



MINISTRY
TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa. Tel. (+27 12) 444 6780, Fax (+27 12) 444 7027
Private Bag X9154, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa. Tel. (+27 21) 469 5800, Fax: (+27 21) 465 3216

SPEECH BY MINISTER OF TOURISM, PATRICIA DE LILLE

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AFRICA TRAVEL INDABA DEMONSTRATES AFRICA'S UNLIMITED POTENTIAL FOR TOURISM SECTOR GROWTH

Note to editors: The following keynote speech was delivered by the Minister of Tourism, Honourable Patricia De Lille, at Africa's Travel Indaba (ATI), held at Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre FROM 14 – 16 May 2024.

Programme Director, CEO of South African Tourism, Ms Nombulelo Guliwe

Deputy Minister of Tourism in South Africa, Honourable Mr. Fish Mahlalela

Ministers and Deputy from various African countries

Ambassadors and High Commissioners

Members of the Diplomatic Corp

Members of the Tourism Portfolio Committee on Tourism

Premier of Kwa Zulu-Natal Province, Ms. Nomusa Dube-Ncube

Executive Mayor of eThekweni, Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda

Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) Chairperson, Mr Jerry Mabena

SAT tourism board and executives, government officials, partners, CEOs, tourism associations and members of media

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning, goeie more, molweni, dumelang, sanibonani

It is great to be here again at the 2024 Africa's Travel Indaba in this wonderful city of Durban and province of Kwa Zulu-Natal province.

This province is blessed with world heritage sites, history, wildlife and adventure and wide-open spaces and rolling hills.

Whenever I come to this city, I always look forward to the wonderful weather and food here and to experiencing the fusion of the various rich cultures.

We know that over the last year, the city and the greater province, have had to grapple with extreme weather events driven by climate change, but I am encouraged by the Mayor's recent State of the City Address where he outlines all the city's interventions in addressing these challenges.

Durban is one of Africa's iconic cities and indeed a true wonder of the Kwa Zulu-Natal province.

30 YEARS OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY

Today we meet in a year in which South Africa celebrates 30 years of freedom and democracy.

Our country would not have had this milestone to celebrate without the fearless leadership of our struggle heroes and the generosity of people from across the African continent who opened their hearts and homes to many of our struggle heroes.

I believe it is fitting to quote our dear Father of our Democracy, Tata Nelson Mandela who said:

"It is not our diversity which divides us; it is not our ethnicity, or religion or culture that divides us. Since we have achieved our freedom, there can only be one division amongst us: between those who cherish democracy and those who do not." END quote.

In Africa we have found that we have been united for many years as fellow Africans in our struggles for freedom and democracy.

And so, it is important that in commemorating this all-important milestone, we do so with gratitude and humility.

We are even more grateful that we get to celebrate this together with all of you representing various countries of the world.

As we celebrate 30 years of our democracy, it is important to reflect on and remember the many people and places which played an integral role in our history and attaining our freedom.

Across the length and breadth of South Africa, we have rich ancestry and history mapping the places where we led movements and struggles to overcome the dark days of apartheid.

Right here in Durban, we have the Mandela Capture Site & PheZulu Cultural Village Day Tour from Durban.

This site marked a turning point in our history and saw the start of Nelson Mandela's 27 years of imprisonment – his most notable sacrifice for our freedom.

Visitors can take a day trip to Pietermaritzburg on this small-group tour from Durban and visit the site where Nelson Mandela was captured, learn about traditional Zulu culture, and more on an 8-hour excursion from the city.

In Soweto, Vilakazi Street is iconic as being the home of two struggle icons and two Nobel Peace Laureates, our dear Tata Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu.

In Cape Town, tourists can journey through the later years of Nelson Mandela's struggle where he was imprisoned on Robben Island and later at Victor Verster Prison to delivering his first speech as a free man at the Cape Town City Hall.

The Cape Town City Hall now boasts a life-sized status of Nelson Mandela on the same balcony where Mandela delivered this iconic speech in February 1990.

