



Best practice paves the way for tourism recovery

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The adage: “Necessity is the mother of invention” has never been more true than for the recovery of the tourism sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to innovation, lateral thinking and agile learning with collaboration and partnerships being intrinsic requirements to navigating the pandemic.

This was evidenced yesterday when the Department of Tourism conducted its 9th Sharing of Best Practices Workshop which was attended by delegates from invited countries in Africa and the rest of the world, in particular those with whom South Africa has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and enjoy Bilateral Agreements with.

The objective of the workshop amongst others includes: sharing information and best practices, identifying strategies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector and the strengthening of regional integration and cooperation. This initiative is in line with the provisions of South Africa’s foreign policy which supports the development of the region and the continent. The workshop should be viewed as South Africa’s initiative towards implementing the signed bilateral agreements and building tourism capacity. The continued interest in the workshop has shown the value of this mechanism to our counterparts from the African continent and other parts of the word, to be trained in various areas in the field of tourism.

In his keynote address, the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela said: “This platform lends impetus to the announcement by our President, in his 2019 State of Nation Address, which set a target of 21 million tourist arrivals by 2030 for the tourism sector. It is through initiatives and platforms such as the Best Practices Workshop that will make meaningful contributions in achieving such targets.”

Countries present in the session yesterday were Algeria, Burkina Faso, China, Eswatini, Ghana, India, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Seychelles, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Department appreciates the valuable presentations made by the various countries on their strategies to ensure tourism recovery.

“The Best Practices Workshop provides a platform for robust engagement on the discussions and sharing information and the best practices on tourism recovery plans to address the challenges posed by the COVID19 pandemic. I urge you to continuously seek the alignment of tourism’s contribution to Agenda 2063 through improving the standards, systems and policies in regulating the tourism industry and striving to create jobs and for poverty alleviation” the Deputy Minister further added.

Invited speakers were from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), South African Tourism, the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The recovery of the sector depends on collaborations and dialogues such as this whereby participants can share information and best practice.

“The government of South Africa will continue to engage the diplomatic community with a specific focus on tourism recovery with special attention afforded to issues around South Africa as a safe and desirable destination for international visitors” the Deputy Minister concluded.

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