



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Keynote address on World Tourism Day delivered by Minister Tokozile Xasa
at Kanyamazane Stadium, Nelspruit in Mpumalanga**

27 September 2017

Programme Director,
Honourable Elizabeth Thabethe, Deputy Minister of Tourism
Honourable Sikhumbuzo Kholwane, MEC of Economic Development and Tourism, Mpumalanga
Honourable Desbo Mohono, MEC of Tourism, North West Provincial Government
Honourable Members of the South African Parliament and the Mpumalanga Legislature
Executive Mayor of Mbombela Municipality, Councillor S.P. Mathonsi,
MMCs in Mpumalanga's District Municipalities
Mr Victor Tharage, Director-General of the National Department of Tourism,
Mr Sisa Ntshona, Chief Executive Officer of South African Tourism,
Mr Muzi Mkhize, Head of Department of Economic Development and Tourism, Mpumalanga Province,
Mr Thulani Nzima, Chairperson of the Mpumalanga Tourism Board
Government officials at local, provincial and national levels
Members of the tourism industry
Members of local and international Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my absolute pleasure and of course an honour to be in your midst today in this beautiful province of Mpumalanga as we continue to celebrate Tourism Month. Continuously tourism month in South Africa is celebrated together with Heritage month, whose theme is the celebration of OR Tambo. We congratulate Mama Esther Mahlangu who has been an icon of celebration as part of preservation of our cultures and integrating us with the world. In future we wish to integrate these two, Heritage and Culture under one theme. As we have gathered here today as part of the celebration of world tourism day and month, under the theme "*Sustainable Tourism – a tool for development*", a theme which has been adopted by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation as the focal point towards celebrating the 2017 WORLD TOURISM DAY (WTD) AND Tourism month as declared by South Africa. The official international WTD celebrations will be hosted in Doha, Qatar and this day is celebrated annually, on the 27th September. Incidentally, this year's instalment takes place during the international year of tourism development, as declared by the UN General Assembly.

The purpose of WTD is to support changes in policy, business practices and tourism consumer behaviour, towards a more sustainable tourism sector, which can contribute aggressively towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). During world tourism day, different countries and cultures celebrate a multiplicity of region-based activities, whether it's the promotion of special tariffs and/or broadening access to facilities, through mass-based free access to parks, gardens and including various engagements with our stakeholders, such as the celebrations we are having today.

As will our international counterparts, South Africa, through the Department of Tourism and its subsidiaries, is hosting a number of intra-Provincial events to celebrate Tourism Month, as a vehicle for promoting local tourism, by highlighting the economic benefits of a touring nation, while cultivating the culture of travel. The provincial celebrations will be in observance of and will align with the international theme, of the UNWTO 2017 World Tourism Day, i.e. "*Sustainable Tourism – a tool for development*", the localised theme for Tourism Month, "*We do Tourism Sustainably through our economic, environmental and social business practices and initiatives*".

Critically, this year's national celebrations take place in Mpumalanga, largely because of the Province's drive to aggressively promote tourism, through sustainable tourism packages and opportunities, which ultimately contribute towards the national tourism footprint. This includes the positioning of

Mpumalanga for International as well as domestic travel. In the past year, the 3 top most visited provinces by international tourist were Gauteng- 4.3 million visitors, Western Cape- 1.5 m and Limpopo – 1.4 million. The domestic figures puts Limpopo at the lead with 8.3m followed by Gauteng at 4.4. million and KZN at 4.2 million.

There is no reason why Mpumalanga should not be at the top of the visited destinations, as the home of the iconic and biggest African national park, Kruger National Park and world acclaimed icons such as Mam'Esther Mahlangu, our internationally acclaimed IsiNdebele painter. We are proud of the incredible works of uMama Mahlangu, a resident of Middleburg, Mpumalanga. Only last week in partnership with US Trade and through our South African Tourism office, we honoured her with a huge mural in New York. Mrs Mahlangu was also recognised by my Department last year as a recipient of the Ministerial Lilizela Awards.

On 26 July 2017, we held our official launch of Tourism Month in Dullstroom, Mpumalanga in anticipation of this big day today. It therefore, gives me great pleasure to wish all of you a happy Tourism Day!

Firstly, I want to thank the people of Mpumalanga for hosting Tourism Month this year. This event is a special day in our tourism calendar, and we are privileged to celebrate it in a place of such incredible natural and cultural beauty.

We are gathered here to have fun, but also to raise awareness about the importance of tourism in all our lives.

