



tourism

Department:  
Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **Speech by Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela at the Women and Youth Economic opportunities imbizo, Ebutsini Cultural Precinct, Gert Sibande District, Mpumalanga Province**

**26 October 2021**

Let me take this opportunity to once again acknowledge the collective leadership of members of the Gert Sibande Local House of Traditional Leaders united in their diversity

Deputy Chairperson, Inkhosi MS Mnisi,  
Inkhosi SL Nkosi,  
Inkhosi TP Nkosi  
Provincial Chairperson, Inkhosi SG Ngomane  
Local Chairperson, Inkhosi JV Nhlapho  
Inkhosi B Hlatshwako

I also greet amongst those already mentioned

**Gert Sibande District Executive Mayor Cllr Muzi Chirwa**  
**Cllr Dan Nkosi**, Executive Mayor: Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality  
**Hon Thandi Shongwe**, MEC of Arts, Culture and Sport  
CEOs – Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, SEDA, NYDA, SEFA, NEF, MEGA, and CATHSSETA  
Municipal Manager: Gert Sibande District Municipality  
**Hon Vusumuzi Mkhathswa**, MEC of Finance, Economic Development and Tourism  
**Hon Sdumo Dlamini**, Deputy Minister for Small Business Development  
Delegates from the tourism industry, media and business,

Ladies and gentlemen

Thank you for the great support and collaboration as evidenced by the diversity, yet common purpose of those who have gathered here with us today.

I would like to start by quoting our former President Thabo Mbeki when he said, **“When will the day come that our dignity will be fully restored, when the purpose of our lives will no longer be merely to survive until the sun rises tomorrow?”**

This is the question we should all be asking ourselves and seek to answer.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the lives of ordinary South Africans. It has glaringly exposed the socio-economic fault lines of the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. Women were the hardest hit as there was an extra burden on women-headed households.

The tourism sector is one of the critical intervention areas that have been identified in the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan as a key driver of economic recovery in the country. We can view this COVID-era in two ways — that it spells the end of tourism as we knew it, or that it will usher in an opportunity to create a new trajectory.

The National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) and the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan prioritise the advancement of women and youth in tourism.

Anchored on three interlinked pillars or strategic themes: protecting and rejuvenating supply, reigniting demand and strengthening enabling capability for long term sustainability, the plans endorse

programmes that elevate women and youth entrepreneurship to stimulate sector recovery amidst the CoVid19 pandemic.

## **WOMEN EMPOWERMENT REMAINS HIGH ON OUR DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

President Ramaphosa recently launched the Women Economic Assembly which is a partnership between government, the private sector and women organisations to advance women's economic empowerment and inclusion.

The assembly is a vehicle to reshape our economy, and enhance the opportunities and prospects of millions of South African women.

Together we must do more to ensure that our vision of an equal and just society becomes a lived reality for women. The empowerment of women is an integral part of our effort to achieve inclusive growth, create jobs and expand economic opportunities for all.

The late Secretary of the United Nations Kofi Annan says this about women empowerment, "**There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women.**" It is to this end that our intervention through the Women in Tourism Programme are aimed at accelerating the development and empowerment of women.

Since its inception in 2013 -The Women in Tourism Programme have to date included training on personal development, supporting women to develop a competitive advantage in their businesses and provision of capacity building initiatives.

Participants in the programme include entrepreneurs, women working in the sector, students and women from the informal sector who seek to enter the tourism value chain.

## **WOMEN IN TOURISM - EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

Through our Executive Development Programme, we have capacitated twenty (20) African women managers with an NQF Level 8 at the University of South Africa.

The programme is meant to create a pool from which employers can tap into to close the gap of African women in executive management positions in the sector.

Ultimately it is to prepare them for board and shareholder responsibilities in the higher echelons of a transformed tourism industry we seek to build, and achieve 30% representation of women in leadership and ownership levels in the next five years.

In addition to these development programmes the department continues to expand initiatives and creation of an enabling environment to accelerate women's participation in supply chains through preferential procurement in the public and private sector, and our financing and relief mechanisms have remained unashamedly bias to women and youth.

## **THE YOUTH SHOULD REMAIN BENEFICIARIES OF OUR INITIATIVES.**

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) aims to promote employment opportunities and the transfer of skills to members of the community aimed at supporting the development of community-based tourism, thereby stimulating job creation, sector transformation, economic empowerment, community benefit and geographic spread of tourism investment.

The training programmes of the Department of Tourism are aimed at giving learners industry accredited qualifications which exposes them to the work environment, and prepares them for a career in tourism. **The Hospitality Youth Training Programme** is a twelve-month learnership programme targeting the unemployed youth. Learners are being trained in tourism and hospitality related fields to enable them to gain experience in the overall operations of the hospitality industry.

**The National Tourism Monitors Programme** is targeted to train and deploy youth to assist with the safety of the tourists at key tourism sites with high volumes of tourists or those sites that have a high potential of personal risk to tourists.

**The National Youth Chefs Training Programme** is implemented in partnership with South African Chefs Association to address the urgent need for cooks and chefs in South Africa's growing hospitality subsector.

**The Wine Service Youth Training Programme** is implemented to train unemployed youth on Bar Attendant, Drink Services, and Customer Care and to place them in various establishments for experiential learning for the duration of the project.

**The Food Safety Programme** where hospitality and tourism unemployed graduates from Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges are trained and hosted in partnership with private sector as Food Safety Assurers.

**Tourist guiding** is a critical component of the tourism value chain as it plays an essential role in creating a positive image of our country. In South Africa, tourist guiding is a regulated profession governed by national legislation and policies. In order to improve our service offering and enhance the tourism experience, tour guides were also trained in Mandarin, to address the need of our Chinese markets. Young people with an aptitude for business are encouraged to grab entrepreneurial opportunities available and start their own businesses. These programmes will empower and assist youth to be confident of their future as Franklin D Roosevelt has correctly put it when he says, **"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."**

## **WHAT ARE WE DOING, THAT WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO DO TOGETHER**

The Presidential Employment Stimulus Initiative has enabled and facilitated cooperation in the public sector and demonstrated the importance of social partnership of. Government, business, labour and civil society.

Through the Presidential Employment Stimulus, we have brought young people into the labour force in far greater numbers in an unprecedented manner in a short space of time. Some 84 per cent of the participants in phase one were young people under the age of 35, and two-thirds were women.

The Enterprise Development Support Programme as one of its strategic programmes that facilitate the growth and sustainability of tourism Small, Micro to Medium Enterprises (SMMEs). The objective of the programme is to provide business developmental support to tourism SMMEs by reducing business failure, creating jobs and increasing access to markets, this includes funding, a market access programme, tourism grading funding and incubators to become more sustainable and by doing so, create more jobs.'

The Enterprise Development Directorate has successfully established four (4) tourism business incubators in four different provinces. These incubators are located are classified as active rural tourism nodes popular with international and domestic tourist's visitors. Their unique selling points make it ideal in creating an inclusive tourism economy through development and support of targeted tourism SMMEs. Each incubator enrolls fifty (50) tourism SMMEs and runs for a period of two (2) years.

## **TOURISM DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE AND INVESTMENT**

As the 1996 Tourism White Paper puts it, "... tourism provides enormous potential to create linkages with other sectors of the economy – agriculture, manufacturing and services... Tourism generates demand and production in other sectors of the South African economy." Therefore, Tourism is an unrivalled demand stimulator.

Funding and market information remain the two major stumbling blocks to greater participation of youth and women in the tourism sector. This is particularly the case in light of the COVID-19 pandemic which has hit youth and women-owned tourism enterprises the hardest.

### **Tourism Transformation fund (TTF)**

The TTF is a dedicated capital investment mechanism that was developed to drive transformation in the sector. It assists small and micro black-owned tourism enterprises to expand and grow, creating a new generation of black-owned tourism enterprises.

The TTF provides a combination of grant funding from the Department and debt financing or equity contributions from the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) to facilitate capital investment in the tourism sector by prospective black investors.

### **Green Tourism Incentive Programme (GTIP)**

The GTIP is a resource efficiency grant funding mechanism that assists private sector tourism enterprises to reduce the cost of investing in energy and water efficient operations, thus enabling them to adhere to responsible tourism practices whilst reducing their cost of operations.

Through the implementation of the TTF and the GTIP, we envision creating a sector that is inclusive and sustainable, creating a pathway for new entrants to implement innovative businesses that make tourism thrive. I encourage all enterprises, especially youth and women owned businesses, to apply for both initiatives and contribute to transforming our sector and upholding responsible tourism practices. . Government remains committed to continue to provide financial resources and market information aimed at assisting the recovery and rejuvenation of tourism businesses, working closely with other government departments, development finance institutions and other government agencies.

### **GERT SIBANDE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY (GSDM):**

The Local Economic Development (LED) Strategy for the GSDM on Furthering Tourism Development states that, "This programme seeks to strengthen the tourism sector through enhancing the marketing and promotion of the region as a tourism destination." The LED Strategy recognizes the strength of the GS District Municipality from the attractions' perspective, it states that the District has huge natural resource endowment for tourism, namely: a wetland, historical sites, and heritage and liberation routes. Mpumalanga has extraordinary tourism assets and potential for further growth of the economy through Tourism. The Department will continue to support the work of local and provincial government through destination planning, enhancement and investment co-ordination support.

Aligned with this, using the anchor of the Kruger National Park, there is also work being done to support the development of new community owned and run facilities in properties that border the Kruger National Park.

It is important that women and youth in tourism participates actively in the IDP stakeholder consultations processes in order to ensure that projects that respond to their needs are prioritized in the IDP of relevant local and district municipalities.

Some of the challenges with tourism projects includes lack of support infrastructure like access roads, municipal airports, broadband, etc., required to make these projects commercially viable and are included in the integrated development plans (IDPs) and spatial development frameworks (SDFs) of municipalities.

The investments should further demonstrate value of the opportunity: like potential to stimulate other investment or economic activity, with community benefits , local residents buy-in and support by relevant provincial tourism departments and inclusion in the integrated development and economic plans and budgets.

As I conclude

I call upon the tourism stakeholders, especially youth and women in tourism to lobby for the development of these tourism assets ensuring that some of the plans for critical infrastructure to unlock the value of tourism are built into the IDP, in order to attract funding from strategic funding partners It is in our hands to transform tourism and ensure that our emergence from COVID-19 becomes a turning point for the sector and our country.

Let me once again borrow from President Mbeki when he **says "At the dawn of a new life, our practical actions must ensure that none can challenge us when we say, we are a nation at work to build a better life."**

For all of us to succeed, this calls for greater collaboration between government and the private sector.

I thank you.