



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Tourism Budget Vote Speech 2017: Deputy Minister of Tourism**

**23 May 2017**

Chairperson,  
Honourable Members of the House,

The success of tourism in our country is based on the warmth of our people, the attractiveness of our unique attractions, our infrastructure, our iconic cultural and heritage sites and the abundance of our natural assets.

Of all of these, our most important asset is our people. The skills, knowledge and quality of service provided by our people are central to our efforts to enhance our attractiveness in an increasingly competitive global market.

Minister Xasa has described how we are developing and marketing our destination and our attractions, and putting tourism on a path of inclusive, transformative growth.

I will now focus on how we are training and developing our people, the progress of our enterprise development programme, and the work we are doing with universities to support future tourism development.

Economic transformation is key to a better quality of life and to the well-being of our people. Our efforts at deepening human capital development in the sector are aimed at rapidly bringing more rural people, women, youth and people with disabilities into the value chain, with a wider geographic impact.

We want to link tourism products and services that offer experiences for tourists to the supply of goods and products from local communities. This will cement the relationship between tourism and community development. When tourism is seen to benefit communities in visible and tangible ways, like a signed long-term contract to supply a local lodge with fresh vegetables, it takes on a new value and meaning for that community. They begin to own tourism.

Chairperson, our challenge for the immediate period ahead is to transform the tourism sector with energy and pace, and to achieve magnitude and impact in our efforts towards inclusivity and transformation.

Our aspiration for transformation is built into our policy, and it is clearly expressed in the revised National Tourism Sector Strategy.

Enterprise Development is central to our quest for accelerated economic transformation. The Department of Tourism has established two SMME incubators in key tourism nodes at Pilanesberg in the North West Province and Manyeleti in Mpumalanga. We are working with 100 tourism enterprises and industry stakeholders to promote inclusive economic participation in these areas, which are adjacent to busy tourism attractions. An additional incubator and five additional rural community participation projects will be rolled out in this financial year.

About 400 enterprises across all our provinces are now benefitting from support in the form of mentorship, coaching, market access training and technical assistance.

To support these enterprises further, a portal has been developed to link suppliers of services and products to buyers in the sector, to create business relationships between smaller enterprises and large tourism operators, and to create room for new entrants.

His Excellency, the President stated during the opening of Africa's Tourism Indaba that, "we are starting a journey towards building more sustainable and profitable businesses and opportunities, and expanding the new entrants into medium and large size enterprises". This sums up our approach to radical economic transformation through enterprise development. As a start, we have implemented amongst other an international market access programme for SMMEs and also supported 90 SMMEs to participate at the 2017 Tourism Indaba, as part of the Hidden Gems programme.

The Department hosts the National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) every year to introduce young learners and high school tourism graduates to careers in tourism. Over 6000 learners, 459 educators and 50 exhibitors took part in last year's Expo in Bloemfontein. About 120 youth volunteers were mobilised for the three-day event and they were paid a daily stipend. The next NTCE will take place during 28 - 30 September in Bloemfontein.

The Department's National Youth Chefs Training Programme produces chefs who are able to compete globally. Last year 470 learners graduated with a Diploma and Advanced Diploma - 405 of these learners were women. This financial year 577 learners will be enrolled in the National Youth Chefs Training Programme.

In the Sommelier programme, youth are trained in South African and international wines, wine service and wine making. Last year, 243 young learners graduated, and 187 were women. This year 300 additional youth are enrolled in this programme, which gives hospitality skills and job opportunities.

In the last financial year, 2 654 youth graduated with National Certificate in Food and Beverages at NQF level 4 and others in the National Certificate Accommodation Services at NQF Level 2. Of these, 1837 were women. Twenty of the top achievers in the food and beverage programme, are currently placed in Seychelles for further specialisation including French cuisine.

Last year the department enrolled 500 learners in the Food Safety Programme, and a further 500 will be enrolled this year. The focus will be on strengthening their ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

The first group of women who enrolled for the Executive Women's Programme are due to complete their training in June this year. The programme is a partnership between the Department and the UNISA School of Business, with the support of industry. The programme exposes them to the actual business of tourism beyond just the operations which they are already familiar with, improving their prospects for growth to senior and executive management.

The Department of Tourism provided a series of capacity building opportunities to ensure growth and development of the tourist guiding sector in the past year. These ranged from up-skilling programmes for existing tourist guides to training new entrants.

Our eight World Heritage Sites are amongst South Africa's biggest tourism draw-cards. We must ensure that the knowledge and skill of tourist guides operating at these sites are of a high standard.

