



MINISTRY  
TOURISM  
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## **SPEAKER NOTES FOR DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM, FISH MAHLALELA ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2024 AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA MEDIA LAUNCH**

**23 APRIL 2024**

MEC for Economic Development, Tourism & Environmental Affairs, Mr. Siboniso Duma  
Mayor of eThekweni, Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda  
South African Tourism Board Chair, Ms Makhosazana Khanyile  
DDGs of the Department of Tourism  
Tourism Kwa Zulu-Natal Board Chair and Board Members  
The City of eThekweni Executive council members  
Inkosi Albert Luthuli ICC Board Chair and Board members  
CEO of South African Tourism, Ms Nombulelo Guliwe  
The Executive Management of South African Tourism  
The Executive Management of Tourism Kwa Zulu Natal  
The Executive Management of Durban Tourism  
The Executive Management of Inkosi Albert Luthuli ICC  
CEOs of Provincial Tourism Authorities  
The Executive management of the Tourism Business Council of South Africa  
Industry Associations, valued partners, and Our Tourism Stakeholders  
Valued Media representatives,

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are less than a month away from gathering at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre for the 2024 edition of Africa's Travel Indaba.

I am, therefore, delighted to be here today to share with you, our plans and state of readiness for Africa's premier travel exhibition.

Africa's Travel Indaba remains one of the top four global trade travel and tourism trade shows.

The sheer scale and the number of delegates that attend to this is not only testament to this but also speaks to the value that this trade continues to provide to all delegates.

The upcoming Africa's Travel Indaba, scheduled to be held from May 13th to 16th, will continue to build on the longstanding successes of this trade event.

Africa's Travel Indaba's value lies in its targeted opportunities for networking and connecting to advance meaningful business for buyers and exhibitors.

With 990 confirmed exhibitors from 26 African countries, including newcomers Burkina Faso, Eritrea, and Guinea, and over 1,000 buyers representing 36 countries, Africa's Travel Indaba is a truly global trade show that is not to be missed.

- Key highlights for this show include:
  - Business Opportunity Networking Day – Africa's Travel Indaba's dedicated educational day that will be featuring curated content on topics and trends shaping the tourism industry.
  - Speed marketing sessions between buyers and exhibitors and exhibitors with fellow exhibitors.
  - dedicated airline pavilion for airlines serving the African continent.
  - Match-making diary that enables exhibitors to arrange pre-scheduled meetings with key decision-makers from our key tourism source markets.
  - Including the return of the hidden gems pavilion with 120 SMME's from around the country.

Given the above, it is clear Africa's Travel Indaba, is an expression of a continent that has been hard at work to addressing various challenges and barriers to promote seamless travel.

As you are aware, the show's primary objective is to spotlight Africa's leisure tourism offerings. As the continent's premier travel and tourism tradeshow, Africa's Travel Indaba is a critical platform for showcasing Africa's diversity and fostering collaboration among its nations.

This year's Africa's Travel Indaba theme is "Unlimited Africa," emphasizing the vast array of experiences and products available across the continent.

Through the numerous insight-driven sessions led by various experts from across the globe, Africa's Travel is a narrative of excellence.

This is the narrative that encompasses breathtaking landscapes and warm hospitality.

Africa's Travel Indaba is a showcase of our collective story as Africans. Contrary to outdated stereotypes portraying Africa as a "dark continent," the African story is one of resilience and growth - Africa's Travel Indaba showcases this story best.

With Africa boasting abundant natural beauty and a variety of outdoor and recreational products that align with these insights, our continent is better positioned to take advantage of the growing demand for African products and experiences.

Africa's Travel Indaba provides a perfect platform to showcase all we offer.

**Africa's Travel Indaba is proudly Pan African**

The timing of the event in May is not coincidental.

May holds special significance as Africa Month, a time when we celebrate our African identity and strive to foster unity among the people of our continent.

Africa Month traces its roots back to May 1963, when the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the precursor to the African Union, was established.

In subsequent years, following the attainment of independence by all member states and the end of apartheid, in the case of South Africa, there was consensus on the necessity to shift focus from the struggle for decolonisation towards fostering greater cooperation and integration to propel the continent's growth and economic development.

