



tourism

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Coffee Bay is a hidden tourism gemstone

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Coffee Bay in the Eastern Cape was a buzz as Deputy Ministers of Communications, **Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries**, Public Enterprises, Labour, Tourism, Transport and Eastern Cape MEC for Rural Development and Agrarian Reform convened for an exhibition and Imbizo event from 3 to 4 March 2017. This event was part of the Inter-Departmental Coffee Bay Youth Exhibition aimed at growing the local economy.

The Inter-Departmental Youth Exhibition was held in conjunction with National and Provincial Departments, along with parastatals which exhibited and showcased their services and projects to learners and community members. It was a step towards setting the stage for changes and plans that are currently underway for this small town.

OR Tambo District Municipality Executive Mayor Ms Makhosazana Meth expressed her gratitude towards this initiative. “We as the community of this district especially this town of Coffee Bay welcome all the efforts and proposals of turning things around and making sure that no community is left outside the economy and employment wagon,” stated Meth.

Deputy Tourism Minister Tokozile Xasa said that Coffee Bay is a gemstone in the province offering some of the best nature experiences. “This place is a tourist attraction, and we want to create jobs here. So we're looking at young people who would like to remain in the area and help develop it as well. We want to stimulate them at an early age whilst they are still in school but also those who are already doing careers in tourism to say think big, think entrepreneurship. This is where we can assist as we have initiatives to support you,” said Xasa.

Xasa said that Coffee Bay is domestically one of the most beautiful areas and has the potential to boom in terms of tourism. “There is a lot we need to explore in this town, and we will work together with the municipality and provincial government. Development of the town will create jobs for the local people, and that is what this community has been waiting for,” she added.

Deputy Minister of Communications, Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams emphasised that young people need to be equipped with knowledge and skills in order to participate in the country's economy, either by entering the employment space or even becoming future employers.

“This joint exhibition will enable young people to get exposure to different career opportunities. We need young people in their big numbers to penetrate industries such as agriculture and tourism,” said Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Bheki Cele.

The second day of the event focused on an Imbizo dialog where community members raised a number of issues. A concern raised which was unanimous among young people was the lack of information in regards to job opportunities. They stated that there is a number of educated and qualified young people in the area, but training and job opportunities are lacking.

One of the community member highlighted that the village was declared a town however much needed work is still required in regards to road infrastructure, new building development and tourism facilities. If all of these issues are addressed, the community will be able to participate in the economy and also get employment.

At the end of the two day event the community was satisfied with the developments and was eager to participate in the realisation to develop Coffee Bay.

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