



**tourism**

Department:  
Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Tourism House, 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside. Private Bag X 424, PRETORIA · 0001  
Tel + 27 (0) 12 444 6000· Fax + 27 (0) 12 444 7000. Call Center: 0860 121 929**

## **Tourism careers take centre stage at Expo publicity campaign launch**

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The National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) marks its seventh year in existence, as the 2015 version was launched by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, in Bloemfontein today.

The tourism sector abounds with opportunities for young South Africans to achieve gainful employment. As one of the highest contributing sectors to the country's Gross Domestic Product in 2014, initiatives like the NTCE provide valuable insight into employment in the sector, and aims to light a fire of passion and excitement in tourism as a profession of choice.

The seventh NTCE takes place at the Sand Du Plessis Theatre in Bloemfontein from 1 – 3 October 2015. This will be the first in a cycle of three years that the Free State Province will play host to the event, having previously seen successful events in the Eastern Cape for three years, and prior to that in Kwa-Zulu Natal for three years.

“The publicity campaign for the NTCE that we are launching today will reach all corners of the country to stimulate interest amongst the youth to attend. Under the theme “Tourism is Alive with Possibilities”, it is important that this message can reach our youth and bring hope for a brighter future”, says Ms. Xasa.

The NTCE's primary audience are learners from grade 9 – 12 doing tourism and hospitality at school, FET College and University students, unemployed tourism graduates, educators and lecturers in the subject as well as industry product owners.

Some of the main attractions during the three day Expo will be:

- Exhibitions by product owners and other stakeholders, prioritising skills development and career opportunities in the sector;
- Virtual Classroom and Recruitment Area;
- A Hospitality Corner that simulates a “mock hotel”
- Chefs and Mixology platforms
- Aviation Platform;
- Competitions for students and schools;
- Exposure for unemployed graduates to tourism sector jobs and assistance in preparation for job interviews

“While I am optimistic about the future of the tourism sector and its possibilities for our youth, we cannot overlook the challenges we face as a country,” says Ms. Xasa. “A collaborative approach is the key to overcoming these challenges. The NTCE, like many of our other programmes as the Department of Tourism, works on a partnership model.”

Ms. Xasa expressed her gratitude to the partners who have come on board to create an impactful NTCE in 2015. Implementation partner CATHSSETA will repeat the support they have given to the NTCE over previous years in 2015. Project partners like the Hilton Hotel Group, the Mangaung Tourism Guides Association in and FEDHASA pledged their support at the launch event.

The Department of Tourism has a host of successful youth development programmes that leverage off stakeholder partnerships, such as the Food Safety Assurers, the Chefs Training, Sommeliers and the Tourism Buddies.

“The youth and unemployed are urged to come out in their numbers to see what the tourism sector has to offer them,” Ms. Xasa says.