



**DEPUTY MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Remarks by Deputy Minister of Tourism Fish Mahlalela on the occasion of the South African Tourism (SAT) gala cocktail ahead of Department of Tourism Budget Vote Debate, Langa, Cape Town

17 May 2021

Chairperson of the SA Tourism Board, Mr Siyabonga Dube,
Chairpersons of all the Provincial Tourism Agencies,
SA Tourism CEO, Mr Sisa Ntshona,
CEO's of all the Provincial Tourism Agencies,
Tourism Stakeholders,

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very honoured to be with you today, at a destination that has a rich history in the struggle for the liberation of our people, Langa. This vibrant township was a focal point during the resistance against the apartheid government.

This is where it all started on 30 March 1960 when Philip Kgosana, led a March of up to 50 000 protesters to the apartheid police headquarters in Caledon Square to protest against the carrying of passes or identification books by non-whites everywhere they wished to go, in their land of birth. It is exactly the same sentiments expressed by John Maxwell, when he said, "A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way."

Just over a year ago, we entered into an uncharted territory with the world shutting down due to the Corona Virus pandemic. However, as we learnt more about the virus, and put measures to combat the virus, the opening of many industries and sectors have been forthcoming.

While the pandemic has had a devastating impact on the economy of the country, it has also has given us an opportunity to rethink, remodel and reflect on how we want to move forward as a sector.

Programme Director,

I am aware of tourism businesses that have not made it through these tough times, but am encouraged by those that have stood up and fought to stay afloat and continue to serve the sector.

The Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan announced last year has identified tourism as one of the priority areas of intervention. Our tourism sector contributes to the following priorities of the ERRP:

- Infrastructure development
- Mass public employment
- Green economy interventions and
- The inclusion of women and youth; and
- Skills development.

In response, the Department of Tourism in collaboration with yourselves as provinces, and working together with the private sector, we developed a Tourism Sector Recovery Plan. This Plan, outlines a set of interventions to ignite the recovery of the tourism sector and to place it on a path to long-term sustainability.

I urge you to decisively ensure that by working with municipalities in your respective provinces, the implementation of this Plan finds expression and resonance in the integrated planning and budgeting in your Annual Performance Plans. Let us take advantage of the objectives of District Development Model and the National Development Plan, the NDP, as a fertile ground to implement our Tourism Sector Recovery Plans.

Tourism is the lifeblood of our economy. It touches all facets of our daily lives. We may not know it, but every single South African has a role to play in the success of our country's tourism sector. It also a well-known fact that international travellers are finding it hard to come to South Africa due to the red listing of South Africa in some of our key source markets as well as airlines continuing to suspend routes into South Africa. As government, we are working extremely hard to address this situation and ensure a more favourable outcome for South Africa.

To further, stimulate the sector to get back into action, it is our responsibility to show the country and the world that we are indeed open for business and have compliance and regulations in place to ensure safe and responsible travel.

I want to commend all of you this evening for taking the first steps to have physical meetings again as you had in the CEOs Forum since the pandemic hit us.

This is one way to instil confidence to the MICE industry, corporates and the private sector as a whole that meetings and conferences could be done face to face in our current environment, as long as we comply and observe health protocols.

I am also pleased that your engagement in Cape Town has seen a strong focus on transforming the sector and utilising SMME products and establishments and further highlight the vibrancy of township Tourism.

Tonight is an example of how we can stimulate and empower tourism businesses in the townships and promote our uniquely authentic South African experiences to the fore.

I must commend all involved for taking this route and spearheading economic growth in the townships and allowing for SMME's to showcase and propel themselves.

Recently I attended the final SMME workshop in Mpumalanga, which SA Tourism and the Department of Tourism hosted as part of the Travel with Purpose campaign.

We have amazing products that we need to give opportunities and exposure to and I urge you, the leaders of the tourism industry, that is gathered here this evening, to continue to promote and encourage emerging tourism business and products so that they can thrive and contribute to our bleeding economy.

Domestic tourism remains the backbone of the industry. We have, therefore, initiated a series of domestic tourism activations across the country to highlight the importance of domestic travel and to encourage South Africans to travel in their own country.

We firmly believe that this will carry us through until such time that international travel is stabilised. An example of this, is the venue we are at this evening. Not only does it showcase local product offerings, but also promotes social cohesion and nation building.

As industry leaders, we rely on your impact, influence and inspiration to give expression to this robust recovery plan. Although fragile, this sector is resilient and will rebound. We look forward to our joint collaboration as we learn to live alongside the pandemic and navigate the way forward to resuscitate the sector.

I would like to commend the graduates from our Chefs Training Programme who today are honouring us with their hospitality skills and serving us divine cuisine.

Let us enjoy the fruits of our initiatives, while exposing our graduates to potential employers who might recruit them into their establishments. This shows that when the supply and demand sides work together the sector can meet its expected targets and outcomes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tomorrow is another landmark date in our annual calendar, as I will join Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane in delivering our annual budget speech in Parliament.

We hope that you will take heed of programmes, projects and allocation of funds that we have set aside for national projects and align yourselves to the objectives so that we can collectively play our part in the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan.

As I conclude, I would like to thank you for your time and efforts. As provincial tourism leaders you have committed to ensure that we bounce back from the crisis of the pandemic which has caused much suffering and hardship in our sector.

I want to leave you with the wise words of one of the visionary leaders of the liberation movement, the late Charlotte Maxeke, whom we are this year celebrating 150 years in her memory. Charlotte Maxeke says "This work is not for yourselves, kill that spirit of self and do not live above your people but live with them, and if you can rise, bring someone with you."

Thank you again for keeping this sector afloat.

God bless, enjoy your evening and safe travel back to your provinces.