



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa. Tel. (+27 12) 444 6780, Fax (+27 12) 444 7027
Private Bag X9154, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa. Tel. (+27 21) 469 5800, Fax: (+27 21) 465 3216

**Deputy Minister Elizabeth Thabethe – National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) 2017,
Bloemfontein**

28 September 2017

Programme Director allow me to pass my tourism greetings to the following:-

Honourable Deputy Minister Manamela

MEC for DESTEA Mr Malakwane

Executive Mayor of City of Mangaung

Acting CEO of CATHSETTA Mr Sabelo Silinga

Acting CEO of Free State Gambling, Liquor & Tourism Agency Mr Kenny Dichabe

Representatives of Hilton Group and Southern Sun

Representatives of the South African Chefs Association

Representatives of the Global Travel and Tourism Partnership South Africa (GTTPSA).

NDT, DBE, DESTEA, Provinces and Municipal Officials

Our important guests, the learners and their Educators from provinces

September is an important month for the tourism sector in South Africa and the world. The celebration of the Tourism Month through an event such as the National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) makes September such an important month in the tourism sector calendar. The 28th to the 30th of September 2017 will see the tourism industry hosting its ninth (9) NTCE since the inaugural expo held in KwaZulu Natal in 2008.

All learners at grade 09 – 12, FET and University Student, Unemployed Graduates will be attending the Expo to see what the industry has to offer in Tourism and hospitality career, entrepreneurial and job opportunities.

The NTCE this year is hosted on the back drop of a number of exciting developments both at national and provincial level particularly in the Free State Province. This is the year where the National Department of Tourism has its departmental strategic plan implemented for a renewed approach in tourism service delivery for sustainable growth and development. It is also a year where we are finalising the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) review with industry stakeholders so as to effect a turn around and accelerate tourism growth in the country for an inclusive tourism economy. The Tourism Act is also subjected to some amendments which should lead to a sharper transformative legal instruments for the industry. Coming closer to the NTCE is the Tourism Human Resource Development Strategy (THRDS) and Skills Audit Review process which was completed in March 2017. The THRDS as revised will certainly guide us on how should we move forward with this premier tourism education and training event. Already preliminary emerging issues indicate that the NTCE platform represents a key space for THRD engagement across the diverse interest groups. However it would appear that its potential value is not maximised through full utilisation of the platform.

The Free State NTCE version is happening at the cross roads of the tourism landscape being changed for the better. It is happening at the time when potential value of the platform NTCE must be maximised. It is a challenge to the NTCE 2017, in its third and final round in Bloemfontein, which requires an improvement from lessons learnt from last year to be seen and visible. Therefore it should be better and bigger than last year and end with a **BANG!** Its effects should be felt on the ground, with beneficiaries feeling its presence. The immediate realisable benefits of the Free State NTCE 2015 – 2017 held in Bloemfontein version are as follows:

- Mega event / project management experience by the provincial officials, +9000 learners passing through the exhibition in 3 days.
- Partnership management experience by all partners involved particularly NDT, DESTEA and CATHSSETA including FSGLTA

- Accommodation establishments in the city both big and small over the three year period, were able to gain in terms of revenue.
- Transport sector both air and road modes during the preparatory processes and the actual hosting of the event. Black transport SMME (Bus and taxi owners) benefit most during the actual hosting of the event as they transport learners from the different parts of the province and the country in general.
- Catering SMME companies benefit during the preparatory monthly meetings held by partners and they also benefit during the actual event to cater for all participants (9000 expected this year) including learners.
- The exposure the province gets marketing wise, is enormous as all regions / districts and country provinces descend to Bloemfontein during preparations and the actual event. The host city Bloemfontein becomes the ultimate marketing beneficiary in this regard not forgetting that when people travel through the province to the host city they pass other towns and cities which become known to those who did not know them before. This a marketing exposure the NTCE presents to the province.

The Free State NTCE 2017 is also riding on a wave of the Tourism Month festivities hosted by this province. NTCE in its own objective and right as a tourism event, contributes to the promotion of tourism in the context of tourism month activities as it promotes tourism as a career and profession of choice. In this regard we expect about 9000 learners within these 3 days, from all over the country to descend to the heart of this land, Bloemfontein in the Free State and interact with industry players as their potential employers. They will exhibit their company products selling themselves as employers of choice. A much more improved Hospitality Corner led by the Hilton Hotel Worldwide Group is expected this year. A vibrant Chefs Corners managed by the South African Chefs Association (SACA) will happen as usual. Cook off competitions will take place with learners as professional chefs will be demonstrating to young people what cheffing is all about.

