



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MR FISH MAHLALELA, DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM AT THE OUTREACH PROGRAMME WITH DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY IN EAST AFRICA REGION, NAIROBI IN KENYA ON 22 NOVEMBER 2023

Programme Director

High Commissioner, M J Mahlangu in SA High Commission in Nairobi, Kenya

Ambassador ETL Kumsha, SA Embassy Eretria

Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners on line;

Ms Nombulelo Khumalo, Acting Chief Executive Officer, South African Tourism

Ms Elizabeth Mpye, Acting Deputy Director-General, Civil Aviation, Department of Transport

Senior Officials from the South African Government;

Members of the diplomatic core;

Media Houses

Ladies and gentlemen

Let me from the onset express warm greetings from the people and the government of the Republic of South Africa and also appreciate this special occasion to address you while geopolitics complexities are threatening the global peace and we hope with the strengthening and transforming of world multilateral bodies we can bring back hope for peace.

We meet here in Nairobi to focus on the tourism recovery following the disastrous Covid19 pandemic that left some of the tourism business in dire straits.

In 2021 and 2022, as government, we started engaging with the diplomatic communities in Africa, Middle East, Asia and American regions with the aim of sharing information and discussing the challenges as well as the interventions for the country

to regain its position as the destination of choice for the travelers from all corners of the world.

In our midst, we have the Senior Official from the Department of Transport in RSA to share with us the plans on transport sector recovery as well as the airlines and all other transport mode that were affected.

The report by the International Transport Association (IATA) gives us a glimmer of hope in that the total passenger traffic in August 2023 (measured in revenue passenger kilometers) rose by 28.4% compared to August 2022. It further indicates that the global traffic is now at 95.7% of pre-Covid levels.

Our focus today is to discuss and share information, experiences and opportunities that will drive the interest of the travelers from the continent particularly from the East African market to visit South Africa.

This Outreach Programme serves as a platform to exchange ideas and discussing frankly the challenges facing the tourism sector that needs intervention from the government through the support of our Missions and Embassies.

Investments Opportunities

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman, we therefore require your assistance as the mandate of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) is to work for the realisation of SA's foreign policy objectives through coordinating and aligning SA's international relations abroad in line with the Economic Diplomacy Strategic Framework (EDSF).

The South African Diplomatic Missions are critical players in marketing and branding our country in order to reinvigorate the South African brand for investment attraction, export marketing and tourism promotion globally.

The EDSF identifies the role of Diplomatic Missions and how they could support SA's business sector in exploring new market opportunities. Economic initiatives in this context consist of, but not limited to, the contribution to the fields of economic growth,

trade relations, national investment, tourism, skills development and cultural exchange.

Programme Director, we have indicated in different platforms, including at the Roundtable Discussion on the attractiveness of South Africa as a destination for Hospitality Investment on the sidelines of the ITB Berlin in March this year. The same observation was made in Uganda a couple of weeks ago during the South Africa/Uganda Business Forum, that our Country has an extensive infrastructure for destination marketing, namely:

- We have our official Destination Marketing Organisation, the South African Tourism, which is also supported by an extensive network of both provincial and municipal chapters,
- We have extensive network of diplomatic missions, for example, the South African Mission here in Nairobi. In fact, we have a representation across the East Africa Community (EAC) with an estimated population of 170 million.
- We have Brand South Africa, which is a custodian of our country's brand.
- South African National Parks (SANParks)
- Airports Company South Africa, to name just a few.

The same infrastructure can also be utilized for our investment promotion efforts, therefore, companies that are planning to invest in South Africa and decide to setup their headquarters in South Africa have an access to all these services and infrastructure, which would give them a competitive advantage.

CAPACITY BUILDING

We are busy implementing tourism capacity building programmes meant to strengthen skills and human resource base in the tourism industry.

This is in response to the Tourism Sector Human Resources Development (TSHRD) Strategy which prioritizes the promotion of professions among specific occupations in the tourism industry by means of establishing Centres of Excellence for the Tourism Sector in partnership with relevant stakeholders towards advancing the promotion of professionalism in the industry.

The implementation of capacity building initiatives supports the sector's developmental objectives to achieve the following:

- equip learners with required skills to meet industry needs and demands,

- provide the industry with skilled personnel,
- provide opportunity for business to recoup capital loss as a result of Covid 19, and
- address job losses.

In that regard, we are implementing the following capacity building initiatives;

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Chefs, the main objective of the Programme is to enroll learners through the RPL process to obtain a Chef qualification at an NQF Level 5 and professional designation levels.

The **Educator Development Programme** is a platform where educators in provinces and within the district municipalities are equipped with practical knowledge to teach in the hospitality and tourism sectors.

The other programme is **Occupational Health and Safety on Norms and Standards** which aims to train Small Medium Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) on the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), norms and standards for safe operation across the tourism value chain to enable safe travel and rebuild traveller confidence.

The department also have **Rural Tourism Capacity Building Programme** whose main purpose is to provide an integrated approach on the capacity building for the public sector, private sector and community members within the selected municipalities.

Work Integrated Learning for Tourism Sector this programme is meant to orientate students in terms of the tourism, hospitality and conservation sectors, to advocate for placement of unemployed graduates in the sector for them to acquire the necessary skills and relevant practical work experience, support students with disabilities.

Coastal Marine Tourism Skills Audit 2019 and Implementation Plan, the Coastal Marine Tourism (CMT) is part of the Presidential Operation Phakisa Ocean Economy programme for the exploration of and to maximise the uptake of economic opportunities in existence at the untapped wealth sitting in sea waters that can alleviate poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Development of the Professionalisation Framework the Department of Tourism initiated a process of developing the Professionalization Strategy Framework for the

Tourism Sector, to achieve professionalization of the tourism sector whilst promoting the establishment of professional bodies.

