



**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 Delivered by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, at the occasion of the launch of the National Tourism Careers Expo 2015 at Sand Du Plessis Theatre in Bloemfontein

1 October 2015

Programme Director, Tshepo Moremi
Honourable MEC of Department Economic Development Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Mr Sam Mashinini
MEC for Education, Mr Tate Magoie
Chairperson of Tourism Authority, Mr Glen Nitzhivoze
Our partners from CATHSSETA and FEDHASA
Captains of industry in the tourism sector,
Educators from the various institutions,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and gentlemen.

The baton for the National Tourism Careers Expo has been passed on to the Free State – the third of our provinces to host this prominent event for the next period of three years. Before this, Kwa-Zulu Natal and the Eastern Cape have already helped us to mainstream tourism as a career of choice amongst the youth of South Africa by hosting successful Expos for the past 6 years.

With each Expo that passes, we make greater strides in this regard – because the future of our sector depends on a skilled workforce that is passionate about service excellence. The youth market is our key to unlocking the unlimited opportunities that exist in Tourism.

The tourism industry is a major player in the economy of South Africa, contributing significantly to both employment and economic growth. The country compares favourably with other travel destinations in variables such as price competitiveness, policies, regulations and cultural and natural resources are concerned. However, in terms of human resources, the South African tourism sector still faces challenges, not least of which revolves around transformation and inclusivity.

The theme for the 2015 Tourism Careers Expo sums up the key message that we will be instilling in the minds and hearts of the learners, students and educators that we are hosting over the next few days: **“Tourism is Alive with Opportunities!”**

This huge potential in the sector is severely hampered by the limited understanding that the general public has of the broader tourism dynamics. Some misperceptions about the sector include:

- Lack of recognition of Tourism at high school and tertiary level as a career of choice
- Lower status of Tourism job offerings when compared to other subjects like mathematics and science
- Skewed distribution of internships, bursaries, learnerships and other learner support interventions compared to other sectors

These observations are further confirmed by research around the decline of tourism enrolment at tertiary level conducted by the then Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and FEDHASA in 2008 which reflects that:

- The industry is perceived to provide menial and low paying jobs with long working hours and no career progression

- Tourism is a subject perceived to be chosen by the less intelligent and those who have been rejected in other courses because of their poor academic performance – this in essence has an adverse effect on the calibre of graduates that are produced
- Tourism is an easy subject that is mostly taught by educators who do not have professional qualifications

The National Tourism Careers Expo is strategically positioned to tackle exactly these misperceptions! It also aims to bridge the information gap between the industry, government, learners and educators.

This Expo is a powerful platform to unleash the tourism potential through investment in human capital development, to elevate Tourism as a vibrant profession that attracts people of high calibre.

The primary target group of the NTCE is the grade 9-12 learners, tourism learners at tertiary level, out of school youth with tourism qualifications. The secondary target group are the tourism educators who are the driving force behind the tourism as well as the tourism businesses and government institutions.

The first Free State leg of the NTCE takes place as the Department of Tourism embarks on a second Tourism Human Resources Development strategy and skills audit review process from October 2015. The first process took place in 2006 before Tourism had its own stand-alone government department, and was part of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.

At the culmination of the last skills assessment process a Sector Skills Plan was adopted by a wide range of role-players from private sector to training authorities and unions to address skills development challenges. This plan focussed, amongst other things on setting milestones to bridge the gap between skills supply and demand, and has met with a degree of success through the establishment of the NTCE, educator seminars, an educator placement project and tourism curriculum reviews.

No doubt the current audit process will take us another step closer to reaching an ideal balance between the demand for skills by the industry and the ideal supply of these skills by the education sector. Together as stakeholders we have a duty to counter the trend of unemployable tourism graduates filling up the ranks of unemployed youth in the country by ensuring a smooth supply and demand process in the country when it comes to tourism.

As the Department of Tourism we are already working together with CATHSSETA and other stakeholders to place unemployed graduates in experiential learning programmes with tourism product owners. This has resulted in skills development projects such as the Chefs Training Programme, Tourism Buddies, Food Safety Training and Sommeliers initiative.

