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## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

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### **THE NATIONAL TOURISM CAREERS EXPO 2024 LIFTS OFF IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

Limpopo – Deputy Minister of Tourism Ms. Maggie Sotyú will officially open the 2024 National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) tomorrow in the Limpopo Province. Close to 10 000 learners, educators and unemployed youth are expected to participate in the 2024 NTCE that will be held for the first time at the City of Polokwane’s New Peter Mokaba Stadium from 08 to 10 October 2024.

The NTCE is an interactive three-day event that is held annually to promote tourism as a career, profession, and business of choice to learners from high schools, TVET College and University students, out-of-school youth, and unemployed graduates.

The 2024 NTCE will be hosted under the localised UN Tourism theme “Tourism and Peace – 30yrs of connecting people to places and cultures.” The expo will highlight how our country’s diversity has peacefully brought us together under a democratic South Africa, and how tourism continues to promote peace, justice, cultural appreciation, social cohesion, and economic growth.

“We are excited that the NTCE will be held in the thriving Limpopo Province. As a cradle of our cultural and wildlife heritage, the Limpopo Province contributes immensely to the tourism economy, offering unique cultural and nature experiences that consistently draw-in international and domestic visitors.”

“The NTCE is a leading platform for communicating career, entrepreneurial and the educational prospects and opportunities for youth in the tourism sector. Hosting the event in the City of Polokwane will elevate the Province’s capacity to host large conferences, meeting and exhibitions introducing a MICE clientele in the offerings,” Deputy Minister of Tourism, Maggie Sotyú said.

The NTCE finds its credence in the objectives of the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) and the Tourism Sector Human Resource Development (TSHRD) strategy that seeks to address the needs of the sector in relation to human resource development planning, coordination & information management; skills and capacity development, and the enhancement of tourism, hospitality, conservation education and training systems.

Since its inception in 2008, the expo has bridged the information gap and affording thousands of youth an opportunity to directly interact with tourism stakeholders and businesses at the exhibitions, motivational talks, and through the interactive skill empowerment platforms at the NTCE.

Over the years, the NTCE has adapted to evolving technological trends to include information on career paths in digital transformation such as artificial intelligence (AI), and further training for demanded skills. Inversely, the expo becomes a platform for the industry to present itself as a business and employer of choice.

“Tourism is a channel for the youth to learn new things and discover the world through diverse cultures. The 2024 NTCE will inspire present and prospective tourism learners and unemployed youth to rise to new heights to advance their careers and business opportunities in an inclusive sector,” Deputy Minister Sotyú said.

According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) statistics, South Africa’s tourism sector employed 1.46million people in 2023 and is expected to grow to nearly 1.7 million jobs in 2024. It is further projected that employment in the tourism sector for South Africa is projected to grow to 2.2 million jobs by 2030.

“Our country’s unemployment rate stands at 32.9%. As a sector, it is very important that we do more to respond to joblessness in our country, and tourism can play a critical role in driving economic growth and creating employment opportunities.”

“We are committed to enhancing the implementation of programmes, like the NTCE, to inform the youth of the varied vocations and business opportunities in the sector, as well as in empowering the private sector to generate more sustainable jobs,”

“Job creation remains a cornerstone of our Government of National Unity’s agenda. I encourage the private sector to support us and participate in the implementation of the NTCE to create employment opportunities for the youth and women in the sector,” Deputy Minister Sotyú added.

The NTCE is collaborative initiative between the Department of Tourism (DT), the Culture Arts, Tourism, Hospitality & Sport Education Training Authority (CATHSSETA), the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET), and its provincial marketing agency the Limpopo Tourism Agency (LTA) that will host the NTCE for the next three years from 2024 till 2026.

Entrance to the 2024 NTCE is free and will include motivational talks by leading local sector entrepreneurs and personalities, tourism educator seminars, exhibitions by local tourism products and related services. It will also feature the following live engagements that are poised to captivate learners:

- **The Chefs Corner will provide a** physical demonstration of the culinary arts. Learners will be enthralled by the cook-offs hosted by the graduates of the National Youth Chefs Training Programme that is facilitated by the South African Chefs Association. This is a firm favourite for youth interested in a culinary career.
- **The Mixology Corner** will bring the art of creating fun, enjoyable beverages to life. Mixology is a special craft and an age-old tradition of skillfully mixing various drinks and ingredients to create cocktails with or without alcohol. While mixology and bartending are related, it is generally accepted that a mixologist creates innovative cocktails often using unique or uncommon ingredients and researches and reimagines classic cocktails.
- **Hospitality Corner:** The Hospitality Corner will offer insight into the diverse range of careers from hotel and event management to casino directors.
- **Conservation Corner:** Nature conservation has a direct impact on the future sustainability of tourism. Youth interested in nature and tourism will gain insight into how to join this industry.

- **The Virtual Classroom and Recruitment Arena is the place where** job seekers can engage with potential employers and get the low-down on job hunting, what employers are looking for, how to craft a CV and how to prepare for interviews.
- **The Digital and Artificial Intelligence (AI)** corner will introduce the youth to new and exciting careers opportunities that are driven by technological advancements such as digital tours, and innovative tourism solutions that are enhancing traveler experiences.
- **Educators' Seminar** will provide an opportunity for educators to interact with speakers from various institutions, industry bodies and tourism organisations.

For more information on the NTCE visit [www.tourism.gov.za](http://www.tourism.gov.za). Register to attend the Expo on [www.NTCE.org.za](http://www.NTCE.org.za)

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