



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Welcome address by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, at occasion of
the welcome reception of the Global Entrepreneurship Congress**

13 March 2017

Greetings and a warm welcome to the Delegates of GEC 2017! South Africa is proud to welcome you tonight to experience our land of sunshine and seas, of majestic mountains and enchanting forests, of extreme adventure and blissful relaxation, of culinary hot sports, pulsing nightlife and amazing shopping experiences. Welcome to the land where the Big Five is juxtaposed to the economic hub that you find yourself in. Welcome to the land of diverse people that is a melting pot of culture and heritage and hospitality. Delegates, South Africa welcomes!

Through meetings of this nature, innovation flourishes because of dialogues, and conversations that lead to collaborations and partnerships that will benefit our economy and tourism.

The impact of business events in 2014 and 2015 was estimated at 38.5 billion and 42.4 billion rand respectively. Business events attract the world's industries and thought leaders; provides a platform to showcase innovation products and expertise; and it profiles SA as a place to do business as it generates media attention. From an investment point it provides a world stage - "if they see it, they will invest." It is a good platform for exports as it stimulates international markets for locally produced goods and services. It also provides an excellent networking platform for building business contacts, trade, and research links. It strengthens the knowledge economy by providing access to new technologies and exchange of ideas which in turn strengthens professional expertise.

In terms of the macro-economic benefits, South Africa's business events strategy is focused on attracting events in the six key economic sectors - Mining, Manufacturing, Business Process Outsourcing, Creative Industries, Life Sciences and Information and Communications Technology.

The National Department of Tourism has prioritised this through the establishment of South African National Conventions Bureau. National Treasury is establishing a dedicated bidding support program with the objective of improving the country's success rate in securing business events.

In 2015, SA was ranked 38th globally and in the top 15 for long haul destination. The ranking ensured that we remain the leading business events destination in Africa and the Middle East.

The department is committed to providing the much needed support to the development, growth and sustainability of tourism enterprises in South Africa. Therefore in the current financial year, the department is implementing its new Enterprise Development Programme for more targeted support to tourism SMMEs. This includes the Information Portal, Incubators, and Business Advisory Services.

This is in line with giving expression to government's objective of inclusive economic growth and sustainability as well as contributing to job creation.

Business events also contribute immensely to leisure tourism as the same delegates find time to visit our attractions and often come back for leisure with families. We encourage you to do so and wish for

fruitful congress days. We are also encouraged with the already planned inter-departmental meeting led by the SBDD for formulating an entrepreneurship development plan - post the congress - to ensure that our hosting as a country leaves a legacy that we can all be proud of as participants.

I thank you!

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM