

MARCH 2021

EDITION

04

Bojanala

ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

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tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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EDITORIAL

DEAR TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS

Let me welcome you to this edition of Bojanala. I want to also use this opportunity to thank you for making use of this platform to engage each other particularly in this time, where every effort is necessary for us as the sector to fully engage each other as often as we can.

The era of Covid-19 has necessitated that we do things differently and while we have not succeeded in other fronts, we have most definitely made strides on many others. It is important for the sector to rise above this challenge and make every effort available to reduce the spread of this virus while continually working on reviving the sector.

The reality is that the virus is still so much with us and even with the dropping of numbers and government's effort to vaccinate as much people as possible; we still need to be cautious in how we run our businesses. That is, extra efforts must be implemented in our respective establishments in order to run our businesses safely with minimal risks of spreading the virus.

As we may all be aware, we are entering into an era that not only requires of us to be smart, but caring as well. Easter Holidays are upon us and nobody can blame us from being a little excited. This is especially because we have not been spending some time with our families and friends freely in a while due to the restrictions brought to curb the spread of Covid-19. This also means that some of the businesses have not made as much revenue as they would ordinarily make on a normal setup.

While this is fully understandable, we are called once more to exercise some restraint just a little longer. We have been made aware repeatedly by our government and scientists on how big crowds have become super spreaders of this virus and we need to somewhat limit this.

Similar to the festive season holidays, we are faced with a high possibility of a third wave and who knows how bad this could be? So, let me take this opportunity to remind you all that as we celebrate Easter Holidays, we should try to stay safe and avoid crowded places. Let us continue doing what we have always done before and continually sanitize, wash hands regularly and wear facemasks all

the time we are in a public space.

Also in this edition is the meeting between Afriforum and Solidarity regarding the transformation and the Tourism Equity Fund. Read more about this all important meeting. The objective of the meeting was to engage the two organisations in an attempt to listen and establish the basis of their opposition to the fund - Things did not go well, but we soldier on.

While the pandemic has not made it easy for us to operate smoothly, we have done all we could to engage the sector players as well as the people of South Africa a large. This is displayed in many other stories in this edition, which capture amongst others, the Minister's visit to local schools in Mpumalanga as well as the Deputy Minister's visit to the launch of the Tourism Equity Fund.

Read about a visit by the Deputy Minister to various attractions in Bojanala District Municipality in North West, which were badly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. In this visit, the Deputy Minister learned that the sector lost more than 300 000 jobs thus far, with some establishments having closed completely, while others have not opened and some are gradually opening.

You will also read about the Deputy Minister's engagement with the Chinese community during their new celebration. Learn about a donation of Anti-Epidemic Supplies from the Embassy of the Peoples Republic of China to the department.

The edition also takes you through a process where the department successfully hosted the 8th Sharing of Best Practices Workshop.

I hope you will enjoy these and many articles that are offered in this bumper edition of the magazine. As we look forward to the next one, we continue to invite you to please share some of your best stories within your organisations. These stories go a long way in ensuring that we are all connected and where possible, we can help each in order to be one.

Cheers and see you in the next edition

Blessing Manale

MINISTER MMAMOLOKO KUBAYI-NGUBANE BACK TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN



Minister Kubayi-Ngubane addressing matriculants at K.I. Twala Secondary School



Minister addressing the matriculants of Thomas Nhlabathi Secondary School and displaying the PPE and school supplies from the Department

Staff Reporter

After an extended holiday season, the school calendar for the first term went into full gear throughout the country on 15 February 2021. It marked the beginning of a new academic journey for some and a highly anticipated continuation for others. As teachers and learners alike hope to create some sense of normalcy in schools amidst the current COVID-19 pandemic, Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane embarked on a Back to School Campaign in Secunda to lend a helping hand.

The campaign began at the Govan Mbeki Municipality Chambers where Minister Kubayi-Ngubane was received by esteemed dignitaries such as Executive Mayor of Govan Mbeki Municipality, Nhlakanipho Zuma, Circuit Manager of Education in Govan Mbeki Municipality, Silo Molepo, and Mpumalanga Provincial Chief Whip, Hon. Fidell Mlombo, amongst others. The Department, Mpumalanga Province and Govan Mbeki Municipality each donated school supplies to three children respectively, whom they will sponsor throughout their schooling.



Minister Kubayi-Ngubane (left) handing over the school supplies to the children, accompanied by Mpumalanga Provincial Chief Whip, Fidell Mlombo (centre) and Executive Mayor of Govan Mbeki, Nhlakanipho Zuma (far right)



Minister Kubayi-Ngubane (left) entering the school

The Minister, joined by Executive Mayor Zuma and Govan Mbeki Parliamentary Office delegates, made their first stop at K.I. Twala Secondary School where they held a briefing session with the leadership of the school to identify areas in the school that require support. They further went on to donate school uniforms and school bags carrying the message “Fight COVID. Stay safe. It’s in your hands”. For COVID-19 support, each of the bags that the matriculants received contained a cloth mask, water bottle and sanitiser. Minister Kubayi-Ngubane specifically addressed 31 matriculant learners who do not only study tourism but also bear much academic responsibility as seniors of the school and as prospective students in institutions of higher learning. She offered words of encouragement and informed them of the vast higher learning

support and career possibilities in the industry. “Where you are today does not define where you are going tomorrow. Who you are today does not define who you become tomorrow. It’s in your hands. It’s your choice,” the Minister highlighted.

The next stop was Osizweni Secondary School, where the Minister addressed matriculants studying Maths and Science, which are subjects she personally enjoyed and excelled in when she was in matric. She emphasised the flexibility and multiple opportunities that education gives with regard to the various career paths one can take when hard work is applied. “Education will give you dignity and integrity. Education will help you to have stature in society... always remember, there are no quick wins,” the Minister said.

Thomas Nhlabathi Secondary School was the last school to be visited on the day. Minister Kubayi-Ngubane spoke to the matriculants and demystified popular COVID-19 myths and emphasised the importance of adhering to COVID-19 rules by constantly washing and sanitising of hands, maintaining social distance and wearing a mask. “Fighting COVID-19 is everyone’s responsibility. You are wearing a mask to protect yourself,” the Minister stated.

Minister Kubayi-Ngubane further encouraged the matriculants to work extra hard, pass with excellence and form part of the top learners that qualify for funding and are absorbed in institutions of higher learning. “This country is depending on you as the younger generation today for its future,” she concluded.



Minister Kubayi-Ngubane at the Govan Mbeki Municipality Chambers in Secunda



“Education will give you dignity and integrity. Education will help you to have stature in society... always remember, there are no quick wins,” the Minister said.

Executive Mayor Nhlakanipho Zuma (left) handing over school supplies and PPE to Acting Deputy Principal Ronald Chibanada (2nd left) and Principal Nonthuthuzelo Thwala (right)



The Minister assesses COVID-19 compliance of matriculants in the classroom



(Left to right) Principal of Osizweni Mr Mothupi, Executive Mayor Nhlakanipho Zuma, Minister Kubayi-Ngubane, Deputy Principal Mr Letsela, Circuit Manager of Education in Govan Mbeki Municipality Silo Molepo and Member of Constituency Management Committee (CMC) in Govan Mbeki Municipality, Lucky Mbuyane after handover of school supplies



The Minister (left) addresses the matriculants of Osizweni Secondary School alongside Principal Mothupi (right) with the PPE ready for distribution



(Left to right) Executive Mayor of Govan Mbeki Municipality Nhlakanipho Zuma, Minister Kubayi-Ngubane and Circuit Manager of Education in Govan Mbeki Municipality, Silo Molepo



PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA, MINISTER ZWELI MKHIZE TAKE THE FIRST JAB



President Cyril Ramaphosa leads by example and becomes the first citizen to be vaccinated

Staff Reporter

Earlier in the month, President Cyril Ramaphosa and health minister Zweli Mkhize became the first citizens to be vaccinated with the newly arrived Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The vaccine arrived in South Africa earlier in the year.

Before the vaccination process takes place, the president indicated that the first batch of 80 000 doses of the vaccine were being prepared and will be distributed through the breadth and

length of the country with the attention on healthcare workers.

“To demonstrate our confidence in this vaccine and help allay any fears that people may have, the minister of health and I will join the first healthcare workers to receive the vaccine in Khayelitsha,” said Ramaphosa in a statement on Wednesday.

Ramaphosa gave thumbs up to Minister Mkhize, his team as well as the Medical

Research Council for responding rapidly and effectively and for their success.

“As this batch has already been approved by the SA Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) under the Sisonke Protocol, these vaccines will be rapidly dispatched to all provinces,” he said, adding that most vaccination centres would be ready from Wednesday to begin the vaccination programme.

“The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has been shown in extensive trials to be safe and efficacious and will protect our healthcare workers from illness and death from Covid-19,” he said.

He called on leaders, including premiers, MECs and religious and traditional leaders in various sectors and parts of the country, to lead by example and get inoculated publicly.

“Through this vaccination programme, government aims to achieve population immunity to save lives and protect livelihoods. We have chosen vaccination and we call on all South Africans to choose vaccination and protect one another,” said Ramaphosa.



MINISTER KUBAYI-NGUBANE

ENGAGES WITH AFRIFORUM AND SOLIDARITY ON TRANSFORMATION AND THE TOURISM EQUITY FUND

Staff Reporter

The Minister of Tourism, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, held a meeting with Solidarity and AfriForum on 15 February 2021, following a letter from their attorneys in which they had threatened legal action against the roll-out of the Tourism Equity Fund (TEF). The objective of the meeting was to engage the two organisations in an attempt to listen and establish the basis of their opposition to the fund.

The fund was established and launched by the Department of Tourism in partnership with the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA), as a new financial support mechanism to stimulate investment and transformation in the tourism sector. It is crucial to re-emphasise that this is not a relief fund, as we are finding this to be a source of confusion. The fund will provide a combination of debt finance and grant funding to facilitate equity acquisition as well as new project development, to broaden participation by all South Africans and not just a few dominant players. The fund was set up as a public/private partnership, in particular with commercial banks, in an effort to crowd-in investments in the tourism sector so as to increase diversification and the broadening of ownership of tourism attractions in South Africa.

The organisations questioned the legality, morality and transformative outcome of the qualification criteria for the fund, suggesting that it deviates from the provisions of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act. The government delegation, led by the Minister, utilised the occasion to

communicate government's unwavering commitment to the transformation agenda.

"We have a responsibility to engage with as many stakeholders and role players in the tourism sector as possible, so that we can clarify the thinking behind government's policy decisions. We believe that those who know and understand the history of this country need little convincing that redress is a necessary mechanism towards building a non-racial society, as mandated by the Constitution. Our ultimate goal as government is to ensure that we successfully implement our vision of building a rapidly and inclusively growing tourism economy that is innovative and leverages on our heritage," said Minister Kubayi-Ngubane.

The meeting was also an opportunity to engage and appreciate their concerns and views on the state of tourism in our country, in the context of the fund objectives and goals. The two organisations expressed their strong disagreement with the establishment and implementation of the Tourism Equity Fund. They also expressed their fundamental disagreement with the B-BBEE policy as adopted by our government and indicated that the policy should be scrapped.

