



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
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Deputy Minister Thabethe pilots the OR Tambo Youth Exchange Programme

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In a partnership between the Department of Tourism, OR Tambo District Municipality and Ekurhuleni Metro, Tourism Deputy Minister Elizabeth Thabethe launched the inaugural OR Tambo Youth Exchange Programme at the OR Tambo Cultural Precinct in Gauteng today.

The exchange programme allowed two hundred learners from OR Tambo District Municipality to visit Gauteng attractions, including the OR Tambo Cultural Precinct, with the same number from Ekurhuleni visiting the birthplace of OR Tambo in Mbizana Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape.

“Government has declared 2017 the Year of OR Tambo and as such we named this programme after Oliver Tambo a renowned leader who travelled around many parts of the world mobilising societies to fight the injustices of the apartheid government. This programme allows school children to explore and learn more about Oliver Tambo with the aim of fostering future tourism ambassadors and travellers, who can sustain our history, heritage and legacy of OR Tambo as well as South Africa,” said Thabethe.

The Deputy Minister also urged the stakeholders to work towards greater inclusivity and transformation through practical programmes like the OR Tambo Youth Exchange Programme.

“The majority of the previously disadvantaged communities cannot afford to travel due to financial constraints and unavailability of packages for social tourism. It is based on this background that there is a need to promote social tourism objectives through awareness and educational trips for schools in order to promote the benefits of social tourism products and social cohesion,” the Deputy Minister

The learners were delighted to be part of the programme as many of them never travelled as tourists before. They explored and learned more about the history of Oliver Tambo, shared their experiences and vowed to do more social tourism.

Social tourism speaks to programmes, events, and activities that enable all population groups – and particularly youth, families, retirees, individuals with modest incomes, and individuals with restricted physical capacity – to enjoy tourism, while also attending to the quality of relations between visitors and host.

This Department of Tourism initiative seeks to address the gaps identified in the Domestic Tourism Growth Strategy, which are among others seasonality and uneven geographic spread.

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