



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Speech by Minister of Tourism Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane at the Tourism Month media launch at Drakensberg, KwaZulu-Natal

23 August 2019

MEC Nomusa Dube-Ncube, MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs.
Deputy Minister for Tourism, Mr Fish Mahlalela
Speaker of Uthukela District Municipality Cllr Strydom
SAT Board Member present Mr Dube
The team from the department led by DG Tharage
SAT Acting CEO Sthembiso Dlamini
Mr Chris Hearne, Drakensburg experience tourism association
Members of media, ladies and gentlemen

As we launch our Tourism Month campaign which is in September to coincide with the World Tourism Day - hosted annually in the same month on the 27th, let me begin with a quote by American Author Pat Conroy who said: "once you have travelled, the voyage never ends, but is played out over and over again in the quietest chambers. The mind can never break off from the journey".

We embark on a campaign to encourage South Africans to explore the beautiful country because we understand that our historical past made it impossible for a majority of South Africans to travel and thus even today that historical reality still shows.

One of the concerns often raised about traveling mainly by South Africans is the affordability of traveling. As we announce the Shot' Left travel week, we are cognisant that it still doesn't speak to what many have raised with us and we will continue to improve on it using the feedback they have provided to us.

The theme for this year's World Tourism Day is "*Tourism and jobs – a better future for all*", which highlights the tourism sector's vast capability to create jobs and therefore reduce the country's unemployment rate. We remain confident that tourism will contribute to our country turning to positive economic growth desired by our government and also contribute to more jobs to its maximum potential.

The total consumption of tourism through domestic and international tourism for 2018 generated value that directly accounted for 2.9% of our country's Gross Domestic Product, and accounted for 4.5% of our total employment. Domestic tourism in 2018 contributed R26,4 billion in revenue and we believe with aggressive campaign and marketing this figure can increase to almost double.

Tourism month is also about getting people from outside the borders of our country to travel and experience our country's diverse offerings. To this end, fundamental to the achievement of the over 21 million international tourist target by 2030 is to firstly continue to work closely with home Affairs on visa facilitation to increase access to our country by our tourists. Secondly, work closely with Minister of Police and our sector to address the concerns of safety. We have agreed yesterday with the Minister of Police to bring all our teams together in the coming two weeks. Lastly and most importantly, we need to develop and drive an aggressive marketing campaign for both domestic and international markets. This will

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involve target marketing to countries with potential for our international market and focused campaigns, for example, to millennials in the language they understand and by the people they can relate to.

In an effort to drive international marketing, in the coming months, I will lead a delegation that will unlock more potential to the Asian markets focusing on China and India, as well as unlocking potential in the Middle East and North American markets. We will continue to work extensively to sustain our current markets so that there is still balance and we don't lose our current numbers while pursuing new markets to expand and grow.

On the domestic front, we are working on mechanism to ensure that people with low household income know of their options for traveling. As part of promoting domestic tourism, Standard Bank has offered to sponsor five individuals who will spend a weekend with the Minister of Tourism during the month of September. This will be people selected by Minister and preference will be given to people who fall in the category of auxiliary services such cleaners, security guards etc.

I am deeply encouraged by the support of the private sector and other stakeholders to walk this journey with us. A journey of a people united by the resolve to leverage off our country's rich cultural diversity, our wildlife, our national parks, our heritage, our beaches, the breathtaking scenic views of our beautiful country, a people willing to welcome their own and the world to share in all that is grand about their beloved nation and to also share that simple warm everlasting human touch in their interaction with others. I call on all South Africans to be ambassadors of their country, to travel and experience its length and breadth. Charles Edward Jefferson, an American Congregational clergyman, teaches us that "Patriotism is a thing of the heart. A man is a true patriot if his heart beats true to his country."

The Sho't Left Travel Week will be held between 23 and 29 September 2019, and will present great travel deals, with airlines, hotel groups, tour operators and tourist attractions offering discounts of up to 50. These deals must be bought during this week but can be redeemed at any other time depending on the partner's terms and conditions. This presents an opportunity for South Africans to tour and experience their own country. We also have SanParks running a week of free entry to selected announce free entry and this year it includes weekend starting Sunday 8th to 15th September

Importantly, the period from January to April 2019, showed exceptional growth on the domestic tourism front when compared to the same period last year. Domestic holiday trips rose by 59,7% – highlighting the tremendous impact of the Sho't Left Travel Week campaign with South Africans redeeming their deals and enjoying their country.

Through the Sho't Left Travel Week, South African Tourism, in partnership with the greater tourism industry, enticed South Africans to travel their country. Overall, total domestic trips grew by 11% during January to April 2019.

The campaign also gives potential trade partners the opportunity to upload discounted deals and packages on the Sho't Left Travel Week website - www.shotleft.co.za

So for those who have not yet registered with Sho't Left Travel Week, I urge you to do so soon.

I thank you