



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa. Tel. (+27 12) 444 6780, Fax (+27 12) 444 7027  
Private Bag X9154, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa. Tel. (+27 21) 469 5800, Fax: (+27 21) 465 3216

**Remarks by the Minister of Tourism, Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, at TMF  
Presidential Library Dinner, President Hotel, Cape Town**

**06 September 2019**

Programme director  
Former President of the Republic, President Thabo Mbeki  
Mr Max Boqwana, TMF CEO  
Ms Sofia Fernandez De Mesa  
Mr Seth Phalatse, the Chair of the fundraising committee of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation  
Mr Rali Raliphule founder and CEO and South Africa Housing and Infrastructure Fund  
Mr Patuxolo Nodada, GCEO Busmark  
Distinguished guests  
Ladies and gentlemen

I would like to thank the Thabo Mbeki Foundation and the organisers of this dinner for inviting me to join you in this very important occasion.

One of the giants of the African Continent, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, is no more. We want to convey our deepest condolences to his family, friends, colleagues and the people of Zimbabwe. President Robert Mugabe, our leader, a Pan-Africanist to the end, contributed immensely to the liberation of the continent and for that we will eternally be grateful.

We also want to send our sincere condolences to the families of all the women and girls who have fallen victim to gender based violence perpetrated by men which is a serious challenge in our country. We call on all men in our country to stand up to say Enough is Enough.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In his opening address to the tourism Indaba held in Durban in 2003, the Patron of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation, Former President Thabo Mbeki painted a marvellous picture of an African continent that is rich in history, good and bad. A continent that once had great civilizations and great empires. A continent that has great Art and African Architecture, tapestry of cultures, natural wonders and a diversity of wild life.

He also used the occasion to remind his audience that as African people, we are a people for whom it is not antithetical *“to value our guests, knowing that it is a crime to poison the kola nuts with which we welcome our friends;”* And that as Africans, we are always ready *“to say to those who come from outside our continent, that you are welcome home, to the continent that gave birth to all humanity; to offer you clean water and healthy food that will not make you sick; to share with you what little food we have, because we still do not know how to eat alone and remain human.”*

Our country has in the past few days witnessed some horrendous scenes as businesses owned by foreign nationals were looted and set on fire. Watching this, I started to wonder if some in our country have forgotten that *“it is a crime to poison the kola nuts with which we welcome our friends”*. I was asking

**ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

myself if some of our people are now unable to “*share... what little food we have*”? Have they, somewhere along the way, strangely decided that we can “*eat alone and remain human*”?

The events of the past few days have given us a glimpse of what could happen to a nation that does not preserve its culture and learn from its history. It dawned on me that if we don't intervene, our young democracy could soon be reduced to lawlessness and political populism; our society could soon succumb to anti-immigration and anti-trade nativism; our communities torn apart by ethnic suspicion and hatred; and human lives would be snuffed out with callousness and cruelty.

We have witnessed around the world how political populists are flirting with the misguided idea of Narrow Nationalism. These populists think that creating trade barriers will create more jobs in their countries and grow their economies. They believe erecting high walls that close out immigrants will solve all the social ills in their countries.

Recently, we have seen this kind of negative language seeping into the leadership echelons our country and such language is especially directed against African immigrants. Could it be that our challenges are so immense and seem so insurmountable that we are starting to resort to populism hoping that our challenges will go away?

Yesterday on the letters to editor section of the Business day newspaper, I read a letter titled “*Weep for my beloved SA*” by a Michael Hook, who resides in Parkhurst, Johannesburg, and in it he wrote about what we saw in the past week.

Michael Hook's letter raises many concerning issues which most of us are aware however, what sparked my interest was the way he ended the letter by saying “*Sensible people across the land are not asking the government to do anything at all, except to get out of the way*”. How many of our people, faced with all these challenges, are no longer asking government to do anything at all, except to get out of the way? Could it be that many of our people have lost confidence in the ability of the government to resolve our challenges so that they resort to looting and violence against those they perceive to be the cause of their problems? If so, all of us who have been given the responsibility to serve our people at a leadership level need to think very deeply about what we need to do to regain the confidence of our people .

