



## **Remarks by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr Fish Mahlalela at the occasion of the NTCE 2022 gala dinner at Nasrec**

**01 October 2022**

Master of Ceremonies

Mr Marks Thibela

Mr Victor Tharage

Mr Themba Khumalo

Sthembile Ndaba

Mr Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa

Ms Mmaditlonki Setwaba

Esteemed Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

CATHSSETA CEO

Director General Department of Tourism

Acting SAT CEO

Acting CEO Brand SA

TBCSA CEO

DDG

Good evening.

Let me express my profound gratitude for being accorded the privilege to address you this evening at this prestigious dinner and awards ceremony, as we gradually moving towards wrapping up the activities of the National Tourism Career Expo 2022.

Master of Ceremonies, it is indeed a heartfelt appreciation for being part of this auspicious event as we further celebrate outstanding performance from dedicated and determined individuals against all odds.

Tonight, I wish to restate that as government we are definitely committed to building a sustainable tourism sector with the youth and women.

We have already come to the end of the Tourism Month festivities as of the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, we are once again casting a spotlight on the importance of youth in tourism, and reaffirm our commitment to upskill and empower them during this 13<sup>th</sup> edition of the National Tourism Careers Expo.

Our theme for this Expo is 'Rethink Tourism – Career Opportunities Await,' the overall aim is to inspire and uplift young people to think outside the box, and pursue sustainable livelihoods in tourism.

We hope this theme is extremely exciting and it offers our youth space and time to really rethink about this sector more and more. To many of us, tourism means a lot more to than just travelling for adventure or sight-seeing. It represents something much more than having fun; it's our livelihood, cash crop and life.

We believe tourism gives real opportunities for the potential of wealth creation as it impacts many lives and therefore this creates ample reason to rethink tourism.

According to the UNTWO, this theme has made tourism's relevance so clearer. The time is now to seize this opportunity to rethink how we do tourism.

To many of us rethinking tourism means taking stock of everything that has been done in the past to harness tourism as a force for good. Rethinking tourism also is to re-strategize to make tourism more meaningful to those whose livelihoods depend on it. It's about taking bold decisions to truly make tourism a cornerstone for economic transformation.

To many of us rethinking tourism is also doing away with parochial tendencies towards individualism and finding common ground to work together to bring much needed growth and development to the sector.

We also need to give women and those among us living with disabilities a greater recognition as they make up quite a sizeable proportion of the work force in tourism, moreover that should be part of the rethinking agenda. It's about time to trust them to ascend to those leadership responsibilities and not just be relegated to the shop floor.

Hence this important question of how many women find themselves at the helm of tourism positions? Is it not indeed, a perfect time to rethink tourism to bridge the gaps of inequality that exists in it while opening doors for inclusion.

To many young people in our country and Africa in particular, that have and continued to embrace tourism as a way of life, rethinking tourism is to create the platforms for their voices to be heard. It is also about creating an enabling environment for them to express themselves creatively and build their capacities in understanding tourism as a business and an alternative for employment.

At the same time, we need to rethink tourism by adopting modern technologies and the spaces they provide for marketing and promotions.

Rethinking tourism, should make us more mindful of the global phenomenon of climate change that causes shift in weather conditions and presenting serious concerns for us in tourism, such as unpredictable rainfall patterns which pose a lot of challenges to effectively planning travel and tours and to mitigate their impact on tourism.

More significantly, rethinking tourism should impress on government to create the right climate for wider private participation and investment into the sector to thrive.

It should also address the progress made in the pandemic aftermath and how policymakers and the tourism sector have been able to adapt and rethink tourism to ensure the sector becomes more resilient.

The tourism sector has already become a lifeline that young and old are afforded multiple employment and entrepreneurial opportunities that eventually transform their lives and communities.

Undoubtedly, tourism is the world's fastest growing employment sector and it continues to adapt to new trends and also repositioning itself as a significant economic driver.

As we rise from the brink of a catastrophic pandemic, our domestic tourism market is bouncing back with a renewed focus and appetite for diversified offerings that will live past any future threat or disaster.

