

MEDIA STATEMENT

SOUTH AFRICA CELEBRATES WORLD TOURISM DAY IN LIMPOPO

27 SEPTEMBER 2010

South Africa is today celebrating the World Tourism Day (WTD) in Limpopo under the theme Tourism and Biodiversity. 27 September was declared World Tourism day by the United Nations in 1980. In South Africa, tourism month and WTD is used to promote and encourage South Africans to travel and explore the tourism offerings in their own country. 75 percent of all tourist volumes in 2009 was derived from domestic tourism. About 14,6 million adult South Africans undertook 30 million domestic trips with a total annual spend of more than R22 billion. Holiday trips in South Africa account for only 12 percent. Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms. Tokozile Xasa said that although tourism was becoming popular the number of trips per traveller have decreased. She says the tourism sector needs to continue to entrench a culture of travel amongst South Africans as well as to address the issue of geographical, rural and seasonal spread, which is a requirement of the National Tourism Sector Strategy. Deputy Minister Xasa also urged the sector stakeholders to protect and preserve our biodiversity because the two are interlinked. Biodiversity is under threat globally.

South Africa is a country rich in biodiversity. Amongst others we have a 2 500 km coastline, two deserts, the Kalahari and the Richtersveld, we are one of the richest floral kingdoms in the world and are home to eleven mountain ranges.

As part of celebrating this year's Tourism Month, Limpopo Province had lined up a plethora of activities including three tours for media personnel, tour operators and Representatives from SADC. These tours were aimed at showcasing some of the key strategic tourism products in Limpopo Province but also to encourage increased visits by people to Limpopo. Limpopo Tourism and Parks (LTP) in collaboration with Limpopo Economic will this year be focusing on mobilizing communities to travel and experience their Province, as well as to raise Tourism Safety awareness within the attractions and products.

The MEC for Economic Development Environment and Tourism, Mr Pitsi Moloto described tourism as one of the key factors in the economic path of the province. He added that Limpopo will take full advantage of hosting the World Tourism Day and expose outstanding tourism resources the province has. "Limpopo remains the untapped tourism jewel of the country and as a province we are geared to put added effort to ensure that the province benefits economically and otherwise," said Moloto.

Robert Tooley, CEO of Limpopo Tourism and Parks Tooley said "the theme provides a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity to tourism and the role of sustainable tourism in the conservation of life on Earth. During Tourism Month our province comes under the spotlight due to its wealth in biodiversity, offering conservation, beautiful scenery and a rich culture. This does indeed makes our province one of the most suitable that plays well to this year, theme given the wealth of our province in biodiversity" .

At the event, the provincial winners of the Emerging Tourism Entrepreneur of the year Award, ETEYA, were announced.

For more information please visit www.tourism.gov.za

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ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND LIMPOPO PARKS AN TOURISM BOARD