



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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

**Meetings Africa 2016**

**African Society of Association Executives (AfSAE) cocktail**

**21 February 2016**

Ladies and gentlemen

This is truly a special occasion as we gather to excitedly celebrate yet another milestone for the African Society of Association Executives (AfSAE), which was launched at Meetings Africa last year. Association executives in Africa came together to form a continent-wide society aimed at raising the profile of member-based organisations and improving skills in the sector. There are estimated to be more than 700 associations – national, regional, and international – based on the African continent, but only 220 that take their meetings abroad.

Therefore, the emergence of a stronger association sector will encourage more associations to think bigger and rotate their events throughout Africa and internationally. The Association is made up of 25 members from each African region.

Today, I am proud to be part of this official opening of the society's headquarters in, Johannesburg, Gauteng. This is truly in keeping with the Meetings Africa ethos of "Advancing Africa Together" and the strong theme for this year "Think African."

South Africa is proud to have been hosts of the Society's first AGM this year. This is a ground-breaking and innovative development in the Africa business events industry because through this association, we will be able to encourage meetings to be held and rotated across our own continent and thus benefitting our African economy. It is therefore also fitting that the ICCA MFC board chose Johannesburg as their meeting place.

What adds to the significance is that both the ICCA president, Nina Freysen-Pretorius and Amanda Kotze-Nhlapo, Africa representative on the ICCA board, are proudly South Africans. Yes, strong, female African women!

As representatives of the associations' fraternity, each and every one of you are vitally important stakeholders in the business meetings industry. Tomorrow, members will be participating in Association Day which is part of the educational programme of Meetings Africa. Association Day focuses on knowledge development among associations, and the benefits of association meetings to the economies of the countries where they are held.

This launch shows that we have taken a huge leap forward in the collaboration and partnerships that are necessary to grow the meetings industry in South Africa, and the Continent as a whole. The global meetings industry has, in the last few years, recognised Africa as a competitive business events destination and with that, we need to better co-ordinate our efforts to attract associations meetings in particular. Today, is one such step that we are taking in achieving this.

The South African government's tourism strategy is to boost our knowledge economy by attracting events in 6 identified economic sectors, namely: Manufacturing, Mining Metals, Business process Outsourcing, Creative Industries, Life Sciences and Information and Technology.

With each association meeting held in our country and our continent as a whole, our knowledge economy grows, and our meetings industry is given the opportunity to shine, and expose its world-class meetings infrastructure.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the best for tomorrow as you meet and put your heads together. There is a lot to share, and learn, but more than that, it is a great opportunity to network and have fun.

I thank you and welcome you to Meetings Africa 2016.