



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Speech by Deputy Minister Fish Mahlalela on the occasion of the SMME Campaign Workshop, Nutting House Lodge, Mbombela

30 April 2021

**Programme Director
MEC of Economic Development and Tourism in Mpumalanga
Executive Mayors
MMCs present here
Chairperson of the MTPA Board
Our Tourism Trade Small Businesses
Members of the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good Morning

Today is a proud moment for all of us in the Tourism Industry.

Hosting a workshop of this nature is a significant moment for the Ministry and the Tourism industry.

Upskilling and empowering the future stars of the Tourism industry is a key focus area for the department.

As SMME's in various stages of your journey, we want to equip and ensure that you have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of tourism sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on all industries, with tourism the most impacted due to the severe restrictions that were placed on local and international travel.

The lockdown that started at the end of March 2020 forced many small businesses in the South African tourism industry to close, with many more on the brink of collapse.

And while travel is now permitted in a safe and responsible manner there is still a long journey ahead to not only rebuild the industry, but to also reshape it.

To better understand the way forward post COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to understand that it isn't about moving forward at all.

It's about expanding in all directions, connecting all corners, and drawing all tourism elements and products together in a cohesive, robust and sustainable way.

One that leverages every endeavour and enterprise for a singular vision of growth.

It is with this in mind that we have designed the SMME Workshop framework with the approach that is restorative and regenerative by design, where economic activity builds and rebuilds overall system health for all, side to side, bottom to top, round and round.

The SMME Workshops are a significant part of the drive to structurally transform our economy, rebuild the tourism sector and assist tourism trade partners to reopen post COVID-19.

As part of the Travel with Purpose Campaign, we have rolled out these workshops across all nine provinces.

This morning's workshop is the final series of workshops and we are saving the best for last.

I implore you to make the most of this opportunity as we have curated a program that will assist you in developing and growing your business.

The workshops, in partnership with the "I am an entrepreneur" initiative, will discuss smart strategies and critical components of SMME growth in the digital era.

You will gain insight into the latest trends and opportunities, and network with other partners that could accelerate their businesses.

Having looked at the day's program, I believe that we have an excellent program lined up for you. From Andile Khumalo's sales masterclass, to insights from Google to learning how load your deals on the Sho't Left deals dashboard, there is certainly lots to gain from today.

With the June School holidays fast approaching this presents a unique opportunity for Tourism SMME's to gear yourselves up and get ready to attract as many patrons as possible to your businesses.

I hope that the learnings you take from this workshop will go a long way to ensuring the success and growth of your businesses.

I also urge you to visit the department's website, www.tourism.gov.za and read up on all our programs where you too can potentially get involved.

All the best for the rest of the day and thank you for taking time out to be a part of this session and empowering yourself with knowledge so that you can improve in all facets of your business.

We salute you for the resilience you have shown during these challenging times. Thank you for playing your part in ensuring the tourism industry remains functioning and allowing visitors to experience the wonderful sights, sounds and activities of this amazing country.

I leave you this morning with the inspiring words of a wonderful Black American woman who continues to inspire humankind even on her peaceful eternal sleep,

Maya Angelou:

She once said; "You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them...my mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive, and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style...resilience doesn't have to stop at making it through the day to day grind with a little less trouble. Once you free up mental and physical energy, the question is: What wonderful things are you going to do next?"

"...you can see in others what they don't see in themselves and what the world doesn't see in them. We all have that possibility, that potential and that promise of seeing beyond the seeming"

I thank You!!