



**DEPUTY MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Speech to the National Assembly
By Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela, MP**

**Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, Cape Town
Tourism Budget Vote 38**

18 May 2021

Honourable House Chairperson
Minister of Tourism, Honourable Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane
Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Tourism, Honourable Supra Mahumapelo
Chairperson of the Select Committee on Trade & Industry, Economic Development, Small Business
Development, Tourism and Employment & Labour
Members of Parliament
Board Members of South African Tourism
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen
The media
The public connecting with us over our digital platforms

As we deliver this Budget Vote, we know the path that we have travelled to get here and are, confident and proud of our collective resilience and determined on our new path to recovery. We, therefore, undertake to grow the tourism sector that will contribute towards creating more inclusive and transformed South Africa.

Our strategy for this year is anchored around commitments as espoused in the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan and the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan as alluded to by the Minister.

One Plan – For Tourism Development at a Local Level

Honourable Members, we are proceeding with our efforts to strengthen the local government infrastructure and service to grow tourism and accelerate service delivery through the District Development Model.

Prioritised initiatives from our tourism spatial masterplans will be integrated into the *One Plans* for the districts of OR Tambo, eThekweni Metro, Pixley Ka Seme and Namakwa.

TOWARDS A SAFE RETURN TO A FLOURISHING TOURISM ECONOMY

Honourable members, collaboration and commitment are what is left for us. The main objective of the recovery plan is to ultimately resume and catapult tourism operations to the pre-Covid-19 level, and in an inherently safe way.

As we rethink the grading regime for our products and services, we cannot take a break from assuring the quality of our current offering, particularly for new and emerging entrants.

To this end, South African Tourism is piloting a Basic Quality Verification Programme targeting homestays. This will not only ensure quality assured products for new entrants but also create job opportunities for quality assurers.

To inspire and rebuild traveller confidence and to enable safe travel and we will be training 225 SMMEs nationally, on norms and standards for safe tourism operations.

We will continue to enhance our visitor experience, while seeking to advance broader ownership and participation especially by historically disadvantaged communities.

WE ARE RE-SETTING THE STAGE FOR EVENTS

Because of the mass gathering limitations and the measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19, we have witnessed an increase in the hosting of virtual and hybrid conferences thereby impacting the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) sector - in simpler terms, less travel and lesser bookings.

Honourable members

Events stimulate the desirable use and human experiences that technology cannot recreate and will remain the winning chip for the recovery of domestic tourism.

Indeed, as we look into the near and long term for bidding and hosting major events, we will continue supporting small and medium size events to drive domestic tourism through meaningful partnerships.

INVESTING IN OUR YOUTH

2020 has been difficult for our young people who were looking forward to enrolling and participating in our various skills programmes.

Even though some programmes could be delivered online, we had to temporarily suspend training, and many employers could not take any placements in their establishments.

Oliver Reginald Tambo once said: *"The children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future."*

To this end, our youth programmes in Food Safety Quality Assurer, Chefs training, Wine Service Training Programme (Sommelier) and Hospitality will continue this year.

The benefits of these programmes remain economic relief through stipends; placement in tourism establishments for exposure and experience and accreditation ranging from NQF level 2 to NQF level 4

In addition to continuing with our Educators Development Programme, we are happy to announce that this year we will host a revitalised National Tourism Careers Expo, after cancelling it in 2020.

We will soon be calling for ideas from industry, the training sector and learners themselves on how best they can participate and partner with us in this event.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM REMAINS CRITICAL

As we reopen our sector anew, we must do that in a responsible way, fully committed to the sustainability pillars of people, planet and prosperity.

By this we mean that our investments and the way we do business must be socially inclusive, the ecological footprint, minimum whilst the economic spinoffs are beneficial to communities and to the greater national good.

Our Green Tourism Incentive Programme remains our demonstration of our commitment to being a steward for the environment.

This year, as we continue to implement this programme, we will make it bigger and better.

Importantly, in this current era of Covid-19, responsible tourism means zealously implementing to the norms and standards for safe tourism operations.

A CAPABLE ORGANISATION

Honourable members, the things that we need to do can only be done if we have the right people in place.

It is indeed imperative that ours is an organisation of employees of only the highest dedication to the service of the people of South Africa.

We will implement initiatives to promote integrity and ethical conduct, and strengthen systems to detect, control and eliminate any opposite to these values.

The Public Service has the regulatory frameworks and the operational tools for financial disclosures, acceptance and disposals of gifts, management of financial interest, anti-corruption and the Public Service Code of Conduct amongst others.

Ours will be to continue to implement them to the letter - today, the Minister and myself give you this assurance.

IN CONCLUSION, WE ARE CONFIDENT OF OUR FUTURE AND PROUD OF PAST

This year, and on this Africa Month as we celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Mme Charlotte Maxeke, the colossus of the African people, we call upon our musicians, our sculptors, poets and film makers and our brand ambassadors to immortalise her by sharing the powerful stories of our country– her country.

We challenge our chefs to make recipes and cookbooks in her honour, and winemakers to mix blends to leave an everlasting taste of her legacy. We look forward to supporting such initiatives, when you knock on our doors.

Honourable Members

The road to recovery will have to be transformative, because we can't solve problems the same way they were created.

We have to decisively change the face of our tourism industry and not simply return the tourism sector to where it was before the pandemic. This means, our task is not only to build back better, but also to build forward different.

Transformation is not only a fundamental obligation enshrined in our Constitution. It is also imperative if our tourism is to benefit the creativity, talent, energy and skills of all South Africans.

To bring about this change, we need a radical programme of action that is restorative, that builds and that is transformative.

Let me conclude by quoting an African proverb: "When a needle falls into a deep well, many people will look into the well, but few will be ready to go down after it."

Let us all remain steadfast in our collective resolve to strive towards the recovery of the sector.

I thank you.