"We communicated to Solidarity and AfriForum that the TEF is a necessary intervention for creating an inclusive tourism economy, in which previously disadvantaged individuals, youth and women, are represented and can actively participate in ownership and control.

This fund will support our collective efforts towards economic recovery and reconstruction so that we can move firmly towards the eradication of the legacy of colonialism and apartheid," added the Minister.

The application process is open and accessible to all qualifying entrepreneurs.

Enterprises are encouraged to seize the opportunity and seek support from the fund through SEFA. There has been overwhelming response from entrepreneurs since the call for proposals was made during the virtual launch on 26 January 2021 by President Cyril Ramaphosa, whose support for this project remains inspirational.



R1.2 BILLION TOURISM EQUITY FUND LAUNCHED

Staff Reporter



"Today is a great day for the tourism sector; a great day for black business and entrepreneurs; a great step forward for transformation and a great day for the South African economy," said Minister of Tourism, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane during her opening and welcome speech at the virtual launch of the R1.2 billion Tourism Equity Fund.

It was on 26 February 2021 at the Government Communication and Information System, when President Cyril Ramaphosa gave his address at the launch aimed to drive transformation in the tourism sector.

The TEF has been established by the Department of Tourism in partnership with the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) as a new finance support mechanism to stimulate investment and transformation in the sector. The fund is an equity acquisition fund that will be managed by SEFA on behalf of the Department of Tourism over the initial three-year period, after which it will be evaluated to improve the fund.

During this three-year period, the Department of Tourism will capitalise the fund with an amount of R540 million. The funding from the Department will be matched with a contribution of R120 million from SEFA and R594 million from commercial banks that will be participating in this programme. This combination will put the value of the Tourism Equity Fund at just over R1.2 billion.

The tourism sector in South Africa is largely private-sector owned and driven, and its contribution to the South African economy has grown tremendously since the 1994 democratic breakthrough. In addition to the beautiful landscapes, the long coastline and the wildlife, South Africa is also endowed with a rich biodiversity and a cultural diversity that makes South Africa one of the world's most sought after tourism destination.

This is because these endowments combine to make South Africa's tourism attractions more diverse than other tourist destinations.

"It is this context that we believe the launch of the Tourism Equity Fund is timely and necessary. Though the conceptualisation of the fund preceded the pandemic, as it was announced by the President in the 2020 State of the Nation Address, the fund is timely in that it will be instrumental in helping in the recovery and the reconstruction of the sector after the devastating impact of the pandemic," said Minister Kubayi-Ngubane.

Addressing the launch, Ramaphosa said, "The industry directly accounted for 2.9% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), and 8.9% indirectly. The tourism industry directly and indirectly employed an estimated 1.5 million people," Ramaphosa said. While the Covid-19 lockdown has had a devastating effect on the industry, he was confident that it would bounce back due to its resilient nature.

"The Tourism Equity Fund is informed by the recognition that the capital-intensive nature of the industry prevents many black-owned tourism enterprises from growing and developing," Ramaphosa said. "By providing access to finance for black-owned commercially viable tourism projects, the fund intends to address this challenge."

It is necessary because not only will this fund help to crowd-in private-sector investment in the rejuvenation of the supply side of the tourism market, but it will also help to transform the sector in terms of ownership and make the sector more inclusive. It is envisaged that the fund will seek to achieve the following objectives:

Fund commercially viable and sustainable majority black-owned tourism enterprises with a minimum

of 51% black ownership including enterprises in rural areas and townships, to help create jobs, alleviate poverty, fight inequality and promote growth of black-controlled tourism enterprises. De-risk the funding provided to tourism enterprises through patient capital that will ease the debt repayment ability of black-controlled enterprises.

Facilitate the participation of targeted groups such as women and youth in the priority tourism sectors as defined by the B-BBEE sector codes.

Minister of Small Business Development, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, outlined that the R1.2bn fund would consist of up to R540m from the Department of Tourism, R594m from commercial banks and R120m from SEFA.

The fund was targeted at beneficiaries across the tourism industry value chain, including those in the accommodation, conferencing, travel and other industries.

"Whether it is in a coastal town in the Eastern Cape or a wildlife-rich area in the North West or Limpopo, it is our aim through this fund to actively support black-owned businesses to run profitable and sustainable enterprises. It is also our aim to employ people to procure goods and services locally, and to make a real contribution to our economy," President Ramaphosa emphasised.

"Let me conclude by inviting all the stakeholders on behalf of the Minister of Tourism to work together with us in ensuring that we collectively create a transformed, inclusive tourism economy.

The sector has been on a mark time for too long; we now need radical movement. It is also important to point out that this Fund is for entities that are 100% owned by South African citizens and they can apply through a dedicated email address tourismequityfund@sefa.org.za," concluded Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela.



TOURISM ATTRACTIONS IN BOJANALA BADLY IMPACTED BY COVID-19

Staff Reporter

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr Fish Mahlalela, accompanied by Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism (DEDECT), Ms Kenetswe Mosenogi and Executive Mayors from Bojanala District visited the Bojanala Platinum District Municipality in the North West Province from 9 to 10 February 2021. The objective of the visit was to assess the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the businesses in the tourism value chain.

The Municipality is strategically situated between the three big cities, Johannesburg, Pretoria and the fastest growing area in Africa, Rustenburg. The Hartbeespoortdam is the hub of tourism, the gateway to the North West province and the second most visited place after Table Mountain. The area has 70% of day visitors mostly coming from Gauteng and 50% stay-over nights and 67% of tourism jobs in the province. The international tourist's length of stay is 3 to 5 days – most passing Hartbeespoort going to Sun City during weekends.

Due to the area being declared a Covid-19 hotspot, tourism activities have been restricted, which affected the once bustling businesses in the area. "The district has been negatively affected since the introduction of lockdown, which resulted in a decline in tourism economic activities which include job losses, low revenue, investment depreciation and closure of some businesses," said Deputy Minister

Mahlalela.

Mahlalela further emphasised that, "In Bojanala, they have lost over R600 million alone. In other areas of the country, there are businesses that lost more than what Bojanala has lost. We have lost more than 300 000 jobs thus far. Some establishments have closed completely; others have not yet opened and some are gradually opening."

He said the Department is assessing the impact of Covid-19 in Bojanala. Seasons Golf, Leisure and Spa was the first establishment to be visited on Day 1, followed by Hartees Boat Company and the Hartbeespoort Aerial Cableway.

"Bojanala has been affected in a big way, especially in relation to international tourists. There are no international tourists visiting North West because of the lockdown in the country. What is pleasing is that there is some improvement in the domestic market. We still encourage South Africans to explore their own country. They must do that by adhering to health protocols."

Day 2 started with a game drive in the Pilanesberg National Park and breakfast at Kwa Maritane Game Lodge. The convoy led us to Legae la Tshepo and Mbali View accommodations, which are two tourism incubator projects. The last stop was at the Ivory Tree Game Lodge where presentations from Women in Tourism, North West Tour Operators and Tour Guides were heard.

There is hope in the North West as



most of the workers have returned to their posts. The bedrock for tourism is domestic tourism, which encourages South Africans to travel the country in order to save jobs. South Africa also hopes that when things stabilise in the country, land borders will open since they are a key market for Africa.

"We have developed a recovery plan that will be submitted to Cabinet for adoption. As part of broadening the business, President Cyril Ramaphosa has launched the R1.5 billion Tourism Equity Fund to enable new entrants into the market," concluded Deputy Minister Fish Mahlalela.



DEPUTY MINISTER FISH MAHLALELA JOINS THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN CELEBRATION OF THEIR NEW YEAR



Staff Reporter

On 12 February 2021, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela joined the Chinese community in celebration of their new year. China, unlike other countries, holds a big festivity in February to celebrate their new year. The festival has a history of over 3,000 years. Celebrations on lunar New Year's Day can be dated back to the ancient worship of heaven and earth.

Over the centuries new traditions were added and celebrations became more entertainment-oriented. In 1967 food was rationed, and there was no money! Greetings were full of Communist fervour. Now people eat out for Chinese New Year, send e-money, and greet with instant messages on WeChat.

During the celebration, Deputy Minister Mahlalela indicated that on the 2019 State of the Nation Address (SoNA), the President of the Republic, Cyril Ramaphosa emphasised the importance of expanding the tourism sector to be able to reach 21 million tourist arrivals by 2030 whilst also highlighting the need to focus on lucrative markets such as China and India.

Mahlalela said, "It is also worth noting the statistical trends showing just how important the Chinese market is to the global tourism market. SAT arrival statistics indicate that China has featured in the top ten (10) destinations in terms of international arrivals to South Africa."

According to the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer of October 2018, China is also the leading outbound market in terms of tourism expenditure, followed by the United States of America (USA) and Germany.

He said that the spending power of the Chinese market was recorded at 250 billion in 2016, followed by 258 billion in 2017. Due to its incredible spending power, the Chinese market presents a huge opportunity to South Africa and remains one of South Africa's core markets from Asia, which contributes positively to tourism arrivals into the

country.

Present during the celebration were Mr Zhou Yong, Culture Councillor of the Chinese Embassy in South Africa, Prof. Peng Yi, Co-Director of the University of Johannesburg Confucius Institute (UJCI), Prof. Saurabh Sinha, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg, DDG Mmaditlonki Setwaba, Tourism Sector Support Services, students and all participants.

The Deputy Minister said, "Currently, we are sitting with a global pandemic that has negatively impacted the economy of our country and the world. It is for this reason that we need to keep our relations and appreciate that we need each other more than before.

Be that as it may, we cannot fold our arms and cry and stop planning for the future. This phase will pass and the economies of the world will be opened. As the economy recovers, we need to be able to receive tourists from all over the world, including China.

As you all are aware, South Africa and China enjoys cordial relations in the area of tourism as underpinned by two (2) Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). The first MoU signed in 2002 on the Approved Destination Status (ADS), conferred to South Africa the right to receive tourist groups from China and to open the destination marketing office in Beijing."

The second MoU on cooperation in the field of tourism was signed on 28 October 2013 in Beijing, China. This MoU serves as an institutional mechanism to strengthen bilateral relations on cooperation in the field of tourism. Areas of cooperation in the MoU include the encouragement of information sharing, tourism investment, marketing and promotion, skills development and training and tourism safety and service standards.

"Today, as you celebrate your Spring Festival, I am honoured to welcome the China and South Africa bilateral relations which have progressed to a

comprehensive strategic relationship that has become mutually beneficial.

As we continue to receive tourists, the tour-guiding skill becomes important. To remain highly competitive and ensure sustainable employment, tourist guides of today need to be able to speak foreign languages, have a range of specialities, be able to guide across regions/borders and provide exceptional and authentic customer experiences," he said.

The Department identified Mandarin language training as an important opportunity for existing tourist guides. Coupled with South Africa's diverse offerings, having local tourist guides proficient in the Mandarin language could also present a further opportunity to attract the Chinese market to South Africa.

