



REMARKS BY MR FISH MAHLALELA, DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM AT THE LAUNCH OF THE TWEE RIVIEREN (±KHOMANI SAN) INTERPRETATIVE CENTRE AND NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AND THE TOURIST GUIDE CERTIFICATION CEREMONY IN NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE ON 19 JULY 2023

Programme Director

Dr. Zamani Saul, the Premier of the Northern Cape Province,

Ms. Patricia de Lille, the Minister of the Department of Tourism,

Mr. Abraham, the MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism of the Northern Cape Province,

District and local Mayors present here today;

The traditional leadership of the Khomani and Mier Communities of the Kalahari,

Government Officials from our municipalities, provinces and national government;

The tourist guides which will be graduating here today

Our distinguished guests,

It is my honour and privilege to stand in front of you today to join and support the Khomanani and Mier communities in the creation of economic growth and cultural preservation.

We are all quite aware about your struggle for the land and your resistance against injustices and the systematic exploitation by those who colonised

us. You fought valiantly against colonialism and the deliberate abuse of human rights.

This activity coincides with the July month where we commemorate our global icon, Nelson Mandela, who is the father of our democracy that we enjoy today, we shall always be indebted to his visionary and courageous leadership.

Our democratic government's approach is therefore to empower indigenous groups, by helping them to sustain themselves through provision of training and enabling them to start their own businesses in the tourism industry, creating opportunities for economic growth and cultural preservation.

The ZFM district is home to diverse indigenous communities, each with their own unique cultural heritage and traditions. These communities possess a wealth of knowledge about the local environment, history, and traditions that can be shared with visitors.

However, they often face challenges in accessing the tourism market due to limited resources, lack of training, and language barriers.

Importantly, tourist guide training programs specifically tailored to the needs of indigenous groups can bridge this gap and empower them to become active participants in the tourism industry.

These programs can provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to offer authentic and meaningful experiences to visitors. Topics covered may include cultural heritage, storytelling, language skills, customer service, and sustainable tourism practices.

By equipping indigenous individuals with these skills, we enable them to become ambassadors of their own culture and heritage. They can share their unique knowledge and traditions with visitors, raising awareness and appreciation for their culture.

This not only helps preserve their identity but also promotes cultural diversity and understanding among different communities.

Our revered freedom fighter, OR Tambo once described yourselves as men and women...trained to utilize a variety of means for their survival, they employed the art of hunting, the judicious selection of fruits of the wild, identification of the lushest pastures for their livestock, cultivation of the most reliable staple foods, the growth of trade, (mostly) the practical value of warm relationships and a deep respect for a shared humanity.

Moreover, tourist guide training can create economic opportunities for indigenous communities in the ZFM district. By starting their own tourism businesses, they can generate income, create jobs, and improve their overall standard of living.

This economic empowerment can help reduce poverty and dependence on external aid, fostering self-sufficiency and resilience within indigenous communities.

It is crucial to ensure that these training programs are developed in collaboration with the indigenous communities themselves. Their input and involvement are essential to ensure that the training is culturally appropriate, respectful, and aligned with their values and traditions.

Indigenous communities should have a say in the design and implementation of these programs, ensuring that they meet their specific needs and aspirations.

Furthermore, it is important to promote responsible and sustainable tourism practices within these training programs. The ZFM district is blessed with natural beauty and rich biodiversity.

By incorporating indigenous traditional knowledge and sustainable practices into tourism activities, we can contribute to the conservation of natural resources and the protection of fragile ecosystems.

In conclusion, tourist guide training for indigenous groups in the ZFM district is a powerful tool for empowerment, economic growth, and cultural preservation. By providing them with the necessary skills and support, we enable indigenous communities to sustain themselves, start their own businesses, and share their unique cultural heritage with the world.

Let us work together to create inclusive and sustainable tourism opportunities that benefit both indigenous communities and visitors alike.
I thank you all.