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SPEECH

DATE: 11 MAY 2025

MINISTER OF TOURISM PATRICIA DE LILLE'S REMARKS AT THE OPENING OF THE 2ND G20 TOURISM WORKING GROUP MEETING IN DURBAN, KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

Premier of KwaZulu Natal, Mr Arthur Ntuli

MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Rev. Musa Zondi

EtheKwini Municipality Mayor Councillor Cyril Xaba

Honourable G20 Delegates and Guest Country Delegates

Tourism Director General Mr Victor Vele

UN Tourism Executive Director Ms. Natalia Bayona

Members of the Media

Esteemed Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning, Sanibonani

South Africa is proud to host the G20 for the first time on African soil. It's a defining time for South Africa and the rest of the African continent.

The G20 nations represent 85% of the global economy, 75% of international trade, and 67% of the world's population. In November this year, the G20 Summit will also bring together global heads of state in South Africa.

As the only African member country of the G20, South Africa, in partnership with the African Union, is providing a vital voice in global discussions, especially concerning issues affecting developing nations and the African continent.

We do not take lightly the responsibility of using this to highlight Africa's development agenda and promote greater equity in global governance. Indeed, we are committed to aligning our G20 efforts with the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Under the theme 'Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability', South Africa's G20 presidency highlights our commitment to tourism innovation and investment, enhancing air connectivity, and developing inclusive and sustainable tourism policies.

More than 130 G20-related meetings will be held across South Africa this year, providing unparalleled opportunities to showcase our country's venues and facilities, showcase business collaboration, contribute to job creation, and drive investment.

The G20 summit is more than just an event - it is a statement that Africa is ready to take its rightful place in global economic leadership. It demonstrates our proven ability to host safe, world-class events on this scale.

AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA

Honourable G20 delegates it is no accident that you are meeting in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal for the 2nd G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting.

In May every year, Durban and KwaZulu-Natal are the host city and province to the biggest showcase of Africa's tourism excellence. Africa's Travel Indaba is the pride of African tourism.

This year's Indaba welcomes over 1,300 exhibitors, delegates from 27 African countries, and over 1,200 vetted international buyers from 55 source markets.

We are incredibly honoured to welcome new participants from Chad, St Helena, and Burkina Faso, whose presence affirms Indaba's growing role as a genuinely continental platform.

In 2024, Africa's Travel Indaba generated R226 million in direct economic activity in Durban and an additional R333 million across the KwaZulu-Natal province.

More than 1,000 jobs were created through the event, and 120 tourism Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSMES) were given a platform to engage with global buyers and media through the Department of Tourism's Market Access Support Programme

Under the theme, “Unlimited Africa”, G20 delegates at Africa’s Travel Indaba can look forward to:

- Insightful sessions designed to drive the growth of the African tourism sector forward;
- Opportunities to forge new and sustained partnerships through the various networking sessions;
- Updates on South Africa’s global tourism marketing strategies;
- A deeper focus on the economic significance and impact of the tourism industry; and
- An overall showcase of the greater African tourism sector at work.

EXPERIENCE THE WARMTH AND JOY OF DURBAN AND KWAZULU-NATAL

I also want to tell you about this great city and province that Mayor Xaba and Premier Ntuli call home.

G20 delegates should know that Durban is where you feel the warmth of South Africa. There is no other province or city like it.

You will feel it when you meet people from diverse cultures and backgrounds, eat the spicy curries, not to mention our warm tropical climate.

I know you have a packed meeting today, but I am excited that you will also visit the Chief Albert Luthuli Museum, conduct a site tour of Club Med Coastal Resort Development, and finish off with the Inanda Heritage Route on the Ricksha Bus.

G20 2ND WORKING GROUP MEETING OUTCOMES

But first, you have to put your head down and work.

Your discussions during the next three days will not only inform what each G20 Tourism Minister decides and debates in September when we meet in Mpumalanga, but they will also inform what our Heads of State finally agree on in Johannesburg during November.

The highest level of engagement for the Tourism sector is the G20 Tourism Ministers’ Meeting, which is supported by a Working Group comprising of senior officials and experts.

The Tourism Working Group serves as a forum for the growth and development of sustainable tourism by promoting dialogue, the exchange of knowledge, and best practices amongst the G20 members.

The G20 Tourism Ministers provide leadership in respect of the Tourism Agenda for G20 as identified by the Presidency.

The main objectives of the G20 Tourism Ministers' Meeting are to:

- Position tourism as a driver of economic, social and environmental change;
- Explore the potential for tourism and travel to support the economic recovery as well as longer-term transformation to a green economy;
- Better articulate and communicate the economic and development case for tourism;
- Mainstream travel and tourism sector's voice in the global agenda by building a more effective voice for the sector; and
- Mobilise a collective effort among Tourism Ministers towards building a sensible tourism policy framework that will help influence country-level and international economic and development policies.

South Africa's G20 Tourism Issue Note highlights the key priorities and deliverables for 2025. They are:

- Priority 1: People-centred Artificial Intelligence (AI) and innovation to enhance Travel and Tourism Start-ups and MSMEs. The Deliverable is to create an action plan to enhance Travel and Tourism Start-Ups and MSMEs through AI and innovation.
- Priority 2: Tourism financing and investment to enhance equality and promote sustainable development. The deliverable is to host a seminar on enhancing partnerships for tourism financing and investment for sustainable development.
- Priority 3: Air connectivity for seamless travel. The deliverable is to agree on the G20 Tourism report on air connectivity for seamless travel.
- Priority 4: Enhanced resilience for inclusive, sustainable tourism development. As G20 countries, we must deliver an Action plan for enhanced resilience for sustainable development.

I look forward to the outcomes of these in-depth discussions and to our work as G20 nations to reach a consensus on what needs to be done and achieved. We will handover the G20 to America in November 2025 and will continue to work with them to further the G20 Agenda.

UN TOURISM KNOWLEDGE PARTNER

None of this could have been possible without the incredible support of each G20 nation, which has been ongoing since our first Tourism Working Group Meeting, and also with the support of our knowledge partner, UN Tourism, which has worked tirelessly to bring life to South Africa's Tourism Issue Note.

I wish you a productive few days with open ears, an open mind and an open heart.

Be inspired by the warmth of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

Like we say in South Africa – Come find your joy.

Thank you, Ngiyabonga

ENDS

Media Queries:

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