



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**

**INDABA 2013 Opening Ceremony
Speech by National Tourism Minister, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk**

11 May 2013

This is who we are ... we are South Africa! Inspired and inspiring, diverse and united, we gather here today in this great province of KwaZulu-Natal – this legendary kingdom of dreams and opportunities. We gather here between the ocean and the mountains, between our heritage and our tomorrow, to celebrate the power and the prospects of an industry that showcases our nation to the world.

Welcome to the 2013 Tourism Indaba!

Last year, I took stock of our achievements since 2004. We had so much to celebrate, and indeed we did.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am privileged to join you again this year, and am excited to be here today. Two weeks ago, we were at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town with the President, where we announced the latest international tourist arrival statistics. Let me share a few highlights with you: We welcomed approximately 9,2 million tourists to our shores last year. Our overall international tourist arrivals growth in 2012 was 10,2%. This was against an average global industry growth of 4%. We certainly performed remarkably. We are growing into a most sought-after tourist destination, with a vast array of unique experiences on offer.

But, of course, this did not just fall into our laps. We had to work harder than ever to sustain growth and encourage prospective travellers to act on the seed of inspiration we had sown through our various branding and marketing endeavours. Our brand message on channels such as National Geographic and CNN International enabled us to reach over one billion consumers last year. Our video, banner and text adverts were displayed to targeted audiences over 1,1 billion times. This complemented our online partnerships with the likes of Expedia, Facebook, TripAdvisor and WAYN.com. Last year, we also generated over R4,6 billion in editorial coverage for our destination through our global and in-country media relations work.

We are intent on building on this foundation. The launch of the South African National Convention Bureau has delivered exceptional results and has greatly boosted our global competitiveness in pursuing our target of R6,2 billion in direct spend via business events over the next five years.

Over a long period, the Tourism Indaba has maintained its stature and viability as Africa's top travel show. Simultaneously, we can do more to tangibly strengthen the African tourism industry through mutually beneficial 'coopetition' – which brings out the best in all of us through cooperation and healthy competition on our continent.

It is time to modernise and expand Indaba. Our vision as government and South African Tourism is that Indaba must be the platform for exhibitors and buyers, not only in and from South Africa, but for the whole of the African continent. To achieve this we are willing to invest even more to transform Indaba into a pan-African trade platform.

I can therefore announce that, as part of our growth and expansion plans, we will be gradually increasing African participation at the Indaba in 2014 and beyond. That will ensure more exhibitors and more buyers, which will be good both for South Africa and the African continent. South African Tourism has been consulting and will do more work to generate firm proposals by December this year. As Africans, the lesson is this: Let's not resent each other's success; instead, let's grow off the success of each other.

Furthermore, in the coming year, South African Tourism (SAT) will roll out a global hub strategy created to effectively deliver the destination marketing message, with a wider reach than ever before. To further bolster growth, we have identified core markets, investment markets and tactical markets across regional Africa, the Americas, Asia and Australasia, as well as Europe. We understand that when we enter a market, we have to work hard to achieve success, and that it is always a partnership. That is why, in the coming year, SAT will open fully-fledged offices in Brazil, Angola, Kenya and Nigeria, whilst also expanding its marketing presence and partnerships with the trade in South Korea, Russia, Scandinavia, Shanghai in China, Uganda, Ghana and Tanzania.

In positioning our country as a globally competitive and responsible tourism destination, we will, amongst other things, be raising the profile of our heritage and cultural tourism assets. This year, our Heritage and Cultural Pavilion here at the Tourism Indaba aims to profile and promote the eight world heritage sites we are proud to have in South Africa. I invite you to visit the pavilion, experience some of the exciting products on offer, and promote these in your future travel plans.

Domestic tourism is a key component of our journey going forward. Increasing domestic tourism's contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) and promoting a culture of travel among South Africans are key objectives of the National Tourism Sector Strategy. At any given time, three quarters of all tourists in South Africa are South Africans, with domestic tourists having contributed one hundred and one billion rand (R101 billion) to our economy in 2011.

Some of the South Africans who do not travel tell us that they cannot afford it or are not aware of accessible offerings. As a sector, we therefore need to work harder to address these information and cost barriers. To this end, we are:

- investing in new partnerships and relationships, including between provincial tourism marketers and SAT;
- investing in a new marketing campaign for domestic tourists that is to be launched during Tourism Month in September, targeted at a broad cross-section of the South African population; and
- reminding South Africans that tourism is everybody's business. All South Africans stand to benefit from a robust, growing destination.

We are also thinking innovatively of new ways to ensure that more South African families have access to the places that we have inherited as a nation. To truly deliver on the promise of tourism, we have to create the conditions that render the tourism experience and the treasures of our country accessible and affordable to a much greater share of our population. To this end, I can today announce that, in partnership with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), we have recently commissioned an audit of underutilised state assets and properties that could be developed into tourist attractions and facilities. It is simply wrong to have state resources stand vacant while there is cropped-up demand in certain market segments. Pursuant to this, we have also commissioned a feasibility study for a pilot budget resort chain, which could in some or other way be de-risked through partnership approaches, aimed at an underserved market segment of would-be travellers earning less than R5000 per month. The time has come to remove the final barriers to fully unlock our country's tourism treasures and the intrinsic value of travel for all South Africans,

thereby bolstering our contribution to job creation and poverty alleviation.

This year, we also start to take stock of 20 years of freedom and democracy, and 20 years of tourism in our country. We have come such a long way. Tourism has taken its place as a vital contributor to economic growth, catapulting South Africa from a pariah prior to 1994, to one of the fastest-growing and most desired leisure holiday destinations in the world today. In 1993, the country received just over 3,4 million international arrivals. In 2012, we witnessed over 13 million international arrivals, of which some nine million were international tourists visiting our shores. In addition, we have gained recognition across the globe as a capable, warm, friendly and accessible global mega-events destination. Therefore, we are planning a celebration of 20 years of tourism in the months leading up to Freedom Day on 27 April 2014. At next year's Tourism Indaba, we will recognise South Africa's top 200 trade partners for their contribution to our industry over the past 20 years. We will also honour all the Emerging Tourism Entrepreneur of the Year Award (ETEYA) winners over the years, with a focus on learning from what they continue to achieve.

I look forward to continue taking the hands of all our partners as we celebrate 20 years of freedom and democracy and 20 years of tourism, and as we put our heads together to lay the foundation for another 20 years of new opportunities and fulfilling experiences. It was Mark Twain who said: "Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So, throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

With these words, I thank you for your commitment to our sector and hope that you will be exploring, dreaming and discovering the wonders of tourism and our country at what I am convinced will be a successful 2013 Tourism Indaba.

Enquiries:

Ms. Melene Rossouw

Director: Media Liaison

Telephone: +27 (0) 21 465 7240

Fax: +27 (0) 21 465 3216

Cell: +27 (0) 82 753 7107

Email: mrossouw@tourism.gov.za

Website: www.tourism.gov.za/

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