



MINISTRY
TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**Speech to the NCOP by Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela, MP
Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, Cape Town
Tourism Budget Vote 38**

25 May 2023

Honourable House Chairperson,
Minister of Tourism, Honourable Patricia De Lille
Honourable Members of the National Council of Provinces
Director-General and senior managers
Acting CEO of South African Tourism and Executive Managers
Distinguished guests

More than at any other time, the state of our tourism and travel sector has demanded that we inspire and organize all our people to act together as one, mindful that together we all hold our own future in our own hands.

As we transit from Africa Month to Youth Month we do so with vigour and hope always remaining cautious that in everything we do there is both prospect of great progress and the risk of reversal.

Indeed, our implementation of the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan has demonstrated a remarkable success for the recovery of the sector to set back the COVID19 induced 70% losses of arrivals and earnings.

A crude glance at the 1st Quarter of 2023, clearly indicates that domestic travel has far exceeded the 2019 numbers and at the same time international tourist arrivals to South Africa are continuing to recover.

The 2023/24 budget is clearly dedicated to the revitalization and rejuvenation of the sector that has seen so much loss. With the resilience and vibrancy of our people, there is a huge potential of reclaiming our international arrivals and demonstrate our appetite for strong recovery.

Rejuvenating the country's tourism sector is a key aspect of the country's Tourism Sector Recovery Plan and it aims to ignite economic growth and create jobs.

Investing and paying attention to addressing barriers that deter South Africans from exploring their own country is extremely important. It is quite clear, information and affordability – are of utmost importance

to make the population travel. Unfortunately, racial profiling also remains a big concern for many domestic travelers.

We will continue to encourage South African Product Owners (SAPO) to cater for domestic travellers' needs through their various products and offerings, also implement deal-driven domestic campaigns (Easter, Travel Week and Summer)

These campaigns are aimed to inspire the domestic segments to "get out of their houses" and take more day and holiday trips by showcasing a variety of affordable, desired experiences in a clear and accessible manner, that are underlined by personal safety messages.

ON YOUTH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

In our quest to train our youth with requisite skills, during the last financial year, we implemented Youth Skills Development Programmes targeting 2500 retrenched and unemployed youth.

These learners were trained on the Norms and Standards for safe tourism operations.

Last financial year, 30 Chefs were enrolled in a Recognition of Prior Learning process to obtain a professional qualification or designation. The Chefs underwent an RPL process and get awarded an NOF Level 5 Artisan Chef qualification or designation by SA Chefs Association.

In this financial year, we are targeting 50 Chefs from Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal Provinces to undergo a **Recognition of Prior Learning** process to obtain professional designations or qualification.

In addition, 660 learners will be trained in Food and Beverages with 100 from each of the following Provinces Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West and Free State, while 120 from Gauteng and 140 from KwaZulu-Natal.

On Food Safety Quality Assurers, we earmarked 165 learners from KZN at the tune of R2,6m and Professional Cookery 120 learners from North West at the tune of R2,8m.

We are currently supporting three existing incubators programmes that is, tourism and innovation incubators, food services incubator and community-based tourism enterprise.

In addition two new business incubators will be established, that is, Business Advisory Services for Women in Tourism in Limpopo and Homestay Pilot Programme in Eastern Cape.

Responsible Tourism - Maintenance

As part of investment in tourism infrastructure we funded SANParks to implement the Infrastructure Maintenance Programme in 19 national parks. This programme commenced in 2019 and ended on 31 March 2023. The Department made a funding of R 120 million, with an additional R 25,5million received from the Presidential Employment Stimulus.

About R 145 582 754 was spent on this programme creating 953 temporary jobs in some of the most remote areas of the country, with 345 women, 519 youth and 30 People with disabilities employed.

In total 116 SMMEs were employed in the maintenance programme, for the Kruger National Park and other parks. This programme created decent work and training opportunities for participants from 129 communities and villages adjacent to the 19 National Parks.

Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA)

In this financial year, we aim to complete the review of the grading criteria and continue to innovate in this area of work to include short-term rentals, sustainable initiatives and new traveller trends.

The continued growth of the Basic Quality Verification programme, which serves to provide certification for homestays and tourism establishments in villages, townships and small dorpies will be rolled out through Kwa Zulu-Natal this year. Through this programme, TGCSA has employed 20 graduates to evaluate these properties.

South African National Convention Bureau (SANCB)

The SANCB is actively seeking to develop leads for future business events so that South Africa can continuously enhance its bidding pipeline.

Business development is one of the key strategies to maintain South Africa's position as the number one business events destination in Africa and the Middle East, and to retain the destination's competitive advantage in the global business events sector.

A key initiative that will continue in this financial year is hosting business events in villages, towns and small dorpies (VTSDs), thereby aiding economic impact in the less-visited areas throughout the country.

For this financial year, SANCB will continue to drive the business events hosting in VTSDs and five business events will be hosted in various provinces after the bidding process.

Build a bidding pipeline for future conference and mega events

The South African National Convention Bureau (SANCB) sourced and submitted 95 bids for international business events to be hosted in South Africa between 2022 and 2029. These 95 bids submission have a combined estimated economic value of R1.2b and can potentially attract 49 232 international and regional delegates to South Africa between 2022 and 2029.

These secured conferences which will be hosted in various provinces also contribute to the regional spread of business events as they will be hosted in Gauteng, Western Cape, Free State, Limpopo, and KZN.

Multi Fora Engagements

South Africa will continue to advance South Africa's tourism interest by participating in six Multilateral fora which is UNWTO, BRICS, SADC, IORA, G20 and AU.

The Department will in this financial year continue to host two diplomatic outreach programmes with special focus on Asia and Africa. These outreach programme will provide our country with an opportunity to engage tourism stakeholders in those specific targeted countries with a special focus on tourism recovery.

Over and above, our country will continue to enhance ease of access for tourism priority markets in 24 markets, our analysis indicate that the prioritized tourism markets enjoy a relatively liberal visa regime.

We will have to work harder for markets development in Eastern Europe, Asia particularly China, India and the African Continent.

In conclusion, let us all make tourism an enterprise for everyone in our quest to build earnestly a prosperous sector that will benefit all our people.