This resulted in the establishment of the African Union, which was officially launched at the Durban ICC in 2002.

As a firm believer in tourism's significant potential to fuel economic growth and development across the continent, I find it fitting for Africa's Travel Indaba to take place at the same venue where the AU was founded and that it is taking place during the month highlighting our interdependence and interconnectedness as Africans.

### **Importance of Africa's Travel Indaba**

Economic and cultural impacts are central to the success of Africa's Travel Indaba.

The trade exhibition holds immense significance for the tourism sector and the broader economy.

Our post-event survey reveals that Africa's Travel Indaba 2023 had a total economic contribution of R1.2 billion.

This was made up of a direct contribution of approximately R408.6 million to the South African economy, while an additional contribution of R776.4 million was either indirect or induced.

Furthermore, Africa's Travel Indaba 2023 created or sustained 2,295 jobs. These include 1,374 direct, 186 indirect, and 735 induced jobs.

Additionally, the event contributed R75 million to national government taxes.

Despite the subdued economic environment, we are optimistic that the 2024 instalment will match or surpass these figures.

### **Beyond the economic impact**

Africa's Travel Indaba extends its influence beyond the short-term economic impact.

Our survey further revealed that most attendees are inclined to advocate for South Africa as a destination.

The survey indicates that 99% of participants will likely recommend South Africa to friends, peers, or colleagues.

These participants said they adore the vast array of attractions and experiences.

Despite being a long-haul destination, they find the journey to South Africa worthwhile, with no shortage of immersive experiences, local interactions, and sophisticated luxury awaiting them upon arrival.

Insights from last year's Indaba show that an impressive 99% of the buyers surveyed stated that the exhibitors had met their expectations.

There is something for everyone at Africa's Travel Indaba, and we encourage all players in the tourism industry not to miss the opportunity to be part of the event.

### **Contribution of Tourism to Africa's Development**

The African tourism sector is already making a substantial contribution to the continent's economy and development.

According to data released by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) in November 2023, Africa's travel and tourism sector has the potential to inject US\$ 168 billion into the continent's economy and generate over 18 million new jobs over the next decade.

The report titled 'Unlocking Opportunities for Travel & Tourism Growth in Africa,' studies the historical trends of the Travel & Tourism sector in Africa and provides a forecast for the next decade.

It also identifies the key opportunities and challenges that, if addressed, could propel the region's sector to achieve even higher growth.

### **The South African example**

There is no better demonstration of the power of intracontinental travel than the **Kenya-South Africa example** which highlights importance of facilitation of intracontinental travel.

Between January and December 2023, arrivals from Kenya recorded a remarkable 99% increase compared to 2022, reaching 42,403 arrivals.

Visa exemptions resulting in visa-free travel for Kenyans and South Africans between the two countries, as well as targeted destination marketing efforts, have been instrumental in achieving this great success and surge in arrival numbers from Kenya to South Africa

We are starting to witness a similar growth trend with Ghana since South Africa and Ghana announced a visa-waiver scheme on 1 November 2023, allowing citizens to travel freely between them.

The visa-waiver allows for travel for periods of up to 90 days within a calendar year, for purposes of business or tourism.

Strategic partnerships in the aviation and hospitality sectors have also contributed to this growth. As an example, the codeshare agreement between Kenya Airways and South African Airways (SAA), which established direct flights between Nairobi and major South African cities, has enhanced accessibility and convenience for travellers, thereby stimulating tourism between the two countries.

In addition to this, several new routes have been launched here in South Africa since the last Africa's Travel Indaba. These include:

- SAA commencing Johannesburg to Sao Paulo flights on October 31, 2023.
- In September 2023, South African Airways (SAA) announced the launch of the Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire route, flying three times weekly which started in November 2023.
- Furthermore, South African Airways recently announced the resumption of direct operations to Australia, with the first flights departing for Perth in late April in a few days' time on the 26th of April.
- Airlink also announced a new route from Mbombela to Johannesburg and Mozambique, and this route is set to launch a route in July 2024.

These developments underscore the industriousness of the sector, with airline carriers playing a pivotal role.

Hence, one of Africa's Travel Indaba highlights will be the airline/Aviation Pavilion, connecting aviation industry players with key decision-makers within our continent and across the globe.

