



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MINISTER (ODM)
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**SPEECH TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM HON. FISH MAHLALELA, MP
22 JULY 2020
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, CAPE TOWN
TOURISM BUDGET VOTE 38**

Honourable House Chairperson
Minister of Tourism, Honourable Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane
Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Tourism, Honourable Supra Mahumapelo
Chairperson of the Select Committee on Trade & Industry, Economic Development,
Small Business Development, Tourism and Employment & Labour
Members of Parliament
Board Members of SA Tourism
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Honourable members

Today, we connect, rather than gather under sombre conditions, to consider the tourism budget vote.

Although the situation we find ourselves in today has been on our scenario's castings for decades, we never imagined the disruption we have had to navigate since the outbreak of the global pandemic, COVID-19.

As I share and outline the underlying focus of the work which we commit to undertake through this Budget Vote, I want to recall the saying of former

President Thabo Mbeki, in his last address to the Nation as Head of State on 21 September 2008. He said:

"Gloom and despondency have never defeated adversity. Trying times need courage and resilience. Our strength as a people is not tested during the best of times. As we said before, we should never become despondent because the weather is bad nor should we turn triumphalist because the sun shines."

Yes, we are on a disenchanting path – never traversed before – but despair and desperate measures should not be an option.

Our strategy for the MTSF period is built around commitments for growth and development expressed in the sixth administration's priority of creating of a capable state – **developmental of course.**

Ours therefore, is to undertake projects that will contribute towards *creating more decent and sustainable jobs, and investing for inclusive growth.*

We are not rebuilding from nothing, and restoring traveller confidence is going to be a key ingredient in recovering demand over time as we strive towards re-establishing tourism flows.

BROADENING BENEFITS AND CREATING AN INCLUSIVE SECTOR THROUGH ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Our interventions through opportunities like tourism incubator; tourism grading; and market access support; and other incentives programme, have made it possible for SMMEs in the tourism to reap positive rewards.

Through the Enterprise **Development and Transformation Programme**, we are introducing new players in the tourism economy and contribute to the competitiveness of tourism destinations.

The **Enterprise Development and Transformation Portal** will serve as an online supplier marketplace for SMMEs in order to promote sector transformation and job creation. We recognise that technology will drive provision of government services into the future.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION

As we continue with Working for Tourism projects, we will create 2500-work opportunities through the Department's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) during this financial year.

Our Working for Tourism Programme supports training, firstly through on the job training within infrastructure projects, and secondly stand – alone training interventions with participants accumulating credits towards a qualification.

Projects for 2020/21 include (1) Tour Guide Capacity building (2) Food Safety Quality Assurers (3) Wine Service Training (Sommelier) (4) Hospitality and Fast Food Training programmes.

Unfortunately, we have had to suspend the Youth Chefs Training and Coastal Marine Tourism Skills Development Programmes in line with the COVID-19 restrictions and risk assessments.

INVESTING IN DIVERSIFIED DEVELOPMENTS AND RE-INSTILLING CONFIDENCE IN THE DESTINATION WHILST BROADENING PARTICIPATION

Honourable members,

From a Destination Development perspective, we continue our path of inclusive growth through investments in community tourism, and will this year conclude concepts for the following community-based tourism projects:

1. Numbi Gate in Mpumanga: Ehlanzeni District Municipality
2. Nandoni Dam in Limpopo: Vhembe District Municipality
3. Tshathogwe Game Farm in Limpopo
4. Mtititi Game Farm in Limpopo: Mopani District Municipality
5. Mapate Recreational Social Tourism Facility in Limpopo: Vhembe District Municipality

Through the Grading Council of South Africa, we are also introducing an approach to prepare establishments for grading. This will enable establishments to receive feedback on areas that require attention prior to full grading application, thereby minimising the numbers of those that do not make it or increasing the uptake, particularly for emerging small enterprises.

We will equally pursue a well-developed system of handling and managing complaints from travellers and consumers, with an aim for ensuring speedy resolution of such complaints.

WE WILL REOPEN, OPEN UP AND MEET AGAIN

The Meetings Incentives Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) sector has endured the most of the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with cancellations of events.

The pandemic resulted in the cancellation of Travel Trade Platforms globally such as ITB, IMEX and WTM to name a few; this included our own platforms such as Africa's Travel Indaba and Meetings Africa.

The South African National Conventions Bureau (SANCB) will this year focus to support the recovery of business events tourism, by targeting future events, which have a bidding process of 3 to 4 year lead times.

The geographic spread of tourism business events is another way of broadening participation in the sector. For this, SA Tourism is developing a framework to capacitate national associations to host business events in Villages, Towns and Small Dorpies (VTSDs) across the nine provinces.