Around the corner from the City Hall, is the old Granary Building now known as Desmond and Leah Tutu House with an exhibition of the life and contribution of our dear Arch at this site.

Across our beautiful country there are many journeys through history we can take and we need to see these journeys being marketed more aggressively to our visitors, especially as we celebrate 30 years of democracy.

Our quest in overcoming apartheid to where we are now should be a firm demonstration of the power that is within us as people if we work together for the greater good.

It shows us that the possibilities are limitless.

AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA THEME AND STATISTICS

It is therefore apt, that our theme this is year is "Unlimited Africa".

This speaks to our unlimited potential because our continent boasts diverse, landscapes, cultures, and experiences that offer limitless possibilities for exploration and growth.

The theme affirms that Africa is not confined by boundaries but is expansive, offering endless opportunities for discovery and innovation in the tourism sector.

So, to all the buyers, you are guaranteed to find what you are looking for here at Africa's Travel Indaba.

To fully realise the effect of an “unlimited Africa”, I invite all of you to really explore the trade floor. Here you will discover the richness and variety of experiences across Africa.

You will venture beyond familiar territories, uncover hidden gems, and embrace new adventures.

Africa's Travel Indaba emphasizes the importance of networking, collaboration, and building bridges across borders.

So, we implore you to continue in the spirit of the BONDAY held yesterday by exchanging ideas and sharing best practices, and of course forging partnerships that contribute to the sustainable growth of African tourism.

Whether it's through attending workshops, engaging in discussions or making business deals, let us all grow our knowledge, networks, so that we can fully and positively impact our dynamic landscape of African tourism.

Together, we represent the story of an Africa with Unlimited possibilities.

Africa's Travel Indaba is one of the powerful platforms that we must continue to use to drive and advance a positive and powerful African tourism story.

I am so pleased to say that Africa's Travel Indaba has reached a ground-breaking achievement with the participation of 26 African countries exhibiting this year.

These countries represent a total of 344 products that will be showcased is an increase of 14 % compared to last year's 301 products.

A special mention goes out to Burkina Faso and Eritrea who are joining us exhibiting at the trade show for the first time.

We look forward to a long and mutually beneficial partnership and wish all our exhibitors every success at this year's show.

Africa's Travel Indaba's value lies in its targeted opportunities for networking and connecting to advance meaningful business for buyers and exhibitors.

With more than 1 200 confirmed exhibitors including 26 African countries and over 1100 buyers representing 55 countries, Africa's Travel Indaba is a truly global trade show that is not to be missed.

Buyers include inbound tour operators, foreign travel agents, destination marketing companies, online bookings agents, transport companies, airlines and travel and tourism companies.

With a fully sold-out floor space and well done to all on this ground-breaking achievement.

This is testament to the pivotal role the trade show plays in advancing the continent's growth.

As usual, the Department of Tourism has funded the participation of 120 South African small to medium enterprises to exhibit their tourism offerings at this year's Africa Travel Indaba and gain exposure to wide ranging network of tourism trade industry players from all over Africa and the world.

Africa's Travel Indaba provides a platform for African tourism product owners to meet with global buyers who will have a wide variety of products and experiences to engage with.

We are confident that Africa's Travel Indaba will continue to be a fertile environment for closing business deals that nurture partnership and drive growth.

Key highlights of Africa's Travel Indaba include the:

Business Opportunity Networking Day that was held yesterday which is a dedicated educational day featured curated content on topics and trends shaping the tourism industry.

This is geared towards upskilling businesses and equipping them with the necessary knowledge and expertise to thrive in the tourism industry.

The Speed marketing sessions between buyers and exhibitors and exhibitors with fellow exhibitors as well as the hidden gems zone housing about 120 SMMEs from around South Africa.

These speed marketing sessions are about facilitating access and supporting the development of small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures within the tourism sector, thereby stimulating economic growth and job creation.

Our official welcome and networking event taking place this evening is all about fostering collaboration and partnerships among the various stakeholders present here to promote global tourism initiatives.

The Match-making diary enabling exhibitors to arrange pre-scheduled meetings with key decision-makers from our key tourism source markets.

