you to take a Sho't left and experience our beautiful country and its melting pot of people and cultures." Concluded Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela.

On the same day of the lecture, Deputy Minister Fish Mahlalela and Free State Member of Executive Council Makola Mohale hosted a community radio Imbizo discussion on tourism for inclusive growth. The ninety-minute discussion highlighted policy initiatives that range from Skills Development Programmes, to incentivized business funding initiatives that will be implemented as part of the objectives of the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) and the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan.



SMMES ‘CRUCIAL TO NEW TOURISM ECONOMY’ — DLAMINI

By Tourism Update

Small, medium and micro-sized (SMME) businesses are considered crucial to the new tourism economy created by the onset of COVID-19.

“They bring fresh ideas and flexibility to adapt to a new tourism economy,” said South African Tourism Acting CEO, Sthembiso Dlamini, noting that this was why Africa’s Travel and Tourism Summit would dedicate a day to empower future Pioneers and Game Changers in the tourism sector.

The Summit is being hosted as a hybrid event, simultaneously in three major cities in Africa – Johannesburg, Durban and Lagos – between September 19 and 21. SMME Day, held on September 19, would

focus on best practices in an ever-changing Brand Africa, and provide these businesses with opportunities to exchange leads and collaborate as drivers for transforming the sector, explained Dlamini.

“The Summit is what the African travel trade needs right now and SMME Day is a perfect way to reboot the tourism economy as small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of tourism. Many of the business people at SMME Day will be seasoned entrepreneurs. They do not want to know how they should run their business. Instead, they are here to find ways of adapting their businesses to a new kind of tourism market.” Dlamini added that the new post-COVID tourism sector would rely more on digital

technology, stringent health and safety standards and new ways to package travel, particularly for the outdoors. But she warned against too much speculation and asked that industry players focus on working together instead.

“Right now, we cannot really predict what the tourism market will look like or what it should be. Instead, we should spend our energy on working together to rebuild the tourism sector and make it even more robust than it was before the COVID-19 era.”

With the theme ‘Re-awakening Africa’, the Summit calls on all tourism stakeholders to reflect, reimagine and reignite a tourism sector ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Sindile Xulu

A CASE FOR RETHINKING AND REBUILDING TOURISM

We're living in a South Africa disrupted. Disrupted by a relentless pandemic that constantly throws us curveballs. Disrupted by a shaky economy that needs urgent bolstering. Disrupted by civil unrest on a scale we have not seen in our democratic nation before. It's difficult among all these challenges to see hope, resilience or even sustainability in the future.

Yet, for me, disruption may also ignite a bold new beginning. I believe we should use the disruption and crises we're faced with to sharpen our resolve to build our nation and the African continent. The time is ripe for industry and stakeholders to rally together and collaborate. Now is the time to use this disruption to catapult us into a more inclusive, more resilient, and more sustainable path towards the future.

It will take a lot of blood and sweat. We need people on the ground, pulling up their shirtsleeves and getting their hands dirty as they begin rebuilding. But, with patience and perseverance, I believe the rewards will be bountiful.

My conviction in tourism has never been stronger than it is now. Despite the challenges we're facing, I have an unshakeable faith in the powerful socio-economic, cultural, and nation-building value of tourism in our country as well as the continent. And this underpins my determination to make a powerful investment case for tourism.

There are a variety of indicators to look to. To measure economic growth prospects in tourism. From GDP growth outlooks to travel demand growth projections. Because the world is currently experiencing turmoil it is advisable to adopt the long view. It might not be that crystal clear – there are promising signs that motivate the case for tourism.

Private-public community partnerships Government is increasingly accepting the role of private-public-community partnerships in its drive for GDP growth.

Recent announcements regarding proposed expansion of the Durban harbour for instance - with a required investment quantum of R100 billion (€5.87bn) – invites significant private-sector investment and participation. It is an indication that we will see increased impetus to roll out more projects. These have a positive impact on investment and GDP growth. The World Bank is optimistic about South Africa's GDP growth in 2021. Its South Africa Economic Update Edition 13 predicts 4% growth supported by the global recovery, the vaccination roll-out, and favourable commodity prices (World Bank 2021b, Zeufack et al. 2021). Overall GDP growth is positive news for the tourism sector.

Tackling unemployment is even more critical. The same World Bank report titled Building Back better from Covid-19 with a special focus on jobs highlights the importance of job creation for sustainable economic growth. It recommends a four-blocks policy package for accelerated employment recovery. One of the low-hanging opportunities is that increasing the rate of self-employment – without decreasing the other forms of employment – to 30% could change the landscape considerably.

