



**MINISTRY OF 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 the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa on the occasion of her visit to Gabon for the SA / Gabon Cultural Season

11 March 2017

Deputy Minister of Promotion of Private Investment, Trade and Tourism- Mme Irene Lissenguët Epse Lindzondzo
Ambassador Magaqa: South African Embassy
Ministry of Education
Team Gabon and SA
Azur and SAA - Sponsors
Award winners
Industry
Media

“The genesis of the SA/Gabon Tourism Co-Operation and Future Aspirations”

Fellow Africans

South Africa enjoys a very special relationship with this beautiful country. Not only was your support steadfast during our struggle but still is today through our various bilateral agreements. Our beloved Madiba visited Gabon and also spent time here in his personal capacity. That speaks volumes of our regard for your country.

Our continent is blessed with so much natural resources and historical and cultural treasures. From the rich fauna and flora to the majestic mountains and rivers, we are also home to UNESCO heritage sites. Our biggest treasures are without doubt are our diverse people. It is indeed this diversity – our melting pot of cultures that increases our touristic value.

South Africa and Gabon currently enjoy healthy bilateral trade relations that are proving to increase steadily. We plan to place tourism firmly in this economic mix.

“Agenda 2063” is an approach to how the continent should effectively learn from the lessons of the past, build on the progress now underway and strategically exploit all possible opportunities available in the immediate and medium term, so as to ensure positive socioeconomic transformation within the next 50 years. Agenda 2063 builds on the Pan African vision and frameworks.”

The UNWTO has worked closely with the AU and providing an opportunity to discuss the need of mainstreaming tourism in the AU agenda 2063. The African Union Commission has prioritised tourism among the socio-economic sectors in defining the targets and strategies for the Africa Agenda 2063. Tourism has a huge potential and would go a long way in improving the economic and social status of Africans in the next few decades.

Our first step was to extend the Tourism Indaba to the rest of the continent and thus making it a Pan African Indaba. As a continent on the rise, we know that we should employ the concept of co-

opetition if we want to advance Africa together. Each one of our countries has unique tourism offerings and we therefore complement each other. In doing so, we also share best practice and learn from each other. Because not only do we want an economically strong Continent, we want to create a self-reliant continent.

The former Gabon Minister of Mines, Industry and Tourism, Hon. Mr. Régis Immongault, participated at the Inaugural Indaba Ministerial Session in Durban in 2014. He was accompanied by the General Director of the Gabon Agency of Development and Promotion of Tourism. Earlier that year in March 2014, the African Ministerial Working Group conducted their work under the theme: Tourism: a Transformative Force for Africa.

This continent is the cradle of humanity – the genesis of it all. Let us liken it to the the genesis of our working relations to ignite a passion for Pan Africanism through tourism. By increasing tourism growth over the next decade one can expect to see local economies benefit through the tourist spend in the areas which should support jobs in local tourism establishments, profit margins and sustainability.

What do we do to ensure tourism co-operation? Firstly we have to recognise that tourism is a value chain and not just an end product. Allow me to share some of our programmes.

Knowledge transfer – hosting of business events

The business events industry as a major driver of job creation, skills development and transformation of the nation's knowledge and creative economy. The global meetings industry has, in the last few years, recognised Africa as a competitive business events destination and with that, we needed to better co-ordinate our efforts to attract associations meetings in particular. We are achieving this. Meetings Africa showcases Africa's diverse offering of services and products where African associations and African meetings industry professionals can partner to help transform our continent. Through this platform, we are also opening the Continent to investment opportunities as well as the establishment of legacy projects.

Skills transfer, development and capacity building – our programmes

Our National development Plan underpins the triple bottom line challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. We have a number of programmes aimed at capacitating our young people and women – especially from marginalised communities to redress these challenges. These include:

- The tourism buddies programme is an experiential hospitality training programme targeting the unemployed youth to enable them to acquire skills and gain work experience to enhance employability in the hospitality and tourism sector.
- The National Youth Chefs Training Programme ensures world-class service standards, promote South African indigenous cuisine and, at the same time, produce chefs who are able to compete with the best in the world.
- Food Safety is a scientific discipline aimed at handling, preparing, and storing food in ways that prevent food borne illnesses. This includes a number of routines that should be followed to avoid potentially severe health hazards.
- The Sommelier programme trained youth wine service

Enterprise development

Our Enterprise Development Programme will focus on the following areas, namely: Enterprise Development Online Information Portal, Business Advisory Services, Tourism Incubator Hubs Establishment and stakeholder engagement. There will also be continued support of 100 rural tourism enterprises with coaching and mentorship. In outer years, the number will increase and will not be limited to rural localities.

It is also important that we share best practice. This could be on platforms of various fora and think tanks – both regionally and internationally.

Digitisation of the tourism industry and innovation is vital in keeping with current trends. With social media, we need to ensure that Wi-Fi is available to our tourists so that they can use Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to share their experiences in real time. This peer to peer platform also serves as a marketing tool.

Product development and enhancement is pivotal to increasing our value offering. We should ensure that our existing attractions are well maintained while exploring new ways of enhancing our destinations.

Ultimately, we should aim to achieve a “Brand Africa” brand by collective thinking and strategy in realising our vision of One Africa – One Continent, One People.

I thank you

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM