



tourism

Department:  
Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**Address by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa at the  
Tourist's Guides Day celebrations in KwaZulu-Natal**

**20 February 2014**

Director of proceedings  
Speaker for uThungulu District Municipality, Cllr Musa Mzimela  
Tourism KZN Board Chairperson, Sadha Naidoo  
CEO of Brand SA, Mr Miller Matola  
Officials from government departments and state owned enterprises  
Captains of Industries  
Invited guests  
Members of the media  
Ladies and Gentlemen  
Good evening to you all

It is indeed an honour to be here with you this evening. Allow me to extend my sincere gratitude to the stakeholders of the tourism sector that have been working tirelessly with us on the preparations for this very special occasion.

*Ladies and gentlemen*

In his State of the Nation Address, President Zuma on 13 February 2014, stated that the tourism industry has grown dramatically. In 1993, South Africa received a mere 3 million foreign visitors. By 2012, the figure had grown to 13 million visitors. We will continue to grow this industry, given its potential for job creation. – End quote.

When the President stated this, I nodded and said, yes, **THIS IS A GOOD STORY TO TELL.**

I also know that you to know more about the good stories about our country, the SKA. These and other similar stories make us proud to be South Africans. We rely on you to tell them to the world as Ambassadors of the country brand.

The theme for this year's tourist's guides day celebrations is "Keeping up with the changing trends". The theme focuses on current issues related to tourist guiding and does not only address the challenges experienced in the sector, but also the opportunities that are available to tourist guides to grow their businesses in a constantly changing environment.

In line with the non-stop growing global trend of tourists and travellers, tourism has further stimulated its crucial role in economic, social and environmental aspects. Looking at the performance of the tourism sector, the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer indicates that International tourist arrivals grew by 5% in 2013, reaching a record of over 1 billion.

According to the Declaration of the 4th T20 Tourism Ministers Meeting held May 16, 2012 in Mexico, Tourism accounts for as much as 9% of world's GDP, considering its direct, indirect and induced impacts. Tourism represents one of the fastest growing economic activities. In comparison with other sectors, it is also one of the most resilient. In simple terms, this says

that, there is future for me and you in this sector.

Tourism is a major driver of job creation, accounting for 8% of global employment. Tourism also creates significantly more jobs than other industries, employing six times more people than the global automotive manufacturing sector, four times more than the mining sector, and a third more than the financial sector. We firmly believe that productivity and service quality of the tourism sector offer a unique opportunity for poverty reduction and entry point, especially for young workers.

I can firmly say that, indeed, **SOUTH AFRICA A MUCH BETTER PLACE TO LIVE IN THAN IN 1994.**

Director of ceremonies, as we celebrate the Tourist's Guides Day, we salute the guides and honour them for the magnificent work they do for the Tourism industry. Tour guides lead visitors, individually or in groups, on tours of varying durations. They need to ensure that itineraries are met and that customers are being informed in an entertaining manner about the location they are touring. The aptitude for languages is the skill set required to be successful in the field. You need to have a thorough knowledge relating to travelling and tourist destinations, business tactics and social etiquettes.

All that I have just mentioned is not something that can be achieved overnight. For a tourist guide to master the art of guiding, it says that there is a lot of training that must take place. In this regard, it is important guides continue to equip themselves with new skills, including understanding new markets and better command of content.

It is not a lie that the growth of tourism has attracted illegal tour guides wanting to make entry into the industry through back door. This is a potentially dangerous development which is in direct violation to our land and should be strongly discouraged.

Illegal tourist guides hamper positive growth in the tourism industry. Through inaccurate information and sub-standard service provision, these practices rob the country of the chance to make a positive impact on tourists. Ladies and Gentlemen, we have established good working relationships with other stakeholders, including the SAPS, in terms of registering cases of illegal guiding. We have to enforce compliance and root out this scourge.

Last year we spoke of the opportunities presented by co-operatives. I must state that we have made some progress in this regard. Working together with the dti, Eastern Cape Province and Free State Province, we are supporting the Vredefort dome tourist guides Associations and the Qunu tourists guides association with the formations of co-operatives. This support will include up-skilling and incentive access for their start-up formation. The department will continue to identify high-potential areas that present opportunities for guides.

*As you might be aware of that the Tourism Bill will be tabled in Parliament before the end of this first term, it is important to familiarise yourself with it as it defines the scope for tourist guiding. Once the new Tourism Act is in place, new regulations will have to be drafted setting out the procedures to be followed when registering tourist guides and will also include the drafting of the Code of Conduct and Ethics for tourist guides.*

From the above, it is evident that a tour guide is a critical player in the tourism sector. Forums of this nature assist us to discuss bottlenecks around tour guiding in South Africa. We are even going a step further to work with our neighbouring countries in terms of harmonising cross-border tourist guiding activities. We do a lot of work together in the SADC region, it is therefore fair to venture into tourist guiding and unlock the opportunities for tourist guides that may consider expanding their operations.

Tourist guides deserve recognition. That is why we will be introducing a tourist guiding category in the Lilizela Awards.

We are doing all this in order to create a conducive environment for the tourist-guides to thrive. We are the nation that has been endowed with many gifts, including scenic beauty, diverse cultures and hospitality. Quality tourist guiding is one important ammunition that may assist us greatly to aggressively market South Africa. **Indeed, South Africa is a better place than it was in 1994.**

I thank you.

Tokozile Xasa, MP  
Deputy Minister of Tourism

**Issued by The National Department of Tourism**