### **The Role of SMMEs in Tourism**

Africa's Travel Indaba also plays a significant role in our efforts to promote inclusivity within the tourism sector.

Drawing from our insights, we understand that travellers seek more than just sightseeing; they crave immersive cultural encounters, delectable culinary experiences, and perhaps the chance to savour our finest wines.

Above all, they yearn for new, unique, unforgettable experiences that will form the cornerstone of lasting memories.

The presence of SMMEs at Africa's Travel Indaba, through the Department of Tourism, ensures that these fresh and unexplored experiences, which enrich our destination's diverse offerings, are showcased fully.

Through dynamic speed marketing sessions hosted by South African Tourism, in partnership with the greater tourism sector, we aim to showcase this diversity further, ensuring that all visitors encounter and experience more genuinely unique and memorable offerings.

We all want small, medium, and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) to grow into substantial players in this critical sector of our economy.

However, we understand such transformation will not occur spontaneously but will require deliberate and sustained effort from all stakeholders.

For this reason, we have implemented various programmes to ensure that our SMMEs get the much deserved and needed support.

At Africa's Travel Indaba, we continue to do this as we drive efforts of promoting the role of SMMEs, community empowerment, and economic sustainability within the tourism sector.

The Department of Tourism's Market Access Support Programme (MASP) which offers small businesses an opportunity to travel to and exhibit at national and international tourism trade shows to expose their offerings to more buyers, unlock market potential, grow their customer base and drive sales.

I am delighted to announce that we will bring more than 120 SMMEs to exhibit at Africa's Travel Indaba this year. I am confident these exhibitors will find their event participation highly beneficial to their future growth.

I am excited that a lot is being done to promote rural and township tourism in South Africa.

Earlier this year, the inaugural Township and Village Tourism Expo was hosted by the SA Township and Village Tourism Organisation (SATOVITO) at the Cradle of Humankind, showcasing initiatives and destinations that embody these principles, highlighting the importance of sustainable and community-centric tourism practices.

I am pleased that they are also joining us in the room here today and we will later hear from them.

Also joining us is a representative from Women in Tourism. Very importantly, this organisation exists to ensure that women are Respected, Recognized, Represented, and Rewarded in the sector.

It is important for me to highlight that the South African government remains fully committed to supporting Women in Tourism and collaborating in investing in mechanisms to address the barriers faced by women in the tourism sector.

**Invitations to all delegates**

To our international delegates, we cannot wait to welcome you to Africa's Travel Indaba, where an unforgettable experience awaits.

We assure you; you will be met with a wide variety of African tourism products and experiences ready to be packaged for the full value and benefit of the various traveller preferences and needs.

As you arrive in our vibrant country next month, you'll be greeted with the warmth and hospitality that South Africa is renowned for.

Even beyond the confines of the tradeshow venue, the beauty and allure of South Africa beckons.

Whether it's a safari adventure in one of our world-renowned game parks, an immersive rural or township experience or a stroll along the sun-kissed beaches of the Kwa Zulu-Natal province's 600 km coastline, every moment promises to be filled with excitement.

We also warmly welcome our fellow brothers and sisters from the rest of the African continent, who will be joining us for this event.

Together, let us celebrate the spirit of unity and collaboration as we showcase the best of what our beloved African continent has to offer the world.

For those who have yet to secure their spot, we urge you not to miss out on this opportunity to connect, engage, and forge new partnerships.

Register now and be part of Africa's journey towards a brighter, more prosperous future in the global tourism landscape.

To the members of the media, thank you for your continued support and for contributing to advancing the story of us – the story of an unlimited Africa.

At this year's Africa Travel Indaba, there will be plenty of stories for you. With topics such as the role of technology in tourism, updates on the latest tourism trends, the role of film and entertainment in destination marketing, more insights on our focus and marketing efforts, and a delightful showcase of our continent's diverse offerings, there will be no shortage of stories.

Given the number of exhibitors at Africa's Travel Indaba, there will be a lot of exciting news and developments to report on.

I encourage everyone to take the time to explore some of our attractions and interact with our warm people to experience South African exceptionalism first-hand.

Thank you.