



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Speech delivered by the Deputy Minister of Tourism  
International Tourist Guide Day Celebrations gala dinner**

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It is wonderful for me to be here with you tonight at this majestic world heritage site – the cradle of humankind. I cannot think of a more appropriate place to re-affirm our “Africanness.” I quote Raymond Suttner and Jeremy Cronin in their book, “50 Years of the Freedom Charter”, published by UNISA PRESS in 2006. “The Freedom Charter was not only a political event, it was a major cultural milestone. The Freedom Charter recognises both the desire for unity and the rich, cultural diversity of our country.”

We are entering a new era in our history and the sector at large. The fifth democratic parliament is under way and we celebrate twenty one years of democracy this year. We are currently crafting a new strategic plan for the next five years. We celebrate 60 years of the Freedom charter and 25 years since the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela.

We are here to celebrate International Tourist Guides Day – and we honour them as our ambassadors to the world. As the president mentioned in his State of the Nation Address last week, we need to ensure that we sell a positive message about South Africa which in turn will build a positive image. And that in turn will of course bring more tourists to our country and boost our economy. Yes, we need to become the biggest proponents of our brand in order to move South Africa forward. Let us counter the worry-mongers, sensationalists and doomsdayers by enthusing our own brand of positivity and show them what this country has to offer.

The theme for this year’s national event is “New Approaches to Interpreting Cultural and Natural Heritage”. The aim of the conference is to capacitate tourist guides on better approaches to interpret South African heritage and culture.

South Africa indeed has a strong and vibrant cultural diversity and this includes tangible and intangible culture and heritage tourism products in the form of the arts, crafts, festivals, indigenous knowledge systems, oral history, storytelling and folklore, heritage sites, natural heritage, to name but a few.

During most of the 20th century culture and heritage resources and tourism were viewed as largely separate aspects of destinations. Heritage resources were seen as part of the physical fabric (authenticity) of destinations, largely underpinning local identities or national identity. Tourism on the other hand was viewed largely as a leisure-related activity separate from everyday life and the culture of the local communities. From the 1980’s onwards culture and heritage tourism products became viewed as a major source of economic development for many destinations.

Therefore, a key objective of the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) are to ensure that newly developed niche tourism products are developed in order to grow the tourism industry in support of its global competitiveness. Heritage and cultural tourism is one of the important niche tourism products that have been identified in support of tourism growth.

According to the South African White Paper on Arts and Culture drafted by the Department of Arts and Culture (1996), heritage is the sum total of wildlife and scenic parks, sites of scientific and historical importance, national monuments, historic buildings, works of art, literature and music, oral traditions and museum collections and their documentation which provides the basis for a shared culture and creativity in the arts. Culture refers to a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional

features of society or a social group. It encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

One of the key elements of the domestic tourism strategy focuses on geographical spread and product development. Since the majority of the World Heritage Sites are located in less visited provinces, it also assists the NDT with the implementation of the domestic tourism strategy.

The National Department of Tourism's (NDT) leadership and commitment to promote and professionalize tourist guiding in South Africa has played a major role in encouraging the celebration of the day in all provinces. Provincial registrars of tourist guides provide leadership in planning and celebration of the day through assistance from the provincial tourist guide associations.

The department has a number of key projects and initiatives in tourist guiding towards the implementation of the National Tourism Sector Strategy and the Tourism Act, 2014.

Formal agreements with stakeholders NDT successfully entered into agreements with CATHSSETA and the Field Guides Association in Southern Africa (FGASA) during 2013 which was aimed at prioritising tourist guide training and development throughout South Africa and to strengthen relationships with tourist guiding associations respectively. During the course of the 2014/2015, NDT continued engagements with these respective organisations particularly with regards to the qualification development process which is still in progress. The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) had appointed CATHSSETA to facilitate the curriculum development process together with industry bodies and subject matter experts.

During the course of the year, further collaborations took place with the South African Police Services (SAPS) who has a significant role to play in the tourist guide legislation in terms of registering cases of illegal guiding. They recently facilitated a capacity building session for Provincial Registrars on the Criminal Procedure Act and the process of laying charges. The NDT has also formed important relationships with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) on issues pertaining to the new qualification development process and their role in the Tourism Act, 2014 in terms of determining the competencies for tourist guides as well as SANParks on issues pertaining to law enforcement within national parks and other guiding matters.

One of the most important developments which took place last year was the promulgation of the new Tourism Act, 2014 on 16 June 2014. The new Tourism Act repealed both the Tourism Act of 1993 and the Tourism Second Amendment Act, 2000. It is important to note that the Regulations for Tourist Guides which were promulgated in 1994 and 2001 respectively will only be repealed once new Regulations are passed, a process which is currently underway.

The process to review the current regulations with respect of tourist guiding will involve wide consultations with tourist guides and key stakeholders throughout the country with the aim of improving the existing processes and systems to register tourist guides and ensure compliance within the sector.

The NDT hosts quarterly Registrars' workshops which are attended by the National and Provincial Registrars, registration officials from all nine provinces as well as NDT officials. The quarterly workshops provide a platform for exchanging views and experiences in the tourist guiding sector. Provincial Registrars provide provincial reports on the achievements and challenges experienced in the Tourist Guiding sector in each quarter.

The following statistics are based on the data submitted by provinces on a monthly as well as on a quarterly basis: Registration figures grew by 12.26% over the past five (5) years from 8 657 in the 2009/10 financial year to 11 078 at the end of 2013/14 financial year. Since the promulgation of the Tourism Amendment Act in 2000, the participation of Black tourist guides (i.e comprising Africans, Coloureds and Indians) grew from less than 10% in 2000 to just over 30% in 2010 which represents a growth of over 20% in a ten (10) year period. The number of female tourist guides also grew in the past few years from 2 937 tourist guides registered in the 2009/10 financial year to 3 574 registered during 2013/14 financial year which represent the growth of 9.78%.

During last year, the tourist guiding category was incorporated into the Lilizela Tourism Awards for the first time. The aim of this category was to give recognition to tourist guides that have excelled in their profession. This category was also put in place to create awareness about the value and the importance of the tourist guiding sector.

It is pleasing to note that in its first year of running, the tourist guiding category was amongst the top three (3) categories in terms of the high numbers of nominations received. The nominations that were received went through an extensive shortlisting and adjudication process both provincially and nationally. The national winners were announced during the national Lilizela Tourism Awards event in October where Mr Isaiah Banda from the Limpopo province received an award for the Best Nature Guide and Mr Rob Caskie from KwaZulu-Natal was chosen as the Best Culture Guide.

The past few days were very constructive. The discussions and deliberations during the event are aimed at addressing the challenges facing the sector. The department is committed in resolving some of these key challenges:

- to encourage tourist guides to adhere to the Tourism Act, 2014, respect and adhere to the Code of Conduct and Ethics in order to contribute to the professionalisation of the sector and playing a part in curbing illegal guiding activities; and
- to emphasise that the NDT will strive to ensure continuous implementation of the National Development Plan, the Strategy to Professionalise Tourist Guiding and the National Tourism Sector Strategy by growing tourism in South Africa and improving service standards within the sector.

South Africa is indeed well known for its diverse range of tourism products but at the heart of its value offering, are its people. We use culture as a unifying guide and to give expression to what makes us uniquely South African. Let us embrace it.

I wish you well for the rest of the celebrations.

I thank you.

**Natasha N Rockman**

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