Africa's Travel Indaba truly is the Tourism Master Plan in motion.

TOURISM SECTOR MASTER PLAN

Since we last met here at the Indaba, we have made great strides as a tourism sector in South Africa, working closer together with the private sector.

Here in South Africa, our sector is guided by the Tourism Sector Master plan approved by Cabinet on 27 September 2023.

This was a collaborative effort between government and the private sector.

This is a plan that includes a road map for the tourism sector's 'full recovery' from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic –by facilitating new opportunities in the sector.

Last year, we also relaunched the R1.2 billion Tourism Equity Fund to support the growth of emerging tourism enterprises.

The features and planned events at Africa's Travel Indaba are aligned with the Tourism Sector Master Plan which has key focus areas such as:

- Stimulating Demand through exciting tourism products,
- Enhancing Education and Skills Development;
- Promoting Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth;
- Improving Infrastructure and Connectivity;
- Fostering Social Cohesion and Well-being and Promoting Regional Cooperation.

INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC STATS

Ladies and gentlemen, we are all here with one goal, to vastly grow our tourism sectors and to do this through collaborating with one another.

For South Africa, we are pleased that we have made significant strides in our tourist arrival numbers.

I want to thank travellers from all over the world and South Africans for exploring our beautiful country and supporting our tourism sector.

We are pleased that the latest official release of international arrival figures by Statistics South Africa for January to March 2024 points to a robust and growing South African tourism sector.

International tourist arrivals from January to March 2024 totalled 2.4 million, representing a remarkable 15.4% increase when compared with the same period in 2023.

For 2023, we welcomed more than 8,5million tourists from across the world with 6.4million of those arrivals from the rest of the African continent.

Africa continues to lead the way

South Africa welcomed 1.8 million tourist arrivals from the rest of the African continent between January and March 2024, marking a significant 74.5% of all arrivals.

Zimbabwe and Ghana stood out for their remarkable growth, with Zimbabwe experiencing a 21.8% increase in tourist arrivals to South Africa when compared to 2023, totalling more than 613 000 arrivals.

Ghana recorded a 249,4% surge when compared to 2023, reaching 7,904 arrivals for January to March 2024.

Ghana's immense performance can be attributed the fact that travellers between Ghana and South Africa no longer need visas for a period of up to 90 days within a calendar year, for purposes of business or tourism.

South Africa and Ghana announced a visa-waiver scheme on 1 November 2023, allowing citizens to travel freely between them.

This coupled, with targeted integrated marketing initiatives executed by SA Tourism to attract visitors from this market makes for a winning formula for the growth of our sector.

Travelers from other parts of the world also continued to show their appreciation and love for South Africa.

For the first 3 months of 2024, tourist arrivals from the Americas registered at more than 118 000 reflecting a 12.4% growth compared to the same period in 2023.

From January to March 2024, South Africa saw more than 420 000 tourist arrivals from Europe, an 8.6% increase compared to the same period in 2023.

The United Kingdom remains the top European source market, with more than 125 000 tourists choosing South Africa, marking a 5.3% growth compared to 2023.

Germany experienced a 9.9% increase in arrivals compared to 2023, amounting to over 98,900 tourists.

Asian markets also showed significant growth with more than 49 000 arrivals from the region, representing an astounding 25.4% when compared to the same period in 2023.

We welcomed more than 16 209 tourists from India and saw over 11 000 arrivals from China, a massive 82% surge in 2024 when compared to 2023.

DOMESTIC TOURISM

On the domestic front, by the end of 2023, domestic trips had already reached over 130% of the 2019 level with domestic spending in 2023 seeing an increase of over 80% compared to spending in 2019.

South Africans have truly gone out for revenge tourism and have rediscovered their love for exploring their own country and we thank all our locals for supporting tourism businesses and job creation.

SHO'T LEFT TRAVEL WEEK

Also aligned to the Tourism Sector Master Plan, I am so please that once again, in our effort to address the affordability barrier and accessibility to information for domestic travellers, SA Tourism opened entries from yesterday, the 13th of May for the annual Sho't Left Travel Week.

