tourism
Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM SUPPORTS ONE YOUNG WORLD SUMMIT AS A CATALYST FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND TOURISM GROWTH

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The Department of Tourism welcomes and supports the hosting of the One Young World Summit 2026 in Cape Town, recognising the global gathering as an important platform to advance youth leadership, foster international collaboration and create meaningful opportunities for young South Africans to participate in the tourism economy.

Hosted at the Cape Town International Convention Centre from 3 to 6 November 2026, the Summit brought together more than 2,000 young leaders from over 190 countries, alongside business leaders, social entrepreneurs, innovators and changemakers committed to addressing some of the world's most pressing challenges.

The gathering further reinforces South Africa's position as a leading destination for international conferences and events, while showcasing the country's hospitality, cultural diversity, innovation and capacity to host major global gatherings.

For the Department, the Summit's significance extends beyond its international profile and immediate economic contribution. It presents an opportunity to translate the benefits of hosting a major international event into practical opportunities for youth development, enterprise participation and long-term economic inclusion.

Creating opportunities for young South Africans

As part of its support for initiatives associated with the Summit, the Department has prioritised opportunities that connect young South Africans to careers in tourism, hospitality and the events industry.

This includes support for the Tourism Youth Career and Industry Exposure initiative, designed to introduce approximately 300 unemployed young people to career opportunities across the tourism and events value chain.

Through engagement with industry professionals and potential employers, participants were exposed to opportunities in hospitality, event management, logistics, production, guest services and related industries. The initiative also aimed to provide practical career guidance, workplace-readiness insights and information on employment, internships and learnership opportunities.

The Department also welcomes the proposed One Young World Event Leaders Academy, a legacy initiative aimed at equipping 3,000 young South Africans with practical skills, professional credentials and access to industry networks.

The Academy's emphasis on employability and linking skills development to real opportunities aligns with the Department's commitment to building a capable and inclusive tourism

workforce. The One Young World Leaders Academy is also working with Harambee and Yes4Youth to recruit unemployed youth.

Showcasing South African enterprise and hospitality

The Department's support also extends to creating opportunities for tourism micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to participate in Summit-related activities.

Through the Tourism Business Dinner initiative, emerging South African food enterprises can showcase the country's rich culinary heritage, hospitality and entrepreneurial talent to an international audience.

Beyond showcasing authentic South African flavours, such initiatives create opportunities for local enterprises to access markets, establish business networks and gain valuable exposure to potential future customers and partners.

Local enterprises' participation in international events shows how tourism can support economic activity across a broad value chain, from hospitality and catering to transport, events, cultural experiences and local suppliers.

Building a lasting tourism legacy

The Department's support for the Summit is aligned with the objectives of the Tourism Growth Partnership Plan (TGPP), which positions tourism as a priority sector for economic growth, job creation and greater economic inclusion.

A key priority is ensuring young South Africans have the skills and opportunities to participate meaningfully in a growing tourism economy.

The Department believes that the success of major international events should be measured not only by the number of delegates they attract or the international exposure they generate, but also by the lasting opportunities they create for local communities, businesses and young people.

By connecting international platforms with skills development, enterprise opportunities and industry exposure, South Africa can maximise the wider economic and social benefits of its thriving business events sector.

The One Young World Summit provides a valuable opportunity to demonstrate tourism's power to connect people, inspire innovation, and contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable future.

The Department of Tourism remains committed to working with industry and strategic partners to ensure that tourism continues to open doors for young people, support emerging enterprises, and create opportunities that extend well beyond the conclusion of major international events.

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