



Media Statement

G20 TOURISM WORKING GROUP MEETING AGREES ON FOUR PRIORITIES FOR 2025

5 March 2025

South Africa hosted a successful first G20 Tourism Working Group meeting virtually from the Head Office of the Department of International Relations and Co-operation (DIRCO) today.

The Director General of the South African Department of Tourism, Mister Nkhumeleni Victor Vele chaired the first Tourism Working Group meeting which was attended by senior officials and experts in the tourism sector of the G20 countries, invited guest countries and international organisations. Delegates deliberated on and agreed to work on four priorities for the year, namely:

1. People-Centered Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Innovation to enhance Travel and Tourism Start-Ups and SMMEs;
2. Tourism Financing and Investment to Enhance Equality and Promote Sustainable Development;
3. Air Connectivity for Seamless Travel, and
4. Enhanced Resilience for Inclusive, Sustainable Tourism Development.

The meeting was the first of a series of engagements that will take place throughout the year, ahead of the G20 Tourism Ministers' Meeting in September 2025.

Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille welcomed the delegates through a video-recorded message. She said: "South Africa is excited to welcome all G20 delegates, member states and organisations to our beautiful country and proud to host the G20 for the first time on





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African soil. As you convene during the first Tourism Working Group, I implore on all delegates to focus on how we can use tourism to change people's lives, communities and the world."

The Tourism Working Group will exchange knowledge and best practices among the member countries with a view of crafting actionable deliverables.

The Tourism Working Group is among the 16 working groups of the G20 during South Africa's Presidency focusing on solidarity, equality and sustainability. As the first African country to preside over the G20 presidency, South Africa is utilising its term to drive a developmental agenda to benefit the African continent.

Going forward, the following G20 Tourism Meetings are planned in South Africa:

- 2nd G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting – from 11 till 13 May 2025, KwaZulu Natal Province
- 3rd G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting – from 10 till 11 September 2025, Mpumalanga Province
- G20 Tourism Ministers' Meeting – on 12 September 2025, Mpumalanga Province

The G20 economies represent around 85% of the global gross domestic product (GDP), over 75% of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population. In 2023, the G20 welcomed 69% of all international tourists and accounted for 71% of tourism exports worldwide. In 2023 Tourism Direct GDP reached 3.1% of the G20 economies.

Tourism plays a critical role in the global economy and is one of the vital economic sectors contributing significantly to socio-economic development, but it remains vulnerable to natural and manmade hazards. For many countries, the tourism economy is growing faster than most other economic sectors. With its extensive value chain and labour absorption capacity, it is acknowledged as a tool for inclusive economic development, playing a significant role in responding to socioeconomic challenges.

Tourism is an important economic sector in Africa. In 2023 the continent's, Tourism direct gross domestic product reached 85 US billion representing 3.5% of the region's GDP. This value is still below the pre-pandemic US billion 94 reached in 2019 (4.3% share).



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The challenges facing the African travel and tourism sector include air connectivity, limited investments, financing for tourism development, positioning and marketing, social and environmental sustainability, as well as safety and security amongst others.

South Africa's tourism priorities for the 2025 G20 Presidency are aligned with the continental priorities as expressed in Agenda 2063 as well as with the core objectives contained in the *UN Tourism Agenda for Africa – Tourism for Inclusive Growth*, the strategic roadmap guiding the promotion of sustainable tourism development across the African continent.

This meeting also appreciated South Africa's intention to build on the efforts and successes of the last three G20 Presidencies of the Global South and to champion Africa's developmental agenda.

Ends/

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