The platform is open to all members of the tourism trade including tour operators, accommodation establishments, tourism attractions and experiences.

Sho't Left Travel Week will this year take place from the 2nd to the 8th of September this year and is a 7-day promotion of discounted South African tourism related deals and packages.

Commonly referred to as the GREAT SOUTH AFRICAN SALE, tourism businesses from around the country pledge to support tourism recovery and growth of the industry by packaging and offering their services and products to drive consumers to book their travel deals now and travel later at discounted rates.

The campaign aims to encourage South Africans to explore their own backyards and enjoy what the country has to offer throughout the year.

Sho't Left trade partners are encouraged to use the partners' platform: <https://profile.shotleft.co.za> to load their discounted deals.

Last year, we had a record number of 920 deals loaded for the Sho't Left Travel Week and 94 660 people visited to the website during Travel Week in 2023.

We invite more SA tourism companies to join the Sho't Left campaign this year.

Sho't Left week is specifically geared towards enticing locals to explore the hidden gems of our country including the unique experiences in our rural villages, townships and dorpiess.

WORKING WITH SATOVITO AND PROMOTING HIDDEN GEMS TOWNSHIPS, VILLAGES AND DORPIES.

Africa's Travel Indaba also plays a significant role in our efforts to promote inclusivity within the tourism sector.

We are unapologetic about celebrating diversity because we understand from our insights, that travellers seek more than just ordinary experiences.

They yearn for new, unique, unforgettable experiences that will form the cornerstone of lasting memories.

We call on all tourism sector partners to work with us to support and market the tourism offerings in our townships, villages and dorpiess and work with partners like the South African Township and Village Tourism Organisation (SATOVITO).

The presence of SMMEs at Africa's Travel Indaba, through the Department of Tourism, ensures that these fresh and unexplored experiences, which enrich our destination's diverse offerings, are showcased fully.

This year we are proud to fund the participation of 120 SMEs from across the country exhibiting at the hidden gems pavilion.

The Department of Tourism through the Market Access Support Programme (MASP), published a 'Call for Applications' inviting eligible small tourism enterprises to apply for support to participate and exhibit at Africa's Travel Indaba.

Under MASP, the department funds the costs of return economy airfare, accommodation including breakfast and lunch and exhibition/participation fees to SMEs to exhibit at national and international trade shows.

For the Indaba this year, we offered the opportunity to 120 small enterprises from the nine provinces to exhibit at ATI 2024, the leading province being KwaZulu-Natal with 28 exhibitors. 25 from Gauteng, 18 from Limpopo.

We have 11 SMEs from the Free State, 10 from Mpumalanga, 9 from the North West, 9 from the Eastern Cape, 9 from the Western Cape and 1 from the Northern Cape.

Some of the enterprises who previously benefitted from the MASP support ATI indicated that the programme worked well for them and benefitted them in terms of business growth.

Mr Moepadira from Neo Star Travel and Tours in KwaZulu-Natal says "Our business benefitted from increased visibility, new connections, and potential business growth"

Ms Charity Mahlangu from Charimo Travel Solutions in Mpumalanga said "We are excited to exhibit our offerings at ATI 2024, where will have the opportunity to network, connect, and collaborate with industry peers and leaders while engaging and attracting international tourists to drive the future of African Tourism".

Also very positive about the programme is Ms Putumani from SA Globetrotters in Eastern Cape who indicated that they are "excited to connect with industry leaders and showcase our innovative solutions at ATI 2024, make meaningful connections and drive business growth".

I encourage you to visit and support these emerging tourism businesses as I am certain they will offer you a new and fresh experience.

Let us support them so that they can grow and increase their contribution to the economy and job creation.

Earlier this year, the inaugural Township and Village Tourism Expo was hosted by the SA Township and Village Tourism Organisation (SATOVITO) at the Cradle of Humankind highlighting the importance of community-centric tourism experiences.

