



tourism

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Tourism a leading sector – Minister

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Tourism Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk says tourism is a leading sector of the South African economy.

It surpassed the global average by more than two-and-a-half times during international ratings last year.

Van Schalkwyk was addressing delegates at Boardwalk Convention Centre in Port Elizabeth yesterday during the conference organised by the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry.

“Last year, international tourist arrivals grew by 10.2%, which is more than two and a half times the global average of 4%. The business-events industry has been an important contributor to this success,” the minister said.

He said the government’s decision to invest in business-events tourism was informed by their strategy to diversify offerings and source markets.

According to Van Schalkwyk, the 97 international association meetings that South Africa hosted last year amounted to a third of all the meetings hosted on the entire continent.

“However, there is still much work to be done. Although we are the undisputed leader in business events on the African continent, we have to work hard to attract and host more regional association conferences.

“Furthermore, Africa as a whole still has a long way to go to attract international association meetings.

“For example, Africa hosted just 2.7% of the 11 000 international meetings held globally in 2012,” Van Schalkwyk said.

The CEO of South African Tourism, Thulani Nzima, said of the R76.4bn that tourism contributed to South Africa’s GDP last year, R47.6bn was from African markets.

“This focus on Africa is not new for us. South Africa’s commitment to success across the region and across the continent is established and on the record,” Nzima said.

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