



tourism

Department:
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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NDT celebrates International Tourist Guide Day

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The National Department of Tourism (NDT) joined the world in celebrating this year's International Tourist Guide Day, under the theme, ***"Tourist guiding in the 21st Century"***. Taking place in Kimberley in the Northern Cape, the celebrations sought to create awareness about tourist guiding. It also provided a platform for the recognition of tourist guides who have excelled in their profession.

Celebrated annually on the February 21, this day was first introduced by the World Federation of Tourist Guide Association in 1990, where 15 countries participated. Twenty three (23) years later, this day is celebrated by tourist guides in more than 75 countries. On his opening remarks NDT's Deputy Director-General for Policy and Knowledge Services and National Registrar for Tourist Guides, Victor Tharage defined the Northern Cape as the historical province for tourism. He further suggested the use of social media as a platform for tourist guiding as it is an advanced and easily accessible medium. Tharage also emphasized the need for the tourist guide industry to be formally acknowledged as a profession.

"Tourist guiding can be done through Tour Operators where one becomes employed as a tourist guide or as a freelancer and becomes his or her own manager. Tourist guides should receive training through Culture, Arts, Tourism Hospitality, Sport Sector and Education Training Authority, CATHSSETA", he said.

Tourist guides were encouraged to adhere to the Tourism Act of 1993, and contribute to the professionalization of the sector.

The two-day programme was structured through panel discussions about challenges and opportunities faced by Tourist guides in the country. A gala dinner hosted by the Deputy Minister of NDT, in conjunction Northern Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism MEC Mr. John Block was held as part of the celebrations.

In her key note address, Deputy Minister Thokizile Xasa pointed out the complex environment in which tourist guides operate and how it requires that they keep up with developments around them to remain competitive and relevant.

"As you do this, you must remain authentic and true to your profession. We believe that technological advancements should be taken up to enhance opportunities. I would also like to see more and more guides taking up the opportunities presented by cooperatives and work with tour operators to enhance market access. Working together between the established and emerging enterprises will be one of the most critical ingredients for the success and transformation of the tourism sector," The Deputy Minister concluded.

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