



MINISTRY
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MEDIA STATEMENT: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Africa Showcases Vibrant Tourism Offerings at ITB Berlin 2025

Berlin, 6 March 2025 – South Africa’s Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille, delivered an inspiring address at ITB Berlin 2025, the biggest global travel trade show, highlighting South Africa’s diverse tourism offerings, strong sector performance, and exciting new initiatives to boost international travel.

“Our country is a place of incredible beauty, rich cultural heritage, and world-class experiences,” said Minister de Lille. “From championship golf courses to breathtaking night skies, wellness retreats, and award-winning gastronomy, South Africa has something for every traveller.”

Yesterday Minister de Lille also received a “Tourism Minister of the Year Award - Governance - Infrastructure Development” at the Pacific Area Travel Writers’ Association Summit and Awards.

Showcasing South Africa’s Unique Travel Offerings

Minister de Lille also highlighted South Africa’s diverse tourism offerings across all nine provinces, from astro-tourism in the Northern Cape, the Big 7 wildlife experience in the Eastern Cape, and luxury wine tourism in the Western Cape, to cultural experiences in Soweto and adventure tourism in Mpumalanga.

South Africa continues to gain international recognition, with Cape Town being voted the World’s Best Food City by Condé Nast in 2024 and the “Tourism in South Africa with Trevor Noah” campaign winning third place at the 36th World Tourism Film Awards.

The Minister also highlighted the crucial role of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) in the country’s thriving tourism sector. She emphasised that SMMEs are key drivers of innovation, employment, and economic growth, contributing significantly to the nation’s tourism industry.

“Tourism is one of South Africa’s most dynamic industries, contributing 8.8% to the country’s GDP and supporting 1.68 million jobs in 2024 alone,” stated Minister De Lille. “At the heart of this growth are SMMEs, whose creativity and entrepreneurship help shape South Africa as a top global destination.”

Fifteen standout SMMEs are attending ITB 2025 having been selected as part of the Department of Tourism’s Market Access Support Programme. This initiative provides funding to help emerging businesses gain international exposure and build valuable trade relationships. They also participated in a special bespoke session where they got to present their business to key members of the European trade.

South Africa's commitment to supporting SMMEs is clear. The Department also manages the Tourism Incentive Programme (TIP), which has allocated R172.1 million in the 2024/25 financial year to assist businesses with market access, green tourism projects, transformation efforts, and grading support.

“As we stand here at ITB Berlin, we proudly present 15 remarkable SMMEs offering everything from adventure tourism to eco-tourism and cultural experiences. Their presence showcases South Africa's rich and diverse tourism offerings. The Department of Tourism's investment ensures that our SMMEs remain competitive and sustainable in a global marketplace,” she added.

The participation of South African businesses at ITB Berlin follows the successful Meetings Africa 2025, where 113 SMMEs showcased their tourism products and services. These efforts reinforce South Africa's focus on fostering inclusive tourism growth and creating opportunities for entrepreneurs in the sector.

South Africa to Host the G20 Summit

A key milestone in 2025 is South Africa's role as the host and Chair of the G20. The country will host over 130 G20 meetings, including a dedicated Tourism G20 Working Group meeting taking place in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal in May and the G20 Tourism Minister's Meeting in the Mpumalanga province in September.

“This is a proud and historic moment as South Africa becomes the first African nation to host the G20. Under the theme ‘Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability,’ we aim to advance tourism's role in socio-economic development and job creation,” Minister de Lille stated.

Boosting Accessibility Through Visas and Air Routes

South Africa has introduced a new Trusted Tour Operator Scheme (TTOS) visa initiative by the Department of Home Affairs, streamlining visa applications for travellers from India and China, two key growth markets. The first group of Chinese travellers using TTOS arrived in February 2025, marking a breakthrough in accessibility.

Additionally, South Africa has expanded its air connectivity, now boasting 103 active international routes to 64 cities worldwide, with a 9.4% increase in available seats for 2025.

Tourism Growth and Economic Impact

In 2024, South Africa welcomed 8.9 million international visitors, marking a 5.1% increase from the previous year. The tourism sector now contributes 8.8% to South Africa's GDP and supports 1.68 million jobs, reinforcing its role as a key driver of economic growth.

A Call for Global Partnerships

Minister de Lille extended an invitation to investors and tourism stakeholders to collaborate in growing sustainable tourism, expanding travel accessibility, and supporting community-driven tourism initiatives. She also invited them to come to [Africa's Travel Indaba](#) in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, from 12-15 May 2025.

“South Africa is more than a destination—it's an experience that transforms. We welcome travellers, investors, and partners to join us in shaping the future of global tourism,” she concluded.

The South Africa stand at ITB 2025 is in Hall 20 or explore offerings at the upcoming Africa's Travel

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