I am pleased that SATOVITO are also joining us for this year's Africa's Travel Indaba as is the organisation, Women in Tourism which exists to ensure that women are respected, recognized, represented, and rewarded in the sector.

It is from these organisations that we can continue adding new, immersive and unique experiences to our already wide-variety tourism offering.

So I want to appeal to all tourism stakeholders, let us work with SATOVITO and others to uplift and give more exposure to township, rural and village tourism.

The distinctive and quaint experiences certainly provide memories to last a life time.

TOURISM'S ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE:

The Tourism sector is a significant contributor to the country's economy and job creation numbers.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), preliminary numbers are that the South African Tourism sector created 1.3million jobs in 2023 – 8.7% of all jobs.

Preliminary estimates, according to the WTTC is that the tourism sector contributed 6.8% to the country's GDP worth R458,9billion.

Furthermore, the direct contribution of the Africa's Travel Indaba in 2023 to the South African economy is projected at R408.6 million.

An additional R776.4 million is projected to be generated through indirect and induced impacts, resulting in a total contribution to the South African economy of R1.2 billion.

Africa's Travel Indaba 2023 resulted in the creation and/or sustainment of around 2 295 jobs, 1 374 direct, 186 indirect and 735 induced temporary jobs in the South African economy.

INVESTMENT IN HISTORIC SITES

Earlier I spoke about our country's deep history and the Tourism Sector Master Plan.

As part of stimulating demand and investing in historic sites, the Department of Tourism has over many years invested in infrastructure at iconic and historic sites in our country.

Between 2019 and 2023 approximately R 211million of which R34million was from the Department of Tourism's budget was spent on sites of cultural heritage significance. The remainder of the budget was received from donor funding.

The funding for these projects were spent on the following:

The Robben Island Museum: For the planning and construction of the canopy restaurant, digitization of the Mayibuye archives, provision of interpretative signage, development of the Robben Island Museum Mobile App and tour guide training.

A R 25million investment was also made in providing Solar PV on the island which has drastically reduced energy bills.

At the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage site: R 15.5 million was provided for the development of various exhibition elements, these upgrades were concluded in 2021 and include the addition of bust sculptors, audio- visual equipment and ticketed parking infrastructure.

At the Baviaanskloof at the Cape Floral Kingdom World Heritage Site: R 57m funding secured from the European Union through National Treasury for the construction of the Baviaanskloof World Heritage Site Leopard Trail Huts and Interpretation Centre.

These projects were implemented in partnership with the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) and were both completed and handed over in March 2022.

Savings on the project costs directed towards staff accommodation which was approved in March 2023.

In the Northern Cape, the Department of Tourism funded the Khomani Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site with R 3.5 million in funding for the Interpretation Centre including exhibition and interpretative signage.

This historic space offers visitors a diversified, quality presentation of the cultural and natural heritage in the Kgalagadi National Park together with an interactive narrative on the Khomani San people of the Kalahari Region in the Northern Cape province. The Twee Rivieren Interpretative Centre was completed in 2023.

AIR ACCESS

Ladies and Gentlemen, while we invest in our tourism offerings, it is also important to ensure that we make it easier for travellers to reach our destinations.

Africa's tourism sector is open and thriving, offering various products and experiences catering to travellers' needs and preferences.

While our continent tourism's sector is looking really good and progressing we still need to work on certain areas that inhibit us from growing exponentially.

Air access in one of such critical area where a significant amount of work is needed urgently to improve air access in Africa and for the rest of the world to connect with us.

This is why along with my fellow African Tourism Ministers and captains of the global aviation industry engaged in a dialogue around improving Air Access in the African Ministers' Dialogue yesterday.

The time for talking is now over and it is time to finalise agreements and implement an enhanced air access system for Africa.

While we have seen great strides made in immigration policy regulations, and have witnessed the gains from these strides, some markets still remained with marked challenges in this regard.

Air connectivity in Africa has exceeded its 2019 level and was at 104% in March 2023.

Throughout my time as Minister of Tourism, I continue to work with various partners in reducing these barriers that deters visitors from opting to come to South Africa and I am proud to say that there has been some mutually-beneficial strategic partnership.