Our view is that the success of the tourism product will be determined largely by the level and extent of co-operation between governments, the private sectors and communities. I drew great inspiration from our recent engagements in various parts of the country we have been part of. Today we are here in the beautiful province of Mpumalanga.

This year, we celebrate Tourism Day under the theme *Sustainable Tourism – a Tool for Development*, which is in line with the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's (UNWTO) declaration that 2017 is *the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development*. These themes remind us of the role of tourism in contributing toward the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

In our usual South African, we have decided to extend our celebrations of World Tourism Day into a month-long affair so that we can showcase to local and international visitors the natural beauty and heritage of our country.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in all our provinces we boast some of the world's best natural and cultural attractions. The increasing numbers of international tourists who land on our shores gives testament to that fact. While we welcome these international tourist arrivals, we also want our own South Africans to enjoy the pleasures of our attractions by exploring their country and experiencing its beauty and attractions first hand, starting right here – in *this place where the sun rises*.

During his address at the opening of Africa's Travel Indaba 2017, President Zuma reminded us that "in this era of the fourth industrial revolution which may threaten traditional jobs, tourism's labour absorption capacity remains a great weapon against unemployment".

The President further contextualised the approach to radical economic transformation as a "programme that seeks to correct the painful history of our country where the black majority was excluded from meaningful participation, ownership and control of our economy". President Zuma also indicated that "for tourism we are looking at 30% black ownership", which is likely to improve domestic investment and therefore foreign direct investment into our economy.

Radical Economic Transformation reinforces the call made by World Economic Forum Africa that Africa's economies should consider diversifying from commodities to services such as tourism in light of the challenges facing traditional industries.

As the economy contracts and shows signs of being unable to sustain the Country's socio-economic conditions, South Africa (as a tourist destination known for safari and business tourism) faces the prospects of growing its transversal tourism sectors, in order to ensure that the massive economic potential is enabled, through the so-called traditional dominant tourism economic sectors, such as:

- Rural tourism;
- Medical tourism;
- Agro tourism;
- Cultural and heritage tourism;
- science and technology tourism

- Marine and coastal tourism
- Township tourism
- Community based tourism

In pursuit of our transformation agenda, we will be implementing our transformation plan, which was developed under the guidance of the Tourism Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Charter council. The plan includes but is not limited to:-

- Putting together a framework for maximizing empowerment of black people through concessions in state owned facilities;
- Partnerships to bring in existing black operators to serve as management companies for state owned facilities;
- Partnership with industry to scale up enterprise and supplier development;
- Effective use of state procurement levers in partnership with National Treasury to empower black suppliers of tourism products and services.
- Strengthening market access for black owned enterprises in terms of government driven marketing initiatives.
- Enhanced mechanisms for access to funding for new initiatives and expansion projects.
- Our ultimate goal is to participate in the black Industrialist programme

While we are on the matter of celebrations, I also want to wish all of you a happy Heritage Month. Last week, we saw many businesses and schools encouraging their people to celebrate the day by wearing colourful attire, share South African cuisine and entertainment. Our colourful art pieces and jewellery are a big draw for tourists who visit our country. That's why those of us who are in the tourism sector, always see a close linkage between tourism and heritage/culture.

That is because when people travel, they not only do it for fun, but also want to have diverse cultural experiences, see how other people live and appreciate other people's cultures and heritage. By so doing, we are then able to ensure the continuation and preservation of our diverse cultures and build peace toward one another.

Mpumalanga, as the host province for this year's Tourism Month celebrations, has done much throughout the year to develop and implement a full programme that showcases the province's diverse cultures, arts and natural heritage. To highlight just a few of these events:

- Joint Heritage Day celebrations were recently held by the provincial Department of Economic Development and Tourism together with the Department of Culture Sport and Recreation (DCSR) to showcase local art and culture.
- In October, a Senior Citizen Tour of the provincial parks will be held for residents of communities located adjacent to these parks as part of the Social Tourism activation. Provincial government will be joined by the Department of Tourism and Standard Bank in implementing this event.
- Today, we will see an industrial theatre event to showcase local talent while educating communities about tourism and the culture of travel.
- In December, as the celebrations draw to a close, the province will host its Second Annual Cultural Festival in partnership with DCSR.

In referring to just these few activities, it becomes apparent that we have much to celebrate and share with the world.

