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KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, PATRICIA DE LILLE, AT THE HANDOVER OF THE AGULHAS PRECINCT DEVELOPMENT IN THE AGULHAS NATIONAL PARK ON 14 APRIL 2026.

Today, we gather at a place of profound meaning, the southernmost tip of the African continent, where two oceans meet and where history, nature and identity converge. Minister

It is here, at Cape Agulhas National Park, that we are proud to launch and hand over to the community this R82 million infrastructure project.

But first, I want to express my sincere gratitude to all our partners who made today possible.

To South African National Parks, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, the contractors and community members, thank you for your hard work and dedication.

Two years ago, in March 2024, I stood here when this was still just a construction site.

And today, we see what your hands and imagination have delivered for the local community and tourists who will soon be flocking to this town.

This project has created 117 local employment opportunities and supported 9 local SMMEs. A clear demonstration of how tourism infrastructure contributes directly to job creation and enterprise development.

This is what is possible through collaboration. Whether it is partnerships between government and the private sector, or cooperation across government.

The launch of this project follows another successful partnership between SANParks and the Department of Tourism. In June last year, we launched the Kgodumodumo Dinosaur Interpretation Centre, where the world's oldest dinosaur embryo was discovered.

Nearly 200 million years old, the real Jurassic, right here in South Africa, at the Golden Gate Highlands National Park in the Free State. Since that launch, over 88 000 people have visited the centre.

And we wish similar success to Cape Agulhas National Park and the broader Overberg region.

In the State of the Nation Address in February, President Cyril Ramaphosa instructed us to *“promote unique cultural, historical and natural attractions of our country.”*

At the core of this commitment is diversifying our tourism offerings beyond Table Mountain and traditional safari experiences.

Last year, a record-breaking 10.5 million international visitors to South Africa in 2025 demonstrated strong confidence in our offering. Confidence that is also reflected in private sector investment, particularly in tourism infrastructure.

At the recent South African Investment Conference, the country secured a record R890 billion in investment pledges. Of the R415 billion in private investment pledges, 75.9% is local South African capital.

This signals a fundamental shift from the investment strike that had plagued the country for years.

And today, we are demonstrating that government-led investment is also in full swing. But investment is not only about bricks and mortar, it is also about maintenance and recovery when disaster strikes.

Following the devastating floods that hit Mpumalanga and Limpopo earlier this year, the Department of Tourism allocated R56.3 million through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) to support mop-up operations across both public and private tourism facilities, including the Kruger National Park. This intervention was about protecting livelihoods and ensuring that tourism businesses can continue to operate and grow. It is about investing in our people and restoring pride.

Standing here today, at the southernmost tip of Africa, we are reminded that South Africa is more than just a destination; it is an experience.

With a 60-seater restaurant, an interpretation centre, visitor facilities, improved access infrastructure and essential services, we are building a destination that is accessible, inclusive and ready to welcome more visitors from across South Africa and the world.

This project is a direct expression of the Cabinet-approved Tourism Growth Partnership Plan, particularly our focus on tourism product development, job creation and coordinated destination marketing.

Cape Agulhas is not just a national asset with unique biodiversity and cultural heritage, but it is also a global landmark. Behind us stands the 178-year-old Cape Agulhas Lighthouse, the second-oldest working lighthouse in South Africa.

As the Overberg District Development Champion, I encourage everyone to place the Agulhas Lighthouse Precinct firmly on their bucket list.

To our brothers and sisters across the continent — from Cape to Cairo, Morocco to Madagascar — come and experience what it feels like to stand at the southernmost tip of your continent. From east to west, this is where the warm Indian Ocean meets the cold Atlantic Ocean, embracing our beautiful continent.

And perhaps this is why coexistence comes so naturally to us, as reflected in our Government of National Unity, which stands as a testament to a shared future.

Baie Dankie

THE END

For streaming links, images, videos and further information please scan the QR Code and join the Tourism Department's National Multimedia WhatsApp Group.



Media Queries:

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