



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Budget Vote Speech to the National Assembly  
by Deputy Minister of Tourism, Hon. Fish Mahlalela, MP  
Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, Cape Town  
Tourism vote 33  
10 July 2019**

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Honourable House Chairperson  
Minister of Tourism, Hon Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane  
Members of Parliament  
Director General and Senior Managers of the Department of Tourism  
Members of the SAT Board and Acting CEO  
Acting CEO of South African Tourism  
Distinguished guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I receive with great humility the opportunity to address this august assemblage on the occasion of the Debate on the Budget and Policy Statement of the Department of Tourism. It is more humbling to stand on this podium at the time when our country is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of democracy and freedom. This is an opportune moment which reflects that we embrace the thoughts of President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere that “if a door is shut, attempts should be made to open it, if it is ajar, it should be pushed until it is wide open”.

We have opened our Country’s door to democracy to realise the strategic Objective that the late ANC President OR Tambo has set for all of us when he instructed all and sundry that “It is our responsibility to break down barriers of division and create a country where there will be neither white nor black, just South Africans, free and united in diversity”.

Honourable Members

Mahatma Gandhi says; “A nation’s culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people”.

As a nation our collective history, culture and heritage defines us as a people and we need to cherish this because it positions us as one of the most attractive destination in the world due to our diversity. If we are to attain our economic objective, of “creating a better life for all” we ought to cherish our history, culture and heritage.

Our democracy; its distinguished features and its heroes and heroines afforded brand South Africa to parade its uniqueness. We look back into those 25 years with pride on how we have branded South Africa and made it a significant destination of choice for tourists. We have tirelessly worked towards the development of destination South Africa as a first port of call for tourism and investment in the Southern hemisphere.

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Our efforts continue to bear fruits which have resulted in the steady growth of tourism since the adventure of our hard fought democracy. We must continue to build up on our success to ensure that tourism become a significant player for employment creation, inclusive economic growth and economic development. We must ensure that Tourism work for the people of South Africa gives full meaning to the thoughts of Frantz Fanon that if the building of a bridge does not enrich the awareness

of those who work on it, then the bridge ought not to be built. So Tourism must work for our people through employment creation, inclusive economic growth and development.

Honourable Members

Through this budget debate, we share with you highlights of our readiness to reposition the destination and the brand, borne of the collective commitment to grow the tourism sector and carry the aspiration of millions of South Africans through a path of growth, recovery and prosperity.

## **DRIVING GROWTH THROUGH RESPONSIBLE TOURISM, EXCELLENCE AND QUALITY**

Honourable Members

As a service sector, our customers buy experiences therefore, driving excellence must be a habit. Our Nation spearheaded by our government need to make a concerted effort to continually increase the levels of hospitality and friendliness, and the general standards of service.

We will continue to champion our programmes aimed at creating a culture of service excellence in order to ensure that services are delivered to the *satisfaction* of our tourists.

## **RESPONSIBLE TOURISM**

Honourable House Chairperson,

We have a responsibility to advance and protect the objectives of responsible tourism. Our country has demonstrated our appreciation of the importance of responsible tourism by being the first country in 1996, to include responsible tourism in the 1996 White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa which addresses the need to implement energy efficiency programmes in order to prepare our sector and communities to deal with the effects of climate change. Tourism cannot be a tool to destruct society but is a perfect instrument for sustainable development, social cohesion and human development.

## **IMPROVING SERVICE EXCELLENCE**

Honourable House Chairpersons,

We are the first ones to acknowledge that even though tourism is about human experiences, economic thrive and development it must be cornerstone on the people. Ours is a business about and for people, and for this reason we will continue to recognise and encourage the pursuit of excellence in the conduct of our business.

To advance this ideal pursuance of excellence we are putting efforts to revolutionise our Service Excellence Awards and the creation for an industry-wide staff service excellence recognition system to achieve our objective.