Ladies and Gentleman, at various times in our lives, we travel for fun, business or to attend to family matters. Many of us do not readily realise that the funds we use when we *Do Tourism* (as stated in our movement), we contribute toward our country's economic growth. In fact, some of these funds go into our government coffers to help create jobs and lift many people out of poverty.

That is why as a sector we must rally behind this year's sustainability theme because it highlights tourism's role and importance in contributing towards:

- Inclusive and sustainable economic growth;
- Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction;
- Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change;
- Cultural values, diversity and heritage; and
- Mutual understanding, peace and security.

Therefore, when we enjoy tourism attractions, let's do it responsibly – let's follow our Tourism Month slogan and *Do Tourism Sustainably*.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I want to draw your attention to the key messages we have adopted for Tourism Month this year. The message we have adopted, invite us to do the following:

- To take a journey to Mpumalanga and visit attractions such as the vast Blyde River Canyon, the mysterious Sidwala Caves and Mama Esther Mahlangu's world renowned Ndebele art.
- To recognise the strategic importance to government of sustainable tourism.
- To become tourists that only leave a positive footprint by only buying regional products to support local communities, jobs and economies. To join the We Do Tourism Sustainably national campaign for Tourism Month and make tourism everyone's business by supporting domestic tourism products, including those in township and rural sites.
- To recognise that tourism is critical for economic growth and job creation as the sector supports over 1.5 million jobs directly and indirectly in South Africa.
- To work together to make domestic tourism sustainable so that we build an inclusive, highly competitive and sustainable tourism sector that benefits all South Africans.

Ladies and Gentlemen, today's economic climate makes it difficult for many countries to advance their development goals. Tourism has however become a serious game changer for many economies, including our own. The UNWTO reported that last year, over 1,2 billion global travellers visited other countries for leisure or business. By 2030, the number of international travellers is expected to reach 1.8 billion! As South Africans, we want to have a significant slice of this pie.

It is against this backdrop that the national 5-in-5 strategic plan was developed to increase our country's global tourism market share. We intend to attract an additional 4 million and international tourists and 1 million more domestic holiday trips within the next 5 years. I am happy to announce that as at 6 months into the year, we are well on the way to reach this ambitious target. We want these international tourists to consider South Africa a must-see destination.

We know that the sector supported 702 824 direct jobs and over 1,5 million total jobs in 2015. By 2026, it is projected that the number of direct jobs created will reach 1 million vs over 2, 26 million total jobs that will be supported by the sector.

The numbers are on our side, ladies and gentlemen - only if we make the right interventions. These statistics tell us that many South Africans in urban and rural areas, youth and old, women and people with disabilities stand to benefit from the growth of the tourism sector. It therefore, becomes important for government, industry and communities to work together to grow the domestic tourism sector, as I will demonstrate below.

The Department's Rural Tourism Strategy identifies priority actions for implementation to help enhance tourism development and capacity building in rural nodes, such as the Bushbuckridge and Nkomazi Local Municipalities here in Mpumalanga. We want to empower communities, SMMEs, cooperatives and the traditional leadership in these areas.

The Department has already identified critical projects for capacity building. To name just a few - we have embarked on the following activities:

- The Bushbuckridge Local Tourism Organisation to help build the capacity of the Nkomazi Local Municipality;
- The Samora Machel Memorial to commemorate the death of President Machel and the 34 others who also died at the crash; .
- The Masoyi Tribal Area which operates the volunteer-run Masoyi Home Based Care programme for 1300 vulnerable youth. This project is notable as it welcomes tourists to visit and give support.

Mpumalanga is a melting pot of culture, art and historic and geological treasures. Visitors to the province are spoiled for choice when it comes to some of the world's best attractions that are located here. These include the Botshabelo Mission Station and Historical Village in which visitors can buy the rare Lantus Cycads; the Matsamo Cultural Park that offers local cuisine and entertainment by tour guides; the Wild about Whiskey tour at Dullstroom where visitors can enjoy whiskey tastings; the ancient rock art formations at the Nkomazi Game Reserve; and last but not least, the Mbombela Stadium, which was originally built for the 2010 Soccer World Cup, and now serves as a venue for local soccer and rugby matches. What I have listed are only but a few of the top attractions in Mpumalanga.

Other opportunities identified by the Department for the Mpumalanga area include the development of Liberation, Culture and Heritage routes that link South Africa to Mozambique and Swaziland.

Ladies and Gentlemen, for just a few minutes I want to address our young people to discuss tourism opportunities that are provided by the Department to benefit unemployed youth and women. The Department is training

unemployed youth-in-tourism in various professions within the Tourism and Hospitality sector. We want to supply skills to improve the competitiveness of the sector.

