

“We are serious about growing arrivals to our country for our sector to have a positive impact on the South African economy and we are unambiguous in the stance that achieving this will take partnerships between the public and private sector,” said Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille.

Minister de Lille participated at the annual WTM Ministerial Summit where she joined 40 tourism ministers from around the world at this event hosted in association with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). This year the ministers placed the spotlight on the importance of education in the tourism sector.

Minister de Lille’s remarks at the summit were lauded as the Minister shared the need for the private sector to project the future needs of tourism, the skills and training that will be needed to support the growth and changes in the tourism sector so that young people are directed into the requisite fields of study in tourism.

At the Minister’s Summit at WTM, minister de Lille said: “There is a misalignment between the skills currently being taught and what is needed in the sector. The skills gap for the future of tourism can only be filled with a partnership between the public and private sector”.

Minister de Lille also shared information on the Department of Tourism’s skills and training opportunities provided to young people from across South Africa. These programmes targeting unemployed youth represents a multi-million investments into empowering young people to enter the tourism sector.

Following the hosting of the BRICS Tourism Ministers meeting in Cape Town in October, minister de Lille will also be signing an Action Plan with Brazil’s Minister of Tourism, Celso Sabino on joint marketing and collaborative efforts geared towards growing tourism between South Africa and Brazil, especially in light of the relaunch of SAA’s direct flights from Cape Town and Johannesburg which took off in the past few days.

Team South Africa is attending WTM buoyed by the remarkable tourism arrivals statistics of recent months. Between January and September this year, South Africa saw a significant influx of tourists, with over 6,1 million visitors arriving in the country, more than 58.4% when compared to the 3.8million arrivals to South Africa the same period in 2022.

During this period, visitors from Africa represented 4.6million of the total arrivals to South Africa, a 60% increase in Africa land arrivals and a 35% increase in Africa air arrivals.

South Africa welcomed more than 862 000 arrivals from Europe between January and September this year, a 50,9% increase on the more than 571 000 arrivals in 2022.

From Asia, we welcomed more than 148 000 visitors in the first 9 months of 2023, an increase of 82,6% from the 81 000 arrivals in the same period in 2022.

Notably, China’s arrivals to South Africa increased by 247% in 2023 when compared to 2022.

India arrivals to South Africa increased by 57% in 2023, when compared to 2022.

All markets saw an increase in arrivals to South Africa of between 48 and 99%.

During the first two quarters of 2023, total tourist foreign direct spend amounted to R48 billion.

South Africa's appeal to travellers from around the world is undeniable. The South African Tourism UK and Ireland Hub was recently honoured as the 'Luxury Tourist Board of the Year' at the Aspire Awards 2023, held in Manchester on 18 October. Aspire, a premier luxury trade magazine, presented this award.

Furthermore, in July, South Africa received recognition as the “Best Country in the World”, while Cape Town was awarded the title of the “Best City” at the Telegraph Travel Awards as voted by The Telegraph readers.

Minister de Lille engaged the Telegraph Travel editor, Ben Ross and received the awards at the South Africa exhibition stand at WTM in London on Monday 6 November. Minister de Lille also engaged various trade partners and high profile media representatives including CNN, Wanderlust magazine and LonelyPlanet.

The LonelyPlanet team also handed over an award to Minister de Lille voting South Africa as a “Top Sustainable Destination” in the Best in Travel 2024 awards.

"Despite these wonderful recognitions and accolades, in a highly competitive global tourism landscape, we must continue to escalate our efforts to reassure travellers from all over the world that South Africa is the destination they must visit and explore. At WTM, we will also update our partners on our latest safety initiatives and reinforce our message that South Africa is an affordable destination where visitors can enjoy a range of diverse experiences and that these are all complemented by the warmth and welcoming posture of South Africa's people.

“As the summer season has begun in South Africa, we are also going to use that opportunity to invite the world to come to South Africa for summer,” De Lille concluded.

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Note the source for the tourism spend is from the International Tourist Key Measure Report: <https://www.southafrica.net/gl/en/corporate/page/international-tourist-key-measures-report>

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