



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Speech by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, at the NTCE Gala Dinner

30 September 2016

Ladies and gentlemen,

I was here nearly a month ago when we had the media launch for this event. Then already, there was great excitement and a buzz. The air was charged with infectious energy. The scene was set – Free State was ready! And now we are here and true to its hashtag - the Free State burns like a wild fire! My interaction with the learners earlier today as well as the walkabout is absolute testament to that.

The Free State is fast claiming the top accolade in being the best national events host. Your gracious willingness to host the NTCE lends impetus to this. For that, I applaud you! Halala Free State! Halala!

This event takes place at an exciting time when the tourism landscape is evolving. It is happening at the time when the potential value of the platform of the NTCE must be maximised and its economic potential realised – across the value chain.

In its seventh consecutive year, NTCE is the largest tourism education event in South Africa and was initiated in 2007 to address challenges in the supply of skills to the South African tourism industry. It was used as a lever to advance strategies to promote investment in human capital in this sector and in doing so, was aligned to objectives of the National Tourism Sector Strategy and the National Tourism Sector Skills Strategy.

The NTCE represents ideas, initiatives and active engagements between education, curriculum developers and the private sector, who share the common goal of taking skills development in tourism to the next level. It also seeks to improve the training of tourism educators by providing seminars to empower educators. This is augmented by the annual Tourism Teacher Awards, presented at the NTCE to reward those who make remarkable contributions in the teaching of tourism subjects.

This is the second year in Bloemfontein. While we take the lessons from the past, we fuse it with the energy and enthusiasm of the present. We take those lessons and turn them into growing opportunities. And of course, we take the successes and celebrate them!

The Bloemfontein Metro is a gracious host and its hospitality should be memorably experienced and remembered forever by NTCE stakeholders that will flood the city during the event. It should leave a social footprint in the hearts of its visitors. The Free State NTCE 2016 is also riding on a wave of the Tourism Month festivities that were hosted by this province. The NTCE in its own objective and right as tourism event, contributes to the promotion of tourism in the context of tourism month activities as it promotes tourism as a career and profession of choice. In this regard we expect about 9000 learners from all over the country to descend to the heart of this land, Bloemfontein in the Free State and interact with industry players as their potential employers. They are exhibiting their company products selling themselves as employers of choice. A much more improved Hospitality Corner led by the Hilton Hotel Worldwide Group is expected this year with a vibrant Chefs and Mixology Corners.

I am also told that other provinces are here with increased numbers of learners this year. They are upbeat and ready to square up in the competitions that learners will face each other on at the NTCE 2016. I am also encouraged to hear that educators view the NTCE learner competitions in a very serious development light for learners such that they said it would be difficult to attend if these competitions were to be discontinued. This tells of the developmental impact the NTCE competitions have on

learners. The platform can however be further improved and elevated to higher NTCE level such that it receives the necessary focus and attention it deserves.

The Youth Business Zone (YBZ) is also said to be growing in terms of the quality of participants and their contributions with business ideas. The two pilot idea owners from the Eastern Cape Province that were assisted financially by NTCE Partners through the SABS as their coach and mentor are also attending the NTCE event this year to motivate young on unleashing their business talents and potential and compete in the YBZ platform. The two YBZ beneficiaries from the Eastern Cape are part of the NTCE 2012 – 2014 Legacy Project for the province who will be supported until they are independently operational. The Free State Province is also expected to produce its own NTCE young entrepreneurs through the YBZ platform from this year and next year.

The Virtual Classroom and Recruitment Arena platform is also in as a stronger version this year having learnt from last year's lessons. Young people will be exposed to existing vacancies in the sector and apply for them online on the spot. They will also be coached and guided on how to handle job interviews in case they are called for interviews. Personal grooming and confidence building are part of the coaching sessions to be held. It is overall aimed at empowering young people with knowledge and skill to better understand themselves, properly brand themselves and are enabled to properly sell themselves when looking for a job including during interviews. Industry stakeholders are urged to source their internship and learnership candidates as well offer their company bursaries to young people and educators at the NTCE 2016. Their profiles will be published as part of the NTCE platform if they do so.

The aeroplane simulator from South African Airways (SAA) is on display again this year. It was a compelling attraction last year and is still is this time around. Everybody, not only learners, even people passing by the street would come in just to see how an aeroplane looks like inside. This platform does not only show the aircraft but has professionals that work inside the aircraft who then tell learners about professional careers that exist in the aviation industry and what it takes to be such professionals e.g. pilots, hostesses, technicians, etc.

Educators do have their own NTCE feast through the educators seminars coordinated by a partnership led by Umalusi with Global Travel and Tourism Partnership South Africa (GTTPSA) and Department of Basic Education (DBE). Industry speakers are invited to present on different topics. The GTTPSA will also present the outcome of its national schools competitions and the Best Tourism Teacher Awards 2016 will also be announced.

The NTCE 2016 is really assuming its true character of being "melting pot" where all tourism education and training stakeholders meet, engage and interact on issues of demand and supply of skills in the sector. It must live up to its slogan that says "NTCE is not just a paper grabbing platform, but an interactive exercise". It is not like any other careers expo, as it brings all elements of Tourism Human Resources Development on board. It is the biggest education and training event in tourism.

We are looking forward to a fulfilling final day tomorrow and we want to thank all stakeholders that made this event a success.

I would like to end with the following quote: "A child's mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled." And what better fire than the Free State wild fire! Let's burn!

I thank you

Background – Who benefits from NTCE?

First the youth; by the youth we refer to high school (grade 9 – 12) and TVET College learners, university students and unemployed tourism graduates or youth. This is the primary target group for the NTCE as they are the people our primary objective talks to when we promote tourism (inclusive of hospitality, travel, conservation, gambling and other related sub sectors) as a career, profession and business (entrepreneurship) of choice. The various interactive platforms that translate this objective into reality include the industry speakers' platform where engagements with young people take place on what the industry is all about and has got to offer. The exhibition platforms and other youth engagements with industry actually serve this purpose. That is precisely the reason why industry stakeholders are so important to be part of this process to ensure young people acquire the necessary exposure on who and what this industry is made up of. In that way they are enabled to make informed decisions to continue studying tourism as well as committing themselves to a profession in the industry. Their commitment to serve in the industry does not happen by default as it happened with most people in this room and

elsewhere in the industry. It must be by design that a young person decides to take tourism as a career and profession because of exposure to industry and opportunities that exist. That will ensure we attract the right people for the right job at the right time. This will then enhance our service excellence from a position of understanding, positive attitude informed by the urge and passion to work in this industry. In a nutshell, the NTCE actually saves young people from making career choices by default and they lend themselves in the industry unplanned. It however presents them with exciting opportunities that exists and they therefore get spoilt for choice.

Secondly for the industry, we refer to all industry product owners, captains and value chain participants. The NTCE offers the industry an opportunity to 'sell' themselves to young people especially in the face of unfavourable perceptions that young people have about this industry. As industry stakeholders sell themselves in terms of what their businesses are all about and offer as well as their overall contribution in the industry and the economy individually or collectively. In that way, they present a positive picture to young people that negates the negative perceptions they harbour and instead presents them with a host of exciting and real career and professional opportunities that exist. This is done with the background understanding that young people are not only a source for future labour but they are potential entrepreneurs and tourists of the future. The tourist element in this regard also plays its part even with the current situation, in that if a young person is sold on a tourism product and goes back home with a positive perspective about the product, the parents will definitely know about it to an extent of even be convinced to buy and consume the services of the product. So there is also a commercial value in selling tourism products to young people in this regard as the latter benefit is surely derived through direct product marketing to young people. You may not be concluding deals at the NTCE as expected in a platform like here at Indaba, but depending on how best you sell your product to young people, the potential exist for industry stakeholders to benefit commercially. In future we will probably find an appropriate marketing concept to sell this aspect of the NTCE benefit to industry. It is therefore very important for the industry stakeholders to position and prepare themselves timeously for the NTCE 2016 so as to come in numbers, exhibit and as guest speakers to learners at this year's event.

Thirdly for government, by government we refer to all three spheres of government and their related public entities. Their role at the NTCE is to present programmes arranged or organised from a demand and supply perspective that are in place to benefit young people from an educational, career and professional perspective. Their programmes are expected to be presented through exhibitions and presentations at the various relevant platforms in place at the NTCE. The government sector includes the education and training institutions that are preparing young people as future tourism professionals and entrepreneurs. They therefore need to engage with industry stakeholders at the NTCE to establish latest trends in terms of skills needs or gaps. The NTCE usually presents a platform in this regard that provides the supply side (education and training institutions) and the demand side (industry players) with an opportunity to engage on how they can reach equilibrium on demand and supply of skills. Educator Seminars also fall in this category and other platforms that are policy and regulations related. The NTCE therefore presents a captured audience for government to engage its stakeholders on relevant tourism matters.