



**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

**Minister of Tourism, Ms Tokozile Xasa launches the Gauteng Tourism Monitors Programme,
Vilakazi Precinct, Soweto**

17 October 2017

Programme Director,
Honourable Elizabeth Thabethe, Deputy Minister of Tourism
Honourable Lebogang Maile, Gauteng MEC of Economic Development,
Honourable Sizakele Nkosi-Malobane, Gauteng MEC of Safety,
Honourable Members of Gauteng Legislature,
Executive Mayor of Johannesburg Metro Municipality, Councillor H Mashaba,
Honourable Members of Municipal Councils,
Mr Victor Tharage, Director-General of the National Department of Tourism,
Mr Sisa Ntshona, Chief Executive Officer of South African Tourism,
Ms Phindile Mbanjwa, Head of Department of Economic Development, Gauteng,
Ms Yoliswa Makhasi, Head of Department of Community Safety, Gauteng,
Mr Siphwe Ngwenya, CEO Gauteng Tourism Agency,
Members of the Media,
All other Dignitaries;
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here at this crucial launch event of something that we are all so excited about and an initiative that carries the hope for our tourism industry, hope for our young people, our entrepreneurs, various vertical businesses and broadly, the economy of this Country. Critically, yet again, we are gathered at this historic precinct and site which is very important in the history of our Country and our people, to launch and mark another significant event in the tourism calendar of the already many milestones this year.

As part of the precinct, Vilakazi Street is a critical part of the story of our heritage, as the only street in the world to count the 2 Nobel Laureates, Nelson Mandela and Bishop Tutu, as its residents. It is also recognised as the epicentre of student protest where young Hector Peterson was shot dead by the apartheid police. Therefore, given the historical importance of the area, it was important that we launch at this site as part of the preservation of our heritage.

As responsible global citizens, we commit to play our part in making sure that South Africa embraces the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), while growing the tourism sector and creating jobs for our people. Informed by these SDGs, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation adopted the 2017 theme of "*Sustainable Tourism – a tool for Development*" as the clarion call for all nations to work towards responsible tourism.

As the incoming Chair of BRICS, South Africa is committed to walk hand in hand with other BRICS partners towards the development and enablement of an environment conducive for economic growth. To this end, during its tenure, South Africa espouses to play a pivotal role in highlighting the role of tourism as an opportunity enabler and a key factor towards unlocking the shackles of poverty, lack of opportunity and joblessness.

Tourism presents a great economic opportunity for BRICS partners to develop an appetite for emphasizing the importance of formulating a road map for greater joint co-operation in tourism sector. The world economic forum released two key facts in 2016. The first is that 60-70% of jobs will be lost due to changes in technology. This is countered by the second, 65% of kids entering Grade 1 now will do jobs we do not know about yet. What can be read from this is that that the world needs to look into new sectors towards job and opportunity creation and tourism sits at the epicentre of such development and enablement.

We are equal to that task as a country and as a sector. Sustainable tourism is an industry commitment to reduce the carbon footprint and have less impact on our environment while at the same time ensuring that our sector grows and remains at the heart of our job-creation agenda as spelt out in the National Development Plan.

The National Development Plan highlights tourism as a sector where millions of jobs can be created, small businesses can be developed, and spin-off investments can take place as more and more tourists visit South Africa. We are proud that despite trying economic times and a wide array of options available to the domestic and international tourism market, we continue to attract record numbers of tourists to our shores. In 2016 over 10 million tourist arrivals were recorded in South Africa; representing a 13% increase from the previous year. I must hasten to add that this was even in the face of a downward trend in other international destinations.

Today, we are launching the Gauteng-leg of the National Tourism Monitors Initiative. This initiative positions the *relationship* between our tourists, our host communities and the industry, in the *epicentre* of critical collaboration required in order to achieve a fully rounded experience for our touring stakeholders. The Gauteng Tourism Monitors Programme is a critical aspect of ensuring that visitors enjoy a peaceful experience which they can relate to future visitors of Vilakazi St and other sites in other provinces.

The Tourism Monitors Programme is part of a long-term strategy to enhance tourism destinations through safety and development of vibrant precincts/sites. Tourism precinct development recognises that tourism supply is not evenly dispersed throughout destinations, but is mostly concentrated into distinctive geographical areas or precincts. Such precincts are anchored around various aspects, e.g. historic architecture and clustered together attractions, activities and infrastructure. The Tourism Monitors Project is intended to be extended to all other provinces, to among other things, address visitor safety and support in visitor precincts and sites.

Each Monitor/beneficiary will receive a monthly stipend of R3,600 in line with the Expanded Public Works Programme for a period of 36 months.

While it is being piloted in Gauteng, the Tourism Monitors Programme is actually a national strategy, with a focus on the nodal points of our tourism portfolio. It is intended to give a special focus on ensuring the safety of tourists' hotspots, nationally. To this end, further engagements are currently underway between the Department and the Ehlanzeni Municipality in Mbombela (among others) to address tourism safety and extend the Tourism Monitors Programme to the area. Central to all of the aforementioned attributes are our people, who are our best assets.

That is why my department continues to provide a series of capacity building interventions and opportunities to ensure that our tourism product grows and that central to all other efforts, it is actually underpinned by a new cadre of a citizenry that cares about the well-being of tourists. Critically, we continue with various community mobilisation efforts, geared towards host community mobilisation and education.

We announced earlier that as part of our broad intervention towards radical economic transformation and unlocking the economic impediments in our industry, the National Department of Tourism has put together a fund to support Greenfield projects and expansions. This is in partnership with the National Empowerment Fund. It will provide the de-risking capital grant portion from the department's side capped at R5 million, whilst NEF will provide both debt and equity capital. The available Development Fund for the next 3 years is R360 million with R120 million in the grant component.

We have also partnered with various stakeholders in the industry to continue to support graduates, especially those who want to have their own business and employ other young people. Through the Enterprise Development Unit within the department, small enterprises are advised and coached on how to run their business. I would like to urge all our young people to take full advantage of these opportunities across the sector.

Tourism is not only an economic activity, but an essential vehicle that promotes mutual understanding between a tourist and a host community. The visitor experience is a key priority of the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS). It specifically puts emphasis on the enhancement of local destination sites through cleanliness, safety and security, access to information, as well as provision of a quality service and authentic experiences. Memorable visitor experiences encourage tourists to return and invite other tourists to the area through word of mouth.

Subsequently, the Department has formed a collaboration with the Gauteng Provincial Government, three Gauteng Metropolitan Municipalities and the two Gauteng District Municipalities to not only address safety in Gauteng's destinations, but to also look at overall destination enhancement with regard to precinct development, enterprise development and the development of attractions in order to attract increased local and international tourist traffic.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Tourism in South Africa is on the rise. We can't however, grow it without our communities, so as we look forward to launching this initiative in other parts of the Country, let's all continue being part of showing and proving to the rest of the world that South Africa is a value-driven tourism destination, that continues to deliver value to its tourists.

Let's all continue the stewardship and *Do Tourism!*

I thank you.