The main objective of the Mandarin language training is therefore to provide an opportunity for local tourist guides to be trained in the command of the Mandarin language to better serve the potential influx of Chinese tourists to South Africa.

The Deputy Minister said, "Let me take this opportunity and thank all the tourist guides that are currently undergoing training under these trying conditions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that you are ambassadors for our country as you will be exposing South Africa to our Chinese tourists."

Skills development amongst our youth is a must, if we want to sustain our existence as humans. Oliver Reginald Tambo once said, "The children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future." We will ensure that we maintain good relations with your country and other countries of the world as we seek to create a united democratic and non-racial society. To all our 20 students, you are so wonderful, we are proud of you. We know you are enjoying this training a lot and studying hard. Happy new year to all of you on this Chinese year."



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO LAUNCH PILOT PROGRAMME FOR A NEW WEB-BASED TRAVEL HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE COVID-19 SCREENING PLATFORM

**Popo Maja,
Departmental Spokesperson**

With the full resumption of international travel, the national Department of Health has increased efforts to strengthen active screening and surveillance at ports of entry in South Africa.

The Department is launching a pilot project for the COVID SA Travel System, which is a digital screening solution that allows travellers to complete the required travel health questionnaire (THQ) on their personal devices ahead of their arrival at the ports of entry. The Department intends to make a move from paper-based screening systems to a digitised screening solution in a phased approach. The web-based THQ platform will complement and strengthen the existing method of screening and surveillance at ports of entry as a user-friendly tool allowing travellers to complete the travel health questionnaire on their personal devices prior to their travel.

The web-based travel screening solution will allow travellers to complete their travel and symptomatic information at any time from two days ahead of their journey to ensure that the exposure and symptoms information provided is relevant. Once completed, the traveller will receive a unique number (look-up ID) which they will present to the Port

Health Official at the respective port of entry to proceed with the screening process. Over time, as more travellers use this system, it can save them time and help fast-track screening at ports of entry. The Department will introduce through a pilot, a digitised screening system for international travellers arriving in and departing from South Africa.

As of the 17th of December 2020, international travellers arriving at O.R Tambo International Airport, those departing from Cape Town International Airport, those entering the country through the Beit Bridge land border and those exiting through the Maseru Bridge land border will be expected to complete the web-based THQ. The paper-based system for COVID-19 screening will continue to be in operation at all other operational ports of entry. This system will play a critical role in assisting Port Health Officials with managing travellers, identifying potential high-risk travellers and to respond effectively.

Security of personal information was one of the top priorities throughout the development of this system.

Accordingly, best practice guidelines as per the POPI Act are followed to protect all travellers' personal information at all times. The COVID SA Travel System

provides us with additional armour to better manage and survey travellers to prevent importation and exporting of the virus. The system will also provide better data collection and storage which can be helpful with identifying potential high-risk travellers. An algorithm that helps determine the risk profile of travellers is embedded in the system.

In the event of a positive case, the system will assist with identifying potentially exposed travellers who were in proximity to the positive case, further assisting with better contact tracing. The COVID SA Travel System will be live from noon on 15 December 2020 to allow travellers to complete the web-based form ahead of their travel and can be accessed using this link: <https://sa-covid-19-travel.info/>. Travellers who have already booked their tickets can still access the web-based THQ at any time after the system goes live.

Travellers will still be subjected to the screening protocols at ports of entry, including temperature screening, and are still required to present a negative COVID-19 PCR test result obtained not more than 72 hours from time of departure. Travellers arriving into South Africa are required to download the COVID Alert SA application on their mobile phones.

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM RECEIVES DONATION OF PPE'S FROM THE EMBASSY OF THE PEOPLE REPUBLIC OF CHINA



Pictured are Tourism representatives receiving masks from the Councillor of Cultural Affairs, Yong Zhou from the Embassy of the PRC

Staff Reporter

South Africa and China enjoy cordial relations as underpinned by two existing agreements in the field of tourism. To strengthen and enhance bilateral relations, the two parties engage in, amongst others, exchange of information, skills development as well as exchange of gifts to the benefit of their prospective countries.

As South Africa continues to grapple with the global COVID pandemic, the continuous provision and access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is essential. To this effect, on 10 December 2020, the Department of Tourism received a donation of 20 000 disposable masks from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China (PRC), during a

handing-over ceremony. The Councillor of Cultural Affairs, Yong Zhou, from the Embassy of the PRC warmly received the delegation from the Department of Tourism, which consisted of:

Ms A Potgieter – COVID Compliance Officer

Ms T Sithi – delegate from Directorate responsible for bilateral relations with China

Ms C Sebola – delegate from Communications to photograph the handing over

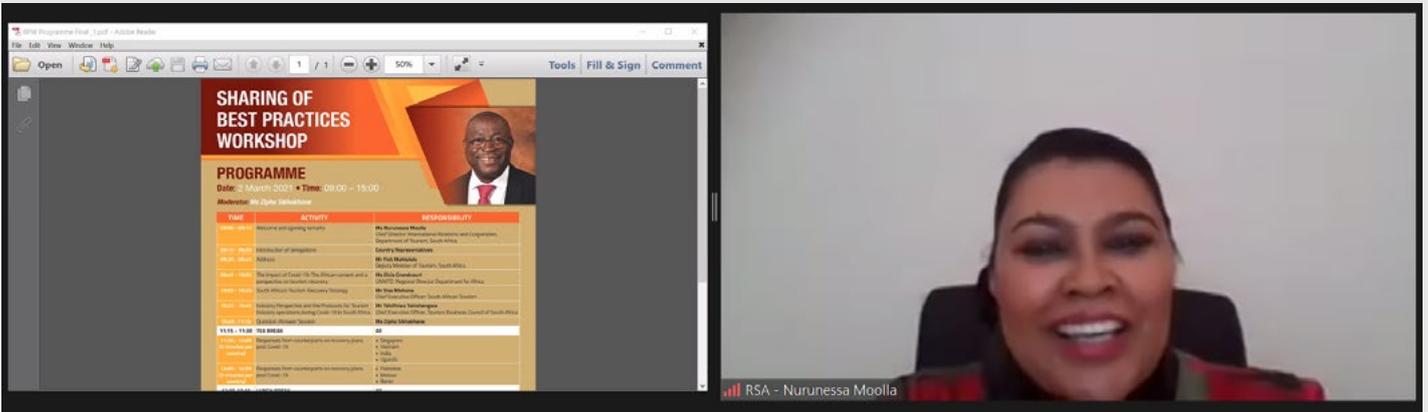
Ms C Fortuin – delegate from Tourism Guiding and Growth Development Mr D

Mbungele – delegate from Tourist

Guidance Compliance, and Mr K Seoko – Driver

In representing the Department's Employee Health and Wellness and in her capacity as the Department's COVID Compliance Officer, Ms Potgieter, along with Councillor Zhou, signed the Certificate for Acceptance between China and South Africa on the Anti-Epidemic Supplies to South Africa. This was to record and acknowledge a successful handover between the two countries represented. In attempts to support much needed tourism recovery, the Department will distribute the donated disposable masks to tourist guides.

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM SUCCESSFULLY HOSTS THE 8TH SHARING OF BEST PRACTICES WORKSHOP



Chief Director: International Relations and Cooperation in the Department of Tourism, Nuruessa Moolla, giving opening remarks

Staff Reporter

For seven years in succession, the Department of Tourism has been hosting the Sharing of Best Practices Workshops (BPW) for delegates from invited countries in Africa and the rest of the world, particularly those with whom South Africa has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Bilateral Agreements within the field of tourism. The continued interest in the workshop has shown the value of this forum as it provides an opportunity for countries from the continent to share information and best practices in the area of tourism and to strengthen regional integration.

The focus of the Best Practices Workshops is based on the areas of cooperation outlined in the signed tourism bilateral agreements which South Africa has signed with various countries and covers areas such as: Exchange of tourism information, experience and expertise in the following areas:

- Policies, strategies and initiatives relating to tourism development;
- Tourism destination marketing;
- National parks for the society;
- Incentives for tourism development;
- Cross-border tourism;
- Tourism resorts development;
- Trans-frontier parks development;
- Regional tourism marketing;
- Responsible tourism;
- Rural tourism development; and
- Community tourism development framework and projects.

This Best Practices Workshop initiative is in line with the provisions of South Africa's foreign policy which supports the development of the region and the continent. However, this workshop that usually brings together creatives, intellects and pioneers of the tourism industry from all walks of life in a room charged with ideas

and innovation, took place virtually on 2 March 2021 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The theme "Tourism Recovery post Covid-19 – a country perspective" was the focus of the day, with the objective of sharing information and best practices, and to identify strategies to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 in the tourism sector, among others.

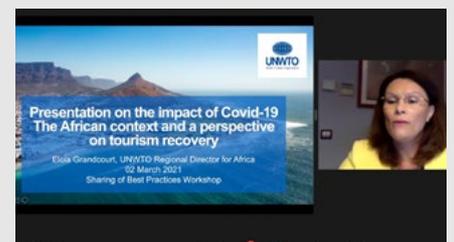
Chief Director: International Relations and Cooperation in the Department of Tourism, Nuruessa Moolla, activated the workshop with a special welcome to:

- Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela;
- Director-General in the Department of Tourism Victor Tharage;
- CEO of EMZ Advisory and moderator of the workshop Zipho Sikhakhane;
- Regional Director-Africa of United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Elcia Grandcourt;
- CEO of South African Tourism (SAT) Sisa Ntshona;
- CEO of Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa; and
- Representatives from the African Continent as well as delegates in India, Singapore, Vietnam, Brazil, Venezuela and Mexico.

In his address to the esteemed delegates present, Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela stated that the South African government places tourism high on its agenda for sustainable growth and job creation, which is one of the eight interventions in the economic Reconstruction Recovery Plan. Referring to President Cyril Ramaphosa's State of the Nation Address (SONA) in 2019, whereby a target of 21 million tourist arrivals by 2030



Pictured: Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela giving his address



Pictured: Elcia Grandcourt, United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Regional Director-Africa presenting on the impact of COVID-19, the African context and a perspective on tourism recovery

for the tourism sector was set, the Deputy Minister mentioned that it is initiatives and platforms such as the Best Practices Workshop that will make meaningful contributions in achieving such targets. Furthermore, it will assist in aligning tourism's contribution to Agenda 2063 through improving the standards, systems and policies in regulating the tourism industry while creating jobs and alleviating poverty.

Amidst the status quo of COVID-19 around the world, tourism activity is constantly subject to abrupt restrictions, thus affecting

the tourism sector negatively. "The impact of the virus resulted in the closure of businesses and tourism establishments, and severe job losses. Some countries were predicted to face more substantial blows than others due to their high reliance on the tourism sector. Out of the top 10 destinations by international tourist arrivals (France, Spain, United States, China, Italy, Turkey, Mexico, Germany, UK and Thailand), eight were hardest hit by COVID-19," said Mahlalela.

He concernedly highlighted that the challenge is that many African countries have weak health systems and testing is significantly insufficient overall. The Deputy Minister added that there is limited data on the actual number of tests performed, the number of tests per population, and the rate of positive tests for African countries. Furthermore, many health policy experts on the continent are concerned that testing is simply too low to have an accurate picture of the spread of the virus, which poses serious challenges for the tourism sector on the safety of visiting tourist and workers in the industry.

"I therefore urge all of you to use this platform to share your country experiences in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic to assist in identifying strategies that will bring solutions for the recovery of the tourism sector post the Covid-19 pandemic challenges, especially for those strategies aimed at strengthening regional integration and cooperation," Mahlalela said.

"...We know that our situation will no longer be the same as yesterday, but the new normal is the way to go now," Deputy Minister concluded.

Elcia Grandcourt, Regional Director-Africa of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) painted a global and continental picture of COVID-19 developments respectively. Her presentation on The impact of COVID-19, The African context and a perspective on tourism recovery, states that global tourism suffered its worst year on record in 2020, with international arrivals dropping by -74%.

Destinations around the world have seen fewer international arrivals in 2020 due to a reduction in demand compared to the previous years. Furthermore, the collapse in international travel represents an estimated loss of 1.3 trillion in export revenues, which is more than 11 times the loss that has been recorded during the 2009 global economic crisis.

Grandcourt mentioned that this crisis has put millions of jobs at direct risk, mainly those in the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) which greatly contribute to African economies. International arrivals in the Africa region have dropped by 75%, making it one of the hardest hit regions following Asia and the Pacific, which is a far cry from the 70+ million international tourist arrivals generating 39+ Billion US Dollars in terms

of tourism receipts in 2019 pre-COVID, she highlighted.

According to Grandcourt, predictions by experts say that a rebound is expected in the second half of the year if the pandemic is gradually brought under control and travel restrictions are lifted. Be that as it may, the emergence of new strains and a surge in infections can slow down the recovery. However, international tourism can modestly bounce back with the roll-out of vaccines and yield a significant improvement in traveller confidence.

Some of the initiatives by the UNWTO through the Global Tourism Crisis Committee include Tourism Guidelines to Restart Tourism, the Travel Restriction Report to track measures being taken by destinations worldwide that helps to support with the mitigation and recovery efforts of the tourism sector, and Recommendations on Tourism and Rural Development which aims to support governments and the private sector at various levels to develop rural tourism. In addition, the UNWTO Global Tourism Dashboard and UNWTO Tourism Recovery Tracker compiles all relevant data in one place and helps governments and private business track tourism recovery on a regional and global level.

The continuous and strengthened collaboration of the public and private sector is one that is pivotal to the recovery and success of tourism post-COVID-19. The CEO of Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA), Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa, provided insight on Industry Perspective and the Protocols for Tourism Industry operations during Covid-19 in South Africa.

"We advocate for the private sector... We represent the needs of the business sector in government, in larger business associations and many other formations that are important in advancing the needs of tourism in South Africa. We all know that tourism is a concurrent function and it's a function that touches multiple departments..." Tshivhengwa stated.

Whilst giving context of the negative impact of COVID-19 in its initial stages of transmission which lead to a Risk Adjusted Approach (level 1-5) in South Africa, he proudly mentioned how tourism was one of the first sectors to do safety protocols such as contact tracing, screening of customers in restaurants, utilising applications to monitor and access details of patrons entering establishments and providing online training for business owners to train and manage their staff on COVID-19 protocols. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) approved these protocols and enabled establishments to receive certificates of COVID-19 compliance.

"We are dependent on the movement of people..." Tshivhengwa said, as he highlighted how the objective was to have

protocols in place to de-risk the sector so that tourism is not a mass carrier of the virus. "I do believe what we have done is world class. It is a shining example of what can be done anywhere else. There is still going to be more work ahead of us. The development and application of protocols is going to be with us for quite some time. Therefore, from our side this is something that we keep constant and we make sure that there's compliance across the board," he concluded.

The CEO of South African Tourism (SAT) honed in on South Africa's Tourism Recovery Strategy, in order to give an account of the status quo of the country and provide foresight of what the next phases will look like. Three fundamental pillars for Tourism Sector Recovery were established in conjunction with the public and private sector, namely:

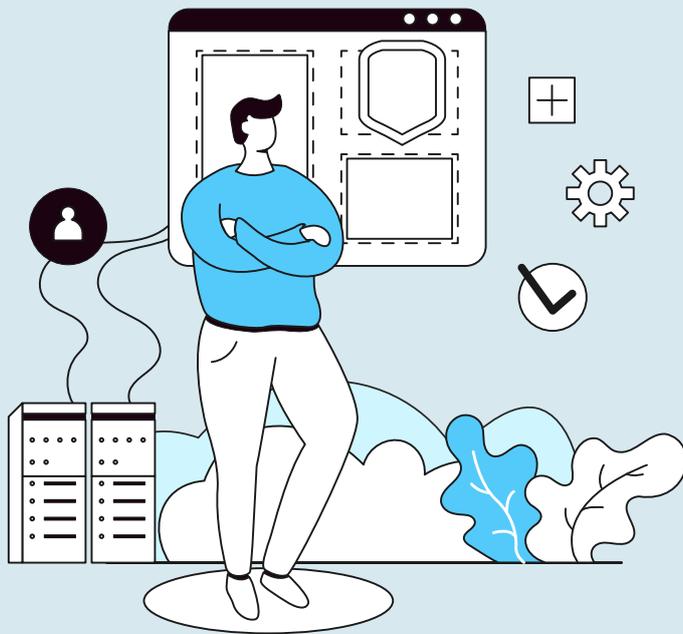
1. Protect and Rejuvenate Supply;
2. Reignite Demand in the sector; and
3. Strengthening and Enabling Capability.

In summary, this was to ensure that the sector's integrity is protected during these unprecedented times, to make sure South Africa is suitably placed to be chosen amongst the competitive tourist pool as recovery begins on a domestic, regional and then international level. Furthermore, to strengthen the enabling capability of the country to be able to essentially look at institutional things that need to be fixed and amended, from e-Visas, licensing, transportation and anything else that affects and impacts the tourism industry.

Ntshona also highlighted that 2021 is dubbed the "year of the vaccine" in terms of restoring traveller confidence. That there's a race around the world on which countries are likely to travel, looking at factors such as the severity of the pandemic steadily being replaced by the vaccine roll-out index (risk-rating countries on ability to travel), government stringent index pertaining to policies that affect border control and quarantine dates.

Finally, we need to look at accessibility in terms of the ease of travel on land, and by air and sea to and from South Africa. A comparison between South Africa, Africa, Australasia, Europe and America was made in this regard.

The presentations from the panel were followed by a question and answer session and thereafter rounded off by best practice discussions by delegates from Singapore, Uganda, Malawi, Benin, Nigeria, Zambia and Mexico in terms of the various strategies they have put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sectors respectively. The 2021 Sharing of Best Practices Workshop was indeed eye-opening, insightful and attested to the power of global collaboration in fighting a common enemy, COVID-19.



2021 RESEARCH WEBINAR

Staff Reporter

The tourism sector is in a constant state of flux and fluidity. Research, therefore, guides the way forward in identifying knowledge gaps as well as prioritising important trends. The Department of Tourism hosted a Tourism Research webinar in March with the theme “Advancing Tourism Growth and Development through Research: COVID-19 Impacts and Potential Opportunities.”

Because tourism is a cross-functional sector, it requires collaboration with its stakeholders. This seminar is held annually to ensure that the research findings address the needs of stakeholders in the sector, to disseminate and discuss the findings of the research studies and to obtain constructive feedback from key stakeholders and researchers in the sector. It also aims to disseminate research findings to key stakeholders in the sector, thereby ensuring that research recommendations are implemented, and translated into policy and practice.

Research has been identified as a critical area for the development and growth of the tourism sector. The revised National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) 2016-2026, recognises research as one of the key success factors for sustainable competitiveness in destination management and emphasises the important role research plays to guide planning and decision-making in the sector. Research in tourism assists, amongst others, to identify new markets, understand trends that might have an impact on the tourism sector, monitor performance, assess competitiveness and provide statistics on tourism

movement, profiles and characteristics.

This strategy further highlights the need to foster partnerships and collaboration in order to strengthen the context, use and dissemination of research findings to inform policy and decision-making. It is on this basis that the Department strives to collaborate with institutions of higher learning to conduct tourism research.

During her opening remarks, Anemé Malan, Deputy Director-General: Tourism Research, Policy and International Relations at the Department of Tourism said: “As far back as 2010, the Department initiated engagements with several universities to foster collaboration on tourism research and to enhance capacity within the tourism sector – a partnership that we are very proud to continue to have with universities until today. The main aim of the partnerships is to foster collaboration, enhance research capacity within the tourism sector and provide financial support to post-graduate students pursuing tourism-related studies.” This collaboration produced valuable research outputs which were disseminated to tourism stakeholders through the annual Tourism Research Seminars.

Dr Unathi Sonwabale Henama from the Tshwane University of Technology moderated the session and also gave the keynote address where he highlighted that research is important in providing the information needed by the tourism value chain for strategic decision-making and to inform policymakers and the state apparatus on how to plan the recovery

of the tourism industry. The research undertaken by both the University of Johannesburg and the University of Pretoria would inform all tourism stakeholders on how to prepare for the new normal, where we co-exist with COVID-19.

Prof. Christian Rogerson from the University of Johannesburg presented a study to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the demand and supply of tourism products, with a view to propose interventions to meet the needs of tourists post-COVID-19 through the approach of undertaking case studies of local destinations which offer a differing mix of tourism products.

This was followed by the University of Pretoria where Professor Berendien Lubbe and Dr Joachim Vermooten looked at the impact of COVID-19 on tourism sector demand and supply and to explore the symbiotic transport – tourism interface in South Africa.

Over the years, research in tourism has provided insights into areas such as management, tourist behaviour, planning, marketing, destination development and product development. Guided by evidence-based research, the sector would be able to develop and implement policies, strategies, programmes, interventions and decisions to meet the needs and expectations of different stakeholders. The Department continues to strengthen and advance the body of knowledge and research in the tourism sector.



Pictured front centre is Johannesburg Mayor Geoff Makhubo applauding Kyalami 9-Hour winners in the middle podium: Sheldon van der Linde (right) with Augusto Farfus and Nick Catsburg representing Walkenhorst Motorsport BMW M6

Jordan Pepper, South African International racer competing in Kyalami 9-Hour with Bentley Continental GT3

KYALAMI 9-HOUR SPEEDS ITS WAY TO SUCCESS!

Staff Reporter

Sports tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in tourism, and motor sport specifically, is determined to fight for its spot of glory as it brings the world together for the love of racing. Sport tourism can generally be described as travel focusing primarily on either engaging in or observing a sporting event as an official, journalist or as a spectator. The Kyalami 9-Hour is a world-class international motorsport event which forms part of the only global GT3 championship – the Intercontinental GT Challenge Powered by Pirelli. For the second year in a row Kyalami hosted a successful 9-Hour on 12 December 2020.