"In South Africa only 10 percent of employed workers are self-employed, against about 30 percent in upper-middle-income countries on average. A rough but striking illustration is that if self-employment were to reach levels more typical of upper-middle-income countries, unemployment in South Africa would be about half its current rate. A rate of self-employment of 30 percent would increase the number of workers by about 3.5 million, or about half of people who are currently unemployed."

These figures begin to create targets for us in the tourism sector. With a common vision then we could better invest and drive change.

'Collaboration, critiquing and engagement' My vision is one of collaboration, critiquing,

and engagement with every stakeholder in the tourism sector. By eschewing our silos and coming together to share our expertise, ideas, and methodologies we have a better chance of re-thinking and re-imagining the tourism sector to mitigate the type of disruptions that have brought us to our knees recently.

Collaboration should include entrepreneurs, businesses, government, investors, communities, researchers and more. Every facet of the tourism sector must be drawn on to rebuild a tourism economy that is more robust, fruitful, and sustainable for the future. McKinsey's How South African SMEs can survive and thrive post COVID-19 report for instance, rightfully points out that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) employ between 50 and 60 percent of the country's workforce across all sectors, and are responsible for a quarter of job growth in the private sector. Because the tourism sector is dominated by SMEs, this underscores the importance of retaining and saving as many SMEs as possible in the immediate term, and growing their numbers in the long term.

Entrepreneurs, where it all starts, are the risk-takers who we need to support and bolster. We need to hear their plans and find creative and innovative ways to ensure these plans reach fruition and are sustainable in the future. If we all accept and embrace the role of entrepreneurship and SMEs, then collaboration between government, banks, investors, development agencies to provide impactful and results-driven support is imperative.

Supplier development

Big businesses are specialists with proven track records. They're vital to share their wisdom and experiences. Supplier development by big business is an area that could have a positive impact on SME development and support. McKinsey recommends five elements:

"Corporates more generally could enable



SMEs by focusing their supplier development for longer-term scale and competitiveness. We recommend five elements for private sector players to consider as part of their supplier development processes to both serve their needs and ensure the viability and sustainability of their SME partners as a business imperative, and not just for social responsibility purposes.

1. Develop clear selection criteria for suppliers up-front. For example, by defining the categories in which to develop suppliers. This could be based on ownership structures, business performance, or other criteria.
2. Assess the capability gaps that exist within suppliers up-front and develop plans to help them close these.
3. Build funding and capability requirements into the contract to create sustainability.
4. Simplify contractual terms and conditions and required paperwork for SMEs that often do not have large/dedicated commercial teams.
5. Establish regular check-ins and course correction sessions throughout the lifecycle of the suppliers."

Government too is vital. It is through them that policy and regulations to support the sector are enacted. The investment community will play an important role as advisers and thought leaders in re-strategising how best to channel investment into tourism.

As we rethink and rebuild, the value of community involvement in the tourism sector cannot be stressed enough. From rural communities to women and youth – there are so many innovative and creative ways previously marginalised communities can be drawn in to rebuild and grow the sector. Now is the time to think about these and find ways of making them a reality.

'COLLABORATION AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH KEY TO TOURISM'S SURVIVAL'



Government plans to roll out a national training programme targeting small, medium and micro-sized (SMME) tourism businesses in rural, township and small towns to facilitate implementation of a set of globally benchmarked norms and standards needed for the businesses.

The plan also makes provision for the establishment of a support hub to provide non-financial support to tourism businesses to increase the resilience of SMMEs during the pandemic and beyond.

This was highlighted by Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela, speaking at Africa's Travel and Tourism Summit's SMME Day on Sunday (September 19).

"SMMEs are the backbone of the tourism economy. Attesting to this, I recently took part in a parliamentary debate on how a self-reliant township and rural economies can bode well for tourism," he said, noting that SMMEs could aid in the sector's return to pre-COVID performance levels and its long-term sustainable growth trajectory that fully realised Africa's vast and diverse tourism potential.

South African Tourism Acting CEO, Sthembiso Dlamini, agreed that SMME businesses were considered crucial to the new tourism economy created by the onset of COVID-19.

"They bring fresh ideas and flexibility to adapt to a new tourism economy," she said, noting that this was why Africa's Travel and

Tourism Summit would dedicate a day to empower the future pioneers and game-changers of the tourism sector.

'We can no longer do business in silos'
Mahlalela pointed out that the onset of COVID-19 could be viewed in two ways – "that it spells the end of tourism as we knew it or that it ushers in an opportunity to create a new identity for our sector, which hinges on increased collaboration among all industry role players".

"For all of us to succeed, we can no longer do business in silos. This calls for greater collaboration between government and the private sector, as well as between all the governments on the continent," he emphasised.

