



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MINISTER (ODM)  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Remarks by the Deputy Minister for Tourism, Mr. Fish Mahlalela on the occasion of the Chinese New Year (CNY) celebration, and the encouragement of the tourist guides on their training programme in the Mandarin language**

**12 February 2021**

Mr. Zhou Yong, Culture Councilor of Chinese Embassy in South Africa,  
Prof Peng Yi, Co-Director of University of Johannesburg Confucius Institute (UJCI),  
Prof Saurabh Sinha, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg,  
DDG Mmaditlonki Setwaba, Tourism Sector Support Services,  
Students and all participants

**Good evening**

During the 2019 State of the Nation Address (SoNA), the President of the Republic Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa emphasized the importance of expanding the tourism sector to be able to reach 21 million tourist arrivals by 2030 whilst also highlighting the need to focus on lucrative markets such as China and India.

It is also worth noting the statistical trends showing just how important the Chinese market is to the global tourism market.

SAT arrival statistics indicates that China has featured in the top ten (10) destinations in terms of international arrivals to South Africa.

According to the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer of October 2018, China is also the leading outbound market in terms of tourism expenditure followed by the United States of America (USA) and Germany.

The spending power of the Chinese market was recorded at 250 billion in 2016 followed by 258 billion in 2017. Due to their incredible spending power, the Chinese market presents a huge opportunity to South Africa and remains one of South Africa's core markets from Asia which contributes positively to tourism arrivals into the country.

Currently, we are sitting with the global pandemic that has impacted negatively to the economy of our country and the World. It is for this reason that we need to keep our relations and appreciate that we need each other more than before.

Be that as it may, we cannot fold our arms and cry and stop planning for the future. This phase will pass and the economies of the World will be opened. As the economy recovers, we need to be able to receive tourists from all over the World, including China.

As you all are aware, South Africa and China enjoys cordial relations in the area of tourism as underpinned by two (2) Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). The first MoU signed in 2002 on the Approved Destination Status (ADS), conferred to South Africa the right to receive tourist groups from China and to open the destination marketing office in Beijing.

The second MoU on cooperation in the field of tourism was signed on 28 October 2013 in Beijing, China. This MoU serves as an institutional mechanism to strengthen bilateral relations on cooperation in the field of tourism. Areas of cooperation in the MoU includes the encouragement of

information sharing, tourism investment, marketing and promotion, skills development and training and tourism safety and service standards.

Today, as you celebrate your Spring Festival, I am honoured to welcome the China and South Africa bilateral relations which have progressed to a comprehensive strategic relationship that has become mutually beneficial.

As we continue to receive tourists, the tour guiding skill becomes important. To remain highly competitive and ensure sustainable employment, tourist guides of today need to be able to speak foreign languages, have a range of specialities, be able to guide across regions/borders and provide exceptional and authentic customer experiences.

Taking the above into consideration, the Department identified Mandarin language training as an important opportunity for existing tourist guides. Coupled with South Africa's diverse offerings, having local tourist guides proficient in the Mandarin language could also present a further opportunity to attract the Chinese market to South Africa.

The main objective of the Mandarin language training is therefore to provide an opportunity for local tourist guides to be trained in the command of the Mandarin language to better serve the potential influx of Chinese tourists to South Africa.

Let me take this opportunity and thank all the tourist guides that are currently undergoing training under these trying conditions brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that you are ambassadors for our country as you will be exposing South Africa to our Chinese tourists.

Skills development amongst our youth is a must, if we want to sustain our existence as humans. Oliver Reginald Tambo once said: *"The children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future."*

We will ensure that we maintain good relations with your country and other countries of the World as we seek to create a united democratic and non-racial society.

To all our 20 students, you are so wonderful, we are proud of you. We know you are enjoying this training a lot and studying hard. Happy new year to all of you on this Chinese year the of Ox.

I thank you.