Our National Youth Chefs Training Programme is training our young people in Professional Cookery, to enable them to enter the hospitality industry. We are also inviting eager learners to join our Hospitality Youth Training Programme to acquire various skills within the Tourism and Hospitality. We currently have 350 learners from Mpumalanga who are registered under this programme.

Another opportunity is available *through our* Wine Service or Sommelier Training for youth who want employability within the Hospitality and Wine industry. This project is however available only in the Western Cape, Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

When tourists visit our establishment, we want to ensure their safety when they sample our cuisine. That is why we offer the Food Safety Training Programme to provide training in food safety quality assurance. 75 of the 500 participants in this programme are from Mpumalanga

Another exciting opportunity is in our Tourism Blue Flag Programme which trains young people to become beach stewards who improve tourism facilities and services in our 50 Blue Flag beaches across the provinces of KwaZulu Natal, Western Cape and Eastern Cape.

Our latest initiative is *Tourism Monitors* programme which will be piloted in Gauteng to train 200 beneficiaries in tourism safety awareness, among other tourism-related areas. The monitors will be placed in tourism attraction sites to enhance the tourism experience for tourists. This programme is anticipated to start later in 2017.

Staying with the theme of sustainable tourism, I also want to highlight another EPWP initiative undertaken to develop the Barberton Makhonjwa Geotrail which is located right here in Mpumalanga. This 38km self-drive exploration trail runs up the new tourism landmark, the Bulembu Pass, to Swaziland. The rock formations on the Barberton Mountains date back as far as 3.2 to 3.57 billion. Our youth have been involved in unearthing this important national heritage which forms part of “the history of our planet cast in stone.” We hope that this national treasure will be listed soon as a World Heritage Site.

Other initiatives include enterprise development (ED) programmes for tourism-related SMMEs, particularly those that are targeted at women and youth empowerment. Currently SMMEs contribute just over 10% in value to the tourism economy. Our ED programmes aim to increase the contribution of SMMEs by facilitating market access for them. We also support them by providing technological support so that they can access state procurement opportunities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Department is committed to ensuring transformation of the sector so that it benefits even more South Africans, particularly the poor and marginalised in townships and rural areas.

Our transformation initiatives include elevating the pillar of representation as the focus area for the next 5 years. We want women at decision making levels such as executive management and board directorships. The gazetted Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment code, has a set target of 30% for women participation for ownership, board representation and executive management. The campaign “30in5” will take this approach to the industry and mobilise for active transformation.

As a result of the slow pace of transformation in the country, during the 2017 state of the nation address, the President announced the new trajectory for the country - Radical Economic Transformation (RET).

In support of this radical approach, the Tourism B-BBEE Charter Council, in partnership with the Department, will host the transformation Summit on 30 and 31 October 2017 in Gauteng which will be attended by industry leaders and other players from large to small businesses to engage in dialogue and exchange views on how to radically transform the tourism sector and its value chain.

The Council is also finalising a new Baseline Study to establish the current state of transformation in the tourism sector. The results of the baseline study will be presented at the Transformation Summit.

The Summit will also provide an appropriate platform for a formal launch of the Tourism Transformation Fund – a partnership established with the National Empowerment Fund (NEF). The total monetary size for the TTF of R360 million over the 2017/18 to 2019/20 medium term expenditure framework (MTEF) period, will unlock investment for black investors in the tourism sector and produce viable community owned tourism projects.

Our partnership with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), will avail R142.5 million over the 2017/18 to 2019/20 medium term expenditure framework (MTEF) period. The Green Tourism Incentive Programme will assist private sector tourism enterprises to retrofit their facilities with renewable energy and energy efficient equipment.

I hope I have been able to share some of the work we are doing as a department to contribute towards the development of our economy and our people. More importantly, I hope I have demonstrated that there is a place in tourism for everyone who is eager, curious and able.

I want to once again thank our provincial host, the Mpumalanga Provincial Government, together with municipal partners and the people of Mpumalanga for hosting a successful World Tourism Month and confirming that we can *Do Tourism Sustainably*, not just in Mpumalanga, but also throughout our beautiful country.

I also want to take this occasion to congratulate the province of the Eastern Cape, that will be the next province to host Tourism Month in 2018. I wish the government, industry and people of the Eastern Cape much success in hosting next year's celebrations.

I thank you.