

## **Tourism builds back better for inclusive growth**

**27 September 2021**

Tourism Month is the celebration of people, places and products. With people at the heart of its brand, South Africa boasts a wealth of diverse landscapes and cityscapes, populated with an array of tourism products to suit every traveller's need.

The Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela, today addressed the South African edition of World Tourism Day celebrations in Clarens in the Free State Province – host of this year's Tourism Month. "Today we join and connect with the world as we mark World Tourism Day and celebrate our resilience, recovery and as we forge ahead towards a rejuvenated and inclusive tourism sector," said the Deputy Minister.

This global observance day by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation aims to foster awareness of tourism's social, cultural, political and economic value. Under the theme: "*Tourism for Inclusive Growth*," the celebrations aim to inspire and highlight the initiatives that are poised to drive tourism recovery, in a "new and better normal", post the pandemic.

During the celebrations, the Deputy Minister stated that the Department of Tourism has been engaging with the Acting High Commissioner of the United Kingdom. "The Minister of Tourism, Lindiwe Sisulu, has requested the Acting High Commissioner of the United Kingdom to urgently arrange a meeting between her and the Minister of Transportation in the United Kingdom, who is leading the Task Force dealing with transportation and the restrictions. We, however, welcome Germany, the United States of America, the United Arab Emirates and many other countries that have removed restrictions against us," he stated.

The Deputy Minister also indicated that Cabinet is addressing concerns around the vaccination certificate including the digital vaccination certificate. "Government and social partners are engaging on the form of this passport or certificate which should follow international trends. This might simply mean a proof of vaccination in a format which is not easy to forged or altered, and will be developed specifically to integrate with information of all official vaccinations and test types, including PCR and rapid tests," stated Deputy Minister Mahlalela.

Tourism played a pivotal role in the broader South African economy before the pandemic. It is a tertiary sector with strong linkages to transportation, consumer retail, financial services and other network industries.

"The Covid-19 pandemic might have brought us to our knees, but it did not topple us. A pivotal economic lever, the tourism sector has proved to be resilient and with the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan in place, it promises to rebound," the Deputy Minister stated.

In addition to the tourism sector implementing Covid-19 protocols to protect tourists, the Government is also rolling out measures to strengthen the quality of tourism offerings. This includes the Norms and Standards approved by Cabinet which will be gazetted on 1 November 2021, in time to prepare for the arrivals of our festive season visitors. To support and ensure that the tourism sector is ready to welcome back tourists to South Africa, Minister Sisulu will launch the tourism sector vaccination programme in Gauteng on 30 September 2021.

The Deputy Minister also announced strategic interventions to attract tourists back to South Africa with South African Tourism launching two global campaigns soon namely a Global Advocacy Campaign and Global Brand Campaign.

The Department is also re-evaluating the extent to which the supply side of the tourism value chain has been affected by the pandemic. To assist, the Department is relaunching some of its support mechanisms and funding initiatives including the Tourism Transformation Fund and a Green Tourism Incentive Scheme.

The Deputy Minister urged South Africans to support the local tourism sector in its recovery. “As we have said, certainly we will travel again soon, whether it is to gather to host a small get-together with friends or celebrate a party or a wedding. Let us all please book an event venue to support a local restaurant or hospitality venue,” he stated.

“The path to recovery is going to be laborious and tedious, but will require the collective energy of every stakeholder. Therefore, as we build back better, we should do that with a renewed social compact led by government, driven by the private sector, and most importantly, such a recovery must be inclusive to find meaning for all our communities,” concluded Deputy Minister Mahlalela.

**ENQUIRIES:**

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