



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Speech delivered by the Deputy Minister of tourism**

**Meetings Africa 2016**

**IMEX-MPI-MCI future leaders forum a\Africa 2016**

**22 February 2016**

Ladies and gentlemen

Future leaders of our country, the tourism students present here today

Good afternoon. I trust you had fruitful deliberations thus far. I would like to acknowledge the students from Midlands State University in Zimbabwe and the Namibia University of Science and Technology. You represent your countries and participating in this challenge for the first time.

Youth empowerment and development is very close to my heart as I used to be an educator. I am therefore very passionate about ensuring that our country's future leaders are given the opportunities and platforms to showcase their talents. Indeed, youth-targeted interventions are needed to enable young people to actively participate and engage in society and the economy.

I am therefore particularly glad that Meetings Africa has partnered with IMEX-MPI-MCI, in encouraging you, the best performing students in travel and tourism, an opportunity to make a career in business events. Through this partnership, you are able to find mentors. This programme is designed to provide students in this sector with an educational programme including sessions with industry experts on key topics, an insightful overview, roundtable discussions and questions and debates and networking.

It is important for me to stress that you are here because each and every one of you is already a leader in the field you have chosen. By participating in programmes such as this, you are set on path to carving a promising career in the tourism industry

For the students of tourism, there is no more prestigious and coveted award than the Future Leaders award at IMEX, the world's biggest business event trade show. These awards distinguish the best tourism student as global leaders and benchmark setters. This is why we are incredibly proud of South African students' achievements in this contest.

Last year at the IMEX Awards in Frankfurt, Anzelle Vortsman, a tourism management student at North West University, won the first place in the Future Leaders Forum International University Challenge. Anzelle attended IMEX 2015 after winning the University Challenge hosted last year's Meetings Africa, like this one we are having here today. I hope you will be inspired by her as she really did our country proud.

Let me assure you, tourism is a really exciting industry to be in right now. You have definitely chosen well. Tourism has experienced continued and steady growth in South Africa and has undergone such a diversification in our country to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors. Modern tourism's success depends on, and is closely linked to skills development. In fact, they share a symbiotic relationship. These dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress. It has subsequently been identified as one of the economic pillars.

The South African government's strategy to entrench South Africa's position as premier destination for business events and meetings, through the South African Convention Bureau, has borne excellent fruits and we are intent on growing this industry to reach its full potential future. South Africa has hosted a significant number of high profile events that have seen more than 100 000 delegates experience our first-rate meeting venues and explore the amazing attractions our country has to offer. South Africa's excellent track record in international events has seen it host meetings such as COP17, the 5th BRICS Summit, and the World Economic Forum. Few other destinations offer the variety of meeting and incentive options available in South Africa. This is one of a handful of countries that has played host to most of the major sports world cups including the 2010 FIFA World Cup™, and the Cricket and Rugby World Cups.

So you see my dear future leaders, you have chosen a vibrant and dynamic industry to work in. Whatever the outcome I have no doubt each of you will map out a promising career in business events.

You don't have to wait for opportunity - take an opportunity!

I wish each of you the best of luck. Enjoy the rest of the rest of the session.

I thank you.

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