As preparations were underway prior to main event, 24-year-old South African racer Jordan Pepper was counting down the hours to the big day in the hopes of winning. Pepper started racing at the age of 5 and moved overseas at the age of 18. He has accolades of being in the Top 3 of the Regional Championship winners in South Africa, winning his first European Championship in 2014 at the age of 17, and winning the 2020 Bathurst 12-hour in Australia with his team Bentley, to name a few.

"I just like sports in general but with racing, the fuel, the sound and the speed excite me," Pepper highlighted. He is not a stranger to the Kyalami 9-Hour racing event, as he competed in 2019 in November. Pepper mentioned that South Africa has a motor sport heritage

and a passion behind it.

Taking into consideration the grip of the COVID pandemic in South Africa and that the Kyalami 9-Hour race would be subject to COVID restrictions, Pepper expressed his concern in this regard.

"It's not acceptable for some people to not abide by the rules, because the longer people don't abide by the rules, the longer we are going to have these regulations and restrictions," he added. As a sportsman, Pepper was able to travel to eight different countries in 2020 during the COVID pandemic and was successfully able to abide by the regulations.

He mentioned that it is possible to do racing as long as people abide by the rules so that things can get back to normal soon. When comparing motor sport racing in South Africa to its counterparts overseas, Pepper mentioned the importance of having the Kyalami 9-Hour race as a platform to prove that it is indeed possible to make a career out of racing just like the giants in Europe. "We just need South Africans to get behind racing a bit more," he concluded.

On the day of the event, the environment was buzzing with sounds of revving engines, tyre pumps and racers pacing up and down doing their final checks and rounds on the tracks. Due to COVID regulations, no spectators were

allowed but only a limited number of stakeholders were allowed to attend the event. The Department of Tourism, Gauteng Tourism Association, Joburg Municipality, Government Communication and information System (GCIS), motor sport industry giants and international media personnel were amongst the key stakeholders that came to support and experience the event.

Johannesburg Mayor Geoff Makhubo, Deputy Minister of Higher Education Buti Manamela, African National Congress (ANC) Treasurer-General Paul Mashatile, Former ANC Communications Manager Keith Khoza and popular local actress Makgofe Moagi also graced the occasion. Guests enjoyed fine dining whilst having an exclusive grand view of the race on their screens with a live broadcast and an up-close view on the balcony at the grand prix circuit office.

After a long and rain-interrupted race, Sheldon van der Linde in a BMW M6 was part of the three-man team who emerged victorious at Kyalami 9-Hour on Saturday. Van der Linde's Walkenhorst Motorsport teammates Augusto Farfus and Nick Catsburg became joint champions of the 2020 Intercontinental GT Challenge. Audi Sport Team WRT's Frederic Vervisch, Mirko Bortolotti and Charles Weerts came home second ahead of Matt Campbell, Patrick Pilet and Mathieu Jaminet (GPX Racing) who sealed the Manufacturer's crown for Porsche in third overall.

MINISTER HANDS OVER GOLF TOURNAMENT PROCEEDS AT VILAKAZI PRECINCT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Staff Reporter

South Africa commemorates Human Rights Month under the theme "The year of Charlotte Maxeke: promoting human rights in the Age of COVID-19". Charlotte Manny Maxeke (1871-1919) was the first black South African woman to achieve a BSc degree in 1901 and was passionate about inclusivity and education. The history of Human Rights Day is grounded in the Sharpeville Massacre that took place on 21 March 1960, where the apartheid police shot and killed 69 people during a peaceful protest. This year's commemoration of Human Rights Month coincides with the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

The Constitution enshrines the rights of all people in South Africa and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. During Human Rights Month, government is making a clarion call to all South Africans to use Human Rights Month to foster social cohesion, nation building and participate in all planned commemoration activities. In campaigning for human rights, Charlotte Manny Maxeke once said, "This work is not for yourselves, kill that spirit of self and do not live above your people but live with them and if you can rise, bring someone with you," as a call for all South Africans to be inclusive and uplift each other.

The Minister of Tourism, Mmamoloko Kubayi- Ngubane, hosted the Department's Human Rights Day Activation at the Vilakazi Precinct, Soweto in Gauteng on 21 March 2021 with the following objectives:

- To profile and inform small businesses and the larger community about continued government priorities in fighting Covid-19 and overall recovery plan for tourism sector;
- To inspire the tourism sector, businesses and communities to play their part in

promoting the country and supporting efforts to combat Covid-19;

- To mobilise communities and stakeholders to be partners and participants in various programmes aimed at their segment; and
- To Increase awareness of the tourism brand and its efforts in rejuvenating South Africa's economy and promote social cohesion.

The main event kicked off at Nex Dor restaurant for the handover of Golf Tournament proceeds to beneficiaries. Minister Kubayi- Ngubane was joined by Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) Economic Development - City of Johannesburg, Councillor Lorence Khoza, Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) Barba Gaogamediwe, along with other distinguished stakeholders, guests and Golf Tournament beneficiaries. In pure "kasi" style, a hopeful and vibrant street vendor selling colourful bucket hats walked into the venue and to his surprise was met by Minister Kubayi- Ngubane who purchased one of his hats and made his day.

After an uplifting faith-based chorus from the guests (considering that the event was on a Sunday morning), MMC Khoza warmly welcomed all distinguished guests. "Soweto is at the centre of our Tourism Strategy. What we want to see is growth that is shared by our people, a kind of growth that is inclusive and tourism does exactly that for us. As we recover our economy post-COVID, tourism will be at the centre," Khoza said. "What we want to see is young people, people with disabilities and women also benefiting from the initiatives that the city of Johannesburg has put in place," he added.

Minister Kubayi- Ngubane then rendered a heartfelt message of hope and resilience in the spirit of Human Rights Day in remembrance of struggle stalwart Charlotte

Maxeke and specifically to the women present on the day. "Until the women of this country, especially black women, stop being the face of poverty, the struggle has not been won. COVID has exacerbated the problems of the women in this country – they are worse off," Kubayi- Ngubane said. "The Tourism Equity Fund is meant to transform the tourism sector. If I stand alone and remain fighting for implementation of 51% black ownership and 40% women in that equity fund, I'm prepared to stand alone and fight. Transformation is non-negotiable," she added.

The Minister highlighted that the Golf Tournament fundraising initiative in partnership with the Thami Dish Foundation and other sponsors has managed to assist five businesses in Limpopo and trained 45 women. The roll-out of the proceeds will grant 100 litres of sanitiser per establishment, 4 sanitiser stands per establishment, 4 reception protective screens per establishment, "Stay Safe" branded masks, and 4 COVID thermometers per establishment for 12 women-owned small businesses within the Vilakazi Precinct. "It was the women in Soweto who were the brainchild of this fundraising initiative. This is why I had to come back and account to them about the proceeds," Kubayi- Ngubane said.

The Beneficiaries of the proceeds from the Golf Tournament are the following:

1. Neo BnB
2. Thukela Resorts
3. Ndofoya Hospitality Academy
4. Fanny's Tavern and Restaurants
5. Sister's Sisters Place
6. My Love is Pup Restaurants
7. Rose BnB
8. Vhavhenda Bed and breakfast
9. Nthateng Bed and Breakfast
10. Mthonjeni Bed and Breakfast
11. Lihle Bed and Breakfast



Pictured in the middle is Minister Kubayi-Ngubane with owners of Glamping



Pictured left is Minister Kubayi-Ngubane with owner of clothing brand Dont Be Basic Prince Tshivhi



The PPE proceeds from the Golf Tournament fundraising

12. Ekhaya Bed and Breakfast

"Those who have started establishments, we want them to continue to have a way of living. With the little that we have brought here today, we are saying hold on, don't lose hope. As Minister I may not have been able to reach out to all the women, but I hope when you see these women benefiting, it gives you hope that this government cares," the Minister proudly exclaimed. She highlighted that the proceeds are strictly from fundraising and that no money was used from the Department of Tourism.

"Vilakazi remains one of the critical streets for us in tourism. The only street in the world with two icons who stayed in it. Tourism sustains jobs and puts food on the table for the most vulnerable. One business indirectly supports other businesses. We can't afford for Vilakazi to die," Kubayi-Ngubane said. The Minister emphasised the continuous adherence of COVID-19 protocols, to always sanitise hands, always wear a mask and maintain social distancing.

In closure of the first programme for the day, CEO of GTA Gaoganeidiwe pledged GTA's support for women-owned establishments in Vilakazi Precinct. "There's a direct relationship between human rights and livelihoods. COVID has disrupted livelihoods and trampled on the human right to do business," he said. In showing support, he stated that GTA commits itself to packaging

a dedicated electronic and print brochure that

articulates the services of the establishments for free. One of the biggest projects the GTA proposes to undertake with the support of the City of Johannesburg and the Department of Tourism is to make Vilakazi Street a boulevard with high security and no traffic to ensure a pleasant and uninterrupted tourist experience.

After a successful handover, Minister Kubayi-Ngubane with her delegates and media personnel visited various tourism establishments in Vilakazi Precinct to assess their COVID-19 protocol compliance, offer Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) along with tourism-branded goodies as she wished them well in their businesses and a happy Human Rights Day.

Some of these establishments are:

- Mandela House
- Sakhumzi,
- Kwande Luv My Print
- Azishe Smoke Emporium

In the same breath, government is committed to upholding the constitutional right to life and access to healthcare, specifically now during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the Minister's walkabout, she was fortunate to come across healthcare workers rendering free community on-site medical assessments. In setting a fine example of the importance of health and wellness, Kubayi-

Ngubane bravely volunteered to be publicly assessed and also handed some PPE to the health workers.

Stakeholders and guests later enjoyed their lunch at Vilakazi restaurant as well as Makhelwane whilst watching President Cyril Ramaphosa's Human Rights Day address, which was shortly followed by the Minister's walkabout and visit of street trade exhibitions.

These are some of the exhibitions visited:

- Kay Wines
- Gemere Mix
- Glamping Adventures
- Don't Be Basic
- FLYSA Wise
- ElevateZA Dried fruit

Sports Tourism is one of the key areas needed to revitalise our economy, which shines the spotlight on another iconic moment that took place on the day – the 100th Soweto Derby between top soccer teams from Soweto, Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates. It is the 10th biggest derby in the world, hosted in the FNB Stadium which is the 3rd biggest stadium in Africa and 7th biggest stadium in the world. The city of Johannesburg remains the most visited African city, even during COVID. Loyal soccer supporters safely enjoyed the beloved derby displayed on a big screen in Vilakazi precinct, and Kaizer Chiefs ended the day with a glorious win of 1-0 against Orlando Pirates.



MENTAL HEALTH KEY TO REBUILDING TOURISM SECTOR – WTTC – TOURISM UPDATE





The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has highlighted mental wellbeing as one of the key factors that will ensure that, as the tourism sector rebuilds, it comes “back stronger and better than before”.

To that end, the council has launched its new mental health guidelines which have been compiled to support businesses of all sizes to support the mental health of their employees.

The Mental Health Guidelines build on the Diversity & Inclusion Guidelines released by WTTC in 2020, going one step deeper to focus on mental wellbeing to help businesses better prepare for the recovery period following the COVID-19 crisis.

