



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**ADDRESS BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM, FISH MAHLALELA, TO THE
SHARING OF BEST PRACTICES WORKSHOP**

13 MARCH 2024

Programme Director,
Mr Victor Tharage, Director-General: Department of Tourism
Representatives from the African Continent, delegates from China, India, UAE, Mexico and Iran.
Mr Nombulelo Guliwe; the CEO-South African Tourism,
Mr Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa the CEO-Tourism Business Council of South Africa;
Mr Rest Kanju, Director and Head of Operations, Indalo Inclusive;
Political and Cultural Counselors and Tourism Attaches from Foreign Embassies and Consulates in South Africa,

I welcome you to this hybrid Sharing of Best Practices Workshop after 3 years of having to deal with the health break out challenges. We all have been making sure that there are plans and policies, regulations on interventions to face and deal with the challenges.

It gives me pleasure to welcome all of you from different corners of the world. When South Africa started engaging other countries on the topics that were of interest at the time, we all did not realise that at this stage we would be addressing bigger common problems that we all could not avoid as it called for joint efforts among the member states, the recovery of the tourism sector globally which is positively improving.

Out of the 1.3 billion young people worldwide, 85% live in developing countries and almost 50% live in fragile and conflict-affected areas. All over the world, young people are struggling to gain access to the labour market. Youth make up 25% of the global working age population, but account for over 40% of the unemployed.

As you continue to engage each other, your strategic thrust should be to lead and facilitate scalable and measurable solutions that are transformative in unleashing the inherent assets of youth to achieve positive socioeconomic change through the following:

- Providing innovative, tangible, measurable solutions that leverage the inherent assets of youth to effectively define and achieve their goals.
- Celebrating and supporting youth to lead change in their own lives, those of others and those in their communities by sharing stories of youth led change and building supportive networks for the youth in our programs.

- Actively pursue financial and operational stability to innovate and create sustainable long- term impact.
- Contribute to achieving national and global development goals through an ecosystem approach.

Adding value by actively partnering and collaborating with organisations, institutions and companies where possible

When the UNWTO forecasted international tourist arrivals to be down by 20% to 30% in 2020 when compared with 2019 figures, which was an equivalent to a loss of 300 to 450 US\$ billion in international tourism receipts (exports), which was almost one third of the US\$1.5 trillion generated globally, the impact of that resulted in some countries facing more substantial blows than others especially those that had high reliance on the tourism sector.

Travel & Tourism is one of the world's largest sectors, accounting for 10.3% of global GDP and 330 million jobs, or 1 in 10 people on the planet. In 2019, the sector's growth reached 3.5%, a rate higher than that of the global economy for the ninth consecutive year, thereby enriching local communities at a faster rate than many other sectors. Over the years, one in four of all new jobs created across the world has been in Travel & Tourism. The sector has tremendous social impact on local communities and the lives and livelihoods of people touched by Travel & Tourism. Through the revenues and jobs that it provides, Travel & Tourism helps reduce poverty and improve health, housing, education, and overall well-being. It supports diversity and inclusion, employing and offering opportunities to people from all walks of life, including minorities, youth and women. Travel & Tourism has a unique ability to further protect and engage vulnerable groups and communities, while fostering innovation and preserving local heritage and culture. In light of the devastating impact of COVID-19 on Travel & Tourism globally, there was an even more pressing need to come together to recover the hundreds of millions of jobs lost, and livelihoods impacted, while advancing the social progress. (Source: wtcc.org)

As a catalyst for innovation and entrepreneurship, Travel & Tourism has positive ripple effect that does not only helps to support local businesses but fosters entrepreneurship and new business ventures. In effect, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) account for 80% of the Travel & Tourism sector and these SMEs that were particularly affected by COVID-19, and were forced to require governmental support to ensure their survival and most run by the youth.

As a cutting across activity, tourism academics need to step up and contribute research-based, data-driven ideas and solutions in collaboration with the private sector to shape the future needs supporting the development and promotion of the industry. The data to be collected should help stakeholders to make informed decisions and Academics will need to support new creativity and new opportunities that will be available to contribute to the improvement especially focusing on youth in tourism.

Changing lives of unemployed youth

The Department has a number of programmes that are aimed at training unemployed youth to empower them to be in the streamline of tourism and hospitality. These are programmes such as Food and Beverage as well as Accommodation Services which capacitated more than 2500 young South Africans in the tourism value chain, and have created more than 60% employment opportunities.

The Hospitality Youth Training Programme is part of a greater objective of the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) 2016-2026 to ensure an adequately skilled and professional tourism workforce that can deliver a world-class visitor experience.

During the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 financial years, the department achieved training and placement of 2802 unemployed and retrenched youth from the targeted 2500 on the following Skills Development Training Programmes:

- Professional Cookery: targeting 300 unemployed youth
- Food Safety Quality Assures targeting 750 unemployed youth
- Wine Service Training: targeting 502 unemployed youth.
- Food Beverage Service: targeting 1000
- Hospitality Youth Training (Fast Food Services): targeting 250 unemployed youth

One of the major projects implemented by the department and extended internationally, is the National Tourism Career Expo, (NTCE). This Programme started in 2008 targeting tourism high school learners from grades 10 to 12, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and university students, out of school youth, unemployed graduates and educators and lectures. The main aim of the NTCE is to promote tourism as a career, profession and business of choice targeting learners from high schools, TVET College and University students, out of school youth and unemployed tourism graduates. The programme has been able to change the perception that Tourism is an easy subject with no career progression. The industry is perceived to provide menial and low paying jobs with long working hours and the NTCE has completely changed that narrative with the number of learners enrolled for Tourism increasing since the inception of the NTCE.

Air connectivity

As countries open their skies, there will be more impunities for entrepreneurship and more value chain jobs in that sector which brings opportunities for the youth. As our national carrier, the South African Airways offers a variety programmes that positively prepare South Africa's youth to take on a progressive career journey. The Youth Development Programmes are designed to expose youth to new knowledge and opportunities to practise skills in the workplace which is aimed to empower tomorrow's generation to become an integral part of the workplace by empowering them to reach for their dreams.

Visa issues

As and when the countries have opened their doors through easing the Visa exemption and by introducing e-Visa, it is an opportunity that our youth should grab with both as the sector revolves to the 4th Industrial Revolution.

Though with limited time on this year's Workshop, I still trust that you are going to robustly engage on the discussions and sharing information and the best practices on tourism recovery plans but focusing on the improvement for recovery of the tourism industry. We have noted high numbers that are already higher than the 2019 arrivals in a number of countries. It is time that as governments we should join partner with the private sector in supporting the youth in programme such as those under the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Air Transport

Association (IATA) and the Airports Council International (ACI) who joined forces to support the development of tomorrow's leaders of the air transport industry through the Young Aviation Professionals Program. *Source: ICAO.org*

Ladies and Gentlemen, I trust that you will spend the rest of the day sharing information frankly about your own experiences in this regard as you learn from each other while sharing the best ways of dealing with our current challenges.

In conclusion, I wish you the best in your deliberations and sharing of information, best practices and strategies that will contribute towards tourism recovery in all our countries. We know that our situation will no longer be the same as yesterday, but a better normal, a more inclusive, innovative and inter-connected normal is what we look forward to now.

Thank You.

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