



**MINISTER  
TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**SPEECH BY MINISTER OF TOURISM PATRICIA DE LILLE AT THE G20 TOURISM  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN MBOMBELA,  
MPUMALANGA, 31 JULY 2025**

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Ehlanzeni District Mayor Cllr Terra Shabangu  
Mbombela Mayor Cllr Sibongile Makushe-Mazibuko  
Member of Parliament, Ms Altia Hlongo  
Tshwane University of Technology Campus Rector Dr Kenneth Netshiombo  
Students and Academics from the University of Mpumalanga and the Tshwane University of  
Technology, Mbombela Campus  
Deputy Director General Ms Aneme Malan  
Local Tourism Associations  
Community Members  
Ladies and Gentlemen*

Good morning, Sanibonani, Avu Xen! (Awu sheni)

It is great to wake up in the province of the rising sun, Mpumalanga, and a privilege to be here with you in Mbombela—the beating heart of Ehlanzeni District.

Let me begin by acknowledging the spirit of Mpumalanga, a province of abundant beauty, deep cultural heritage, and untapped tourism possibilities.

Mpumalanga is more than a gateway to Kruger National Park. It is the Panorama Route and it is Barberton's ancient landscapes, where our planet first breathed life, as Honourable Hlongo can tell you. Where culture and mountains collide to tell the stories of our communities, and our creativity that inspires us to dream bigger.

Today, we gather for the G20 Tourism Community Outreach, and we thought it was important to speak with communities about the G20 and what that means for every South African.

I am sure you have seen the Minister speak on the television, radio or your phone on TikTok about G20, and you think OK, what is there for me?

South Africa's 2025 G20 Presidency has a theme called "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability." South Africa's year-long G20 presidency isn't just politics at the top. It must deliver real opportunities that you can see and feel in your daily life.

South Africa will host more than 130 meetings and 23 ministerial-level meetings across major cities. Over 200 G20-related events are expected, pumping millions into local hotels, restaurants, and transport services.

This influx of delegates and support staff creates short-term jobs in hospitality, security, event management, and logistics—jobs that must go to local workers

Tour guides, guesthouses, craft markets, and SMMEs benefit from international exposure—many have already showcased Mpumalanga products at Africa's Travel Indaba, for example.

With Africa's focus on artificial intelligence, data governance, and digital innovation, we must fund training programmes that equip young people with in-demand tech skills. Our hackathon and start-up challenge linked to G20 spur homegrown solutions — everything from mobile payment platforms to smart-city apps.

Hosting the first G20 on African soil shines a spotlight on South African hospitality — and raises standards for customer service, security, and event management.

As the Department of Tourism, we are not just promoting tourism—we are investing in the future you will lead.

We have launched the Tourism Growth Partnership Plan, built on collaboration between government, industry, and local communities.

It focuses on creating jobs, building capacity, promoting sustainable travel, and opening doors to markets across the globe.

Mpumalanga is central to this plan, and we are here to LISTEN — to hear your voice in shaping how tourism grows here.

Now, speaking of the future: the G20 Tourism Hackathon is a platform where students like you are using artificial intelligence and digital innovation to reimagine travel.

I look forward to seeing young minds create prototypes for innovative visitor systems, accessible booking platforms, and cultural storytelling apps.

I know that the students like those from TUT and the University of Mpumalanga are proving that you are not waiting for the future. You are building it.

The winners will present their ideas to the 30 Ministers from all the G20 Member Countries and Guest Countries, and prize money to the top three institutions.

In September, we will host the Tourism Investment Summit in Cape Town, an opportunity to unlock funding and form lasting partnerships.

Mpumalanga's proactive investment in infrastructure—through public-private partnerships—is already showing results. From upgraded heritage sites to improved road networks and community lodges, we see progress, and we want to scale it.

The Department of Tourism continues to support the tourism sector across all provinces through targeted programmes:

The Green Tourism Incentive Programme empowers businesses to adopt sustainable practices by providing grants of up to R1 million.

In Mpumalanga, 23 approved projects are currently active, 18 are at various stages of finalising their agreements, while five (5) projects have been completed.

The five (5) completed projects include the Tshamani Guest House, a 100% woman owned company with a level 1 B-BBEE located in Mkhuhlu Township, here in Ehlanzeni.

Others include Timamoon Lodge outside Hazyview, a 100% women-owned business, and the La Kruger Lodge, a 34% women-owned lodge, in Marloth Park in Nkomazi Municipality.

The Department's Market Access Support Programme helps our SMMEs access new global markets, through funding travel and accommodation and providing training, so that these tourism businesses participate in national and international trade fairs.

Since the 2023/24 financial year, 21 small tourism enterprises from the Ehlanzeni were supported under the Market Access Support Programme to participate in various trade shows.

All 21 of these enterprises are black-owned, while 10 are woman-owned. Eleven (11) out of the 21 enterprises supported in Ehlanzeni are located here in the Mbombela Local Municipality.

Our focus on SMME development and free grading ensures quality and competitiveness.

Let me proudly highlight the vibrant SMMEs from Mpumalanga that exhibited at Africa's Travel Indaba—local chefs, eco-guides, craft makers—who brought the warmth and wonder of this province to international audiences.

Walking through the exhibition hall today, I saw that there is so much more that Mpumalanga has to offer.

And now, let's talk about why this moment matters.

Mpumalanga will proudly host the G20 Tourism Ministers Meeting in September.

That means over 30 Ministers from around the world will come here—not just to talk policy—but to *experience* our landscapes, our hospitality, our cultural richness.

This isn't just exposure. It's a transformation.

Hosting the G20 puts Mpumalanga on the global map. It strengthens bilateral relationships, opens doors for investment, and introduces our local products to new markets.

But this community outreach today isn't just me preaching. It's about listening to what *you* imagine tourism can become.

What you need to thrive. What skills, platforms, and support structures must we create together?

Let me say this clearly: The next chapter of South African tourism will be written by *you*—the students, entrepreneurs, innovators, and storytellers of Mpumalanga.

Your hopes and dreams are the foundation of our plans. And your courage to imagine differently is what will set this province apart.

I thank you. Ngiyabonga. Nkhensa.

**END**