We will continue to put more efforts in ensuring that Tourism Visitor Information ecosystem functions effectively and efficiently, this we shall do working together with our industry associations and bodies.

## **GRADING**

Our efforts for excellence has resulted in the establishment of our quality assurance scheme through the Star Grading System for accommodation, meetings, exhibitions and Special Events. This system has realised our objectives of reducing the cost burden on small tourism enterprises and encourage greater conformity to quality standards in tourism.

Since integrating the programme with the online application process in January 2018, 1 529 accommodation and Meeting establishments applied for and benefitted from 80% to 90% discount on their grading assessment fees. The Department is confident that this number will grow.

## **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUTH**

Honourable Members

The existence of vibrant small business entrepreneurs and a skilled work force is vital for sustainable tourism development. Not much will be realised without an investment in the development of appropriate skills in the tourism industry.

As part of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), we have implemented niche skills development initiatives targeting youth, and we are proud that our investment continues to bear fruit.

We have prioritised Youth Development, and the Department is now effectively implementing 8 youth skills development programme nationwide, leaving a dent on the scourge of unemployment and consequential social strife.

**National Youth Chefs Training Programme;** - Is now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year. A total of 1 867 have benefitted from this programme.

The international placement element of the programme exposes SA youth to culinary skills, in French, Portuguese, Italian cuisine and others, has over the last two years' successful placed six hundred (600) hundred students.

**Wine Service Training Programme;** - Is a three-year training programme, and 300 unemployed youth people from Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape and Gauteng have enrolled.

**Tourism Blue Flag - Beach Stewards;** -The training programme is aimed at improving tourism facilities and services offered at 50 Blue Flag beaches across, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape and Eastern Cape. 300 learners have enrolled as beach stewards. An addition of 25 beaches will be added to the fifty in the next three years

These programme will not be successful without the participation of industry, our hotels, B&Bs, restaurants and guest houses, and our NGOs and social enterprises who continue to welcome our youth to get practical training.

**National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE);** - This year we will once again host the National Tourism Careers Expo in Mafikeng from the 19 to 21 September 2019, in a partnership with the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA).

The NTCE is the biggest excursion targeting educators, high school learners, TVET colleges, university students and unemployed graduates, with the sole aim of promoting tourism as a career choice and as a platform for the diverse sub-sectors in the tourism industry to promote themselves as employers of choice.

Last year's expo attracted 6 678 young people and (303) educators, and our target for this year is to reach ten thousand (10 000) young people and 500 educators directly.

We do these programmes because we know that it is only through awareness, education, persuasion, and enticement that we can bring back our youth from streets of hopelessness, and make them pioneers in building and growing South Africa.

We are investing in the skills of young people, our women and importantly those in the employ of the state, because it only through the acquisition of relevant skills that we can have a state that is as capable to deliver on its developmental mandate.

## **MORE VISITORS THROUGH MEETINGS, INCENTIVES AND EVENTS**

South Africa continues to claim its share as a global competitor destination for a variety of small, medium and Mēga events - be its business, sports and lifestyle.

The hosting of major events continues to be an effective tool to promote, position, and brand our country as destination of choice.

SA Tourism serves to market the country as a tourist destination of choice as well as a world class business events destination and will continue on promoting Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibition (MICE) through the National Conventions Bureau as well as quality assurance through the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa.

## **DRIVING A NEW EVENTS STRATEGY**

We need to consolidate and tap into the energy and innovation of our people and make them partners in driving the culture of travel and contributing to the product offering of taking a domestic trip

We will in this financial year launch, and implement a national tourism events strategy and plan, anchored by a number of catalytic initiatives to support successful bidding and hosting of local, provincial and national events outside of the traditional meetings conferences and resources.

This strategy will complement the work that is been done by the Departments of Arts, Sports and Culture, our provincial Tourism Authorities, and our municipalities in supporting vibrant and viable leisure, lifestyle, food music, cultural, films, conferencing and events, which are driving domestic tourism and promoting social cohesion.