Over 60 guides have benefitted from training which the Department provided at iSimangaliso Wetland Park and the Cradle of Humankind.

We also provided training opportunities for tourist guides to be skilled in Russian and Mandarin languages. The training culminated in the guides being taken abroad to gain further exposure to the cultural practices and the way of life of people from these countries.

These opportunities, are changing lives of ordinary South Africans. Ms Nosiphiwe Mbele from Umlazi township who is with us here today, is one of the beneficiaries of the chefs training programme. A qualified professional pastry chef, she has made a great success of her career, which includes global exposure and building a house for her mother.

Ms Teddi Tokwe is the CEO of the Lilizela Award winning Ashwood Guest House, a hidden gem in Bloemfontein in the Free State. She is an example of the impact of Hidden Gems Programme.

Chairperson, the new domestic tourism strategy has directed us to put equal emphasis on product development as well as marketing. We will be supporting strategic product development and enhancement with the aim of broadening the product base to accommodate the needs of our diverse domestic tourism market. This will also broaden our product offering for the international market. The initiative includes some of the over 700 state-owned products such as provincial and municipal resorts, some of which already attract international visitors but require refurbishment. Part of our strategy is to facilitate sector transformation through creating partnerships for black management at these facilities. We will start with the Midmar Dam resort in Pietermaritzburg. Through our 5 in 5 marketing strategy, we will add one million additional domestic holiday trips, thereby stimulating a market for these products.

Our enterprise development programme will also facilitate the development of a new breed of tour operators for the domestic tourism market, which will work with SMME tourism product owners and service providers to take advantage of the growing diverse market needs.

We will also be creating travel schemes for social clubs and strengthening the role of events in growing domestic tourism. We will work with key national and provincial attractions such as parks, cultural and heritage sites to expose underprivileged South Africans the country's tourism offering.

Through South African Tourism will also form strategic partnerships to enhance conversion based on our domestic tourism marketing drive.

The department has made significant progress on the implementation of solar photovoltaic energy generating technologies at strategic tourism attractions as part of destination greening. This includes the completion of a solar power plant on Robben Island, which is already supplying solar energy to the island. This project was made possible by close cooperation between the Department of Tourism, the Department of Arts and Culture, the Department of Public Works and the Robben Island Museum. This is yet another example of the power of collaboration.

The Department has also collaborated with the Industrial Development Corporation to introduce a Green Tourism Incentive Programme to support qualifying tourism enterprises to retrofit with more energy efficient technologies. This will save costs for operators and contribute to a greener destination. The programme will also create employment through retro-fitment practitioners and localisation.

Through our Tourism Incentive Programme we supported 277 establishments through rebates on their grading assessment fees.

In collaboration with the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa, we have improved the programme and integrated it with the Grading Council's online application process. Enterprises applying for grading can now qualify for a discount of up to 90% on their assessment, making it feasible for enterprises with smaller turnovers to be graded.

Chairperson, the development of our human resources extends to the research work we are conducting in collaboration with several universities.

The Department has assisted 64 students to conduct research in partnership with five universities: 49 of these were women, 35 were sponsored at Honours level, 26 at Master's and three at Doctorate level. I am delighted to report that 25 of these students have completed their Honours studies, seven have received Masters Degrees and one has received his PhD degree. Some of these students have presented the findings of their research studies at national and international conferences and published them in accredited journals.

We encourage everyone in our country, those of us who are directly involved in tourism and those who are not, to stand up and say proudly: "I Do Tourism".

By addressing prevailing imbalances related to the participation in the tourism economy by black people, women, our youth, people living with disabilities and people living in rural areas, we will make tourism meaningful for more of our people.

This fits in well with the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's theme for this year: The Development of Sustainable Tourism.

The Department has infused social, economic and environmental sustainability into its programmes and projects.

The Department has developed guidelines for community participation in tourism. These guidelines will be implemented among five community groups this year. The communities will be targeted for interventions and exposed to opportunities to provide services and products that enhance the experience of tourists and create economic benefit for the communities.

Chairperson, I would like to conclude by reminding us of the strong link between tourism and this year's theme for Africa Month: The Year of O R Tambo, building a better Africa and a better world. Throughout Africa, the great potential of tourism to contribute to economic growth and social advancement is being realised.

In commemorating the profound legacy of OR Tambo, let's work together: national, provincial and municipal government; the private and the public sector; owners of tourism enterprises and workers, let us all work together to ensure that tourism works for our local communities, for our nation and for our continent.

I thank you.