



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa. Tel. (+27 12) 444 6780, Fax (+27 12) 444 7027  
Private Bag X9154, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa. Tel. (+27 21) 469 5800, Fax: (+27 21) 465 3216

**Address by Minister Tokozile Xasa at the Inaugural National Traditional Leaders Indaba taking place on 29 May 2017 to 02 June 2017 at BirchwoodHotel, Gauteng.**

**29 May 2017**

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma,  
Your Majesties and Royal Highnesses,  
Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the National House of Traditional Leaders,  
Chairpersons and members of the Provincial Houses of Traditional Leaders,  
Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted and honoured to be part of the Inaugural National Traditional Leaders Indaba as it is critical for government and traditional leaders to work together to improve the lives of all South Africans especially those living in rural areas.

The National Development Plan recognises tourism as one of the main drivers of the country's economy and employment. Currently tourism is contributing to the economy by supporting over 1.5 million jobs in total and bringing in about 9% to our Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

To maintain this growth, our blueprint to achieve further growth of tourism, the National Tourism Sector Strategy, was reviewed last year. The draft strategy is currently out for public comments has as its foundation on inclusive and sustainable tourism growth.

Through implementation of the National Tourism Sector Strategy, we aim to achieve over 200% growth in our direct contribution to the 2015 GDP figure of R118 billion to R302 Billion by 2026. The indirect contribution to GDP will be just under a trillion rands at R941 billion from the 2015 figure of R375 billion. We will also add 300,000 more jobs to bring direct employment to one million from the 2015 figure of 700,000. This will increase the indirect employment to approximately 2,26 million.

These figures can bring real change in our country especially in rural areas. However, to make them reality, we call on every South African to play their part. President Jacob Zuma at the Tourism Indaba two weeks ago launched the "I DO TOURISM" campaign. It aims to remind every South African of the importance of the tourism industry and the role citizens can play as advocates for South Africa and for tourism.

Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, our traditional leaders,

The role of Traditional Leadership is critically important in supporting tourism development on Traditional Land and in particular in rural areas of South Africa. Without the support or buy-in from Traditional Leaders in these areas, tourism development will never succeed.

The role of your leadership in tourism development includes among others assisting with a coordinated approach to integrated land use planning and development; facilitating access to communal land for tourism purposes; the development of authentic cultural and heritage tourism products and the development of rural tourism precincts or nodes.

Traditional Leaders are the custodian of communal land with land ownership being a critical component for economic transformation. This asset provides communities with a strategic advantage for economic development, in particular tourism development.

Community owned land despite having different land uses can be compatible with tourism development. It is imperative that integrated land use planning takes place once Security of Tenure has been resolved in the case of restituted or redistributed land. This should be followed by the training for “new” owners in partnership with communities and Traditional Leaders. Tourism should also be seen as one of the possible land use options that can complement, rather than compete with, more traditional land uses like agriculture and cattle farming.

The transfer of communal land to communities is a cross cutting issue within the 3 spheres of government. The challenges associated with land which was already transferred are mainly due to the different spheres of government failing to fulfil their responsibilities, causing transferred land to often lie fallow whereas communities could be benefiting from the productive use of this land.

Most of the communal land is adjacent to game farms, both private and public. With proper Public-Private-Partnerships, these depressed areas can be resuscitated and communities can benefit meaningfully from mixed use of the land.

Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, our traditional leaders,

Tourism can provide a source of income in locations with few alternative economic opportunities. Some of the opportunities relate to the value chain in the tourism sector as tourism depends on other goods and services beyond just providing accommodation and transport.

Communities and local entrepreneurs should be encouraged and supported to develop supply chain opportunities among others in food production, such as vegetables; growing of flowers for hotels and lodges; establishing laundry services; developing culturally specific and unique crafts for retail at market places or use as décor at tourism establishments; development of community based tourism experiences which can be linked to a local tourism route; and training as tour guides and wonderful story tellers.

Opportunities also exist to develop rural community tourism destination or hubs which provide visitors with an established gateway to the various unique community experiences. A key tourism trend is providing authentic tourism experience. Many tourists request opportunities where they can become part of the daily routine of a community through homestay visits and interacting with the local culture through engagement with the community and even enjoyment of our traditional food. These are low hanging fruit and does not require any additional infrastructure or skills.

Programme Director,

We recently hosted the Local Government Tourism Conference with more than 700 national delegates under the themed; “*Tourism Planning is everybody’s Business*”. It emphasised that local government and traditional leaders are critical partners in driving tourism development. Moreover, tourism can assist municipalities and traditional leaders to attain development needs of communities and the use of local land for tourism purposes can greatly benefit local communities.

The conference also put great emphasis on integrated planning and ensuring long term sustainability for successful tourism development.

The Department remains committed to working with local government and Traditional Leadership to ensure the benefits from our tourism growth reach every corner of our country.

Currently, the Department has two projects; namely the Local Government Tourism Induction Programme and the Working for Tourism Programme in place which were designed to benefit local governments and their communities.

The first programme aims to provide an integrated approach for capacity building. It creates a platform for stakeholder engagement and information sharing for the public sector, private sector and communities focussing on rural municipalities.

The project prioritises spatial nodes that have a potential to stimulate tourism growth in rural areas. The approach utilised is in the form of workshops and site visits to projects that can be used as case studies for lessons learnt and improvement.

The beneficiaries of this programme are municipal officials in Local Economic Development and Tourism units. SMMEs, local community representatives, traditional as well as Political leadership within the selected communities are also part of the programme.