We are also working with CATHSSETA and UMALUSI to evaluate the tourism and hospitality curricula. With FEDHASA we are involved in annual educator seminars in order to capacitate educators with contemporary information about tourism businesses in practice, leading to the establishment of a pilot Educators Placement Programme in Gauteng. Going forward we will look at an MOU with the Department of Basic Education to implement this programme.

The NTCE this year will once again act as a platform to bring the two parties into contact to deal directly with this issue, and to present the industry as an employer of choice. Attraction and retention of skilled employees in our sector is an ongoing challenge. We welcome all your innovative ideas on how we can move the sector towards greater human resource sustainability.

Ladies and gentlemen, many months of hard work have gone into this exhibition, with a wide variety of stakeholders collaborating to stage a successful event. Finally the day has come for this province to show the youth of South Africa what exciting career prospects are available in the tourism space.

As we start the NTCE 2015 – 2017 cycle, let me remind our NTCE partners and all other stakeholders that we need your commitment to create a demand led skills base in the sector. Your input going forward from the Tourism Human Resources Development strategy and skills audit process will be critical for our future success as a sector as we endeavour to match supply with demand.

To the learners and educators who will participate in the NTCE over the next few days – please make the most of your time here. We are sure that the Expo will open your horizons to a whole new world of opportunity that awaits you in choosing the tourism sector as a career of choice.

I would like to thank each and every staff member from national and provincial government as well as our partner organisations and businesses for their tireless efforts in making this Expo possible.

With those few words, ladies and gentlemen, it now gives me great pleasure to declare the 2015 National Tourism Careers Expo in the Free State open!

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCHOOLS COMPETITION WINNERS AND THE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER

Today's generation of young people are more informed, more mobile and more adventurous than ever before. They are recognised by the South African tourism sector as a major force for development and social change. More and more young people around the world are becoming tourism leaders, investing in local tourism businesses and championing environmental protection. The youth can be instrumental in eradicating poverty by managing existing assets in ways that will create opportunities and generate income.

The Global Travel and Tourism Partnership South Africa, has for the past 16 years been running tourism competitions in more than 3 700 schools offering Tourism as a high school subject.

The three competitions are administered by the Global Travel and Tourism Partnership South Africa with the purpose of stimulating and encouraging participation in the tourism industry amongst the youth and build human capital for the tourism industry of South Africa.

Winners from the 12 GTTP-SA member countries across the world will also be announced this week. The fortunate winners will meet in Nice in the south of France later this year.

This year, the GTTP-SA, with national sponsors **Travelport** and **Travel with Flair**, have launched the inaugural TRAVELPORT TOURISM TEACHER OF THE YEAR. This award aims to acknowledge and reward exceptional Tourism teachers who go beyond the call of duty to cultivate a love for the subject and to excite learners into careers in the tourism industry.

The GTTP-SA, in collaboration with the NTCE partners, would like to announce the winners of the THREE annual Tourism Schools' competitions for 2015 as well as the three finalists of the Teacher of the Year competition.

The first competition is the DIGITAL PHOTO competition

Learners were required to enter a photo of something very special in their country.

The winners of the photo competitions are: (in no specific order)

Northern Cape Province - Janel Blaauw from Kimberley

Title of photograph: **Flamingo Family** taken outside Kimberley.

Prize: International certificate + R1 000 cash

Limpopo – Bianca Benade from Phalaborwa

Title of photograph: **Southern ground hornbill** taken near the Kruger National Park

Prize: International certificate + R1 000 cash

Eastern Cape Province – Bianca-Lee Nabal from Port Elizabeth

Title of photograph: **Tiger, tiger burning bright** taken at the Seaview Game Park outside Port Elizabeth

Prize: International certificate + R1 000 cash

The second competition is the TRAVEL WRITING competition

The learners were required to enter 400 word essay called “**Secret trails of my country**” to be published in a travel magazine.

The winner of the travel writing competition is:

Winner: North West province

Refilwe Letsapa from New Vision Secondary School, Klerksdorp

She wrote about how she experienced the Bona Bona Game Lodge

Prize: Certificate, a floating trophy and R2 000 cash + publication on the GTTP-SA website

Teacher: One year's subscription to a travel magazine of her choice.