As we stimulate our sector back to life, we will require an inclusive and transformative approach that ensures that all, in particular the youth and women, enjoy the benefits of the success of the sector.

Quite clearly numbers are telling us an interesting story that between January and June 2022, 15,2 million domestic tourism trips were taken. This is a significant upward trajectory for the tourism sector, as this is higher than pre-pandemic levels, indicating that South Africa's domestic tourism sector also experienced the revenge travel trend.

The biggest driver of domestic travel in the first six months of 2022 was the easing of Covid-19 travel restrictions. It therefore tells us to thank all South Africans who heeded the call and travelled within their own country when the world-imposed travel bans and restrictions on South Africa.

Domestic tourism continues to be the backbone of our sector. We have just concluded the hugely successful Sho't left Travel Week. This campaign performed well, with many South Africans taking advantage of the great deals designed to ensure that travel is accessible to all locals.

The buoyance of the domestic tourism market augurs well for the sector as a whole. According to Statistics SA, by June this year, we had received nearly 2.28 million international visitors; this is a phenomenal growth indeed.

Already, we are on track to matching and surpassing last year's full-year total tourist arrival statistics of just over 2.3 million. The Total Foreign Direct Spend from January to June 2022 was R21.5 billion.

The target to reach 21 million tourist arrivals by 2030 still stands, and we are working with all the stakeholders in the sector to attain this. This is thanks to the extraordinary work being done by the various South Africa Tourism teams, industry leaders, tourism operators, the aviation sector, and all involved in the hospitality industry.

There has been much excitement and anticipation among the NTCE partners and sector stakeholders in preparation for this Youth Expo.

Our youth is at the cusp of making life-changing decisions that will map out their career paths. We looking forward to welcoming an estimated 6000 youth, and 400 educators at this three-day EXPO and offer them a glimpse into the world of tourism and hospitality as potential career of choice.

As we wage war against the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality, we will definitely require a skilled workforce that will be up to the challenge of the developing economy

Therefore, an empowered and adequately skilled workforce is critical for the success of the tourism sector, economy and global competitiveness. CATHSSETA is introducing young people to its accredited educational programmes that not only contribute to improved service levels, but will also assure an enhanced visitor experience and the sector's sustainability.

The interactive nature of the 2022 NTCE offers grade 9 – 12 learners, FET and University Students and unemployed graduates an opportunity to voice their opinion and contribute to the development of empowerment programmes that will enrich their lives.

The NTCE highlights for 2022 are that attendees can interact with motivational talks by leading tourism entrepreneurs and personalities, tourism educator seminars, exhibitions by local tourism products and related services. This event is also featuring the following live engagements:

- **The Chef's Corner:** youth interested in a culinary career will be enthralled by a cook-off among graduates of the National Youth Chefs Training Programme, that will be facilitated by the South African Chefs Association (SACA).
- **Mixology Corner:** The Mixology Corner will bring the art of creating fun, enjoyable beverages to life. Mixology, the skill of mixing various drinks and ingredients to create cocktails, is a special craft that is growing in popularity worldwide.
- **Hospitality Corner:** The Hospitality Corner will offer insight on the diverse range of careers from hotel and event management, to casino directors.
- **Conservation Corner:** Nature conservation has a direct impact on the future sustainability of tourism. Youth interested in nature and tourism will gain insight on how to join this industry.
- **Virtual Classroom & Recruitment Arena:** Job seekers and potential employers can meet and engage on aspects that relate to vacancies in the sector, the crafting of Curriculum Vitae (CV), and tips to prepare for interviews.

- **Educators' Seminars:** The seminars will bring educators together to interact with speakers from various institutions, industry bodies and organizations on tourism curriculum.

In conclusion, Master of Ceremonies, the Department is once again grateful for the ongoing support from our partners for the dedication and commitment to go above and beyond the expectations, as well as the team in the Department under the leadership of DDG Mmaditlonki Setwaba for working together to make this programme a success

I take this opportunity to also congratulate all those among us whose hard work, dedication and determination will be awarded today.

I thank you all.