



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Keynote address by Tourism Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane at the 4th Annual Mbombela Jazz Festival Charity Gala Dinner, Mpumalanga

21 November 2020

MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism MR PAT NGOMANE
MMC For sports, Speaker & Chief Whip of Bushbuckridge Local Municipality
MTPA Board Chairperson, Thulani Ndzima and members of the board
HOD of Mpumalanga Department of finance, Economic development and Tourism Mr Mtsweni
CEO MTPA
SANParks CEO Mr Mfundisile Mketeni
Deputy Chairperson of BBBEE COUNCIL and CEO of Thebe investments MR JERRY MABENA
CEO of Sabie Sands Wildtuin, Mr Oscar Mthimkhulu
CEO OF NW Tourism Authority
Chairperson and members of the Portfolio committee in Mpumalanga legislature
Judge Mali, Mpumalanga high court
Acting Judge of Mpumalanga high court, Judge Mudau
Mr Dzong from South Korea embassy
Business leaders and CEOs who in attendance
Members of the media
Ladies and gentlemen

Good evening

A measure of a successful leadership of society is how well those who are in leadership contribute to the alleviation of the plight of those who are less fortunate. When I say leaders and leadership I am not limiting these notions to political leaders and political leadership. Leaders are found in every sphere of society and each in their own sphere of influence have huge role to play in ensuring progress in our society and that we become a more equal and a just society.

As minister of tourism I have been traveling across the country interacting with communities and business leaders in the tourism sector as part of the work on tourism recovery after the COVID 19 devastation of the sector. What I have noticed is that tourism is rooted in communities and it's making a huge contribution to rural economies. However, there is a skills gap in rural communities that often impedes the participation of the rural people in these very exciting businesses that are emerging. So a question often arises as what is it that we need to do to ensure that businesses maximize their impact in rural communities in which they operate? And inversely, what is it that we need to do to ensure that it is the people within which these businesses operate that operate these businesses?

The answer to these questions is a complex one but I believe that the fundamental issue that we first need to focus on is education. I say this because historically we have seen how the provision of quality education to citizens can fundamentally transform a society. A recent great example of this is the Chinese

society. China before the 1978 reforms was wandering in the wilderness with an economy that no one would have imagined that it would be the great country that it is today. The great Chinese leader and reformer Deng Xiaoping identified education reforms as the most fundamental element for creating a modern prosperous Chinese society. He ensured that the Chinese education system was comparable to the best in the world and in a few years the results are there for all to see. China today is the second largest economy in the world if not the largest.

It is for this reason that I was excited to participate in today's event when I heard that the proceeds of this fundraising event will go towards education. Often when we stand before our countrymen we talk about the notion of creating a better life for all. Since our democratic breakthrough we have been striving towards creating a better life and we have done a great many things towards achieving this vision. But all of us know that much more still needs to be done.

I think a fundamental element of creating a better life for all is the notion of encouraging and equipping our people to be their own liberators. We must strive as a leadership of this country in all spheres of society to provide our people especially, young people, with the necessary tools to make a success of themselves in today's world. Again I must emphasize that the only way that people themselves can be their own liberators is through education.

One of the business visits I made today was to Selati Train Restaurant. While I was there I met Andrew Atkinson one of South Africa's well-respected chefs who walked me through his kitchen full of young people from the local community who are under his training. In fact the restaurant is largely manned by local young people who are being trained on the various aspects of the tourism value chain. I am not mentioning this visit because Jerry is here and he is going to make a generous pledge, but because this is a success story that demonstrates what education and skills training can fundamentally change people's lives. I started thinking about how many families have been saved from poverty just by getting all those young people who before August did not have any form of employment and are now earning a living.

I am simply making a case for why today's event and your generosity can fundamentally change a child's life, family circumstances, and the fortunes of a community and the economy of our country. The pledges that I know you are going to make tonight are going to go towards providing the tools necessary for a young person to navigate the modern world and become successful.

I want to thank you in advance for the generous donations that you are going to make tonight. Let us make it possible for the kids and the young people in our country to get the tools to be their own liberators. The two schools that are going to be the recipients of your generous donations are a site in which the great leaders, judges, chefs, engineers and CEOs of major institutions are being molded. Let us make it possible for this young people to fulfill their aspirations

I thank you