Our other programme, the Working for Tourism Programme assists with community based tourism development. The Department of Tourism is funding and managing the implementation of tourism infrastructure, skills development and destination enhancement projects through the Working for Tourism Programme. The programme is aligned to and funded as part of the Expanded Public Works Programme with the objective to create jobs through the provision of a range of tourism services and infrastructure. Most of the beneficiaries are women and youth.

The opportunities of this programme are directly linked to the areas of work covered by the Programme which include visitor information services, accommodation establishments, caravan sites, retail centres for crafts, heritage tourism products, day visitor precincts, youth tourism learnership programmes, tourism experience and destination enhancement and product or attraction enhancement. Also the development and maintenance of infrastructure include infrastructure such as benches, pathway development, attractions interpretive signage, access roads into attractions and parking and sidewalk infrastructure.

Great work has been done on community projects over the years, but it was not without challenges. The majority of the tourism facilities funded through this programme are in the rural provinces. However there is often a lack of enabling infrastructure in these areas, which severely limits the long term sustainability of the projects.

The assets created through the projects were handed over to either a municipality, provincial government department, provincial tourism authority or a beneficiary. However, there is limited technical and management expertise of community based owning agencies and to some extent local municipalities to commercially run the tourism projects and ensure that they are sustainable over time.

Challenges were also experienced with ownership conflicts; governance and community benefit challenges; and lack of start-up capital and operational funding.

Great lessons were also learnt which we will factor into future planning. The majority of community based organisations do not have the capacity to operate and manage the accommodation establishments. So going forward, pre and post construction support, training and mentoring will need to be considered. This will be part of the requirements for funding community owned projects.

Mechanisms for sustainability must also be established prior to the commencement of projects and where applicable, the future strategic or operating partner must be involved from the start.

Furthermore, joint planning with all parties involved and pooling of resources across all spheres of government are another critical success factors. An integrated approach is also required which takes into account economic and technical aspects of the interventions.

Going forward, before any project will be funded, it will have to prove to be technically, commercially and financially viable before funding is granted. Viability will take into account land availability/ownership and use rights; identified access roads; bulk services such as water and electricity; identified beneficiaries; type or nature of facility and the required grading; blending with surrounding environment and surrounding attractions and amenities.

The department through the Working for Tourism Programme has had success stories of partnerships with community projects under traditional leadership. I would like to share two projects with you today which are currently being managed by Transfrontier Park Destinations (TFPD) in collaboration with the Traditional Leaders of the communities of Mamaila Kolobetona and Batlokoa. These two communities entered into a partnership with TFPD in order that their facilities are commercially managed.

The first project is the Nahakwe Mountain Lodge which is owned by the Mamaila Kolobetona Traditional Authority in Limpopo. This Lodge was opened on 26 September 2015 as a showcase of a modern community-owned tourism enterprise, the Department invested R 31.5 million in the development of these facilities. The Nahakwe Lodge offers fresh, modern event facilities and accommodation in Limpopo Province. Situated just 90 minutes north of Polokwane, it is ideally placed for meetings and events that attract delegates from all over the country. The Lodge boasts 4-star accommodation in free-standing chalets with air-conditioning and en-suites. A swimming pool adds to the guests' comfort. Nahakwe Lodge is ideally situated for all travelers who want to explore the

Limpopo Province. The Limpopo Tourism Authority helps in promoting the facility as it adds the much needed tourism beds and infrastructure in the province. It is well situated to be linked to a number of travel routes in the area.

Let me share with you another success story, that of the Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge which is owned by the Batlokoa Traditional Council, Qwaqwa in the Free State. The story of this site goes back to the 1950s when Former Batlokoa Chief Wessels Mota built a stone hut for backpackers. In the 1970s, the facility was upgraded and in the mid 1990s the lodge was gradually given over to the current King of the local Batlokoa community, Morena Mota (son of Chief Wessels Mota). The Department of Tourism recently invested just under R 28 million in the total upgrade of Witsieshoek Hotel which included and upgraded sewer treatment plant, demolishing of old buildings, upgrading of 4 medium sized chalets, the construction of a manager's house and service workshop, installation of a central heating system, upgrading of 2 sentinel buildings, the gate house and staff accommodation as well as fixing the electrical wiring inside the buildings.

With their focus on the development of a viable and sustainable tourism industry that balances the needs of the local community with those of nature, Transfrontier Park Destinations now manages Witsieshoek and the surrounding land and tourism activities on behalf of the Batlokoa community. The Batlokoa people still own the lodge and the bulk of its revenue remains within the community; the Batlokoa people are also the majority of employees at the lodge. King Mota and his council are responsible for decisions regarding all proposals for the future of the lodge and its finances. Much of the artwork and woven items in the lodge is also made within the local Batlokoa community and Qwaqwa region.

Both the Nahakwe and Witsieshoek Mountain Lodges demonstrate the success of partnerships between government, traditional leadership and communities built on mutual respect, collective wisdom and a shared vision and goal for successful tourism development that achieves social and economic transformation.

In closing, I would like to call on the traditional leadership in joining the President in condemning the attacks and abuse of women and children that have taken place in our country in recent weeks. These types of crimes do not have a place in our society.

Government, cannot defeat the scourge of gender-based violence alone as it requires a collective response from every South African. We all have a role to play in ensuring that women and children feel safe and protected in our communities. As part of this, we must challenge the existing gender-based stereotypes that contribute to the abuse of women and children.

Finally, I believe that this Indaba will achieve its goals and by doing so create a better life for South Africans, especially the millions of our people in rural South Africa. Let us work together to ensure that tourism benefits your area and every South African.

I thank you.