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SPEECH

DATE: 27 JUNE 2025

MINISTER OF TOURISM PATRICIA DE LILLE'S VIRTUAL REMARKS AT THE LAUNCH OF THE G20 TOURISM HACKATHON AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Programme Directors
Vice Chancellor of the University
Members of the G20 Working Group
Government and industry partners, Educators, mentors
And most importantly, our young innovators

It's an honour to officially launch the G20 Tourism Hackathon right here at the University of the Western Cape, a truly fitting location for this youth-driven, innovation-focused event.

As we celebrate Youth Month, we must always remember and honour our past, but as young people, you now have the opportunity to design your own future. This Hackathon gives real meaning to our commitment to empower young South Africans, not just with education, but with opportunities to lead, innovate and build their own futures.

This initiative forms part of South Africa's proud moment as the G20 Presidency holder for 2025. And under this leadership, we are prioritising a vision of people-centred Artificial Intelligence and sustainable tourism innovation.

What we are doing here today is more than just a competition. It's a legacy project – one that brings together government, business and academia, and one that will outlive our G20 Presidency by planting the seeds of a stronger, more tech-savvy tourism sector.

We have 18 institutions from across the country represented here, with teams of students and mentors from tourism and hospitality programmes. This alone is a remarkable show of talent, and I thank all institutions and educators for answering the call.

Over the next two days, you'll be working on real challenges – designing prototype solutions that can support and grow tourism businesses, both locally and internationally. This is your chance to think big, be bold, and show the world what South African youth are capable of.

Let me be clear: we are not just looking for good ideas – we are investing in you. The top three teams will have their prototypes supported and accelerated for commercialisation, with funding from the Department of Tourism and our partners.

This is your chance to become real tourism tech entrepreneurs. And your work won't stop here – it will go global. The best concepts will be showcased at the G20 Ministerial Meeting in Skukuza, Kruger National Park, this coming 12 September 2025.

But as you build, remember: we are not innovating for the sake of technology alone. We are building solutions that must be ethical, inclusive, and sustainable – ones that uplift communities, protect our environment, and bring more people into the tourism economy.

To our partners, thank you for believing in our youth and in this mission. To the mentors and educators, your contribution is the backbone of this journey. And to our students, this is your moment. Take it seriously. Own it. Use it to shape not just your careers, but your impact on the world.

I wish you well in the challenge and I look forward to seeing the brilliance you will unleash. Let the G20 Tourism Hackathon begin!

Thank you.

ENDS -

Media Queries:

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