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MEDIA STATEMENT

18 December 2024

Tourism Minister and Deputy Minister lead summer campaign activations in Durban And Soweto

As part of the annual Tourism Summer Campaign, launched in the Free State in October this year, today, 18 December 2024, Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille and Deputy Minister, Maggie Sotyu visited various sites in the eThekweni Municipality as part of Summer Campaign activations.

The visit forms part of the summer readiness activations and welcoming local and international tourists who will visit various holiday destinations across the country over the summer period.

December marks the start of the peak tourism season for South Africa and Minister de Lille and Deputy Minister, Sotyu spent time at key tourist sites to engage in activities as part of the summer readiness campaign.

Minister de Lille and Deputy Minister Sotyu started their programme by engaging staff at the Elangeni hotel on the Durban beachfront to thank the staff for their commitment and hard work in promoting and growing the tourism sector.

Following the engagement with hotel staff, the Minister and Deputy Minister visited the beach front and joined Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers in a beach clean-up operation.

This was followed by addressing 50 senior citizens hosted by the Department of Tourism at the start of their Open Bus Tour to uShaka Marine World, joining the tourism monitors on their patrol on the Durban beach front and ending with a senior citizens lunch at one of Durban's beach front restaurants.

“As South Africa's summer holiday season peaks and visitors venture out to explore our diverse travel offerings, we visited these sites to inspect summer readiness and to encourage visitors to explore the country responsibly. This roadshow is part of the broader objectives of the Tourism Sector Masterplan to promote tourist attractions and hidden gems in all our provinces,” Minister de Lille said.

The Department of Tourism is part of the Presidential eThekweni Working Group tasked with addressing various issues in eThekweni.

The working group represents an intergovernmental collaborative approach to addressing challenges in local government, and includes active participation from all levels of government, the private sector, state owned enterprises, organised labour and civil society.

One of the workstreams is the Tourism Revitalisation workstream where the Department of Tourism's actions as part of the tourism revitalization work includes beach clean-ups and general clean up initiatives around the city.

"The clean-up programmes have been a resounding success, with over 800 participants mobilized to date. These participants include EPWP workers, tourism monitors, volunteers from government, local businesses, NGOs, and local communities, showcasing a collective commitment to revitalising eThekweni," Minister de Lille said.

As part of supplementing safety initiatives by the South African Police Service and local law enforcement, the Department implemented the Tourism Monitors initiative which involves the training, mentorship and deployment of unemployed youth at identified tourism sites across the country to enhance tourism safety.

A total of 78 Tourism Monitors have been deployed to various sites in the eThekweni region.

"The Tourism Monitors programme is part of the National Tourism Safety Plan to enhance tourism safety awareness at key tourism sites; to upskill unemployed youth and to reduce tourist vulnerabilities," Deputy Minister, Maggie Sotyu said.

The Department of Tourism together with partners in eThekweni will continue to conduct clean-up campaigns and deploy Tourism Monitors to the region to assist with safety and upkeep of tourist sites.

"The Deputy Minister and I want to thank all visitors for choosing to explore our beautiful country and contributing to the success and growth of the tourism sector. We especially want to thank our domestic travellers as this is the bedrock of our sector and we thank them for exploring and enjoying their own country. Our gratitude also goes to each and every person in the tourism sector for their hard work and wish to thank them in advance for the work we will continue to do in the new year," Minister de Lille said.

Following the engagements in eThekweni, Minister de Lille and Deputy Minister Sotyu will visit various sites in Soweto on Thursday 19 December as part of the Summer Campaign activation.

The Minister and Deputy Minister will engage youth in tourism businesses and young people who have been beneficiaries of the various tourism training departments offered annually by the Department of Tourism such as food and beverage training and chef training.

In Soweto, on Thursday 19 December, the Minister and Deputy Minister will visit the Soweto Chefs Academy, Vilakazi Street including stops at Mandela House, Sakhumzi Restaurant, the Hector Pieterse Memorial, Just Badela restaurant and the Soweto Towers Bungee Jumping.

"These engagements have been inspiring to see the tourism sector at work to provide immersive and exciting tourism offerings to local and domestic travellers. South Africa is blessed with the most amazing natural beauty, vibrant offerings in our cities, towns, townships, villages and dorps and we are working

hard to ensure that we promote all the diverse tourism offerings and hidden gems in every province. This is to ensure that the economic benefits of tourism reach all communities in all nine provinces. We are so grateful to all partners in the tourism sector as they are the heartbeat of our tourism offering, our best asset is the warm, welcoming people of Mzansi and we thank them for all that they do to grow the tourism sector,” Minister de Lille concluded.

Minister de Lille and Deputy Minister Soty also extend their best wishes to all visitors and South Africans for a safe and happy holiday season encouraging all travellers to be safe, take care on the roads and enjoy summer responsibly.

Ends

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