“The guidelines come at a time when mental health could not be more important. With lockdowns, quarantines, job losses and uncertainty looming larger than ever, all against the backdrop of winter, it is crucial that mental health support is given space in the conversations around recovery,” said Gloria Guevara, President and CEO of the WTTC.

She said the travel and tourism sector employed people from all socio-economic backgrounds regardless of age, gender or ethnicity, almost 50% of whom are women and up to 30% youths.

“After nearly a full year of insecurity and hardship that has come from the COVID-19 pandemic, the time could not be more appropriate to invest in the mental wellbeing of this sector.” Research highlights need

Research from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) showed that more than 9 in 10 people (95%) felt that poor mental health affected their performance at work, while 85% said it was difficult to concentrate when struggling with poor

mental health, and 64% felt that it took them longer to complete tasks.

Furthermore, research conducted by the World Health Organization revealed a US\$4 return in improved health and productivity, for every US\$1 investment in improved treatment for common mental disorders.

The Mental Health Guidelines are divided into four pillars:

1. Developing a Supportive System
2. Creating Safe Spaces
3. Supporting an Agile System
4. Exemplifying Support for Good Mental Health

Examples of the guidelines:

- Provide appropriate mental health support within the organisational structure to the extent possible. This could include access to professional and specialised support through the local health authority and/or the business itself.
- Develop leave policies that offer equivalent time off and/or concessions for mental health and physical health, without prejudice.
- Develop feedback systems that allow employees to share if and how the current systems are working well and not working well to meet staff needs.
- Foster an environment that respects the value of wellbeing, at all levels of the organisation, and does not ostracise those with mental health conditions, whether common or less common.
- Consider incorporating intentional wellness elements in the design of new buildings, offices, locations, and/or spaces, where possible.
- Engage with like-minded businesses and associations to share best practice and improve support for and awareness of mental health.



Salifou Sidde

WHY I AM OPTIMISTIC AND HOPEFUL ABOUT TOURISM IN 2021

So, 2021 is upon us. Despite the widespread misery COVID-19 visited on the tourism industry in 2020 and which is spilling over into the new year with renewed concerns, there is cause for the industry to be optimistic and hopeful about 2021.

Vaccinations

A number of anti-coronavirus vaccines have been developed and massive vaccination campaigns are under way in many parts of the world to provide immunisation and pave the way for a recovery. Although these vaccination campaigns are taking place mostly in the developed world for now, it is only a matter of time until African and other developing countries follow suit. According to a recent briefing by the South African Minister of Health, a vaccination campaign could be launched in South Africa as early as February in a prioritised and phased manner.

Mass vaccinations are welcome news for the travel and tourism industry which has been and continues to be the most impacted sector of the world economy. According to UNWTO data, the virus could set the global tourism industry back 20 years, put 120 million jobs at risk and exceed over USD 1 trillion in losses to global GDP. In 2019, some 72 million tourists visited Africa and accounted for USD 40bn in revenue. While the impact of the virus on the tourism sector in Africa in 2020 is yet to be fully assessed, it is expected to be deep, with millions of jobs lost and many businesses, small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in particular, forced to close.

The announcements of vaccination campaigns give hope that, despite the resurging and mutating virus, 2021

will be the year the tourism industry starts firmly on a path to recovery and the building of a better, more resilient, industry. An industry that, having learned once again just how risky it can be to depend heavily on overseas source markets, has had time to introspect to find ways of promoting and growing domestic and regional tourism as core markets with the depth, scale and product diversity to sustain the industry.

African Continental Free Trade Agreement

The other reason to be optimistic about the new year is the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and the vast opportunities it stands to create for the African tourism industry in a post-COVID global environment.

Indeed, the momentous occasion of the operational launch of AfCFTA on January 1 is cause for optimism and hope about the future of the continent. It is remarkable that, despite the unprecedented pandemic, which many feared would jeopardise the operational launch of AfCFTA by causing a lengthy delay, the parties showed determination and pushed on to successfully conclude first phase negotiations of this historic continental agreement.

Negotiations of the first phase of AfCFTA concerned themselves with the development of protocols for trade in goods, trade in services, and rules and regulations on the settlement of trade disputes. It is exciting that the tourism sector – alongside other sectors such as transportation, communications, and financial services – has been included in the first phase of negotiations on trade in services. This is clear indication that African leaders view tourism as a strategic sector that is capable of creating jobs

and lifting communities out of poverty.

The AfCFTA protocols for trade in services will give the tourism sector the legal framework and tools that will allow for its development as a fully integrated and highly competitive single market across the continent. Creating a single African tourism market that is governed by strictly enforced rules and regulations will enhance the sector's ability to attract the large-scale investments and skills it sorely needs in order to achieve its full potential in a post-COVID global environment.

To be sure, AfCFTA is not the first attempt at regional economic integration as far as the tourism sector is concerned. The Regional Tourism Organization of Southern Africa (RETOSA) was established in 1996 by the 14 countries that form the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to promote and market the region as a single tourism destination. However, RETOSA was forced to close down in 2018, 22 years after it was formed, due to financial issues resulting from a lack of commitment by SADC member states to provide funding.

Similarly, in the East African Community (EAC), the East African Tourism Platform (EATP) is the regional tourism organisation mandated to promote the region as a vibrant and diverse single tourism destination. However, although the EAC comprises six member states (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda), only Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda have joined the East Africa Single Tourist Visa programme, which was established to drive international tourist arrivals in the region. A major tourism destination such as Tanzania, for example, had been,



until recently, reluctant to join the visa programme. Burundi and South-Sudan have yet to join. This reluctance, which is a major hindrance to full tourism economic integration, can be explained by differences of opinion among EAC member states with regard to how the visa regime should be implemented, including how visa fees should be collected and shared.

The two examples above show that the continent has been down the road of integrated tourism markets before, with rather limited success. Cynics may point to these experiences and ask how things will be different this time around. What gives us hope and reason to believe that economic integration under AfCFTA will be a successful proposition for tourism is that there is a high degree of political will and commitment to the idea of a continental free trade area at all levels.

At the national level, 54 of the 55 African countries have signed up to the concept. Out of these signatories, 34 have already ratified the agreement to date and are busy finalising trade offers and putting in place the administrative and logistical mechanisms needed to trade under AfCFTA.

At the regional level, there will be policy alignment between AfCFTA and all eight African Union recognised Regional Economic Communities (RECs), namely AMU, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC and SEN-SAD.

These regional organisations, some of which have achieved significant levels of economic integration – ECOWAS for example – will constitute the building blocks for implementing AfCFTA.

At the continental level, an active institutional building process is under way to equip AfCFTA with the organisational frameworks and tools required to facilitate and regulate an integrated trade area of this size and magnitude. The AfCFTA Secretariat has already been established and is headquartered in Accra, Ghana. Various technical committees and sub-committees will be created to help the Secretariat drive implementation.

‘We must keep faith’

So, as we welcome 2021 with a heavy dose of anxiety courtesy of a virus that continues to ravage lives and livelihoods here and in our tourism source markets, we must keep faith that better days are around the corner now that anti-COVID vaccines have been developed and mass vaccination campaigns are under way.

AfCFTA holds the greatest potential for tourism in Africa. As the world’s largest single market with 1,2 billion consumers, 350 million of whom are considered middle class, AfCFTA has the potential to transform the tourism sector and catapult it to the forefront of socio-economic development in Africa. By removing trade barriers and allowing the free movement of people, AfCFTA

stands to create an African tourist target market of 350 million consumers, equivalent to the size of the African middle class today. This target market is projected to grow to 600 million consumers by 2030.

Now that the building blocks of AfCFTA are falling into place, the African single marketplace of goods and services is starting to shape up. Free movement of goods, services and people means that most of the bottle-necks that used to make it near impossible for Africans to trade and visit each other hassle free, will progressively disappear.

The challenge now is for African tourism entrepreneurs, including SMMEs, to start exploring and considering ways of servicing this gigantic intra-African market. A good place to start is by developing innovative and highly diversified products and services that can be strategically packaged to target different consumer segments, both domestic and cross-border, in this gigantic intra-African market.

Trade facilitation and business development organisations will need to provide advice and the technical assistance tourism SMMEs, and any other SMME for that matter, will require in order to take advantage of the cross-border business opportunities AfCFTA has to offer.



Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela addressing the learners.

SKILLS TO BE USED AS A WEAPON WITH WHICH TO CUT THE VICIOUS CYCLE

Staff Reporter

In the month where South Africa celebrates Human Rights, it calls for a time of introspection and reflection in terms of a critical human right that is mostly overlooked – education. Nobel Peace Prize laureate and seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, once said, “Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy, and sustainable human development.” Education is at the centre of our country’s socio-economic transformation.”

To this effect, the Department of Tourism formulated and implements skills programmes in line with the National Tourism Sector Strategy and the Tourism Human Resource Development Strategy, to strategically support the tourism sector’s developmental objectives. The training further promotes inclusivity of black persons’ participation nationwide. The recruitment and selection of participants considers the geographical spread of all municipalities, with a particular focus on villages, towns and small dorpiets (VTSD).

The programmes are implemented under the auspices of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) wherein participants are paid a stipend of R120 p/d. The training covers 30% of theory and 70% of the workplace practical in order to acquire experience within the relevant workplaces. The Department entered into contractual obligation with various service providers to implement the training programmes. The full qualifications attained are accredited by the Culture Arts Tourism Hospitality

Sports Sector Education Training Authority (CATHSSETA) and South African Sommelier Association (SASA).

On 16 March 2021, the Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela along with Department of Tourism delegates from the Programme Planning and Implementation division, visited the Lanzerac Wine Estate in Stellenbosch. The first leg of the visit was focused on Wine Training Services or Sommeliers. Marius Swartland from Tourism World Academy warmly welcomed the delegation and gave an overview of the Wine Training Service Programme.

The programme was rolled out in the Western Cape, Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces for a period of 36 months (three years). The programme lasted from 2017 to 2020, with 300 beneficiaries enrolled from the three provinces respectively, as Northern Cape province could not proceed due to lack of student commitment and high rate of drop-outs. 241 beneficiaries completed the training programme and have obtained certificates as Junior Sommeliers from SASA and CATHSSETA. Swartland gladly highlighted the specialised skills the learners obtained and that 100 beneficiaries are now qualified Junior Sommeliers. Furthermore, that the programme is internationally recognised and allows the newly accredited sommeliers to work at any 5-star facility anywhere in the world.

Michael Schoeman gave feedback as the Host Employer and proudly stated that Lanzerac Hotel has employed all 5 graduates

present on the day. Fundiswa Ziqubu was newly appointed as the Hotel Sommelier. Jerome Afrika, Nyameka Mdoda, Bulelwa Dyani and Lindokuhle Siyo, who won title of Upcoming Sommelier in an inter-hotel challenge that Lanzerac entered, work in Lanzerac Hotel’s Tasting Room.

