



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Speech by Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela on the occasion of the National
Tourism Careers Expo 2022 Business Networking Session during the Africa Travel Indaba
2022, Inkosi Albert Luthuli ICC**

04 May 2022

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

DG of the Department of Tourism

CEO of Gauteng Tourism Authority

CEO of CATHSSETA

DDG for Tourism Sector Support Services at the Department

Captains of the Industry

All media present

Ladies and Gentleman

I am greatly honoured to be part of this great initiative and exchange views on this Business Networking Session about the NTCE 2022.

As we all know, the NTCE programme seeks to promote and highlight tourism as a career, profession and business of choice. It is a programme directed at high school's learners, TVET College, University students and also out of school youth and unemployed tourism graduates.

Programme Director we have recently emerged from the unprecedented global health, social and economic emergency from the pandemic of Covid 19 which virtually shut down all global prospects of developmental tourism. As a result, government response through the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan seeks to facilitate the preservation of jobs and livelihoods.

We all know by now that tourism boosts the revenue of the economy, creates thousands of jobs, develops the infrastructure and establish a sense of cultural exchange amongst communities.

There is growing trend of youth tourism which includes, independent travellers meaning unaccompanied by their parents with the zeal to construe experience vital for new culture and benefit from new learning opportunities

It is for this reason that we converged here today to exchange how the NTCE could provide the tourism industry with marketing space to reposition itself as a business and employer of choice, especially as it actively interacts with young people through exhibitions and on other related interactive platforms.

The NTCE event has various exciting platforms which include the Chefs Corner, Mixology Corner, Hospitality Arena, Virtual Classroom and Recruitment Arena, Adventure Corner, Conservation Corner and Youth Business Zone.

As we embark on this Business Networking Session let us all pause and remind ourselves of what former President Thabo Mbeki cautioned us about when he said "The struggle for a better society spans generations, with each generation called upon by the imperatives of its age to carry out its 'generational mandate'".

It is therefore imperative for our youth to actively seize all the opportunities provided by our government and social partners in their struggle for a better future.

The devastating impact of COVID 19 had severe impacts on the tourism sector. Tourism businesses were closed and employees lost jobs in huge numbers. The tourism sector has been resilient and is on a recovery path. The tourism sector has significant growth potential.

Growth potential could be harnessed to a much greater extent if certain conditions are met. These growth potential are factors such global competitiveness, excellent visitor experience, safety and security. All of these factors are to a varying extent influenced by the quality of human resource development in the industry.

Consequently, it is important to forecast the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry and the effect of government policies in supporting the post-recovery of this industry, vaccine advancements notwithstanding.

Human Resource factor plays a vital role in promoting the image of the country as a tourism attraction.

Employees such as tour guides, travel agents tour operators, airport personnel and hotel staff are considered as the human resource for the hospitality industries.

From a business perspective, a good understanding of the effects of the pandemic is likely to provide the actors of the tourism industry substantial insights on how to build and implement effective decision-making frameworks that can, in turn, ensure rapid responses to unanticipated events that threaten the financial sustainability of their businesses

Human resource development in the tourism sector is a complex process and a number of challenges exist, including but not limited to:

- Concerns with absorption of tourism/hospitality graduates
- Graduates generally viewed as not meeting employer expectations
- Low wages, almost non-existent labour market pathways and poor employment conditions
- Education and training system is fragmented, curricula perceived not to be aligned to employer needs, and quality is highly variable
- Complex nature of training supply across many sources

From a policy-making perspective, epidemic outbreaks not only represent a serious public health crisis that challenges governments, but also the underlying economic downturns resulting from the epidemic

Skills development is important to support the recovery of the tourism sector. The successful implementation of the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan requires a skilled and capable tourism workforce.

The skills supplied by our PSET system need to match the skills demands of the sector. The NTCE 2022 provide a mechanism in which learners and students are directed at the tourism career paths that are in demand and needed to ensure that we continue to grow tourism in a sustainable manner.

The skills audit conducted as part of the development of the TSHRD strategy found scarce skills in the following areas: Hospitality Studies Teacher; Tourism Studies

Teacher; Food and Beverage Technician; Tourism Information Officers; Travel Consultant; Inbound Contact Centre Consultant; Outdoor Adventure Guide; Park Ranger; Environmental Scientist; Training and Development Professional; Safety Officers (Food, Adventure Tourism).

To address some of the human resource development challenges within the sector, the Department of Tourism (DT) in partnership with Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education Training Authority (CATHSSETA) and a host province has since 2008 hosted the NTCE annually (except in 2010 and 2020).

The provinces that hosted the NTCE are KwaZulu Natal, Durban in 2008 – 2011, Eastern Cape, East London in 2012 – 2014, Free State, Bloemfontein in 2015 – 2017, North West, Rustenburg in 2018 – 2019. The NTCE 2020 could not take place due to the COVID – 19 lockdown regulations. The 2021 – 2023 hosting round was awarded to the Gauteng Province and the Gauteng Department of Economic Development (GDED) is the host province partner through its tourism marketing entity, Gauteng Tourism Agency (GTA). The NTCE 2021 was held from 25, 26 and 27 March 2022 at the Johannesburg Expo Centre.

The NTCE mantra is that “it is not a paper grabbing platform like all other career expos, but a highly interactive platform” driven and informed by Tourism Sector Human Resource Development Strategy 2017 - 2027 and NTCE Strategy content. It is a ‘melting pot’ where the demand and supply side of tourism education and training meet.

We initiated this important programme as a department because we understood well and fully believed in the words of the former President of the governing party in our country, when he said: “The children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future”.

Finally Programme Director, the NTCE 2022 will be hosted in the Gauteng Province from 30 September 2022 to 02 October 2022. I call upon all Provinces, Businesses, NGOs and other stakeholders present here to support the hosting of the NTCE 2022. The success of the event depends on the participation of all key stakeholders in the NTCE programme.

I thank you.