



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

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**DATE: 23 APRIL 2025**

### **MINISTER OF TOURISM, PATRICIA DE LILLE AND TOURISM SECTOR PARTNERS HOST AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA MEDIA LAUNCH**

The highly anticipated 2025 Africa's Travel Indaba was officially launched today at a media event hosted at the iconic Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban. The event was led by the Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille, senior representatives from the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government and Tourism Authority, South African Tourism and the greater tourism sector, underscoring the strategic importance of tourism as a catalyst for inclusive growth.

This year's Africa's Travel Indaba theme, "Unlimited Africa," is a bold declaration of the continent's spirit and ambition. In her keynote, Minister de Lille described Indaba as: "Not just a trade show – it is a platform to reshape narratives, forge powerful connections, and unlock shared value across our continent."

#### **The Value of Africa's Travel Indaba**

**For Buyers:** Africa's Travel Indaba serves as a one-stop marketplace for discovering and sourcing a diverse range of African tourism products and experiences. With over 297 unique offerings, 1 200 exhibitors from across 26 African countries and 908 vetted international buyers representing 55 global markets, the event provides tailored networking opportunities and pre-scheduled business to business meetings – already totalling 7,430 confirmed engagements. Buyers gain unmatched access to curated, diverse, authentic, and emerging travel products for their customers.

Exhibitors benefit from premium exposure to global tourism decision-makers. With a completely sold-out exhibition floor, the event presents a high Return on Investment (ROI) environment for launching new products, forming strategic partnerships and entering new markets.

In 2024, over 24,000 business meetings took place at Africa's Travel Indaba, helping transform ideas into deals and exposure into revenue. The platform also empowers SMMEs through mentorship, visibility and access to global buyers.

**For Media,** Africa's Travel Indaba is a storytelling hub – rich with content and impact. Media partners get access to keynote sessions, press briefings and exclusive interviews with tourism leaders. It is a gateway to discovering untold stories of innovation, community upliftment and continental collaboration. Journalists are encouraged to spotlight emerging tourism destinations, youth entrepreneurs, and culture-rich experiences that define the modern African travel narrative.

## Economic Impact of Indaba in Durban and KwaZulu-Natal:

- R226 million in direct economic activity generated in Durban in 2024, with an additional R333 million across the KwaZulu-Natal province.
- More than 1,000 jobs created through the event.
- Empowered 120 tourism SMMEs to engage global buyers and media made possible through funding from the Department of Tourism's Market Access Support Programme

Speaking at the media launch, Minister de Lille said: "We are even more excited about this year's Africa's Travel Indaba as it comes soon after we launched our new Global Campaign: '**South Africa Awaits — Come Find Your Joy!**'— a celebration of the country's boundless energy, rich culture and extraordinary experiences. Our mission is to ensure that all visitors come find their joy across the length and breadth of South Africa and discover all our diverse tourism offerings and our hidden gems in every little town, dorpie and township".

Representing KZN Tourism and Film Authority, Board Chairperson Dr. Sibusiso Ndebele said "After hosting Africa's Travel Indaba (ATI) for more than 30 years, we are delighted to be the host province for ATI 2025. This prestigious tourism exhibition is the perfect platform to showcase the destination's offerings to the thousands of tourism buyers coming from all over the world who'll be looking for exciting tourism destinations to sell and package to their customers. ATI also benefits our emerging tourism entrepreneurs who will have an opportunity to make valuable connections with the global trade that can to propel their tourism businesses to greater heights. Over the years, we have also spearheaded our Tourism Ambassador programme that gives tourism students opportunities to be on the frontline of tourism and play a pivotal role in welcoming our guests to KZN. We remain hopeful to host the event for the next few decades and make KwaZulu-Natal Africa's Travel Indaba's permanent home".

"As we embark on our preparations for Africa's Travel Indaba, we are not only celebrating our vibrant culture and stunning landscapes but also reaffirming our unwavering spirit and resilience. Durban stands ready to showcase our hospitality and commitment to excellence in the global tourism sector. Together, let us make this event a momentous occasion that reflects our pride and potential," Councillor Nkosenhle Madlala, Chairperson of Governance and Human Capital in the eThekweni Metro said.

Some of the key highlights to looking forward to this year's Africa's Travel Indaba:

- BONDday (Business Opportunity Networking Day): Where ideas meet opportunity and emerging trends take shape.
- AI & Tech-Focused Sessions: Exploring how technology can enhance the tourism customer journey.
- Cross-border Tourism Collaboration Forums: Supporting regional growth through collective marketing and shared offerings.
- 12 Independent Airlines & an Airline Pavilion: Boosting air access and route development across Africa.

With the G20 Summit being hosted in South Africa, on African soil for the first time this year, Africa's Travel Indaba also sets the stage for positioning the continent as a leading player in global tourism dialogue and as leader in hosting major events and conferences.

Minister de Lille concluded: "Tourism is not a side act in our economic story – it is centre stage. We invite all delegates to come experience the might of the African continent's tourism sector while enjoying South Africa's hospitality in the province of Kwa Zulu-Natal. South Africa awaits - Come find your joy."

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**For further information contact:**

**Zara Nicholson**

**Ministry Media Liaison Officer**

Cell: +27 (0) 79 416 5996

Email: [znicholson@tourism.gov.za](mailto:znicholson@tourism.gov.za)

**OR**

**South African Tourism**

Email: [mediaq@southafrica.net](mailto:mediaq@southafrica.net)

Website [www.southafrica.net](http://www.southafrica.net)