



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Speech by the Deputy Minister of Tourism South Africa at the Politician's Forum –
IMEX 2015**

19 May 2015

Topic: Business events are the focus, and tourism is the by-product

Good afternoon ladies and gentleman, Tourism Ministers and honoured guests. It is indeed a great privilege to represent South Africa at this year's IMEX Politicians Forum.

Business events: Driver of macro economic development

South Africa's business events strategy is focused on attracting events in 6 economic sectors that have been identified by our government as priorities for future development including:

1. Manufacturing
2. Mining and Metals
3. Business Process Outsourcing
4. Creative Industries
5. Life Sciences
6. Information and Communication Technology

Hosting major events in these sectors can contribute significantly in growing the country's knowledge economy and accelerating the macro-economic benefits.

The strategy is focused on attracting conventions on key issues identified by different national departments, thereby assisting them in addressing these issues along with promoting the business events industry in the country.

As a developing country and as a developing business events destination growing a regional business events trade show allows us to generate quick wins not only for South Africa but also for the continent.

Meetings Africa's growth year on year enables South Africa and continent to position itself as a real contender in the global business events industry.

Meetings Africa

In 2015 Meetings Africa celebrated its tenth anniversary as Africa's Premier Business Events Trade Exhibition.

Looking back at the history of the show's conceptualization the focus was on showcasing South Africa as a Business Tourism Destination with a Mega Fam Trip.

Ten years later Meetings Africa is recognised as truly Pan African exhibition.

- Our turnaround strategy focused on the following elements:
 - A New Theme: **Advancing Africa Together:**
 - Focusing on promoting Meetings Africa as a Pan African Trade Exhibition and to attract Africa Association events linked to our priority sectors.

- Implemented a globally recognised hosted buyer qualification programme to improve the quality and focus of the buyers
 - This ensured that the business, the qualified buyers can bring to the country is aligned with our national strategy.
- We added a dedicated educational programme and partnered with industry partners like ICCA, IMEX, AIPC and SITE.
 - The objective with these partnerships is to ensure that the local industry is knowledgeable to enable them to respond to the market's changing requirements.
- Reduce the show from 3 days to 2 days making it more cost effective and affordable for our stakeholders.

Three years after implementing these changes the results are showing.

- Meetings Africa is a truly Pan African trade show with 13 African Countries represented and over 41 African products exhibiting with specific focus on ICCA Africa Chapter members.
- We improved on all our participation categories of the show.
- We established a measurable Return On Investment (ROI) figure on the hosted buyers we invited.
 - In 2015 66% of all the international hosted buyers at Meetings Africa have never been to South Africa before
- Meetings Africa is now truly established an Africa's Premier Business Events Trade Exhibition.

The tourism by-product

- SA experienced a 2.9% increase in overseas tourists over the year, with 2 254 709 overseas tourists visiting the country last year, compared to 2 190 641 in 2013.
- How does business event contribute to this statistics?
- On average delegates spend 4.9 days at the various business events when travelling to South Africa.
- 46% of delegates travel in South Africa prior to their event.
- Holidaying is the main purpose of their pre and post event activities.
- On average delegates spend 3 nights in South Africa for pre event activities.
- 47% of delegates travel in South Africa after the event.
- On average delegates spend 4.1 nights in South Africa for post event activities.
- The hosted buyers invited to Meetings Africa can potentially bring business events participant to South Africa which can generate R1 billion in economic impact for our country.
- Meetings Africa – A Mega Fam Trip with business event results.

I thank you.

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