



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Speech delivered by the Minister of Tourism, Mr Derek Hanekom at the launch of  
Tourism Month 2014**

**26 August 2014**

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for making the time to join us here today in the Maboneng Precinct. This area has not only revived the Johannesburg CBD but has been instrumental in changing people's perceptions of a city that is fast establishing itself as one of South Africa's most vibrant, creative and exciting tourist destinations.

Each September we celebrate Tourism Month in South Africa. September is also the month during which we celebrate our Heritage. Our heritage is so central to the development of this important sector of our economy.

During Tourism Month we focus our efforts on domestic tourism in particular, using the period as an opportunity to encourage all South Africans to get out and explore this unique, beautiful and diverse country of ours.

This Tourism Month, the first without our beloved Tata Madiba in our presence, we call on all South Africans to take the time to visit the sites and attractions around the country associated with his life, as we look to celebrate and honour his legacy.

To make it as easy as to do this, South African Tourism has developed Madiba-Inspired Tourist Attractions, a map that highlights these attractions and provides all the information necessary to plan your visit. To access this interactive map electronically visit [mandela.southafrica.net](http://mandela.southafrica.net) and start planning your Madiba inspired itinerary today.

Domestic tourism, which is crucial to the long term growth and sustainability of South Africa's tourism industry, will certainly be an important focus area of my department. We are committed to ensuring that the wonders we boast and the unique heritage we have been endowed with are shared by an ever growing number of South Africans.

Take a place like Maropeng, the official visitor centre for the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site, only a short drive from here. The reality is that only a small percentage of the residents of Johannesburg and Pretoria have had the opportunity to experience it. This must change. We can only protect and promote our heritage if our own people understand and appreciate it.

In total, 12 million domestic tourists took 25 million. Our domestic market, unlike our international arrivals which have seen good growth in recent years, has remained under pressure since the 2008/2009 global financial crisis.

Last year, domestic tourists contributed R24.3 billion to the economy, up from the R21.8 billion spent by domestic tourists in 2012. Notwithstanding this, domestic tourism makes a very significant contribution to the country's GDP.

To reach our target of 18 million domestic tourists by 2020, as set out in the National Tourism Sector Strategy, we will have to work hard to ensure that tourism is more affordable and more accessible to all South Africans.

As part of Government's commitment, R100 million in secured ring-fenced funding has been allocated to South African Tourism this year to bolster our domestic tourism marketing efforts.

These marketing efforts will include the continued rollout of the Nothing's More Fun than a Sho't Left campaign. The campaign, launched at the start of Tourism Month last year, drives home the message that travel in South Africa is fun, an investment in your relationships and yourselves as well as being both accessible and affordable.

We are very excited by the market's reaction to this campaign to date. One way of reviewing it is to look at the activity on the Sho't Left website since the campaign launch. So far the website, which is available to desktop, mobile and tablet users, has received over 200 000 visits (204 528 visits as at 25 July 2014) with a 25% return rate, indicating that one in four users returns to check for new deals. An average visit of almost six minutes to the site is incredibly high and shows our users are engaging with the content on the site and making bookings.

Another key focus area for South African Tourism when it comes to domestic tourism is to work with the trade to make travel a reality for millions of South Africans. This includes sharing insights into what today's South African audience seek in a leisure travel experience with the travel industry.

South African Tourism also works with tourism partners to make travel more accessible and more relevant for the domestic market. All tourism businesses are encouraged to upload their value-for-money deals onto the Sho't Left website and to provide a variety of packages and options to suit all budgets.

In line with the objectives set out in National Development Plan, our focus is to increase tourism's contribution to GDP and to contribute positively to addressing inequality and poverty. We are also focusing our efforts on using tourism to improve underdeveloped areas of South Africa.

With these objectives in mind, "Tourism Transforming Lives" is the theme for Tourism Month 2014.

The latest Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) data for tourism receipts and job creation show that South Africa's tourism sector continues to increase its contribution both to the country's GDP and to job creation.

According to TSA statistics, released by Statistics South Africa for the period ending December 2012, direct tourism contribution to GDP was R93 billion or 3% of GDP in 2012 with tourism contributing approximately 617 000 direct jobs in 2012.

During this month we reach out to those people who are making this GDP growth and job creation growth a reality and celebrate their contribution so that we can inspire more South Africans to walk in their footsteps.

Jo Fritz, owner of Jo's Guesthouse and Hantamkraal Restaurant in the small town of Calvinia in the Northern Cape, is testament to the power of tourism to transform lives even in the remotest areas of South Africa.

From a family of eleven children, Fritz worked hard in Cape Town to fund his education in the hospitality sector before returning to Calvinia to set up a take-away business and then a guesthouse and restaurant.

This guesthouse grew from two to 17 rooms within ten years and the attached restaurant has seating for 60 people. Today he employs eleven people, ensuring their growth by sending them on appropriate courses and supports many more in his community by making extensive use of local suppliers. He regularly uses his story to inspire others in Calvinia by giving motivational talks at schools and community meetings.

Through initiatives like the Tourism Enterprise Partnership and the Lilizela Awards we are committed to working to ensure that entrepreneurs in tourism like Jo Fritz get noticed and get the kind of support and mentorship they need to ensure their ongoing success.

This year, World Tourism Day, which takes place on 27 September 2014, will be celebrated under the theme of "Tourism and Development in the Community". For us in South Africa this is certainly relevant as twenty years into our democracy, development of our communities, particularly disadvantaged ones, still remains an overarching priority.

The potential of tourism to develop communities is significant. Around the world people are increasingly searching for authentic experiences. Today's traveller is quite unlike the traveller of yesteryear that simply wanted to come to South Africa to experience a luxury safari, with minimal interaction with the local communities.

Increasingly, travellers across lifestyles want to come to South Africa and not only be wowed by our natural wonders, but want to engage with the communities in the areas they visit.

Voluntourism, where travellers are in some way involved in a community project while in South Africa, such as the building of a school, homestays and township tourism is one of the fastest growing niche travel areas in South Africa. This is excellent news for the ongoing development and growth of community based tourism initiatives and of cultural tourism.

As a country, we will be celebrating World Tourism Day on 27 September 2014 in Jo Fritz's home province of the Northern Cape, South Africa's biggest and least populated province.

This is one part of the country I have had the privilege to get to know quite well in the last few years. In my previous role as Science and Technology Minister, I spent a fair amount of time in the Karoo as it is the location of the Square Kilometre Array. This global science and engineering project to build the world's largest audio telescope is bringing leading scientists and engineers from around the world to this unique part of the country.

Hopefully many of them will take the opportunity to discover more of what the Northern Cape has to offer while they are there such as the Namaqualand National Park, world renowned for its incredible floral display each spring, the mighty Augrabies Waterfall and the expansive and awe-inspiring Kgalagadi Transfronteir Park, to name but a few.

This province also boasts one of South Africa's World Heritage Sites, the Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape. This area, which is home the highest levels of diversity for any arid ecosystem in the world, was declared a World Heritage Site in 2007.

The Department of Tourism has recently completed an assessment of the tourism needs of all of our eight World Heritage Sites. As a starting point, over the next two years we will be funding interpretive signage at the Richtersveld Site, as well as at Mapungubwe, uKhlahlamba Drakensberg and the Baviaanskloof in the Cape Floral Region.

In closing, I would like to emphasise my commitment to ensure that the tourism industry continues to grow and thrive. It is through working together that this industry has come so far in transforming our country into a better place for all our people.

I thank you.

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**Issued by Ministry of Tourism**