



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA RELEASE

24 October 2023

Minister Patricia de Lille opening address at the BRICS Tourism meeting in Cape Town

Note to editors: The following speech was delivered by Minister of Tourism at the Opening Session of the BRICS Tourism Ministers meeting held in Cape Town today, 24 October 2023.

Honourable Vice Minister of Tourism, Ana Carla Lopes from the Republic of Brazil

Honourable Vice Minister, Yingchuan Lu, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China

Honourable Additional Secretary, Rakesh Kumar Verma, Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of India

Honourable Director-General, Nikita Kondratev, Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation

Delegations attending from Brazil, Russia, India and China

Members of the Diplomatic Corp

Director General of the Department of Tourism, Mr Victor Tharage

Acting CEO of South African Tourism, Ms Nombulelo Guliwe

CEO of the V&A Waterfront, David Green

Members of the South African Tourism Sector

Honoured Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning and a warm South African Welcome

It is an honour to officially welcome you to the BRICS Tourism Ministers Meeting in Cape Town, South Africa.

The theme for today's Meeting is "Sustainable and inclusive tourism recovery".

It builds on South Africa's 2023 BRICS Summit held in August under the theme "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism".

President Cyril Ramaphosa, the chair of the BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, said in his opening address:

"BRICS is an inclusive formation of developing and emerging economies that are working together to benefit from our rich histories, cultures and systems to advance common prosperity."

"Over the past decades, the bloc has been a major driver of global growth, trade and investment.

BRICS stands for solidarity and progress.

BRICS stands for inclusivity and a more just, equitable world order.

BRICS stands for sustainable development." [CLOSE QUOTE]

In the Summit Declaration, BRICS Heads of State acknowledged the urgent need for tourism industry recovery and the importance of increasing mutual tourist flows.

We are here today to agree on a way forward and action plan.

The BRICS partnership straddles four continents and five countries home to almost three and a half billion people.

This is enough reason for BRICS Tourism Ministers and countries to come together and work in collaboration to grow our sectors and economies.

The BRICS Tourism Ministers Meeting will exchange information and experiences in our tourism sectors.

It is also an opportunity for BRICS Members to reach a consensus on key policy priorities for a more just and sustainable tourism recovery.

We do so because we know that poverty, unemployment and inequality are the biggest problems the world faces.

According to the United National World Travel Organization (UNWTO), International arrivals could reach 80% to 95% of pre-pandemic levels in 2023.

In South Africa, the tourism sector has risen from the ashes.

From January to August 2023, a total of 5.5 million international tourists arrived in South Africa, signifying a remarkable 70.6% surge compared to the same period in 2022.

While this resurgence is undoubtedly encouraging, it's important to note that these figures still lag behind the pre-pandemic levels of 2019 by a 19.0% shortfall.

However, we are encouraged by these figures. Within these 5.5 million arrivals, the African region has the biggest share.

Tourism can indeed be an engine of growth of our economy, and it is a key part of our country's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan.

We have seen similar growth in our fellow BRICS countries.

OPPORTUNITY FOR MORE INCLUSIVE GROWTH

This recovery provides an opportunity to implement transformational shifts as the Travel and Tourism sector creates a more resilient and inclusive future.

As international arrivals are forecast to reach 1.8 billion by 2030, this growth should be sustainable and inclusive and contribute positively to the communities, natural ecosystems, and cultural heritage.

The UNWTO One Planet Vision for a Responsible Recovery of the Tourism Sector also supports tourism to emerge more robust, equitable, and sustainable.

As BRICS Members, we should align our tourism strategies with the six lines of action as recommended by the One Planet Vision.

They are; public health, social inclusion, biodiversity conservation, combating climate change, ensuring a circular economy that empowers all, and a commitment to fair and transparent governance and finance.

Our collective recovery of tourism must be measured beyond economic impacts.

A fairer development model is called for. It involves stakeholders at different levels in its planning and implementation and provides decent work conditions and opportunities for all, including women, youth, people with disabilities and indigenous communities.

Today's Meeting will explore cooperation priorities for BRICS Members to achieve a resilient, sustainable, inclusive tourism recovery.

We will look at mainstreaming sustainable policies and practices so we can take steps to support better the transition to a green, low emissions and climate-resilient tourism economy.

We will look at developing more sustainable tourism business models using technology to manage visitor flows better.

We will encourage a paradigm shift by reconsidering perceptions of tourism success. Is it just arrival numbers or the actual impact on communities?

I look forward to a productive meeting between all BRICS Tourism Ministers and delegates present today.

I invite my counterparts to give their input and once again, welcome you all to Cape Town, South Africa.

Thank you.

Ends/

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