



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

MEDIA RELEASE

Tourism MINMEC commits to recovery plan for the sector post COVID- 19

17 May 2020

The Minister of Tourism, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane convened an emergency virtual meeting with all Members of Executive Council responsible for Tourism across all provinces on Friday, 15 May 2020. This meeting of Minister and Members of the Executive Council (MINMEC) takes place at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic continues to negatively impact on the sector far more than any other sector in the economy. This was the second of such meetings since the national lockdown.

The meeting deliberated on the impact of COVID-19 on the Tourism Sector and the Tourism Recovery Strategy including the Risk Adjusted Approach for the sector in the immediate period as well as provided an update on the COVID-19 Tourism Relief Fund rollout.

STATE OF THE TOURISM SECTOR UNDER COVID-19

The meeting noted that almost all the sub-sectors of tourism remain closed during Alert Level Four of the Risk Adjusted Approach to the reopening of economic activities after the Level Five lockdown.

The meeting deliberated on adverse socio-economic impact of the virus on employment and the potential job losses, as well as the already dire livelihoods of tourism workers and entrepreneurs, including freelancers such as tourist guides.

MINMEC agreed to work together including with other departments in the economic cluster to save jobs and further committed to devise measures to support the phased opening up of the tourism sub-sectors informed by government's Risk-Adjusted Approach.

It also called upon the industry to collectively demonstrate leadership by being at the forefront of workplace, product and destination readiness through deploying solutions for safety, early detection and prevention measures for the mutual usage by tourism operations and tourists alike.

TOURISM SECTOR RECOVERY STRATEGY

MINMEC received a presentation and an update on the development of the Tourism Recovery Strategy, and welcomed the scenario-based approach adopted in the strategy.

MINMEC also welcomed the fact that the emerging approach adopted appreciates the varying risk of transmission of the virus across tourism sub-sectors and welcomed all efforts that seek to de-risk tourism sub-sectors through the development of health protocols, working with the private sector in line with the risk-adjusted approach.

“To this end we need to stand ready to provide guidance and support for recovery measures in the private and public tourism sector. As the sector starts to go back to work, it must institute health and behavioural protocols to lower the potential for further transmission”, said Minister Kubayi-Ngubane.

MINMEC commended the ongoing and diverse stakeholder engagements in the drafting of the Tourism Recovery Strategy, and called for continued engagement and further submission of inputs and the intensification of such consultations at a provincial level.

UPDATE ON THE RELIEF FUND

MINMEC commended and welcomed the Minister’s intervention through the Tourism Relief Fund given the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector.

In welcoming the update on the Tourism Relief Fund, the meeting requested regular updates on the fund, whilst it appreciated that to complement the current R200 million capitalisation of the Tourism Relief Fund will require interventions at all levels, and committed to speedily initiate such interventions and mobilise provincial resources to mitigate further against the impact of COVID-19 on tourism.

The meeting reiterated the need to improve coordination and the pace of implementation of the intervention measures necessary for the recovery of the sector, such that the sector contributes positively to its national objectives of economic transformation.

MINMEC resolved to champion a national compact for tourism recovery and to investigate more measures to ensure continuous support to tourism businesses to adapt and thrive in a new post-crisis era, and explore innovative capacity building programmes aimed at enabling the travel and tourism sector to be more inclusive, robust and resilient.

CONCLUSION - EFFORTS TO FIGHT CORONA VIRUS

MINMEC thanked and appreciated the invaluable services, which some of business in the value chain like accommodation, airlines and vehicle hire are continuing to render in support of national efforts to curb and manage the pandemic.

In the same vein, the meeting welcomed the solidarity and the benevolent contribution of the private sector by paying for three hotels in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town used as quarantine sites during the lockdown period.

At its conclusion, the meeting reiterated the commitment and will of all of government to work tirelessly to safeguard the tourism industry and called for cooperation and partnerships with academic institutions, regional organisations, communities and international actors to mitigate against the pandemic, develop response plans and solidify the foundation for a healthier, more resilient future.

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