As an example, the codeshare agreement between Kenya Airways and South African Airways (SAA), which established direct flights between Nairobi and major South African cities, has enhanced accessibility and convenience for travellers, thereby stimulating tourism between the two countries.

I would like to take time to congratulate South Africa's national carrier, SAA on some really great development over the last year.

South African Airways recently announced the resumption of direct operations to Australia, with the first flights having taken off at the end of April.

In addition to this, several new routes have been launched here in South Africa since the last Africa's Travel Indaba. These include:

SAA commencing Johannesburg to Sao Paolo flights on October 31, 2023.

In September 2023, South African Airways (SAA) announced the launch of the Abidjan, Côte d' Ivoire route, flying three times weekly which started in November 2023.

Furthermore, Airlink also announced a new route from Mbombela to Johannesburg and Mozambique, and this route is set to launch a route in July 2024.

The SAA team is also exhibiting here at Africa's Travel Indaba this year and I trust we can look forward to many more deals and routes that will further connect our destination to the many travellers from all over the world, seeking to come visit and explore South Africa.

In the spirit of partnerships, one of Africa's Travel Indaba highlights is the airline Pavilion.

With representatives from various airlines this is where the connection of the aviation industry players with key decision-makers within our continent and across the globe takes place.

South Africa has seven active domestic airlines connecting over twenty cities.

Over 17.5 million seats are available for domestic flights in South Africa, still 19% below pre-pandemic levels.

Following a period over the past two years of higher fares, the average fares have started to slow with most airlines dropping fares.

This is particularly encouraging for domestic travellers but also great for international travellers who are looking to travel the length and breadth of our country.

Internationally, South Africa has 41 markets with active direct routes.

India, Canada, Spain, Italy and Russia do not have direct airlines despite being key markets, but we continue to work with various stakeholders both within the public and private sector to change this.

We are fully aware of the importance and impact of direct flights.

In this spirit and as we look forward to welcoming even more travellers from all corners of the world, we are pleased that over eight million seats are available for international flights to South Africa, this is up 8% over 2023 but remains 14% below pre-pandemic seat supply.

In terms of Top International Airlines by Region - Airlink, Emirates, and Ethiopian Airlines are the top airlines for travel to South Africa. SAA remains a key airline on the continent.

VISAS

Between January and December 2023, arrivals from Kenya recorded a remarkable 99% increase compared to 2022, reaching 42,403 arrivals.

Recent visa exemptions resulting in visa-free travel for Kenyans and South Africans between the two countries, as well as targeted destination marketing efforts.

These efforts have been instrumental in achieving this great success and surge in arrival numbers from Kenya to South Africa.

We are also starting to witness a similar growth trend with Ghana since South Africa and Ghana announced a visa-waiver scheme on 1 November 2023, allowing citizens to travel freely between them.

The visa-waiver allows for travel for periods of up to 90 days within a calendar year, for purposes of business or tourism.

South Africa continues to enhance ease of access for tourism priority markets.

The improvement included the addition into the visa waiver regime of travellers from countries such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, New Zealand, Tunisia, Ghana and Cuba.

Last year, the e-Visa system was expanded to 34 countries including India and China.

South Africa currently has visa waivers for 132 countries and is negotiating to extend this to a further 10 countries.

The Department of Tourism continues to work closely with the Department of Home Affairs and the Presidency to address visa issues.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

One of the key areas of working we have been working harder on over the past year, is enhancing safety measures for travellers.

All partners and stakeholders are working very closely with law enforcement agencies to ensure that delegates attending Africa's Travel Indaba are safe while doing business and visiting in KZN.

There will be visible policing around the city, particularly in the tourism nodes that will be frequented by Indaba delegates as well as around the Durban ICC Precinct.

We have Ambassador Programme running during Africa's Travel Indaba 2024, which employs tourism graduates to assist you our valued guest.

Visitors who need directions, information about where to shop, find a bank and or get a taxi can reach out to Tourism Ambassadors.

