



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Deputy Minister's Welcome speech at WTM Africa Trade Show

15 April 2015

Programme Director

Executive Mayor of Cape Town, Cllr Patricia De Lille

CEO of Cape Town Tourism, Mr Enver Duminy

Director of Cape Point, Mr Brett Hendricks

CEO of Thebe Services Division & Board Member of Thebe Reed Exhibitions, Mr Jerry Mabena

Chief Executive of Reed Exhibitions, Mr Richard Mortimore

Managing Director – Thebe Reed Exhibitions, Ms Carol Weaving

Ladies and Gentlemen

Theme: The role of partnerships in growing the tourism sector in South Africa

It is an honour for me to join you today at the second World Travel Market Africa Exhibition and I would like to extend a very warm South African welcome to you all.

Cape Town, your host city for this event, is known around the world for its two iconic locations – Table Mountain and Robben Island. These attractions are symbols of two elements that make South Africa and the African continent a prime tourism destination with abundant natural beauty, and diverse heritage and culture.

As a destination, we offer a compelling sales pitch, and I am sure that you will learn more during the next three days about Destination Africa that will convince you of what we have to offer. These products and services range from mainstream tourist attractions such as the 120 World Heritage Sites in Africa, to our excellent business tourism and conferencing facilities, and the more niche products such as adventure tourism.

As government, we play a crucial part in creating an environment that is conducive for businesses to flourish. Our mandate can be most effectively carried out by creating robust partnerships between government and business. We continue to work in partnership with product and service owners in the tourism sector to find ways in which we can strengthen the quality of our destination offering, and the ease with which you can conduct business.

However, at the end of the day for us as government the growth of business and the economy remains about the lasting gains that we can make for the future prosperity of our people. Tourism has a massive potential to transform lives.

In order for this to happen, we prioritise a focus on sustainability in every element of our work in government. Short term profits cannot create long term change and transformation.

We look to you as owners of tourism products and services to base your business decisions on the principles of good corporate citizenship, in equal amounts as what you prioritise profitability. If you are looking to a sustainable future, you cannot have one without the other.

This good corporate citizenship speaks to conserving our natural resources, to protecting our environment, and to benefitting our communities.

This exhibition, and all the other platforms of this nature, provides the kind of access to markets that is essential for us to continue growing. However, it is also important when you are signing your deals to think about the benefits that your business can bring to the communities where these tourism products and services are located. Platforms such as these offer a business to business networking opportunity that goes a long way towards strengthening our tourism brand.

Destination marketing alone would prove futile without opportunities such as this where buyers and product owners can conduct transactions and close deals. It is in this space that public private partnerships play an important role, and we appreciate all platforms that create such interaction.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation has reported that in 2014 the global tourism sector grew by 4.7% compared to 2013. They also project a further growth of 3 to 4% in 2015. This growth is being experienced in a challenging environment that has seen overall global economic growth of only 2.6%. On the African continent, this tourism growth trend is also visible with growth of 2% in tourist arrivals. This shows that more people are discovering the potential of this continent for travel.

I wish you many productive and profitable engagements during your stay here, and urge you to take every opportunity you have during the next three days to learn more about our offerings, and to help bring us more visitors, because in doing so you will be playing a critical role in the transformation of our people.

I thank you.