

PRESS RELEASE

OFFICIAL OPENING OF TOURISM MONTH ON SA PAVILION AT EXPO



Dubai Expo 2020: Tourism Program launches on South African pavilion

SOUTH AFRICA, Johannesburg – Saturday, 4 December 2021: The Tourism Month on the South African pavilion at the Expo 2020 Dubai was launched to great fanfare on Friday night as delegates from around the world gathered to get a taste of South Africa. The event allows the country to take its place among the globe’s biggest nations, showcase all of its natural wonders and vibrant cultures, and tell its story.

Mzilikazi Themba Khumalo, South African Tourism’s Acting CEO, led the way as he spoke of the pavilion being a microcosm of what delegates might expect if they visit the country. “When you come to South Africa it is not about seeing things and doing things. You can do that anywhere else in the world. When you come to South Africa, you come to be renewed from the inside out.”

Khumalo touched on tourism’s cooling off because of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, he maintained that there is no substitute for experiencing a place for one’s self. “We now live virtual lives where we see each other as pixels on screens. We sit in our rooms without moving for a whole week or even a whole month. This is not what the human race is built to be. There is nothing that replaces being there, the human touch and human interaction.”

Despite the natural wonders that keep on bringing visitors to our shores, Khumalo said the highlight of any trip is the warm hospitality of South Africa’s people.

“From the six pillars we offer from a leisure travel standpoint – our wildlife, urban cities, our brilliant coastline and our marine life – all of those are trumped by one thing: meeting the people of South Africa. You strike up conversations, build friendships, find new things about our culture, and at the end you have friends for life.”

South Africa’s borders are still open

In spite of the Coronavirus, South Africa has decided to trust its scientists’ research and remain open to travellers looking to travel during the upcoming holiday season.

South Africa’s vaccine rollout has been steady and non-pharmaceutical interventions in public spaces still apply. It remains mandatory for all people within South Africa to wear a mask, sanitise regularly, maintain social distance and limit the number of people at gatherings.

Khumalo said that travellers to the country will find every single touchpoint has been reworked to feel make one feel safe. “South Africa is open for business. And we are confidently open because we had put in the work [during lockdown] to make sure your holiday is safe and enjoyable.”

South Africa an attractive investment destination

South Africa's Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saad Cachalia, was on hand to highlight the country's growing trade and industry, saying that it was ripe for foreign direct investment. "Government has made efforts to modernise industry according to global standards. The emerging technologies coming out of the Fourth Industrial Revolution are determining the direction of industry, therefore, considerable amounts of planning and investment is going into upgrading it."

South Africa is an attractive destination for investors who are looking to expand their portfolios. This is because its industry is known to be diverse, with agriculture and automotive manufacturing remaining some of the strongest sectors. Investors, then, have numerous options to explore.

Its R5.52-trillion economy – around US\$335.4 billion – is the 33rd largest in the world. It is export oriented with strong trade links with the US, the UK, Europe and China. Motor vehicles and platinum are some of the largest exports at R164.8-billion and R175.2-billion respectively.

For Cachalia, green energy presents investors – particularly those from the UAE – with a strong opportunity for growth. "South Africa presents the UAE with possibilities that can help address its own challenges - particularly around renewable energy resources. Investment opportunities lie within wind and solar PV energy generation, the manufacturing of solar and wind turbine technologies and components, and in energy storage."

He added that government's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) emphasises the urgency of diversifying the country's energy basket. "The IRP will provide substantial opportunities for private sector participation in the large-scale roll-out of renewable energy generation capacity, particularly wind and solar powered."

Tourism revival on the cards

Tourism plays a crucial role in the development of South Africa's economy. Government has drafted the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan, which is aimed at reviving the industry to pre-Covid levels.

It is also driving re-entry into international tourism markets by maintaining Visa waivers for travellers from over 80 countries. The Tourism Equity Fund has been implemented to support strategic investments that will contribute to the sector's transformation.

"The government is committed in investing in right things to ensure tourism industry continues to evolve and sharpen itself," said Khumalo.

The South African Pavilion can be located in the Opportunity District at Expo and further information can be found on <https://southafricaexpo2020.co.za/sa-pavilion/>

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