The third competition is the prestigious RESEARCH COMPETITION

An international theme is announced every year and learners are required to do research about the topic and write a proposal on how this tourism experience will encourage tourists to visit the area. The theme for this year is ***Sustainable Adventure Tourism***.

The winners of the **Research competition** are:

2nd runner up: KwaZulu-Natal

Bianca Pardey and Jade Glass from Hillcrest High School near Durban

Teacher: Mrs Marienne Singh

Prize for learners and teacher: Certificate, a floating trophy + a 2-night trip out of their province

1st runner up: Northwest

Ofentse Legwale & Tshidi Molotsane from Ikatisong High School in Brits

Teacher: Mr David Ndlovu

Prize for learners and teacher: Certificate, a floating trophy + a 3- night trip out of their province

Winners: Eastern Cape

Janice Lawack & Lee-Ann Wyatt of Paul Sauer High School in the small town of Kareedouw.

Teacher: Mrs Anneke Binneman

The research was on “***Storms River Adventures and sustainable tourism practices.***”

Prize for learners and teacher: R10 000 cash + a 5 day trip to Europe.

The two winners and their teacher will represent South Africa in France at the annual ***Global Travel and Tourism Learner and Teacher Conference*** in November 2015 where they will present their research on Sustainable Adventure Tourism to more than 120 delegates from across the world.

The TRAVELPORT TOURISM TEACHER OF THE YEAR finalists for 2015

The following teachers have been nominated by their principals, colleagues and subject advisors and were selected by the judges as the top three Tourism teachers in South Africa: (in no particular order)

From KwaZulu-Natal

Miss Phindile Mbele who teaches Tourism at Eqakwini High School in Mtubatuba in Northern KZN near the IsiMangaliso Wetlands Park.

Miss Mbele believes Tourism is a hand-on subject and should be taken out of the classroom. She exposes her learners to the real world of tourism and encourages them to become entrepreneurs. Her learners have created their own businesses selling beadwork and perform cultural dances to

tourists visiting the area. They also make crafts from wrought iron, grass and carved wood. She has helped to change the perception of the subject as one which does not only create many career opportunities but also equip learners with necessary life skills. Many of her learners continued their tertiary studies in Tourism and one is even completing her Honours degree this year.

From Gauteng

Mrs Melanie Ponnen-Moodley who teaches Tourism at Willowmead Secondary School in Lenasia near Johannesburg

Mrs Ponnen- Moodley's Tourism learners and learners from the surrounding community have benefitted through her endless efforts to improve results in her subject. She initiated a camp project where learners received extra assistance with their studies from 8 – 10 at night. She dedicated her time and effort to find sponsorship to ensure that these learners receive a decent meal whilst at the camp. Mrs Moodley has interacted with stakeholders in the industry to invest in resources for her classroom in order to assist with learning and teaching the subject more effectively. She has also raised funds and secured sponsorships to take learners on education excursions to open up the world of tourism.

From the Western Cape

Mrs Annelize Robson who teaches Tourism at Lavender Hill High School in Retreat near Cape Town

Mrs Robson is teaching Tourism in the most impoverished and culturally deprived areas of the Western Cape – her school is in the proverbial “heart of gangland”. Very few of her learners have set foot out of the greater Lavender Hill area, let alone Cape Town. Her teaching of Tourism has thus become a window onto the world for her learners. With the help of an Italian businessman, 8 of her grade 12 learners got the opportunity to tour Italy for three months – transforming their lives forever. For the remainder of her learners, she created opportunities to travel around Cape Town and the rest of South Africa. This resulted in Tourism becoming the subject of choice in her school and encouraged her learners to be more hardworking, ambitious and determined to do well. She also initiated a project where ex-learners are employed in the tourism industry and started a bursary fund for learners to further their studies at tertiary level.

All three finalists are champions in their own right.

The winners will be announced and prizes handed at the NTCE's Gala event on Friday evening 2 October 2015.

Congratulations to these Tourism teachers who change the lives of learners and make appositive impact on the schools and communities in which they teach Tourism.

Thank you