



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, tourism honours the Khomani San community with the launch of the Twee Rivieren Interpretative Centre in the Kgalagadi National Park**

**DATE: 19 July 2023**

Deputy Minister, Fish Mahlalela

Northern Cape Premier, Dr Zamani Saul

Northern Cape MEC for Economic Development and Tourism, Abraham Volsoo

ZF Mgcawu District Municipality Mayor, Cllr Maureen Basson

Dawid Kruiper Municipality Mayor, Cllr Michael Segede

Khomani San Chief Petrus Vaalbooi

SANParks Managing Executive, Mr Property Mokoena

Tour guide graduates

Community members

Members of the media

Good afternoon, goeie middag

It is my great honour to be with you all today at the launch of this very important addition to tourism reflecting the important history of the Khomani San community in this region.

Today, tourism honours the Khomani San community with the launch of the Twee Rivieren Interpretative Centre here in the Kgalagadi National Park.

Traversing landscapes of space and time, the Kalahari is known for its rich cultural and tourism offerings of the Kalahari Red Dune Route.

The route passes through small communities such as Mier, Ashkam, Noenieput and Andreisvale, still home to the world's oldest ancient tribes, the!Khomani San.

The sound of the San reverberates through centuries, echoing the stories of its people.

Pulsating through the Kalahari, the gift of these ancient people will be shared with all as we launch the R3.5 million Twee Rivieren (±Khomani San) Interpretative Centre and Narrative Development Project by the Department of Tourism.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted and deeply honoured to launch the Twee Rivieren Interpretative Centre project in the Kgalagadi National Park as it pays homage to the unique culture of the ±Khomani San.

Through this centre, the Department of Tourism has enabled the local community to proudly share the narrative of their captivating culture to thousands of tourists who visit the park annually.

Modern technology meets ancient wisdom as the Interpretative Centre will provide a unique stop for tourists at Twee Rivieren.

The Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park is the largest conservancy area in the world. The Park spans across three countries, South Africa, Botswana and Namibia and Twee Rivieren is the South African entrance gate.

With its almost 3.7 million hectares of sparsely vegetated, red sand dunes and dry riverbeds, it is home to vast herds of gemsbok, springbok, blue wildebeest, red hartebeest, eland as well as black-mane lion, leopard, cheetah and smaller game.

This area and its awe-inspiring landscapes, views and experiences is a jewel in our crown of South African tourism offerings.

The significance of the park can be attributed to its compelling history, and a very rich cultural heritage, with the original inhabitants, the ±Khomani San living close by and able to contribute in the interpretation of the park.

The development of the Twee Rivieren Interpretative Centre and narrative development included the development of the centre and the collection of narratives and storyline of the local ±Khomani San communities within the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park.

The project aims to offer visitors a diversified and quality demonstration of the cultural and natural heritage of the Park, through an interactive exhibition and presentation at the Interpretation Centre.

The narratives and interpretation centre will also ensure that tourist guides have access to information that is comprehensive, factually correct and objective.

The exhibition installation will provide visitors with a demonstration of the cultural and natural heritage of the Park and will be interactive so as to make it an immersive experience.

Despite its rich cultural heritage, there was no interpretation centre to help visitors to gain full understanding and appreciation of the cultural landscape.

This R3.5 million project was funded by the Department of Tourism, and SANParks has been appointed as the Implementing Agency.

The centre is situated in a rural node within the Northern Cape Province, one of the regions identified by government for socio-economic development.

The project scope of work included: the conversion of an old existing building into the Interpretative Centre, situated in the middle of the Twee Rivieren rest camp and is the only access point for visitors from South Africa.

The refurbishment of the centre started in 2021 was completed in March 2023 and also includes a Market Tree/ “Selling Point” where San crafters can sell their products.

The Market Tree aspect was funded by the Northern Cape Department of Development and Tourism and SANParks.

The Market Tree provides an opportunity for direct economic contribution to the local communities to sell their crafts to visitors.

To further give expression to this tourism development project, the Department of Tourism implemented tourist guide training for ten (10) beneficiaries from the Khomani San and Mier communities.

The learners have completed their training as both Nature and Culture Site Guides for the Kgalagadi Transfontier Park and surroundings areas.

This training allows community members to directly benefit from the interpretation centre and tourism activities in the area.

The training was implemented by an accredited training provider called Drumbeat Academy and concluded on 14 July 2023.

The launch of this centre speaks to our mission of destination development through the upgrade tourism infrastructure and constantly improving our tourism offering so that we increase the number of visitors to this region.

The Northern Cape is a destination filled with rich history of San communities and experiences that are hard to find anywhere else in the world.

The outcomes of this initiative was to improve the overall visitor experience of tourists to the Red Dune Kalahari Region, facilitate educational trips of school groups and provide job and entrepreneurial opportunities for the local San communities in Rietfontein, Ashkam and Mier.

This project has once again demonstrated how we can grow inclusive tourism through partnerships and collaboration.

**Other projects in the region by the Department of Tourism include:**

Mier Tourism SMME Incubator Programme for the development and support to small tourism enterprises.

The Department of Tourism invested R150million for the national roll-out which included the Mier Tourism SMME Incubator. Beneficiaries included community members from Local San communities in Rietfontein, Ashkam, Mier.

Another project in recent years by the Department of Tourism was the SANParks Infrastructure Maintenance Programme which saw maintenance work done in the 19 national parks across the country.

This EPWP project employs local communities surrounding these parks.

The Department invested R120million for the national roll-out and in this region, community members surrounding the national parks, i.e, Namakwa, Kgalagadi and Augrabies benefitted from this project with work opportunities.

The Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela is also the appointed District Development Model (DDM) Champion for the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province.

As part of these duties, the Deputy Minister had a number of visits to the District including the most recent activities which took place in November last year to the Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality.

Together with the provincial and local governments, traditional leaders, the communities, the tourism authorities and SANParks, we will continue working on all fronts to advance inclusive economic growth through programmes of community beneficiation.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to all the officials and partners involved in this important project for their work and completing this important tourism and historic centre.

It adds yet another attraction and dimension to our country's vibrant tourism offering as we say to the world: We are open for business and we are open for tourism.

I also want to encourage South Africans to visit the Northern Cape and this centre and explore South Africa's newest world heritage site – The Khomani San Cultural Landscape and join a guided walk with the San Khomani to rediscover the ancient wisdom, customs and folklore of this ancient tribe.

I urge South Africans to support this year's Sho't Left Travel week by signing up for discounted travel deals for South Africans.

Participating tourism establishments are offering discounts of up to 50% off during the week starting from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of September to encourage South Africans to travel our beautiful, vibrant and diverse country.

South Africans can book their discounted travel during Travel Week but can embark on their local holidays at any time they choose.

South African Tourism will promote all Sho't Left Travel Week deals on various marketing platforms.

Please register on [deals.southafrica.net](https://deals.southafrica.net) during the month of August 2023.

Thank you all once again for the work on this project and for being with us at this launch today.

To the local communities, I want to say, this is your centre, your history and your project, protect it and show visitors the best there is to see in the Northern Cape.

Baie Dankie, God Bless

**Ends/**

Issued by: Zara Nicholson Media Liaison Officer to Minister Patricia de Lille, MP

Cell: +27 (0) 79 416 5996

Email: [znicholson@tourism.gov.za](mailto:znicholson@tourism.gov.za)