



**MINISTRY  
TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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

**BUDGET VOTE 38 SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM,  
MS MAGGIE SOTYU, MP  
TUESDAY, 26 MAY 2026 - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

House Chairperson,  
Minister of Tourism, Ms Patricia de Lille,  
Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee in Tourism, Ms. Ronalda Nalumango,  
Honourable Members of Parliament,  
Director-General, Mr Victor Vele, and entire tourism family  
Leadership of South African Tourism,  
Captains of Industry, TBCSA, Council Chairperson and CEO as led by Dr Khosa,  
Distinguished Guests,

Today, we gather not only to debate a budget but to reflect on how tourism continues to create opportunities, strengthen inclusion, and transform lives across our country. As we commemorate the 30th anniversary of our Constitution this year, we are reminded that the promise of democracy must continue to be experienced not only in principle, but in people's daily lives. Indeed, as Minister has stated, Tourism contributes meaningfully to that constitutional vision.

It creates opportunities for participation, supports livelihoods, promotes equality through economic inclusion, and ensures that communities across our country can share in the benefits of growth and development. In many ways, tourism brings to life the spirit of our Constitution - a South Africa that is open, welcoming, diverse, inclusive, and united in its humanity. That is why transformation, inclusion, and community participation remain central to the work we do as the Department of Tourism.

Tourism remains one of the most people-centred sectors of our economy. It is a sector that creates jobs where people live, supports families, empowers women, youth and people with

disabilities, stimulates local economies, and provides pathways for meaningful economic participation especially the previously marginalised groups and for all South Africans.

**House Chairperson,** Transformation remains central to the sustainability and long-term success of the tourism sector. We cannot build a globally competitive tourism economy if many communities, women, youth, people with disabilities and small enterprises remain excluded from meaningful participation. That is why the Department continues to prioritise transformation-driven programmes aimed at broadening participation across the tourism value chain.

At Africa's Travel Indaba and Meetings Africa this year, the Department continued to create real opportunities for SMMEs, township tourism operators, women-owned enterprises, and youth entrepreneurs to access buyers, markets, and international trade networks. Because when small tourism businesses gain access to global buyers, inclusion becomes income. Transformation is not only about representation. It is about ownership, sustainability, economic participation, and ensuring that tourism opportunities reach those who have historically been excluded from the mainstream economy.

**House Chairperson,** Across the country, the Department continues to support tourism projects in villages, townships, rural communities, and small towns to expand participation in tourism and encourage geographic spread.

Every province, district, township, village, and rural community has a tourism story to tell and an experience to offer. Tourism growth must therefore not be concentrated only in established tourism hubs. It must also reach communities where tourism has the potential to transform livelihoods, stimulate local economies, and restore dignity. We must remind ourselves that even the most established of the hubs started from somewhere.

The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa continues to play a significant role in advancing quality assurance, destination competitiveness, and visitor confidence. South African Tourism's work through programmes such as the Basic Quality Verification (BQV) Programme continues to support emerging accommodation establishments, particularly within Villages, Townships and Small Dorpies. The programme helps smaller establishments become market-ready, quality assured, and more competitive within the tourism economy, as we have seen recently at the Africa Travel Indaba (ATI) 2026.

The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) celebrated 25 years of advancing tourism quality assurance, reinforcing its role as a strategic enabler of destination competitiveness, visitor confidence, and tourism sector sustainability. Tourism grading continued to strengthen South Africa's tourism value proposition by providing independent assurance of quality, safety, and service excellence across the sector. *During the reporting period, TGCSA successfully quality assured about 4,544 establishments nationally, exceeding the annual target of 4,500 establishments.*

**House Chairperson,** Tourism safety remains one of the Department's highest priorities. As Chairperson of the National Tourism Safety Forum, I continue to work closely with provinces, municipalities, law enforcement agencies, and private-sector stakeholders to strengthen tourism safety coordination nationwide. A safe destination is not only a tourism priority but also an economic imperative!

Tourism safety is about protecting livelihoods, strengthening destination confidence, supporting local businesses, and preserving South Africa's reputation as a welcoming destination. The Tourism Monitors Programme remains one of the important interventions supporting both tourism safety and youth employment.

It continues to provide visibility at tourism sites, support visitor experiences, and contribute to safer tourism environments across the country. Importantly, Tourism Monitors are often the first ambassadors of South Africa's hospitality, warmly welcoming visitors while contributing to service excellence and destination confidence.

**House Chairperson,** South Africa continues to strengthen its position as one of Africa's leading business events destinations.

The hosting of conferences, meetings, and events in villages, townships, and smaller towns continues to contribute meaningfully towards local economic participation and inclusive development. Of the conferences and events that the Minister referenced earlier, 16 of those business events were hosted across various Villages, Townships and Small Dorpies, attracting about 5,000 delegates with an estimated economic impact of about R53 million. These events support accommodation providers, transport operators, restaurants, creatives, tourism attractions, and small enterprises across local economies.

**House Chairperson**, Women and youth remain central to the future of the tourism sector. The Department continues to support programmes aimed at empowering women in tourism, supporting youth enterprises, and creating pathways for participation within the tourism economy.

The Women in Tourism platform serves as an important mechanism to bring women together across the tourism value chain - from accommodation and hospitality, to transport, tour operations, cultural tourism, events, digital innovation, and community tourism. Importantly, it also provides a space for networking, mentorship, collaboration, and mutual support.

Tourism is at its most powerful when it not only grows visitor numbers, but also grows people, businesses, and communities. The Department remains committed to investing in skills development initiatives that strengthen the tourism workforce.

**House Chairperson**, we must continue ensuring that tourism growth translates into meaningful opportunities for workers, women, youth, people with disabilities, small enterprises, and communities across our country. Because tourism is more than an industry. It is a bridge between people, cultures, opportunities, and hope. When communities participate meaningfully in tourism, the entire country benefits.

**House chairperson** as I conclude,

I'd like to thank the Honourable Minister of Tourism, Ms Patricia de Lille for her leadership within the tourism sector in the past year, and to thank the Director General, Mr Victor Vele and department officials for their support. I also thank you Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, Honourable Nalumango and Portfolio Committee Members, in particular for your robust engagements and guidance.

I Thank You All!

Ends/

**For Media Enquiries:**

Mr Mabandla Kelengeshe

Acting Head of Office for the Deputy Minister

Mobile: 064 521 7031

Email: [MKelengeshe@tourism.gov.za](mailto:MKelengeshe@tourism.gov.za)