“My fellow learners would agree that we are very grateful to be part of the programme as it came at the right time. I was coming from KZN into the winelands needing a skill that could get me work. I remember just when I entered the programme and was offered work in a really good position and wanted to leave the programme, Marius showed me the bigger picture of what staying in the programme would do for me,” Fundiswa Ziqubu said.

“I know with COVID-19 it’s been really tough in the tourism industry but I think we are all hopeful that things are going to improve. I hope in the future there’ll be a similar programme for those who are coming after us,” she added.

In his closing remarks, Deputy Minister Mahlalela congratulated the learners and highlighted the Department’s efforts to revive tourism through the Tourism Recovery Plan. “We are encouraging South Africans to travel and explore their beautiful country. We want to use domestic tourism as a key for tourism so that by the time the international markets open, they find tourism up and running in a very sustainable way,” he said.

Deputy Minister Mahlalela mentioned that a skills analysis was done and it was



Pictured is Deputy Minister Fish Mahlalela with certified Junior Sommerliers and Department of Tourism delegates.

discovered that the majority of South Africans are not exposed to the industry compared to non-South Africans. The Department is currently working with the Department of Employment and Labour and the Department of Higher Education and Training to have a massive training of skills in the tourism sector. "We can't keep on building a cycle of poverty. Skills become the weapon which we can use to cut this vicious cycle, so that we don't carry it from one generation to the next," he said.

South Africa's youth unemployment for people between the ages 15-35 is at an alarming 56%, according to Statistics South Africa. "We are sitting on a time bomb to say the least. The sooner we build capacity in young people, the sooner we give them skills and create opportunities for them, they'll be able to take South Africa forward," the Deputy Minister concernedly expressed. "This is your time. Therefore, you must seize it and the only way of seizing it is by empowering yourself through skills," he concluded.

The day ended with a trip to Babylonstoren Wine Estate in Paarl, where the learners enjoyed a cellar tour and enjoyed sampling the fresh produce of the Wine Estate.

The Shelley Point Hotel at Saldanha Bay hosted the Deputy Minister, his delegation and learners of Fast Food Services on 17 March 2021. Zakiyya Perrun, the Director of The Tourism and Business Institute of Southern Africa (TTBISA), gave an overview and progress report of the Fast Food Services. The training programme was

implemented in 8 provinces for a period of 12 months. Unfortunately, the Free State Project could not proceed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were trained in National Certificate: Fast Food Services NQF Level 4.

The summary of highlights on results achieved to date on the training programmes is as follows:

- 287 candidates have successfully completed the Fast Food Services programme;
- 241 participants completed the Wine Training Services, despite 59 who dropped out;
- Almost 11% have secured permanent jobs at the end of the Fast Food learnership;
- 70% have secured employment opportunities prior to COVID-19 and only 34% to date due to closure of businesses and retrenchments in the wine training service;
- Observations made show the enthusiasm that this programme instilled in the beneficiaries, not just learning a life skill, but actually entering a career;
- The passion witnessed at the workplace impacted on the learners and people around them;
- Learners making a positive impact on certain establishments with the knowledge learnt in the programme; and
- Learners who received permanent positions despite COVID-19 restrictions.

The 9 learners present on the day are

permanently employed, of which two are at Shelley Point Hotel. The learners shared highlights of their training programme and the challenges they encountered along the way. One of these is Charlene Eiman, who is the oldest in the group. "I grabbed the opportunity with both hands since I'm the oldest one in the bunch and felt a bit odd. All of us stood together and helped each other. I held on to the positives and did not focus on the negative. I did what I had to do to the best of my ability, she said.

Deputy Minister Mahlalela thanked the service providers for empowering the learners. "A country that does not value its youth, does not deserve the future, because young people are the future," he said. Mahlalela mentioned that education creates skills and opportunities for employment or start a business as an entrepreneur. "The tourism sector has a huge potential to create more opportunities for South Africa, to create more jobs, to create entrepreneurs in the tourism sector. What is critical is that we need to create an environment that is safe for travellers to travel, and one that creates trust and confidence," he highlighted.

"We are not training you for the sake of ticking off a box and to look good in parliament. We are training you to be absorbed and to be getting employment opportunities. Our education system needs to be improved in order to meet the needs of today. It will require a collective effort. Your achievement is for our country as a whole," he concluded.



Women in Tourism – INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Staff Reporter

Minister of Tourism, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, hosted a webinar to mark International Women's Day on 08 March 2021. International Women's Day is commemorated globally to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. This year, the celebrations were themed "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world".

The webinar offered Women in Tourism (WiT) a platform to engage on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on SMMEs, and to explore mitigating measures. Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane honoured the occasion with a keynote address, setting the tone for insightful

presentations by the following high-powered panel of leaders and trailblazers in the tourism industry. The Minister said, "While the tourism sector has 70% women, the face of poverty is still a black woman. Women should be at the centre of the tourism value chain."

The Women in Tourism (WiT) Programme is an initiative that advances and supports the development and empowerment of women in the tourism sector.

Premised on the principles of Respect; Recognition; Representation and Reward, this programme integrates women from diverse backgrounds to converge on a set of common goals and interests that ensure their success in the tourism sector

and to ensure that they converge on a set of common goals and interests within the industry. The programme includes entrepreneurs, women working in the sector and students and other women from the informal sector seeking to enter the tourism value chain.

Since its inception in 2013, the programme has served as a mechanism to elevate the status of women in the sector by providing training, empowerment and networking opportunities.

Led by a panel of experts in the SMME space, the objective of this webinar was to generate a discussion on the impact of the pandemic on SMMEs and to explore mitigating measures.

MANDARIN LANGUAGE TRAINEES GRADUATE



Staff Reporter

Statistical trends show just how important the Chinese market is to the global tourism market. South Africa's diverse offerings present a further opportunity to lure the Chinese market to South Africa with local tourist guides that are conversant in the Mandarin language acting as a drawcard. The Department took a decision that it would focus on Mandarin language training as a means to up-skill tourist guides.

Just recently, 20 tourist guides graduated from three different provinces in South Africa after being trained in Mandarin.

Addressing the graduates, Deputy Director-General Mmaditlonki Setwaba said that she is proud of the efforts and commitment the guides have shown throughout their training and that they are prepared to serve the tourists well as soon as South African borders are open. "You have learned a lot about the Chinese culture; when they come through, give them excellent service,"

said DDG Setwaba.

The Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK) is an international standardised (writing, reading and listening) examination that has six (6) levels (1–6). The Mandarin language training programme which the Department is rolling out will be implemented in all provinces following a phased approach over a three-year period. The first phase of the training programme focuses on the successful completion of HSK level one (1). The second phase of the training programme entails the attainment of HSK level two (2) and those learners who have acquired the necessary language skills will be exposed to possible trade show opportunities and other marketing platforms. The final phase of the programme includes practical exposure in the form of a cultural immersion phase where learners who meet the prescribed criteria will be selected to participate in the language programme in China.

Setwaba further said, "Go out there and make us proud, keep in touch with your

team and the Department to be able to refresh and also alert us on the gaps you might experience".

During the 2019/20 financial year, twenty (20) tourist guides from the Western Cape, Gauteng and Eastern Cape successfully participated and completed the first phase of the Mandarin language training programme. For the current 2020/21 financial year, the new intake consists of twenty (20) tourist guides from Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. The Department has already advertised the training opportunity for tourist guides located in the Free State, Northern Cape and North West who will form part of the training beneficiaries for the 2021/22 financial year.

"Tourist guides are the face of tourism, you are the first people to meet the tourists and you are also the last people to see the tourists, so make us shine to make tourists visit South Africa again," concluded DDG Mmaditlonki Setwaba



TOURISM LAUNCHES BASIC QUALITY VERIFICATION PROGRAMME IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Staff Reporter

The Department of Tourism, together with Makana Local Municipality and Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, launched the Basic Quality Verification (BQV) programme, an initiative of the Grading Council of South Africa, under South African Tourism.

Launch of the programme took place on 23 and 24 March 2021 in Port Elizabeth and East London. The BQV programme uses the skills of unemployed tourism graduates who are trained as evaluators in the areas they live in. Through the training received from the programme, tourism graduates who already know the areas they live in, will be performing these verifications. This gives them entrepreneurial skills and the technical

specialisation they need to become Accredited Assessors in future.

“The Basic Quality Verification programme enables accommodation establishments who did not meet the tourism criteria of grading or quality verification an opportunity to improve; we aim to improve rural tourism by ensuring that all accommodation products, particularly those in rural areas, have high levels of quality assurance and are in a position to provide quality experiences to all tourists,” said Chief Executive Officer of South African Tourism, Sisa Ntshona.

Ntshona further said that, “Other counties are still on strict Covid-19 lockdown and the tourism sector has regressed immensely. We

need to all adhere to Covid-19 protocols as the industry is working towards inclusive recovery.”

Tourism is recognised for its immense potential and its significant contribution to the economy. The South African approach to tourism is outlined in the 1996 White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism it also confirms that tourism is government led, private sector driven and community based and that tourism is grounded in cooperation and close partnerships between all stakeholders.

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalele said during his keynote address, “We are here today because of the significant role that



rural tourism should play in the recovery of the tourism industry. The aim of rural tourism is to enhance the growth and development of tourism in rural communities, particularly in less visited areas."

"For a long time, we have relied on the overseas customers in order to sustain our economy and our sector. The pandemic has shown us that if we continue to do so, our economy will continue to take a nose dive."

Community Based Tourism (CBT) is tourism in which local residents often rural, poor and economically marginalised invite tourists to visit their communities with the provision of overnight accommodation. By doing so, the residents earn income as product owner, entrepreneurs, service and produce providers, and employees.

"No one can therefore doubt that the communities are the major stakeholder when it comes to tourism," emphasised Mahlalela.

The CBT approach takes environmental, social, and cultural sustainability into account. It is managed and owned by the

community, for the community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life.

Mahlalela highlighted the challenges that threaten the tourism sector such as poor infrastructure. He said that in order to drive towards a solution, our objectives as the Department of Tourism is to create a platform to share knowledge of best practice, development opportunities and challenges in rural areas for tourism development, facilitate the coordination of rural tourism development initiatives amongst relevant stakeholders, create an enabling environment for rural tourism development to stimulate job creation, identify and recommend strategic areas/nodes for tourism development in rural areas within the sector and to create platforms that enable rural tourism products to be exposed and promoted to a variety of audiences.

A special tribute went to the team at the Tourism Grading Council under the auspices of South African Tourism who have been fantastic in drafting guidelines and criteria for the identification of rural homestays. The

rural homestays are owners who have used their home space in order to accommodate the visitors. This can be done by majority of our women and the youth. An unused family house can be turned into a homestay.

"Finally, taking part in quality grading schemes will provide you with access to expert advice, training and ongoing support from the Tourism Quality Assessors. The Quality Assessors will assess your business and advise you on how to make the most of your business," concluded Deputy Minister Mahlalela.

The Principals took time to visit a few homestays around Eastern Cape to also see progress and hand them their Basic Quality Verification certificates.

