



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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SMME's can play pivotal role in boosting domestic tourism

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"Much more can be done by trade to address the affordability and access barriers to encourage South Africans to experience tourism in their own country," said Minister of Tourism, Mr Derek Hanekom. Speaking at the business breakfast event held in Upington in the Northern Cape, Minister Hanekom urged local business owners and tourism stakeholders to explore innovative ways to drive domestic tourism and foster a culture of travel.

The Minister's Business Breakfast is an annual event hosted by the Department of Tourism, and is one of the key events that precede the World Tourism Day (WTD) celebrations on 27 September. The objective of the business breakfast platform is to rally product owners and tourism stakeholders to actively to promote domestic travel.

According to Minister Hanekom, the growth and outlook of domestic travel and tourism remains positive. Tourism generated 9.5% of South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2013, and accounted for more than 1.4 million direct and indirect jobs in the country. "We are convinced that tourism can contribute a great deal in addressing the triple challenges identified by the National Development Plan's of poverty, unemployment and inequality. As a sector we need to continue to work together to support emerging tourism SMME's, which will ultimately create employment opportunities in the sector that will contribute towards transforming the lives of our people and communities," added Hanekom.

MEC for Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. John Block, was among the speakers who presented an overview of the state of tourism in the Northern Cape as the hosts of this year's World Tourism Day (WTD) celebrations. "We are honored to have been afforded the opportunity to host the World Tourism Day celebrations. The "Tourism – Transforming Lives" theme will enable us to showcase how tourism has transformed the Northern Cape into a thriving leisure, adventure and cultural tourism destination," said MEC Block.

According to Statistics South Africa's (STATSSA) 2013 tourist arrival statistics, the Northern Cape Province had the highest growth in the number of international tourist arrivals. The Northern Cape received a total of 749 446 international visitors in 2013, earning R1.417 billion from expenditure, making tourism the third most valuable economic sector in the province followed by mining and agriculture.

Despite the positive international tourist arrival growth, the Northern Cape remains concerned about domestic tourism having only attracted only 446 000 domestic tourists in 2013. "We are proud of our achievements with regards to tourism. We will continue to work in partnership with the Department of Tourism, our public entities and the private sector to address the hindrances to domestic tourism growth," added Block.

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