

Speech by South Africa's Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms Tokozile Xasa at the opening of the South Africa Pavilion's Tourism and Culture Month at the Shanghai World 2010 EXPO, 02 September 2010

Master of ceremony, Deputy Minister of the Shanghai EXPO Zone C; Mr Qiu, Consul General of the Republic of Malawi in Shanghai, Mr Salama, Tourism Trade and Media Professionals present, Honourable guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

During the period 11 June – 11 July 2010, South Africa, and in particular nine of its cities were home to the nations of the world as we hosted the memorable 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup. The cities were Johannesburg which is the financial capital, in Gauteng Province that hosted the opening and the final matches, Bloemfontein the Judicial Capital of South Africa located in the Free State Province, Cape Town the Legislative Capital located in the Western Cape, Durban in KwaZulu Natal Province, Mbombela in Mpumalanga Province, Nelson Mandela Metro named after the first democratically elected President located in Eastern Cape Province, Polokwane in the Limpopo Province and Pretoria the Capital City also located in the Gauteng Province. Around the world, the event attracted a cumulative viewership of 32 billion people. This was a great opportunity for the peoples of the world to get a taste of the South Africa.

The EXPO provides a golden opportunity for the peoples of the world to get closer to the real taste of South Africa. However, there is no substitute for a visit to South Africa, and its cosmopolitan cities. At the EXPO, visitors will be treated to amongst others, uniquely South African finest wines, food, history, culture, music, attractions, experiences and world class infrastructure, but most importantly, South Africa is the cradle of human kind, and thus, it is home to all of humanity. This makes it the must visit place in the world, at least once in a life time. The most distinguishing feature of our cities, are the people, South Africans, a people united in diversity are a warm, loving and a welcoming nation. We believe this is the most essential ingredient for every better city and better life.

Cities are generally becoming universal in nature, with greater levels of predictability on what to expect as a tourist from one city to another across the globe, yet, every city is unique in all respects. This is particularly so as cities tend to have character, culture, heritage and own defining experiences. In South Africa, one can give an example of Kimberly, which started with the discovery of diamonds in 1867, which attracted people from across the world in search of riches. This city today has the largest man-made hole in the world and is home to some of the best and finest diamonds in the world. Now, people come from all over the world to witness this incredible man-made phenomenon and to catch a glimpse of the best diamonds in the world. That defines Kimberly, and I believe that we shall be seeing an increase in the number of visitors from China in particular to this specific area.

During the EXPO, South African diamond companies will share information on how one can enjoy a “shinning journey to South Africa”. We want to ensure that as you plan your journey, you have access to all the relevant information. On the other hand, Johannesburg, a mega city, our business hub boasting the OR Tambo International Airport, our gateway to the rest of the African continent, which started with the discovery of gold in 1886, is globally known for its contribution in the fight against apartheid, its diversity and sophistication. It is home to people from all across the world. It has high-speed train, largest airport in Africa, World class hotels (that cater for different market segments and are a common feature across South African cities); one of the largest townships in the world; SOWETO which also boasts the Vilakazi Street, the only street in the world where two Nobel peace prize Laureates lived side by side. These are the former President Nelson Mandela; whom we all affectionately know as Madiba, internationally recognized and after whom the United Nations declared the 18 July, his birthday as International Mandela Day. On which day peoples of the world selflessly contribute 67 minutes of their time to the betterment of humanity and Arch Bishop emeritus Desmond Tutu. Today, SOWETO has become a global icon and offers tourists experiences beyond imagination.

People from all over the world came to Johannesburg in search of gold, but today, this city has become the financial capital of Africa and people come from across the world to do business with Africa and to experience the uniqueness of

the city's heritage and the hospitality of South Africa. The history of cities in South Africa date back to more than 1000 years ago, when Mapungubwe Kingdom was already trading in gold with China. This also signifies our relationship with China, which was further strengthened through the signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement by President Zuma and President Hu Jintao during the state visit last week.

The world famous Cape Town, a west coast city with its own international airport, which started in the 1400 as a transit hub for traders between the east and the west is well known for its finest selection of wines, finest cuisine that has its influence from Asia (Malaysia), Europe (Holland) and Africa. It is also home to the Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in quest for freedom. This is also a where the India ocean meets the Atlantic Ocean.

On the East Coast, the city of Durban is well known as home to some of the world's cleanest and warmest blue flag beaches. It uniquely offers all year round warm beach swimming, with the finest hospitality infrastructure and diversity of cultures influenced by Asian (Indian) and African origins. It is part of the famous Zulu Kingdom and was home to Mahatma Gandhi the founding father of India for many years.

During the EXPO, we will ensure that tour travel operators have the necessary information about destination South Africa, to ensure that they are in a position to better inform and sell packages to consumers for the destination. Of the 54 million outbound travelers from China, South Africa currently receives 54 000. We believe that there is unlimited growth potential in the Chinese market.

We are also of the view that the sustainability of our cities can only be guaranteed through equitable development of our rural communities. This calls for effective, cooperative partnerships between the city dwellers and the surrounding rural communities. We believe that tourism will remain one of the instrumental economic sectors in the quest to build better cities and better lives.

I would like to extend to you an invitation to come and experience our country.

“Wozani!!!! Namkelekile!!!”

Thank you

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