



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Budget Vote Speech by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, MP at National Council of Provinces

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Chairperson,

Tourism is government- led, industry driven with community participation. It has the greatest potential to develop relationships that impact on political, social and economic development in the country. The symbiotic relationship amongst the three continues to grow and is key for us to realise government's commitment to growing the economy and jobs. The review of the strategy should continue to reflect on this strength as it is critical moving forward.

Our people are at the heart of this dynamic tourism sector. It is the pulse that pumps the lifeblood into this growing industry. They are after all our most valuable resource, as they are the brand ambassadors and biggest proponents of our dorpiés and villages, towns, cities and our country in general, when we welcome visitors – both domestic and international. Our first priority at National Department of Tourism will therefore always be empowering the people of South Africa to participate productively and profitably in the economy. Through our awareness programs, skills development programs, as well as entrepreneurship programs we continue to excite South Africans to the 'New Gold' which is Tourism as a career and employer of choice. As a labour intensive industry, tourism has proven itself to be a key economic driver.

To this end, we are working towards creating a symbiotic relationship between the development of our people and the growth of the sector. A sector that is staffed with knowledgeable and well trained individuals with a service excellence mindset that will continue to create a positive vibe that attracts visitors to our shores. Barriers to entry in this sector are far less than in any other major sectors and often not attractive to our young people.

We continue to work on designing a formal educator's programme with universities, we also embark on a pilot initiative with the Gauteng Province to give educators an experiential learning opportunity by exposing them to the tourism work environment at industry establishments. Other Provinces who are willing to participate will follow thereafter.

Our National Tourism Careers Expo is a success story of which we are very proud, as it enters its 7th sustainable year in existence. We have worked hand-in-hand with the Tourism and Education leaders in the Provinces, as well as our stakeholders at CATHSSETA to produce an annual Expo to educate our youth on the potential career streams available to them in the tourism industry. This initiative was hosted in the Kwa Zulu Natal Province from 2009 - 2011, and during the last three years has been hosted in the Eastern Cape. In 2015 we start the next three-year rotation, which is hosted in the Free State - Mangaung Metro from 1-3 October.

Building the capacity of tourism sector human resources is also merged into our Rural Development initiatives. Based on a needs assessment, 5 capacity building workshops were

held in the past financial year, reaching 500 individuals. Beneficiaries comprised local municipality officials, community representatives, SMME's, local authorities and traditional leaders. Work will be ongoing in the identified rural nodes of uMkhanyakude, Bushbuckridge, Vhembe, and Dr RS Mompoti, Pixley ka Seme Districts as well as the Maloti Drakensberg Route.

Equally, we are empowering women in the tourism space to make their voices heard, and prepare them to take the lead in driving the sector forward. In 2014 we held the inaugural conference of what has become known as "Women in Tourism". Our themes centred on "Respect", "Representivity", "Recognition" and "Results. We have started on a national mobilisation that will see provincial chapters of Women in Tourism established. Earlier this year we announced the introduction of the Tourism Incentive Programme (TIP). This programme offers financial support to tourism enterprises that aims to reduce the cost of doing business and to stimulate business growth and development. In 2015 we will continue to lobby the United Nations World Tourism Authority to collaborate with us on the development of women in our sector. We are also targeting our industry big players to make a meaningful contribution to growing women into management positions.

Our focus on enforcing tourist guiding standards strengthened in 2014, and will continue in the current financial year. With the Tourism Act coming into effect, we have commenced with new regulations and call upon all South Africans to participate. In pursuit of regional integration we are working with academia to bring about integration in the guiding fraternity, particularly as it relates to training. This is in recognition of the fact that tourism knows no boundaries and that 'We are Africa'.

Another niche tourism opportunity lies in Business and Events Tourism. This is enabled by the fact that South Africa provides cost competitive options, while simultaneously providing a wealthy of leisure, recreation and hospitality opportunities.

The SA National Convention Bureau focuses its efforts on attracting business events in economic sectors aligned with the NDP. Hosting of business events in the country deepens the macro-economic impact of these sectors. In 2014/15 55 bids were registered with a potential to attract 122 772 business professionals to South Africa over the next 5 years. The combined impact of this would have an impact of R1.7 billion. At the recent Ministers Session in IMEX South Africa was given an opportunity to present a case study as its success in having a Conventions Bureau led by government.

We also continue our theme of youth development through programs such as The Future Leaders run by IMEX. In 2014 the winner of the International University Challenge, a student from North West University came second globally at the challenge in Frankfurt.

Tourism is the future! We call upon all spheres of government give it the necessary attention, it can change our communities for the better.

I thank you