



**MINISTER
TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Speech by the Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille, World Tourism Day
Celebrations**

Venue: People's Park, ConHill, Braamfontein

Date: 27 September 2025

Deputy Chief Justice, of the Constitutional Court of South Africa Dunstan Mlambo

Deputy Minister of Tourism Maggie Sotyu

Lebogang Maile, Economic Development and Finance MEC here in Gauteng

Kwa Zulu Natal MEC for Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs, Rev. Musa Zondi

The Chairperson of South African Tourism Board, Dr Mzamo Masito

MMC's from the City of Johannesburg

And a special welcome to our senior citizens who are gracing us with their presence.

Good morning, goeie môre, sanibonani, salamalekum.

It is a profound honour to celebrate World Tourism Day 2025 here at Constitution Hill People's Park. This is not just a venue, but a place of memory and freedom. A reminder that democracy is not only about the rights we enjoy, but about the opportunities we create.

Deputy Chief Justice Mlambo, the Department has allocated R12 million to the development of this park. The Constitution Hill Precinct Development Plan designates the park as homage to the Constitutional Court in much the same way as the gardens in front of the Union Buildings.

Today, we gather to affirm a truth that grows clearer each day: tourism is not a side story, tourism is economic policy. It is a driver of jobs, of pride, and of transformation that is sustainable, inclusive, and unstoppable.

This year's theme, "Tourism and Sustainable Transformation," is more than a slogan. It is a global imperative. But we must give meaning to this buzz word "sustainable or sustainability". Sustainable transformation means that tourism's benefits must be shared widely. From our villages and townships to our metros and coastal hubs.

It means that as we grow, we safeguard the treasures that define us: our land, our heritage, and our culture. This transformation is not abstract. It is visible when a family-owned guesthouse in Bizana is fully booked, when walking tours by a young entrepreneur in Mamelodi tell our stories with pride and when a small café in Mpumalanga becomes a must-visit stop.

This is how tourism builds not only an economy, but a nation. South Africans are rediscovering the joy of being tourists in their own land.

This year during our Sho't Left Travel Week we had 650 deals.

Between January and June 2025, domestic trips increased by 14,8%, with 3.8 million holiday trips recorded contributing R15,4 billion to the GDP. During that same period, we welcomed 5 million international visitors, who spent R48,7billion. These arrivals through our port of entries mark a 12% increase.

In July 2025, we welcomed over 880 000 international visitors, a 26% increase compared to the same month last year. These figures are set to increase with the roll out of the Electronic Travel Authorisation.

The ETA which goes live next month in a phased approach, is set to increase international arrivals by 1 million creating between 80 000 to 100 000 jobs. This will add on to the 1,8million jobs the sector is already sustaining while contribution 8.8% to South Africa's GDP.

Friends, we continue to explore creative forms to market our beautiful country.

MEC Zondi, Africa's Travel Indaba goes back to your province for the next 5 years, and MEC Maile, Gauteng will remain the home of Meetings Africa also for the next 5 years. Tourism month, 2025 also marked one of the highlights of South Africa's G20 Presidency.

We held our inaugural Tourism Investment Summit where presented first 8 tourism infrastructure projects valued at nearly R1 billion. The summit has been impactful with growing interest being expressed. We continue to grow the pipeline of bankable projects, which will be presented at the next year's investment summit.

Friends, our young people are designing the future of tourism. This month we crowned the winners of the inaugural Tourism Hackathon. Students from 21 Higher education institutions competed to make your travel experience more memorable through AI solutions. These youth presented their innovations to the G20 Tourism Minister's in Mpumalanga to much fanfare.

Another highlight of this year is Kgodumodumo Dinosaur Interpretation Centre at SanPark's Golden gate in the Free State. Since the launch in June 2025, more than 50 000 people visited the centre.

Yes, we had Dinosaurs. Read more about it, in tomorrow's edition of the Sunday Times.

Next year, South Africa will host the LIV Golf right here in Gauteng's Steyn City and in 2027 we host the ICC Cricket World Cup. These are sporting events that translate into jobs and livelihoods.

Friends, on this World Tourism Day, let us raise our voices with pride: We are building a tourism sector that is not just bigger, but better. Not just profitable, but inclusive. Not just competitive, but sustainable.

Here at Constitution Hill, the home of freedom and resilience, we declare that tourism is economic policy, tourism is transformation, tourism is our future. Join us as we explore the Johannesburg city centre through Jozi My Jozi's walking tours and book a tour.

My World Tourism Day celebration journey ends at the Soweto Expo, come and explore what more South Africa's communities have to offer tourists.

The two day expo boasts live entertainment, unique hand-crafted products and an opportunity to mingle with the entrepreneurs who make tourism tick.

Remember, every photo shared, every review posted, every memory made here tells the world: this is a country where transformation is real, and joy is everywhere.

THANK YOU

THE END