The ambassadors will be recognisable by their uniform and will be stationed at all the key hotels that will be hosting ATI delegates.

Over the past year, we have also made great strides with improved collaboration with the private sector on safety and security for travellers.

We relaunched the National Tourism Safety Forum made up of all three spheres of government, the SA Police, the National Prosecuting Authority, regional and local tourism associations and the private sector.

We have developed a tourism communications strategy, the Department of Tourism invested R174.5million to deploy more than 2 300 Tourism Monitors at key tourist attractions across the country to enhance safety.

The private sector has continued with its Tourism Angels programme and also rolled out the Secura Traveller app and operations centre linking tourists to more than 200 medical, security and other service providers via the app at a click of a button.

MARKETING SOUTH AFRICA AND THE NEW GLOBAL CAMPAIGN

Ladies and gentlemen, we have been busy in tourism and a key area of work we have undertaken over the past year is to bring greater alignment into our marketing.

We consulted extensively across the sector and with international and marketing specialists.

Our mission was to address the fragmentation of marketing by so many stakeholders and this has been addressed with one consistent message for all tourism stakeholders to market SA with.

The value of the new global is that it is about one universal message that we can all optimize, a unique consolidated messaging for the entire tourism sector.

The new global campaign is about building the memorability of our country and building awareness and interest for tourists to visit the country.

Through the campaign we showcase the exceptional nature of all our diverse experiences.

A Global Brand Campaign for South African Tourism plays a pivotal role in boosting the country's economy, enhancing our global reputation, and fostering positive relationships with visitors from around the world.

In terms of the strategic alignment to the business, the Global Brand Campaign helps with the achievement the organization's strategic goals, specifically aimed at enhancing awareness, fostering positive perceptions.

In response to calls for unified and consistent brand messaging, we are pleased that we have recruited special actors to tell the unique South African story to tell the world why they should visit South Africa.

Our new global campaign, will show the world South Africa through the eye of little ones and it will showcase the true magic and wonder of our unique and diverse destination.

COMPETITION AND COLLABORATION

Ladies and gentlemen, competition is often considered the lifeblood of destination marketing and tourism. However, it is important to note that competition should always be balanced with collaboration.

While healthy competition can drive growth and innovation, unhealthy competition can lead to a race to the bottom, with businesses and destinations undercutting each other on price and quality.

Therefore, as the tourism industry, let us foster a culture of healthy competition, where businesses and destinations are encouraged to compete on quality and innovation.

Last year, we signed partnership agreements with Google and Airbnb to collaborate on areas of work to enhance our tourism offerings and marketing thereof.

Let us remember that long-term success in the sector depends not only on competing but also on recognising the value of collaboration and partnerships.

And so, each player in the value chain has a unique role to play, and by working together, we can create seamless and memorable travel experiences for visitors - THAT is the spirit of Africa's Travel Indaba.

Tourism is not just about individual businesses or attractions; it's about the entire ecosystem working together to create value for wonder seekers.

For example, tour operators collaborate with hotels to create packages that meet travellers' needs and expectations.

At the same time, hotels work with local communities to provide authentic experiences.

I repeat, the African tourism value chain is not just about competition but equally collaboration.

We know that many travellers from various parts of the world do not only just want to come to one country on our African continent but that in fact they want to visit multiple countries in their one trip so they can get to experience the full vastness of Africa and its wonders.

In conclusion

Let me once again, welcome all our international delegates to South Africa.

I invite you to take time out to experience, the beauty of our landscapes, and the richness of our cultural heritage.

To all the South Africans, thank you for your contribution in ensuring that we welcome our visitors with warm and open arms.

As each and every one of you go into the next three days with vigour and zeal ready to make your mark, may enjoy connecting with old friends and colleagues as you build new lasting relationships and driving the growth and success of the African tourism sector.

I thank you and God Bless.

ENDS

For Media Enquiries:

Zara Nicholson

Media Liaison Officer – Office of the Minister of Tourism

Cell: +27 (0) 79 416 5996

Email: znicholson@tourism.gov.za