Those that came before us have worked hard both in decolonising our continent and in forging African unity under very difficult conditions and against the will of those who want us to remain divided. It should not be acceptable for anyone in our country to regard our African brothers and sisters as enemies who need to be annihilated and to be forcefully driven out of our country.

Ladies and gentlemen, this week I had the pleasure to be part of a panel of a breakfast discussion addressed by President Ramaphosa on the sidelines of World Economic Forum Africa meetings. One of the panelists said to President Ramaphosa that household South Africa is like a house full of dirty dishes, uncollected rubbish, dirty floor with dirty children. In her view, before we invite visitors to the household South Africa we need to first tidy up and clean the house. I couldn't help but wonder if her views are held by many South Africans. I must say, majority have forgotten a Sepedi idiom that says *Moeng e tla ka Gaye re je ka wena*. Meaning when we have visitors as Africans we always ensure that the house is ready to welcome the visitors. We never say because we don't have enough pots to cook therefore we cannot have wedding ceremonies. In a true African culture, if we are short of anything we go to the neighbours to borrow so that we can host visitors.

Indeed, in the words of former President Mbeki, “*As South Africans, we owe our emancipation from apartheid in no small measure to the support and solidarity extended to us by all the peoples of Africa. In that sense our victory over the system of white minority domination is an African victory. This,..., imposes an obligation on us to use this gift of freedom, which is itself an important contribution to Africa's Renaissance, to advance the cause of the peoples of our continent*”.

Many of you could be wondering what all I have said thus far to do with the cultural economy that you asked me to speak about.

In the same remarks I referred to when I started, President Mbeki also took his audience on a virtual journey through the African continent and amongst other things he said:

*“I would like to wander around in the great street markets of the pulsating African city of Lagos, and bargain with the street traders as millions of Nigerians do, being part of these teeming crowds. From here, I would visit the museums, to contemplate the Benin bronzes and the masks that speak of ancient African skill in the plastic arts, and marvellous craftsmanship.”*

*“I would march through Africa to hear her musicians and poets, to see her dancers and her clothes and the varied ancient games she plays. I would strive to hear how the Africans laugh, and the funny stories they tell, and richness of expression in the languages they speak, and experience the taste and variety of the food they eat, and acquire the handicrafts they produce with their hands, with reeds and beads and bits of wood and animal skins.”*

The tourist journey that he described can only be made possible in an Africa that is open for all Africans to march through without barriers, an Africa that welcomes its guests regardless of the country origin. An Africa that is willing to share its rich culture that includes her *musicians and poets* with everyone regardless of their race, gender and creed.

Tourism, which has linkages to virtually every industry in the economy and in the African continent, has great potential for growth and it is the responsibility of all Africans to make Africa a tourist destination of choice. Cultural tourism in the African continent is an area that remains largely unexplored. Exploring this aspect of the economy, will demand of us to preserve our values, customs, beliefs, art, music and symbolic practices by which African men and women live. It will also remind us that our history is that of a great people who have lived together peacefully as neighbours.

It is only by working together as Africans that we can turn our rich cultural heritage into a great economic asset. I am pleased and encouraged to know that the majority of Africans are tirelessly working towards the African renaissance and nothing will deter them in this great undertaking. They still believe that *it is a crime to poison the kola nuts with which we welcome our friends*.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me conclude by saying we are very pleased that the Foundation has started the work towards building a Thabo Mbeki Presidential Library. We welcome the initiative and we hope, as the Department of Tourism, to work closely with the foundation in making this project a reality. We will offer our assistance where we can.

Currently, we are faced with the mammoth challenge of selling the South African brand to tourists around the world. This is because South Africa the brand has suffered great damage in the recent past. We believe that the codified knowledge and the cultural heritage that will be hosted in this presidential library will serve as great asset in restoring our image and our brand as a nation united in our diversity.

We are confident that the Thabo Mbeki Presidential Library, which will host the rich legacy of Former President Thabo Mbeki and other African leaders, will become an important cultural monument that will not only serve to bring tourists to our shores but will also serve as a reminder of who we are as Africans, where we come from, what we have achieved and our obligations, as a young generation, towards creating a united and prosperous Africa which is at peace with itself.

I thank you