



MINISTRY
TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X 424, PRETORIA, 0001, Tourism House, 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside, PRETORIA, 0002, Switchboard: +27 (0)12 444 6000, Fax: +27 (0)12 444 7000, Website: www.tourism.gov.za

**REMARKS BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM, MAGGIE SOTYU, ON THE OCCASION
OF SATOVITO INTRA-TRADE CONFERENCE**

THURSDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2025.

Programme Director,
Distinguished Guests,
Members of SATOVITO,
Industry Partners,
Community Leaders,
Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

South Africa's story is not written only in the skylines of its cities or the splendour of its landmarks — it is lived, every day, in its townships and villages, the heartbeat of our nation.

These are places of creativity and resilience, where music and memory meet, where history greets hospitality, and where visitors encounter the true spirit of *Ubuntu*.

Township and village tourism is not a side note to our national tourism strategy; it is the very soul of a people-centred and inclusive sector. The National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) reminds us that tourism must do more than grow numbers - it must grow people. It must turn progress into participation, and success into shared prosperity. For two decades, our policies have carried a clear message: communities must not stand on the margins of tourism; they must stand at its centre.

In 2025 South Africa is hosting the G20 Presidency, providing a valuable opportunity to boost the country's tourism sector. This global platform presents powerful opportunities to advance tourism on both national and international stages, serving as a transformative lever across the tourism value chain. Delegates have been invited to discover the unique offerings of all nine provinces, creating lasting memories while supporting local economies. As we reach the summit later this month, we need to fortify our efforts to ensure that the people of South Africa and its majestic beauty leave an indelible mark in our visitors hearts.

The Department of Tourism plays a vital role in ensuring that the benefits of tourism extend beyond large cities and major attractions to reach local communities, especially those in rural areas, villages, small towns, and township economies. It is actively working to develop tourism in villages, townships, and small dorpies (VTSDs) in South Africa, aiming to promote inclusive regional upliftment and economic growth. It is with this brief context that the Department of

Tourism is working hard to ensure that tourism activities and initiatives accrue to benefit Small Medium businesses in the tourism value chain, which underscores the need for a concerted effort to achieve Community Beneficiation in Tourism. This will be a true empowerment of SMMEs in tourism as it will help prepare subsistence SMME businesses to reach the level of commercial SMMEs and grow over time.

The SATOVITO conference is taking place on the eve of the annual “16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children Campaign (16 Days Campaign), which is a United Nations campaign that takes place annually from 25 November (International Day of No Violence” against Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day).

The 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children Campaign will be commemorated under the 2025 Theme: “Letsema”: Men Women, Boys and Girls working together to end GBVF”. “Letsema” a call to collective action, is a Sesotho word that refers to traditional practice of voluntary communal work. This year’s campaign emphasizes addressing the root causes of GBVF, promoting positive masculinity, promoting gender equity, and creating economic opportunities for women and children, which is at the core of this conference and beyond.

This year’s conference carries a special meaning as SATOVITO celebrates its fifth anniversary - five years of steadfast service, passion, and advocacy for township and village tourism across South Africa. Under the theme: “*Township and Rural Tourism Development*,” the 2025 SATOVITO Conference gathers tourism practitioners, policymakers, and community builders from every corner of the country.

Since its establishment in 2020, SATOVITO has achieved remarkable milestones and has led the national conversation on transformation, empowerment, and community ownership.

Township and village tourism brings the promise of tourism home - to our people, our families, our streets, and our stories. Every visitor who stays in a township guesthouse, eats at a local eatery, or buys a handmade craft helps create jobs, support small businesses, advance communities and, most importantly, restore dignity. These moments of exchange are more than transactions - they are acts of nation-building.

This is why the Department of Tourism and organisations such as SATOVITO work hand in hand to strengthen community-based enterprises. Together, they are ensuring that the benefits of tourism are shared widely - particularly among women, youth, and small business owners, who carry the dreams of our local economies.

Each township and village holds a story that cannot be captured in a textbook. From the rhythms of Vilakazi Street in Soweto to the artistry of Venda villages, from the homesteads of Qunu, these places are living museums of culture, identity, and pride. Through heritage routes, festivals, and storytelling experiences, communities are turning culture into capital—transforming their heritage into hope. Township and village tourism celebrates South Africa’s diversity through music, food, art, and storytelling, preserving traditions while igniting new forms of creative expression.

At the heart of township and village tourism are the dreamers and doers, the champions of change, the young tourist guides leading heritage walks in Langa, the families opening homestays in the Eastern Cape, and the cooperatives transforming local materials into art.

Through SATOVITO's platforms, these entrepreneurs find mentorship, visibility, and collective strength. SATOVITO has become a catalyst for transformation, connecting grassroots innovators with provincial and national structures, ensuring that township and village tourism is not only vibrant, but viable and visionary.

Township and village tourism breathe life into *Ubuntu*. When visitors engage with communities, they discover the shared humanity that binds us together. It is through these encounters that tourism becomes a social connector - building bridges across cultures, languages, and generations. Our diversity is not a divide; it is our distinction. Tourism, at its best, is not only about places - it is about belonging.

As today's global travellers seek authentic, responsible experiences, township and village tourism acts as a beacon of sustainability. It promotes travel beyond popular destinations, ensuring that the benefits of tourism reach every region and person. Many of these communities also serve as stewards of our natural beauty—rivers, mountains, and coastlines. Under SATOVITO's leadership, they are adopting responsible tourism practices that protect both the land that sustains us and the culture that defines us.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Township and village tourism is not merely a programme - it is a movement for dignity, ownership, and pride. It transforms places once overlooked into centres of creativity and opportunity. It tells the world that South Africa's greatest asset is not its scenery - it is its people: warm, innovative, and unbreakable in spirit.

This is why the G20 meetings being hosted in South Africa in 2025 have been spread across the length and breadth of South Africa – so that our visitors get to experience the power of Ubuntu first hand.

SATOVITO reminds us that when communities take ownership of tourism, they take ownership of their future. Through partnership - between government, business, and communities - we can build a tourism economy that leaves no one behind.

In conclusion,

As we prepare for the summer holiday season, let us promote our villages and townships, and, together, uplift our nation through tourism that transforms, empowers, and unites.

I Thank You

Ends/