An enabling environment for SMMEs
Percy Koji, CEO of the Small Tourism Enterprise Association (STEA), echoed Mahlalela, saying collaboration between private and public sectors was vital. "Collaboration is a big word. If you are in business for 10 years, no man is an island; no business can survive on its own." He added that government needed to create an enabling environment as an initiative poised to drive growth for small and medium-sized businesses. "People will have more jobs, resuscitate the sector and address the issues around crime."

STEA helps small businesses understand the importance of compliance with regulations and trains in this regard.

Koji said while small and medium-sized

enterprises were recognised as a critical part of the tourism industry, they tended to be neglected. This is because SMMEs are not usually compliant in many aspects of business. "Big business will always be ahead because small businesses are not well prepared to compete against them."

He pointed out that SMMEs still needed training on various issues, including tax matters and being compliant with relevant government regulations. Koji added that SMMEs faced numerous challenges, such as tight cashflow, which limited their strategic options, limited market access, and lack of relevant business management skills.

"For government to have a bigger tax base we have to facilitate small business. We have to professionalise SMMEs so it becomes a more competitive space to be in."

Koji further called for increased focus on the domestic tourism market so as to create opportunities for SMMEs locally. "In South Africa we have focused a lot on the inbound market, but developing the local economy will create better opportunities for everyone. If you buy a coffee at a restaurant, you are creating a job for that person serving you."

The three-day Summit is being hosted simultaneously in three major cities in Africa – Johannesburg, Durban and Lagos. The hybrid event gives delegates from around the world the option to attend either physically or virtually.



SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM TO HOST ITS BIGGEST VIRTUAL ROAD SHOW & VIRTUAL FAM IN CHINA

In a bid to kick start travel to South Africa from China, South African Tourism hosted the 2021 China Virtual Road Show & Virtual Fam to reconnect Chinese buyers with South African trade. The event was scheduled from 13th to 17th September 2021.

China is one of South Africa's key source markets. This virtual tour aims to boost confidence and trust in South Africa as a tourism destination following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic early last year. This Virtual Road Show is a 100% online B2B matchmaking event that connects South African products owners with Chinese trade partners who package South African products and experiences to travellers in the market. It allows for one-on-one virtual meetings via video call and chat on any device.

"South Africa, like many other countries, is seeking ways to rebuild its tourism sector to contribute to the country's economy. Over the last year, we have continued with our strategic goal of promoting the country as a leisure tourism and business

events destination both domestically and internationally. As we continue with our focus, we believe a coordinated response and collaboration with our key trade partners are key and will contribute immensely in us achieving our goal," says South African Tourism Acting CEO, Sthembiso Dlamini.

The China Virtual Tour and Virtual Fam are fully bilingual (English and Mandarin), and the translation services will also be available upon request. It is scheduled daily between 3 pm to 6 pm China time (9 am and 12 pm South African time) from 13th to 17th September 2021. Alongside the virtual roadshow will be a virtual fam which will see South African exhibitors virtually showcasing their updated products to Chinese buyers. It will take place for an hour before the virtual roadshow.

"This engagement is very important for South Africa's economy, not only because it places some of the South African tourism products and services at the forefront of the Chinese buyers, but also because the Chinese tourism industry is recovering,

which is very encouraging. This makes for the perfect opportunity for us to market South Africa so that it is on top of mind for both business and leisure travellers," says Mr. Mansoor Mohamed (Hub Head, Asia Pacific, South African Tourism).

Mansoor further said: "We know that our industry has suffered a great deal since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic last year. As a destination marketing organization marketing a tourism destination with rich and diverse landscapes, it is SA Tourism's responsibility to create an enabling environment for our South African product owners to connect with Chinese partners that will help bring travellers to South Africa. This is all part of reigniting our tourism sector".

SA Tourism is aware of the difficulty the tourism industry is facing and has made the event FREE. The platform has a self-manage account feature for exhibitors to manage marketing content, see daily diary appointments with buyers, and conduct meetings in private chat rooms.



RED MILK

*Blended with hatred, pain and disgust
Dripping from the depth of my breasts
Is the red milk fed to a child forced into my womb
By the pitch black shadow that lingered in the darkness
That was seen by all but, ignored by the law*

*A reminder of my sorrows remains on my lap
The legacy of my misery still cry out for love
A putrid spew that will put a drunkard to shame
An infested phlegm spat towards my face
But yet, fell upon the door of my thighs*

*I continue to feed red milk to this soul reject
I sing lullabies of hatred as I violently rock this seed
The seed that I am planting to cause human destruction
To the world that has darkened the light of my soul
That left me paralysed with unexplainable fear to live*

*Possibly when unmerciful volcano has erupted
Maybe when the looter who uprooted the very core of my soul
Has taken his last gasp beyond the second coming
Hopefully this life held by a thread will mend and revive
And the red milk in my breasts will run white again*

by Stan Montsho





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