



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Address by Tourism Deputy Minister, Tokozile Xasa at the opening of the Sports & Events Tourism Exchange Conference, Protea Hotel Fire & Ice - Pretoria**

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Good afternoon, it is only fitting that I start by congratulating the newly-crowned Champions of Africa, Mamelodi Sundowns following their historic win on Sunday night in the Confederation of African Football's (CAF) Champions league final out in Alexandria, Egypt.

The Brazilians, as Mamelodi Sundowns are affectionately known, have indeed done the country proud and once again placed South Africa on the international sporting map.

We also wish them all the best as they will be taking part in the FIFA Club World Cup in Japan in December by virtue of their epic win on Sunday.

We say Halala Masandawana ka bo Yellow, Halala!

Our job as government of marketing the country is certainly made easier when South Africans achieve great things on the world stage and this achievement by Mamelodi Sundowns will no doubt, have positive spin-offs for the country.

This monumental sporting achievement happens at a time when South Africa is still ranked within the top 15 long-haul destinations globally and is the leading business events destination in Africa and the Middle East.

As proof of this ranking, South Africa hosted no less than 140 international association meetings and conferences in 2015 which brought around 80 000 delegates to this country while 66 international association conferences and meetings have already been secured for the five years starting next year.

The 140 international meetings and conferences held in 2015 had 542 combined conference days while the economic impact is estimated at around a billion Rands that was injected into the South African economy.

About R1, 4 billion is expected to be contributed to the South African economy by the 66 conferences and meetings that are already secured for the next 5 years while 108, 134 association professionals will be attracted to the country as a result.

In addition, 311 event days benefitting all suppliers in the business events value chain, will be generated.

The National Department of Tourism has partnered with Thebe Reed Exhibitions at the Sports & Events Tourism Exchange for the next two years to further promote South Africa as an events tourism destination by utilising the wealth of experience and knowledge gathered at this conference.

This partnership will ensure that at least 10 emerging tourism operators benefit from the international buyers programme with workshops aimed at capacitating and empowering these enterprises at the SETE platform.

One of the key drives from government is ensuring that the tourism sector, like many other sectors, is transformed and this can only happen with the full participation of all stakeholders, particularly those who were previously marginalised, in the economic opportunities presented.

To this effect, the 10 identified SMME's have already received preparatory training in the build up to the Sports & Events Tourism Exchange conference to better prepare them for their participation in this conference.

The training received by the SMME's includes

1. Trade show participation training,
2. Marketing their businesses,
3. Online diary management for trade show meting
4. Networking
5. Generating sales and ensuring return on investment from trade shows and exhibitions
6. As well as having creative and attractive exhibition stands.

Budding entrepreneurs must know that exhibitions and fairs are key factors in any business' marketing strategy as they have the capability to reach thousands of buyers and visitors simultaneously.

Exhibitions and fairs are also the perfect place to strengthen your business networks with your peers in the industry with the right information provided in a conducive atmosphere.

I wish you all the success with this conference and hope it will produce what we are all expecting with tangible outcomes that continue to benefit not only the country but all the delegates as well.

I thank you.