



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

“When you speak to a man in his own language, you speak to his heart”

22 September 2016

“In order for anyone to not only fit in, but to live an effective life in today’s global village, one needs to learn as much about other cultures as possible,” said Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms. Tokozile Xasa, during the launch of the Foreign Language Training Programme in Mandarin and Russian.

The launch was held at Hilton Hotel Sandton with the Russian and Chinese Embassies representatives in attendance.

China and Russia are amongst the top tourist markets for South Africa. Statistics released in January 2016 showed a 12.6% increase from Russia, and a 63.7 % increase from China. In the global trends, China has the largest outbound tourism market in the world - in 2015 over 120 million Chinese nationals visited destinations abroad. These are some of the factors which has led the Department of Tourism to initiate the Foreign Language Training Programme.

Deputy Minister Xasa stated that it is worth noting that Russia has been secured as an investment market for South Africa, with the main purpose of ensuring that South African Tourism is using opportunities that secure the greatest return on investment when trying to attract visitors from Russia.

“Other positive developments in this regard are the relaxation of South African visa requirements which is expected to increase the number of Russian tourists to South Africa,” said Deputy Minister Xasa.

Memorandum of Agreements were signed with Russia and China in areas of capacity building and skills development. Working groups were set up, and they identified the need for a Foreign Language Programme.

The Foreign Language Training Programme is a capacity-building initiative that will enable frontline staff and tourist guides to develop competencies in Mandarin and Russian. Tourism practitioners will be competent in speaking, reading and writing in both languages. The overall outcome is improved service levels and visitor experience.

“We as the people of the Republic of China are grateful for the strides made by the South African government in strengthen relations with BRICS countries,” said Deputy Ambassador of China, Mr. Li Song.

Ambassador Song added that they welcomed the initiative and hoped it will contribute towards bringing more tourists in the country. “When you speak to a man in his own language, you speak to his heart”, concluded the Ambassador.

Counsellor Alexander Agafonof of the Russian Federation Embassy said the initiative will strengthen their bilateral agreements to improve skills development and language exchange. “We would like to express our sincere gratitude towards the efforts undertaken by the Republic of South Africa’s Department of Tourism, and we would like to offer our message of support and encouragement to the trainees. We are confident that this programme will lay a solid foundation for future endeavours of both countries,” said Ambassador Agafonof.

The programme will run for a period of 3 months for both languages. The 28 trainees are from different fields in the tourism sector.

Enquiries:

Mr. Trevor Bloem

NDT spokesperson

Chief Director: Communications

Telephone: +27 (0) 12 444-6607

E-mail: tbloem@tourism.gov.za

Website: www.tourism.gov.za

Issued by The National Department of Tourism