EMPOWERING WOMEN, YOUTH AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

During the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 financial years, the department achieved training and placement of 2802 unemployed and retrenched youth from the targeted 2500 on the following Skills Development Training Programmes:

- Professional Cookery: targeting 300 unemployed youth
- Food Safety Quality Assures targeting 750 unemployed youth
- Wine Service Training: targeting 502 unemployed youth.
- Food Beverage Service: targeting 1000
- Hospitality Youth Training (Fast Food Services): targeting 250 unemployed youth

We also implemented an **Executive Development Programme** (EDP) for Women in Tourism, is pitched at an NQF level 8. The main objective of the Programme is to train black female managers, through a recognized South African Business School, to prepare them for the executive or board positions in the tourism sector.

National Tourism Career Expo, Provincial Tourism Career Expos: The Programme targets tourism high school learners from grades 10 to 12, TVET colleges and university students, out of school youth, unemployed graduates and educators and lectures. To promote tourism as a career, profession and business of choice

Your Excellencies, I may not emphasize more that most countries of the world, including developed and developing countries have ventured into promoting and supporting the development of tourism to transform and diversify their economies from mainly traditional agricultural economies to the services sector.

As such, tourism plays a very important role to enhance macro-economic goals through positive contribution to economic growth, creation of employment opportunities, and supporting sustainable livelihoods.

Tourism is largely seen as an export industry due to its ability to generate foreign exchange earnings. Furthermore, income from tourism indirectly increases the

demand for factors of production and consequently its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

TOURISM PERFORMANCE

- Most of the top ten overseas key markets for South Africa during 2020 were in the top 50 list of countries with regards to the number of COVID-19 cases (August 2021 WHO data).
- Passenger movement (Arrivals and Departures) went down during the period January – July 2021 compared to the same period in 2020.
- Income from accommodation was down by -20,8% during the period January to June 2021 compared to the same period in 2020.
- Slight improvement in occupancy rates for accommodation establishments during Jan-June 2021 (23,7%) compared to Jan-June 2020 (20,1%).
- Food and beverages industry recorded a decline in income of 41,6% during the period Jan-June 2021 compared to the same period in 2020.
- Employment in tourism industries decreased by -9,8% during Jan-Mar 2021 compared to the same period last year.

The Stats SA recently issued the report that reflect that income from accommodation increased by 89,5% in the three months ended August 2022 compared with the three months ended August 2021. The main contributors to this increase were hotels (157,7% and contributing 56,5 percentage points); and 'other' accommodation (53,2% and contributing 28,6 percentage points).

The Tourist accommodation survey is a monthly survey covering a sample of public and private enterprises involved in the short-stay accommodation industry in South Africa. The results of such surveys are used to compile estimates of the tourism satellite accounts (TSA) and the gross domestic product (GDP) and its components, which are used to develop and monitor government policy.

These statistics are also used in the analysis of comparative business and industry performance. The scope of the survey covers the following tax registered private and public enterprises that are mainly engaged in providing short-stay commercial accommodation, and those are:

- Hotels, motels, botels and Inns;
- Caravan parks and camping sites;

- Guest-houses and guest-farms; and
- “Other” accommodation.

TOURISTS ARRIVALS

The reason why we have to host the Outreach Programme in Kenya is because, we see the need to review and prioritize the East African region markets noting that it is the two countries that are strategic in terms of air transit hubs and expat markets, meaning Nairobi in Kenya and Addis Ababa in Ethiopia.

Though the top ten source markets in Africa are dominated by SADC countries, Kenya is amongst those top ten source markets for the period January - December 2023 compared to January- December 2022.

All top ten African source markets remained in the same position except Kenya, which improved its 11th position in 2022 to position 10 in 2023 by replacing Tanzania. All top ten countries recorded a positive growth, with Kenya showing the highest increase of 100,5% followed by Zimbabwe (+89,3%) and Eswatini (78,5%).

We recognized that DIRCO and the Missions play a critical role in charting a course to overcome the challenges arising from conflicts in the region to support efforts by SA Tourism to market to all travellers.

The diplomatic support is required in providing an organised seamless service and specific effort to align our products and experiences in such a way that it is easily accessible to the East African market. This is possible because South Africa has the majority of products and experiences required that are appealing to the travellers in Africa.

SAFETY ISSUES

The Department of Tourism has established a National Tourism Safety Forum which comprises of both public and private sector organizations including the South African Police Services. There are also non-tourism organization like Business Against Crime etc. The main objective of the forum is to have a coordinated approach in the management of issues related to tourist safety. Through the forum, the National Tourism Safety strategy was developed in 2018 focusing on three major themes;

Proactive measure: This pillar focuses on addressing issues that can minimize the potential of incidences that adversely impact on tourist safety. It is about putting in place mechanisms to ensure that tourists (both domestic and international) feel safe even before arriving at the destination.

Responsive measures: The second pillar focuses on measures or processes that will be followed once an incident has occurred. This is about stakeholder coordination and communication in terms of messaging and protocols to follow.

After Care Programme: The third theme focuses on measures or processes that will be put in place once an incident has occurred. Key to this theme is the establishment of the “Victim Support Programme”.

The Department has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the South African Police Services (SAPS) on collaboration towards the prevention, investigation and combating of crimes impacting on the tourism industry and the safety and well-being of tourists.

CONCLUSION

Your Excellencies, this session allows us to engage each other robustly so that we can jointly re-ignite the demand for travel and tourism positioning South Africa as the destination of choice within the region through your support.

The Acting Chief Executive Officer: South Africa Tourism will in their presentations focus on the specific recovery mechanisms, programmes and plans as well as sharing the challenges that the tourism industry has gone through and what the way forward is now.

I THANK YOU