## **INCLUSIVITY THROUGH GROWING COMMUNITY TOURISM**

To enhance Community Based Tourism, the department launched a programme to promote the creation of 'inclusive tourist' destinations, aimed at bringing community-based tourism into the bigger pot of enhancement of visitor experience.

In the previous year the department concluded feasibility studies for community based tourism at the following sites:

- Witsieshoek and Phuthaditjaba, Free State Province
- Rampampa, Pilannesburg to Madikwe Corridor, North West Province
- Vilakazi Street Precinct, Soweto, Gauteng Province
- Khula Village outside St Lucia, in the iSimangaliso Wetlands Park, a World Heritage Site, KwaZulu-Natal Province
- eMazizini in the heart of the Amphitheatre, northern Drakensberg, KwaZulu-Natal Province

True to our commitment to the development of people and parks, this year the Department will, in conjunction with SANParks conclude feasibilities for the enhancement of community tourism in at the following sites:

- (1) Kruger National Park in Mpumalanga;
- (2) Addo National Park; in the Easter Cape
- (3) Marakele National Park; in Limpopo
- (4) Golden Gate National Park in North West
- (5) Kgalagadi National Park in the Northern Cape

The investment and social capital will be the ultimate legacies for these communities around parks to optimise economic and social benefit from these tourism jewels.

## **SOCIAL DOMESTIC TOURISM**

We must live to our infamous claim that tourism is everybody's business.

The millions of South Africans, must be owners, consumers and beneficiaries of their country's tourism success story –after all, that's what domestic tourism's should be all about.

We can only do that if we inculcate and harness a culture of travel in our people, so that they feel, see and touch the benefits of tourism in their country.

We shall continue to engage both public and private sectors, sports and religious bodies, social clubs, stokvels to come ride with us as we continue to instil a culture of exploring our country.

## **REJUVENATING TOURISM IN TRANSIT AND BORDER TOWNS**

The opportunities provided by our bordering of 6 countries (of Botswana Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia Swaziland and Zimbabwe) should be fully exploited by those of our communities staying at and/or working at the border towns.

Our border towns must not just serve as pit-stops for the ports of entry in Musina, Komatipoort, Oshoek, Lobatse, Swakopmund etc., but must be the first impression of the destination and those who enter through these passages and corridors, must feel the need to first spend their money at these tourist ports before proceeding to anywhere in the country

Honourable House Chair

Our success will be measured on how we best offer tourism products, the most pristine destinations and priceless experiences to both local and international tourists alike.

We have characterised the new dawn as an era of doing things differently, “Thuma Mina” and Khauleza as a central theme which instruct government to intensify service delivery to our people.

We will toil vigorously and laboriously to intensify domestic tourism particularly among the rural and the working people of our country. Our aim is to demystify this notion that tourism is an elitist activity and therefore is aimed for certain section of society.

We will promote “one family- one tourism destination per annum as part of our efforts to boost domestic tourism.

We shall drive our efforts through community Izimbizo programme and stakeholder engagement under the theme “Khawuleza Uvakashe”. We will move from the length and breadth of our country to promote this initiative. Singabi mafeladzanwonye kepha wonhke wonkhe kufute abesivakashi lokungenani kanye ngemnyaka nasitsi “Khawuleza uvakashe”

I wish to thank and congratulate the team at Tourism House; political guidance by The Minister, The Director-General, senior management, and the entire staff for their commitment and the hard work in service of our people.

With our renewed energy, innovation and through partnerships, we are certainly destined for greatness.

We look forward to working with all stakeholders, in making South Africa a destination of choice and in making sure that through tourism, *together we grow South Africa*.

It is moments like this when we revisit the thoughts of Kwame Nkrumah when he said “Those who would judge us merely by the heights we have achieved would do well to remember the depths from which we started”.

I thank you