I am also told that other provinces are here with increased numbers of learners this year. They are upbeat and ready to square up in the competitions that learners will face each other on at the NTCE 2017. I am also encouraged to hear that educators view the NTCE learner competitions in a very serious light for learners, such that they said it would be difficult to attend if these competitions were to be discontinued. This tells of the developmental impact the NTCE competitions have on learners. The platform can however be further improved and elevated to higher NTCE level such that it receives the necessary focus and attention it deserves.

The Youth Business Zone (YBZ) is improved this year than last year in terms of quality of participants and their contributions with business ideas. The two pilot idea owners from the Eastern Cape Province that were assisted financially by NTCE Partners through the SABS as their coach and mentor. The two YBZ beneficiaries from the Eastern Cape are part of the NTCE 2012 – 2014 Legacy Project for the province who were supported until they are independently operational. The Free State Province is also expected to produce its own NTCE young entrepreneurs through the YBZ platform from this year. This year the NDT's Enterprise Development unit is joining in this platform to assess and consider possible support that the department can lend to this noble initiative from an enterprise development perspective working closely with the SABS and other possible partners.

The Virtual Classroom and Recruitment Arena platform will come in as a stronger version this year having learnt from last year's lessons. Young people will be exposed to existing vacancies in the sector and apply for them online on the spot. They will also be coached and guided on how to handle job interviews in case they are called for interviews. Personal grooming and confidence building are part of the coaching sessions to be held. It is overall aimed at empowering young people with knowledge and skill to better understand themselves properly brand themselves in order to properly sell themselves when looking for a job during interviews. Industry stakeholders are urged to source their internship and learnership candidates as well offer their company bursaries to young people and educators at the NTCE 2017. Their profiles will be published as part of the NTCE platform if they do so.

The aeroplane simulator from South African Airways (SAA) is expected to be on display again this year. It was a compelling attraction last year. Everybody, not only learners, even people passing by the street would come in just to see how an aeroplane looks like inside. This platform does not only show the aircraft but has professionals that work inside the aircraft who then tell learners about professional careers that exist in the aviation industry and what it takes to be such professionals e.g. pilots, hostesses, technicians, etc.

Educators do have their own NTCE feast through the educators seminars coordinated by a partnership led by Umalusi with Global Travel and Tourism Partnership South Africa (GTTPSA) and the Department of Basic Education (DBE). We have Industry speakers who will present on different topics. This year we also have Travelport to present at the seminars talking about the Global Distribution Systems in tourism. They are also a sponsor of the Best Tourism Teacher Awards since its inception. The GTTPSA will also present the outcome of its national schools competitions and the Travelport Best Tourism Teacher Awards 2017 which I will be announcing tomorrow evening at the NTCE Gala Dinner.

The NTCE 2017 is really going to assume its true character of being a "melting pot" where all tourism education and training stakeholders meet, engage and interact on issues of demand and supply of skills in the sector. It is expected to live up to its slogan that says "NTCE is not just a paper grabbing platform, but an interactive

exercise". It is not like any other careers expo, as it brings all elements of Tourism Human Resources Development on board. It is the biggest education and training event in tourism.

There is also another initiative that the Department is coordinating with South African Schools Football Association (SASFA) and the Free State Province which is called the Coca Cola Premier Tournament on the 30 September 2017. All nine provinces will be represented by their respective football teams and converge in Mangaung for the finals of this competition. We as tourism have enhanced the experience of the youth by adding on to their itinerary tours to places of cultural and heritage significance thereby adding value to the SASFA program. They will be visiting amongst other places a city tour, township tour, the planetarium and the Mandela statue at Naval Hill.

We are looking forward to the NTCE 2017. We are further looking forward for all of you to actively participate in this event in order to make it a success. We all look forward for successful NTCE here at Pereng e Tshwewu, Mangaung, Ha Singangata.

I wish to declare the NTCE 2017 officially opened.

I thank you.