



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Tourism House, 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside. Private Bag X 424, PRETORIA - 0001
Tel + 27 (0) 12 444 6000. Fax + 27 (0) 12 444 7000. Call Center: 0860 121 929

Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom: Public lecture on Sustainable Tourism in a democratic South Africa

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The Department of Tourism in partnership with Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) and UNISA hosted the 4th annual Public Lecture, at the UNISA main campus Tuesday. This year's theme was "*Sustainable Tourism in a Democratic South Africa – Transforming Lives*", which saw the government, education and the tourism sector gathered in an idea sharing session, on how to sustain tourism for generations to come. The purpose of this public lecture was to address issues facing the tourism sector and the ever growing challenges, and the aspects of sustainable tourism.

Key issues such as academically trained and skilled professionals who enter the industry were given special emphasis. In his welcome address, Unisa's Vice Chancellor Prof. Mandla Makhanya outlined the purpose of the Public Lecture as, amongst others, to create an opportunity for the academic sector to debate issues related to tourism.

"The higher education field is a hub for the tourism sector as it produces and provides the industry with specialised professionals who contribute significantly in the growth of the industry. Unisa as a higher education institution is keen on offering research support to the industry in order to come up with long term solutions to constant growing issues. With the right resources, the industry can have skilled professionals who will be able to meet the demand of tourists/customers", said Prof Makhanya.

The main speakers were Prof Cina van Zyl, and Prof Maggi Linington, from Unisa, as well as Mr Stephen Billingham, President of the South African Chefs Association, who all spoke of the need for the Golden Triangle (Government, Academia and Business), to invest in improving the curriculum and skills development, with the aim of making the tourism sector sustainable.

Forming part of the panel were Dr. Celia Booyse from Umalusi, Ms Kathy Bergs from Fair Trade Tourism and Mr Mavuso Msimang, chairman of the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) Board.

In response to the issues raised by the speakers, panel members and delegates, Minister Hanekom amongst other things, expressed the significance of a series of activities taking place during Tourism Month, and emphasised the urgent need to make sure that tourism as a sector is inclusive and sustains growth.

"We encourage domestic tourism to create a desire for people to see more of their country. Today, the focus is more on what we need to do to sell our country better and make it better. It is about the totality of the experience and what we need to do, and the holistic approach of the sector and make the industry sustainable and make it to benefit people", the Minister concluded.

Enquiries:

Mr Trevor Bloem

Chief Director - Communications

National Department of Tourism

Telephone: +27 (0) 12 444 6607

Cell: +27 (0) 82 771 6729

Email: tbloem@tourism.gov.za

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