



**tourism**

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## **More transformation needed in tourism to ensure the benefit of all people – Minister Derek Hanekom**

**3 June 2014**

Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom said the development and growth of the tourism industry should take place at grassroots level and not exclude poor communities, “To unlock tourism development at local government level, we have to work together with municipalities to promote tourism growth, and also look at priorities that presents good growth opportunities that can be exploited for the benefit of our people,” Minister Hanekom said in his recent special address to employees of the Department of Tourism in Pretoria. “We must do our best to ensure that the lives of our people change for the better, and to ensure that even the poor in our society are not excluded,” he said.

Tourism can play an important role in job creation aspirations of the country, “In the National Development Plan (NDP), tourism is identified as one of the six growth pillars of the country’s economy,” he added, before further emphasising the economic potential of the sector. “We must be bold in reaching our targets and objectives, and humble in listening to our stakeholders,” he said.

Minister Hanekom also said special attention should be put on ensuring transformation in the tourism sector, to ensure inclusive participation of all, “Transformation has begun in the sector, but there is still a long way to go, so we have to identify areas that need improvement”. The Department of Tourism has developed a National Rural Tourism Strategy to ensure a developmental approach to the packaging of rural tourism products and opportunities in South Africa. This approach is also meant to prioritise nodes that have the potential to stimulate growth of the rural tourism industry in South Africa.

The Domestic Tourism Growth Strategy 2012-2020, through its capacity building programme in certain nodes within identified high poverty rural nodes, also aims to create a platform to foster relations between municipalities and tourism product owners. The strategy also provides for support to the existing tourism capacity building initiatives in identified municipalities. Minister Hanekom said the Department of Tourism will work towards achieving the objectives enshrined in the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS), one of which aims to entrench the tourism culture amongst ordinary South Africans.

**Issued by The National Department of Tourism**