

**Address by L N Sisulu, MP, Minister of Tourism on the occasion of the Launch of SA  
Tourism's 'Live Again' Global Campaign  
Mandela Square, Sandton, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

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Honourable Deputy Minister, Mr Amos Fish Mahlalela,  
Your Excellency Ambassador Kintu Nyago,  
Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners,  
Director General, Department of Tourism, Mr Victor Tharage  
South African Tourism Interim Board Chair, Advocate Mojanku Gumbi and Board  
Members,  
South African Tourism Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr Themba Khumalo and South  
African Tourism Executive Committee Members,  
Board members and Chief Executive Officers of the various Provincial Tourism  
Authorities,  
My Tourism Colleagues, Officials and Meetings Africa Delegates  
Media representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is very good to stand here in front of the tourism industry to launch our “**Live Again**” Global Campaign. This indicates our resilience, our central role to usher in a new environment of hope and to create jobs which is an essential measure of our value.

We celebrate this period ahead of us as the beginning of life again. We are just emerging from the devastation wrought by the Covid-19 pandemic, with catastrophic effects that has resulted in significant disruption of global leisure tourism, including the business events industry, with huge impact on our unemployment possibilities. With the restrictions that followed, our sector sadly came to a grinding halt. The year 2020 was the worst year on record for tourism, with a 73% year-on-year decrease in international tourist arrivals.

The South African business events industry wasn't spared from the pandemic either, as industry value dropped from \$6.9 billion in 2019 to \$1.6 billion in 2020. For two years the Covid-19 pandemic has robbed us of events such as this one, where we gather and network.

But today we usher in hope that eternal light that spurs us on. And now we are encouraged by estimates from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) that global tourism experienced a 4% upturn in 2021, compared to 2020. This is great news as we all gear up to receive leisure tourists and business events delegates to our country and of course to the rest of the African continent in order to boost the continent's economy and ensure our people are returned to their jobs.

Tonight is an exceptional event as it marks a significant moment when we all come together to IGNITE Tourism to and around South Africa.

Tonight we stand at an iconic site, the Nelson Mandela Square in one of Africa's most significant square miles flanked by high-rise buildings with more on the horizon - Sandton. In close proximity is the Gautrain station - our high speed train that carries thousands of South Africans and tourists to various nodes throughout the Gauteng Province every day.

From this iconic site, the sound of South Africa, a country, whose epic story has gripped, inspired and rallied humanity for decades, will tonight echo and reverberate across continents, oceans, time-zones and geo-political contour lines.

Because tonight we unveil our Global Brand Campaign which we know will convey the message of Destination South Africa in a manner that is bold, loud, and unyielding for all the world to hear. After two years of merely surviving and staying alive with restricted movements, South Africa is showing the world how to Live Again!

We re-enter the global stage confidently and ready to lead the world in the beautiful dance of living a life that takes on a revitalised and profound meaning, in the wake of the devastation of the past two years. And what devastation it has been!

For us here in South Africa, Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020, will likely be a day that will forever live in infamy. We didn't know it at the time, but the detection of the first Coronavirus case in the country turned out to be a seismic event in the life of our nation and everything changed that day.

Subsequently, as a country, we took difficult decisions and unfortunately some of the measures we put in place to contain the spread of the Coronavirus had the effect of disfiguring our economy. But they were necessary and they saved lives.

If tourism is one of the key tectonic plates on which the South African economy rests, the global events of the past two years truly rattled our foundation. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) data tells us that before the pandemic took hold in Africa, tourism generated more than 200 billion dollars in continental revenue, representing about 6.9% of Africa's GDP.

Each tourist generates between seven and ten jobs, which puts tourism central to addressing unemployment in South Africa. Tourism has the capacity to generate employment for low- and semi-skilled workers especially in rural areas with the greatest needs.

According to Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa (FEDHASA) in 2014, Travel and Tourism's contribution to employment was estimated to be larger than the individual contribution of

the agriculture, automotive, manufacturing, chemical manufacturing and mining sectors put together. Approximately 1.5-million direct and indirect jobs were supported by Tourism.

Further, because of its geographic distribution and low barriers to entry, the tourism industry also generates economic activity, opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises.

What our Tourism sector needs is an all-of-government approach to create an enabling environment to flourish and to achieve the Department of Tourism's stated goal of 21-million tourist arrivals by 2030.

The recent unscientific travel bans and unilateral restrictions imposed on Southern African countries like ours, by countries of the global north, exerted an objectively measurable price on our countries' economies.

However, the industriousness, adaptability and our unwavering humanity, all part of the unrelenting South African spirit, meant that we have been able to stand and fight with unwavering hope.

Fueled by these qualities, and driven by an unshakable conviction that we can and must climb back to the peaks we have previously summited with tourism in our country, we got down to business. Our goal is simple, albeit daunting under the circumstances – to restore the tourism sector to its pre-Covid-19 pinnacle and take it even higher.

Despite the heavy price we have since paid in lost human life and lost livelihoods as many tourism businesses shut down, we remain a resilient nation and we live in a gloriously beautiful country. Though we may feel that under the tight grip of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have not lived in the last two years. Today then, we invite everyone to live again!

Importantly, as we contemplated, imagined and conjured-up what tourism would look like in a world where Covid-19 has morphed from despair-inducing pandemic mode to being manageable, we know that as a destination we just have to offer more than the transient high but show people how to live again!

We have traversed between the milestone of despair and that of a new-found zeal for life. And so, as we take to the proverbial global stage, invitingly putting our best-foot forward and beckoning the world to come and dance with us, we do so to the sound-track of hope, soul-deep rejuvenation and a re-energised mind, body and soul that a South African experience provides.

Be it exhilarating adventures that will have you screaming at the top of your voice and get your adrenaline pumping or the natural wonders and landscapes that calm your mind and soul or the kaleidoscope of cultures and 60 million smiles that will warm your heart, ...or even an unforgettable

night-life and cuisine, South Africa has so much to offer and is sure to create streams of a lifetime of unforgettable memories.

Our country is ready to receive all travelers. All Covid-19 compliance measures have been strengthened with scientific evidence to protect all our citizens and all our visitors alike. The norms and standards for the safer operations of the tourism sector in the context of Covid-19 and beyond, were recently gazetted by ourselves on behalf of the South African government. These measures give assurance to all tourists and business events delegates about the safety of destination South Africa. We are safe and open for business.

South Africa is a vibrant destination and is the perfect place to host big business events and conferences as the country has top quality infrastructure. So tonight, we invite the world to come explore and experience our country.

We confidently open our hearts to welcome and embrace the world to a country that is ready to show you what it means to... taste life, laugh again, love again, and feel again. Come, rediscover what it means to connect with our people and **LIVE AGAIN!**

I thank you