ENHANCEMENT OF OUR KNOWLEDGE BASE

The Department is in a process of conducting a comprehensive study on the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sub-sectors, to better understand the impact and inform key interventions and development of responsive recovery strategies.

For 2020/21, we will develop two reports on the Impact evaluation of COVID-19 on the tourism sector.

We will implement the National Tourism Information and Monitoring System (NTIMS) to gather, analyse and provide data to inform our decision making and enable prioritisation of sector initiatives, towards areas with high tourism potential, including townships and rural areas. This is more important given that we need data to be able to support recovery and growth in all corners of our beautiful country, and across all our sub-sectors.

RECLAIMING THE SAFETY OF OUR DESTINATION

The National Tourism Safety Strategy, finalised late last year, covers three strategic interventions being (1) Proactive Measures- focusing on minimizing the incidences that affect tourist safety, **(2) Responsive Measures** and **(3) After Care Programme** to ensure effective support to tourists in distress.

Our collaboration with South African Police Services led to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to identify and address challenges on tourism safety, including (1) Identification of tourism hotspots, analysis and (2) Enhancement of crime prevention initiatives, (3) Creating a platform for joint awareness programmes.

The **Tourism Monitors Programme** was implemented in all provinces including in parks managed by South African National Parks (SANParks), and gardens under the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI).

Albeit 302 participants continuing at SANParks, the programme has been temporarily suspended from 1 June 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19 on

tourism sites and attractions, thus affecting continuation in Gauteng, Western Cape, Free State, North West, as well as SANBI gardens. We will continue to monitor the environment, but our safety monitors stand ready to protect our destination in time of recovery. Plans are also underway for their further training by the South African Police Services Academy.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM: DOING TOURISM SUSTAINABLY

Despite our current challenge, we need to be reminded of the greatest environmental challenge of our time – **climate change**.

Accelerating the implementation of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement requires clear strategies and a progressive system reform for climate responsiveness into tourism planning at provincial and municipal level.

Yes, we may be faced with COVID-19 today, but climate change brings with it, other forms of social and natural disasters, which also impact directly on the economy.

To this end, we have undertaken assessment of tourism vulnerability at a local level. Feedback shall be provided to the municipalities so as to ensure that they factor them in the development and adoption of plans.

Coupled with the introduction the District Development Model (DDM), we believe that we will enhance the competitiveness of tourism localities and open-up destinations as **we continue to diversify our offerings**, with local government as a key role-player in the spatial management of the tourism estate, including work done in communities under traditional leadership. This being a clear indication that tourism is community driven.

BUILDING A BETTER AFRICA AND THE WORLD THROUGH COOPERATION

We can only recover and prosper if the rest of the region, Africa and the world are with us.

In the pursuit of economic diplomacy and development cooperation, the Department has signed Memoranda of Understanding with 35 countries globally and we continue to pursue more.

We shall continue to work towards regional integration through, capacity-building initiatives, investment promotion, sharing of best practices and dialogue about addressing tourism challenges and opportunities in the continent.

Through the regional economic and political alliance of the South African Economic and Development Community (SADC), we will collaborate with other states to implement the SADC Tourism Programme, as a roadmap of a sustainable tourism development and growth agenda for the region.

OUR ORGANISATION AND OUR PEOPLE

Honourable Members

We can only do what we say we will if we have a solid organisation and the people within it.

The Director General and the Board, as supported by the CEO of SA Tourism, will continue to enhance our institutionalised mechanisms and capacity necessary to promote good governance.

To continue to spearhead public service excellence, we will enhance our governance mechanisms, promote ethical conduct, combat and prevent fraud and corruption, and deploy the technology required to optimise our performance.

Through our monitoring and evaluation efforts, we will seek continuous improvement of our project management systems to optimise efficiency and maximise on the intended outcomes and impact.

We will continue to promote diversity and disability management, sensitise employees about progress with disability agenda, and importantly, make sure we continue to walk the talk on these matters.

Amongst the initiatives we will implement to promote reasonable access, is conducting universal accessibility audit for our own headquarters.

IN CONCLUSION

Today, we are witnessing businesses fighting for survival, and we see those who were destined for prosperity, now on the brink of impoverishment because of COVID-19.

This reality, makes me to once again borrow from former President Thabo Mbeki in the same address on 21 September 2008 when he said:

“Those who complete the course will do so only because they do not, as fatigue sets in, convince themselves that the road ahead is still too long, the inclines too steep, the loneliness impossible to bear and the prize itself of doubtful value.”

It might be a winter of despair, but our recovery tale also speaks of a summer of hope. I would not have done justice if I do not tap into the wisdom of the world icon, former President Nelson Mandela when he said:

“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers the fear.”

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.

I thank you