



tourism

Department:  
Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Welcome of President Cyril Ramaphosa to Africa's Travel Indaba 2019 Minister Derek Hanekom  
04 May 2019

President Ramaphosa, on behalf of the tourism industries from 20 African countries doing business here this year, and buyers from over 80 countries around the world, and a huge media contingency, who are communicating the good, including many untold stories about this incredible continent of ours: welcome to the biggest ever annual Africa Travel Indaba.

It has been extremely busy, sellers selling, buyers buying and the media interviewing and reporting. We are a united industry, and an industry that unites, connects, builds bridges and overcomes barriers. We are an industry that is very resilient in the face of economic turbulence. We are an industry that is performing exceptionally well, contributing more than 9% to GDP and employing 1.5 million people across the value chain in South Africa. Tourism grew by 7% in the continent as a whole.

But we are also an industry that has not yet reached its full potential. You know that our country has spectacular landscapes, abundant wildlife, vibrant performing and visual arts, music and heritage, food and wine, adventure and experience. You know that our country and the continent have unique stories to tell, stories of overcoming adversity, stories of hope, stories of inclusivity rather than division.

In South Africa we have chosen to mould a future for ourselves, where no-one is excluded, whether that be because of race, or gender, or religion, or sexual orientation or disability. We have chosen to unite the people of our country in all our magnificent diversity. Rather than separating people, we have chosen the journey of inclusion. Although we still have a long way to go, our progress towards an inclusive future has been quite dramatic.

Mr President, I met with hosted media from 18 countries yesterday and last night I took the liberty of talking to the sellers and buyers asking them what would be a fitting welcome for our beloved President.

Mr President, the message is quite simply that the industry is delighted about your

unexpected visit this morning, and honoured that you have taken time to be here with them today. The industry is overwhelmed by your recognition of the economic and social importance of Tourism. But Mr President, there is an overwhelming message that I heard yesterday – from Nigeria to Ghana, from Kenya to Uganda, from India to China, to New Zealand and other countries, and it is this: this sector has massive potential, and to unlock its potential, the visa dispensation must be overhauled. I took the liberty of assuring them that under your leadership, as you assume a new five year term of office as President of South Africa, we will move, in your own words, rapidly to a world class visa system.

Your Excellency President Ramaphosa, welcome again - the stage is yours.