



MINISTRY
TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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SPEECH BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM, MAGGIE SOTYU

OPENING CEREMONY OF THE NATIONAL TOURISM CAREER EXPO (NTCE) AT THE PETER MOKABA STADIUM IN POLOKWANE – LIMPOPO PROVINCE

It is truly an honour to be here at the prestigious National Tourism Career Expo, an event that brings together passionate and innovative young minds and professionals in one of the most dynamic industries in the country.

Ladies and gentlemen, today is all about exploring future opportunities, broadening horizons, and understanding that the sky is the limit. This is also an opportunity to let your minds travel and see how you can shape your future in this vibrant field. Tourism is more than travel to new places around the world, it is a sector that bridges cultures and contributes to the growth of our economy.

The Department of Tourism, the Culture Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education Training Authority (CATHSSETA) and the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET), the City of Polokwane and the provincial marketing agency - the Limpopo Tourism Authority (LTA) have collaborated to bring this initiative to life. This provides an important opportunity and platform for our future leaders to interact and explore spaces where they can make a difference.

You may ask, why Tourism? The tourism sector is one of the fastest growing sectors, not only nationally, but globally, and continues to adapt to new trends positioning it as a core economic driver. To optimally capitalise on this revival of tourism, we need an inclusive and transformative approach to ensure that all, in particular the youth, women and persons with disabilities enjoy the benefits of the successes of the sector.

As government, specifically the department our approach is to assist people to upskill and future-proof themselves in this changing work environment to make an impact in elevating poverty, unemployment and inequality. Allow me to re-emphasise what we stated in the Tourism Budget Speech regarding the Youth Skills Development Programmes:

- Over 1900 youth benefited from the Youth Skills Development Programmes
- 276 SMMEs in Tourism were trained on occupational health and safety norms and standards for safe tourism operations

- In 2023, 50 Chefs were enrolled in a Recognition of Prior Learning process to obtain a professional qualification in the Western Cape and Kwa-Zulu-Natal provinces
- For this financial year, the Department has planned to train 450 unemployed youth in various skills development programmes from a committed budget of twelve million rand and 2300 Tourism Monitors with a budget of hundred and forty million rand through EPWP funding.

Programme Director,

I highlighted this to give an indication of the commitment of the sector with regards to contributing to development of skills. It is important that we continue working with our partners to identify essential and demand-led skills that are required in the sector.

Governments and businesses are being urged to address global skills gaps and decrease youth unemployment. It is evident that there is a disconnect between requirements and education and training systems

Our partner in this project, CATHSSETA, introduces young people to its accredited educational programmes that contribute to improved service levels and assure sustainability in the sector.

The reason why the NTCE is so important, is to promote tourism as a career, and a business of choice. It focusses on learners from high schools, students from TVET colleges and universities, youth and unemployed tourism graduates.

Ladies and gentlemen, Programme Director,

The NTCE is a platform where the tourism industry can assist people to discover new experiences and get exposure to the opportunities available currently and in the future.

As a young person, you may ask, where to from here? First step is to educate yourself about the diverse opportunities in the tourism industry. Explore where your interest is and get exposure to the kinds of skills that are required to work in and grow in your area of interest. The NTCE 2024, today offers you an opportunity to get the exposure you need and educate yourselves. The country needs young people to grow their skills base, and more importantly become entrepreneurs who innovate new approaches, adopt and set new trends. The sector needs young people who are committed to the growth of the sector and its potential to create jobs and grow our economy. Passion is key to career growth in this sector; whether it is about culture or nature, history or travel and working with people, passion will help your career to flourish.

At NTCE 2024, we celebrate 30 years of our democracy, and the theme "*Tourism and Peace - 30 years of connecting people, places and cultures*", reminds us of how far we have come in changing the landscape of our country. Today we can offer visitors modern cosmopolitan infrastructure coupled with unique cultural and heritage experiences.

Ladies and gentleman, I encourage you today, to learn as much as you can, think big and grasp the opportunities that government and its partners make available to you, so that you become the leaders that help take the growth of the sector to a far more advanced level and exponentially increase the growth of this sector.

ENDS

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