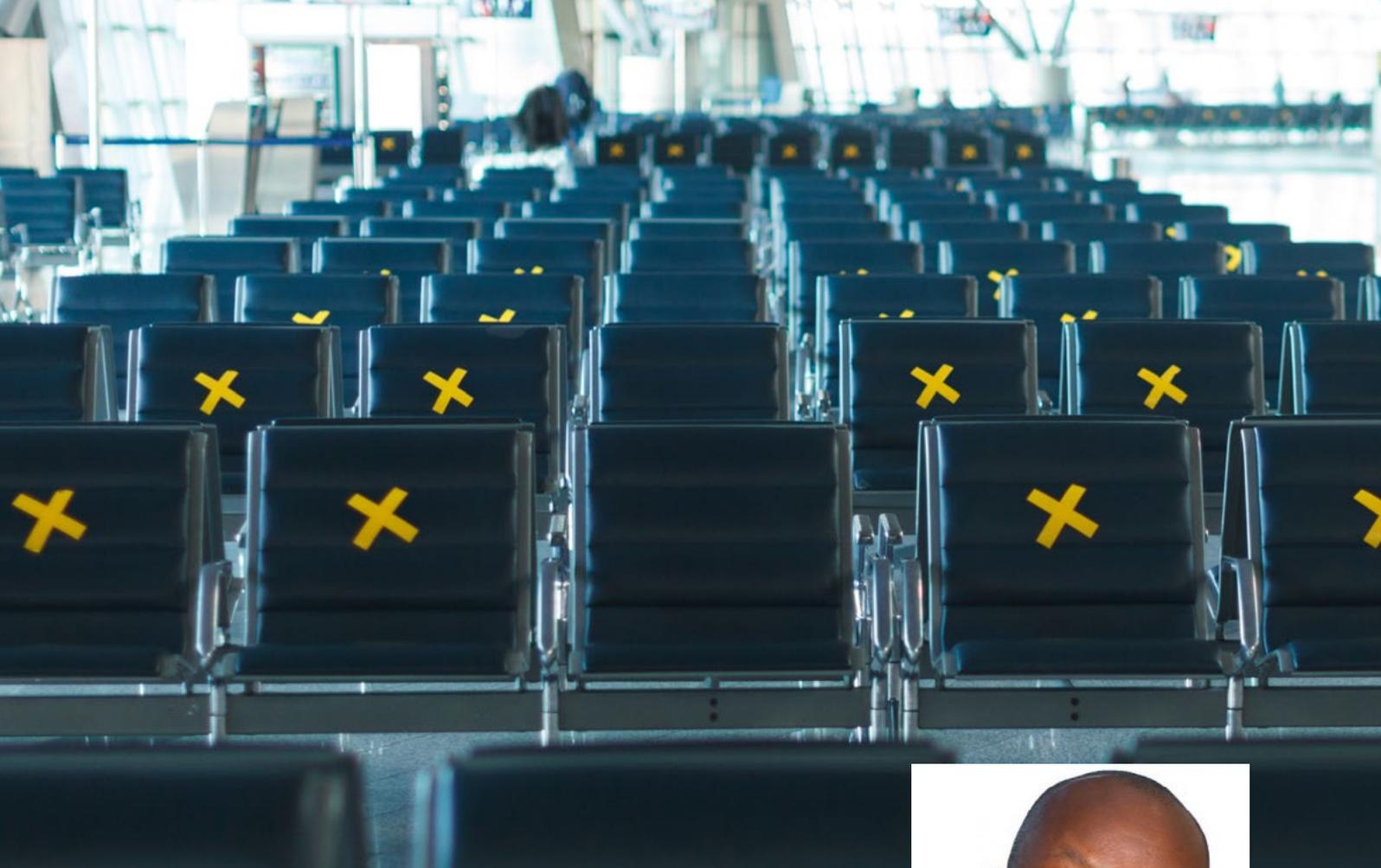


NOTICES BURSARIES AND INTERNSHIPS

The Department has completed the awarding of bursaries for the 2021 academic year and all successful applicants have been notified. Please monitor our website for the 2022 intake during the last quarter of 2021. Also note the two-year internship programme will not have any new intakes for 2021.

INFORMATION RESOURCE & CALL CENTRE OPERATIONS
Please be advised that the information resource desk is closed for walk-ins until further notice.

You are welcome to contact the Call Centre Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 16:30 at 0860 868 747 / callcentre@tourism.gov.za or visit www.tourism.gov.za
For tourism services and consumer related complaints, kindly e-mail complaints@tourism.gov.za



TBCSA CALLS FOR CERTAINTY AROUND NEW POTENTIAL LOCKDOWNS



CEO of TBCSA, Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa

Adele Mackenzie

As the narrative around the 'South African COVID-19 variant' continues – a message largely driven by global media and foreign government's response to close their borders to travellers from South Africa – more inbound bookings for the second half of 2021 are being cancelled.

This was revealed in a Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) report that was presented to the Tourism Portfolio Committee in Parliament recently to highlight the massively negative impact the pandemic – and the measures taken by government to curb the spread – had on the tourism sector and to reiterate the need for government intervention.

TBCSA CEO, **Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa**, pointed to an International Finance Corporation (IFC) report, published in

October last year (before the second wave) that indicated that the vast majority of tourism businesses (92%) had seen a 50% or more drop in revenue.

Furthermore, at that stage, 28% of businesses had closed, 5% of those were left with no option but to close permanently. "Then, the industry was in crisis but the outlook was better. Now the outlook is worse," said Tshivhengwa.

He pointed out that businesses continued to close, jobs were still being lost and the chance to build on South Africa's positive destination profile was receding.

"With 18 countries closed to travellers from South Africa and another five countries requiring either additional tests or quarantine for travellers returning from South Africa, it is impossible or arduous

– expensive and inconvenient – for foreigners to return home if they holiday in South Africa," said Tshivhengwa.

Amongst other interventions, he called on the Portfolio Committee to help manage the collective country message to counter the negative 'SA variant' narrative. Tshivhengwa also appealed for early communications of further potential lockdowns over holiday periods (such as Easter) should there be another rise in COVID-19 infection.

"We need to be better prepared for the predicted third COVID-19 wave, which is expected to hit South Africa at the start of winter, and we need to adopt a different lockdown approach so we can avoid a stop-start scenario that causes major disruption and uncertainty in the travel sector," he said.



Tourism Transformation Council of South Africa Welcomes The Launch Of The Tourism Equity Fund

On 26 January 2021, the Minister of Tourism, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, together with the Minister of Small Business Development, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, launched the historic R1.2 billion Tourism Equity Fund at the occasion graced by the President, His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The Tourism Equity Fund was established by the Department of Tourism in partnership with the Small Enterprise Finance Agency, which is an entity of the Department of Small Business Development, which also saw immense contribution by the commercial banks, to provide a combination of debt finance and grant funding to facilitate equity acquisition as well as new project development in the tourism sector by black entrepreneurs. The fund will serve as a catalyst to fast track transformation in the tourism sector.

Since the appointment of the Tourism Transformation Council of South Africa, the Minister gave them a clear legislative mandate to advise on the implementation of B-BBEE in the tourism sector. The Council had conducted numerous studies which all pointed to the slow pace of transformation in the sector, particularly on the elements of ownership, management control and procurement. To change the status quo, the Council made recommendations to the Minister of Tourism to expand access to finance by black businesses and to establish training programme to equip women, who are the majority workers in the tourism sector, with skills and qualifications to transition them into executive positions and also give them power to start and grow their own businesses.

The Tourism Transformation Council of South Africa, whose members were appointed by the Minister in June 2019, are proud to witness this great milestone of the launch of the Tourism Equity Fund (TEF). "Minister Kubayi-Ngubane, our Minister of Tourism, has championed the establishment of the TEF in order to unlock the potential of black entrepreneurs and continue on this journey of making the tourism sector truly inclusive. The Minister has taken to heart the recommendations and guidance from various players in the tourism sector, as well as by the TTCSA, and in so doing, has demonstrated the need to have a funding facility that covers not only funding needs, but also the need to hand hold budding entrepreneurs as they make their way into mainstream markets and are able to sustain their existence and take their positions centerfield of our industry," said the Chairperson of Tourism Transformation Council of South Africa, Ms Lindiwe Sangweni-Siddo.

Recently, the Minister had also distributed R200 million in the form of Tourism Relief Fund to lessen the impact of Covid-19 on tourism businesses. And about 4 000 tourism small businesses have benefited, and majority were women owned (61%), which highlights her seriousness about transformation and women empowerment. "These unprecedented milestones clearly distinguish Minister Kubayi-Ngubane as a true champion for economic emancipation," said the TTCSA Chairperson.

The Tourism Recovery Plan has put transformation at the centre of the sector's economic recovery post Covid-19. Tourism Equity Fund would go a long way in opening-up the tourism sector to make it practically inclusive to ensure that the fruits of tourism accrue to all South Africans in an equal manner as envisaged by the Tourism B-BBEE Sector Codes. The former Chairperson of the TTCSA, Dr Vuyo Mahlati, once said that "B-BBEE is simply about shared economic benefits throughout the organisation's value chain". This means that we should also expect more from the recipients of the fund to make sure they also use their black status to empower other black people. They can buy from other black suppliers to increase the procurement spread. And they must also employ other black executives, particularly women, who are the majority workers in the tourism sector, to run their new tourism ventures. The pool of qualified and experienced tourism leadership is growing. Following the recommendations of the Council, the Department of Tourism to date has funded and graduated about 80 Tourism Women Executives through the partnership with the Unisa Graduate School of Business Leadership. Furthermore, forty other women are due to commence with the training programme this year.

We agree with the President, His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa, when he expressed that "Tourism Equity Fund... will speed up transformation in one of the most crucial sectors of our economy. This is transformation in action. It is also one of the economic segments that can play a pivotal role in transforming the economy and contributing to changing patterns of ownership, management and control."

"The Council will continue to support the efforts of our young, energetic, visionary and results-oriented Minister, who is always striving to lead by example in steering the sector in the right direction to rapidly advance the course of transformation for the benefit of everyone without any fear," concluded the TTCSA Chairperson.

Tourism Blue Flag Beach Stewards Welcome Beachgoers



Staff Reporter

In mid-December, 75 Beach Stewards reported for duty at 20 Blue Flag beaches along the South African Coastline. These stewards were placed to offer support to these beaches in beach monitoring, visitor assistance, crowd control (encouraging Covid-19 physical distancing and mask wearing), and incident management. They also had a pivotal role in arranging and running enviro-education events and edutainment at their beaches. Stipends for the stewards, their tourism training and resources to support them are funded by the National Department of Tourism; with WESSA managing the stewards. The groups of stewards were also equipped with cellphones for capturing daily beach monitoring data and visitor surveys, using the COLLECT application.

They were also tasked with sending out daily beach reports and updates, to twitter handles assigned to each beach (see screenshot). The stewards also played a social role in helping to reunite parents with lost children, as well as raising awareness around exploitation of children in the beach tourism industry (as part of the international ChildSafe



Programme). In March 2021, a new cohort of 104 youth will join this Tourism Blue Flag Project, to support our BF

beaches and create youth employment and skills training in building back better the South African tourism sector.



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