



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**MEDIA STATEMENT**

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**SOUTH AFRICA POSITIONS TOURISM AS A CORE ECONOMIC DRIVER  
AHEAD OF AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA 2026**

The Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille, has reinforced tourism's role as a central pillar of South Africa's economic growth strategy, calling for stronger continental collaboration and increased investment in the sector ahead of Africa's Travel Indaba 2026.

Speaking during a stakeholder webinar, the Minister announced that the President of South Africa, His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa will open the trade show this year. She emphasised that tourism is not merely a sector, but a powerful economic lever capable of delivering immediate, inclusive, and geographically distributed impact across the country.

"This webinar forms part of our ongoing efforts to keep stakeholders informed, aligned, and confident as we build momentum towards Africa's Travel Indaba. Tourism is one of the few industries that directly supports job creation, stimulates GDP growth, and uplifts communities across accommodation, transport, SMMEs, and cultural enterprises. It must be fully integrated into our broader economic recovery and growth strategies," said Minister de Lille.

The Minister highlighted the importance of the rest of Africa as South Africa's largest and most resilient source market, noting that Africa's Travel Indaba is a critical platform for advancing continental economic cooperation. Leveraging on African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), South Africa is working with regional partners to unlock easier movement of people, boost intra-Africa trade, and strengthen tourism partnerships.

"Africa's Travel Indaba is more than a trade show. It is a platform to position Africa as a unified, competitive destination, particularly as it takes place during Africa Month and celebrate our shared identity and economic integration," she added.

South Africa continues to position itself as a leading global destination, offering world-class infrastructure, rich cultural heritage, and diverse travel experiences at competitive value. The country's tourism strategy places strong emphasis on experience-led travel and geographic spread, ensuring that lesser-known destinations, including rural and township communities, benefit from tourism growth.

South Africa's proven capability in hosting global events further strengthens its appeal as both a leisure and business events destination, offering year-round opportunities for travellers and investors alike.

"Africa's Travel Indaba is a driver of economic recovery, a platform for opportunity, and a gateway to the world. We are not just ready to host an event, but we are ready to unlock value. It allows us to tell the story of KwaZulu-Natal to the world: a story of culture, heritage, nature, and opportunity," said Dr. Nkosenye G. Zulu is the Head of Department (HOD) for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA)

"As the host city for Indaba, eThekweni Municipality is committed to ensuring that every aspect of the event reflects our dedication to excellence and hospitality. The ATI has become a platform for local entrepreneurs and small businesses to gain visibility and access new markets" added eThekweni Mayor Vusumuzi Xaba

Planning for Africa's Travel Indaba 2027 is already underway, as Africa Travel Indaba goes through a revamp with the inclusion of sponsors and private partners, enhancing the destination's global competitiveness, and empowering rural and township tourism enterprises.

In concluding her remarks, the Minister added a call to action inviting the public to bring forth ideas to contribute to the delivery of Africa's Travel Indaba.

Proposals can be emailed to [proposals@southafrica.net](mailto:proposals@southafrica.net)

**THE END**

For streaming links, images, videos and further information please scan the QR Code and join the Tourism Department's National Multimedia WhatsApp Group.



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