



MINISTRY  
TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa. Tel. (+27 12) 444 6780, Fax (+27 12) 444 7027  
Private Bag X9154, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa. Tel. (+27 21) 469 5800, Fax: (+27 21) 465 3216

**8 May 2023**

## **Speech by Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille, MP, at the African Dialogue on Tourism**

***Note to editors, the following speech was delivered by Minister Patricia de Lille at the African Dialogue on Tourism held in Durban today ahead of the Africa Travel Indaba.***

Hon Minister Philda Nani Kereng of Botswana  
Hon Minister Mazenga Mukanzu Didier of Democratic Republic of Congo  
Hon Minister Moses Vilakati Minister of Eswatini  
Hon Minister Rodney Sikumba of Zambia  
Hon Minister Edelvina Materula of Mozambique  
Hon Minister Nqobizitha Mangaliso from Zimbabwe  
Hon. Deputy Minister Heather Sibungo of Namibia  
Hon Premier of KwaZulu-Natal Ms Nomusa Dube-Ncube  
MECs from all nine provinces.  
Hon Members of the South African Parliament.  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps  
AU Commission Representative  
Tourism Industry Organisations  
Government leaders and Captains of Industries  
Members of the Media  
Good Afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen

When we were fighting for the liberation of our beautiful continent, I used to sing this song:

*"From Cape to Cairo  
Morocco to Madagascar"*

I am pleased to welcome Ministers and tourism leaders from across our beautiful continent to Africa's Travel Indaba and this Dialogue, as we show our friends from around the world what the continent has to offer.

Africa offers the loud thunder of the mighty Zambezi River that powers through Zambia and Zimbabwe but turns gentle in Mozambique. It is the mighty Nile, the Limpopo, the Congo and the Niger.

Africa offers a home to the tiny Meerkat that rules the silent expanse of the Kalahari Desert of South Africa, Botswana and Namibia.

It offers the silence of a cheetah on the hunt in the national parks of Kenya, the Kruger or Tanzania.

Africa offers the loud beats of an amapiano song on a rooftop bar in Joburg, a kizomba slow number in Luanda and an Afrobeat banger in Lagos.

Africa offers the solemn call to prayer at the N'Djamena Mosque in Chad and in the cobbled streets of the Bo Kaap, Cape Town.

Africa offers a home to the business traveller and conference-goer in Kigali, Cairo or Durban.

Each country, as you will see on the trade floor tomorrow, has a diverse offering of different tourism products.

We know we have much to offer, but the world owes us nothing. We must figure out how best to convince travellers worldwide to visit our shores.

Africa's Travel Indaba and this tourism Dialogue is where we deliberate 'how', rethink our policies, recognise emerging trends, mitigate threats and identify opportunities.

I am a very practical person. We must identify a simple action plan and decide on a few priority tasks we can achieve.

I hope everyone walks away from this Dialogue this evening with a clear mind-set of what we, as African tourism leaders, need to do.

Tourism has the potential to be a catalyst for change in Africa.

The African Union's Agenda 2063 identifies tourism as a critical driver of inclusive growth, a job creator and a wealth generator.

If sustainable Economic Growth is the pap, fufu, sadza, sima, or ogi – then Tourism is the "magic sauce" that makes it work. The multiplier for success.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) predicted the region's international tourist arrivals would reach 134 million by 2030, up from 70 million in 2019.

The UNWTO's January 2023 report shows that Africa has recovered about 65% of its pre-pandemic visitors, and tourism in Africa contributed US\$ 1.6 trillion in 2022.

So how do we reach and even exceed the pre-2019 Covid level predictions and even exceed it?

We have to become practical. Be realistic about what we can improve and put our heads together.

This evening, not one African Minister or business leader has all the answers, but a collective dialogue can steer us on the right path.

In South Africa the past two months, I have heard many complaints and solutions from businesses and stakeholders, but we need more solutions.

Solutions to improve Air Access, how to market Brand Africa, how to facilitate public-private partnerships, cement country-to-country cooperation, promote innovation and use of technology.

We need solutions. We must hear from countries in East Africa what they are doing differently to recover quicker from Covid 19 and increase tourism arrivals.

Is it because of a more proactive Air Access strategy, incentive programmes, visa requirements and ease of visiting countries?

In South Africa, we are implementing our own Tourism Sector Recovery Plan that we pulled together with inputs from the sector, government and the whole of society.

I invite African countries to share their successes.

This more collaborative and open way of doing things aligns perfectly with the objectives and benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement that creates a predictable environment for investment.

In March 2023, South Africa reported a recovery of 78.5% of tourist arrivals as recorded pre-COVID in 2019, according to Statistics South Africa.

Visitors from the rest of Africa increased by 102% between January to March 2023 compared to the year before. Over one million fellow Africans visited South Africa in the year's first three months.

Last year South Africa welcomed 5 million visitors of which 4 million from Africa. On Wednesday we will announce the latest figures from Statistics South Africa

South Africa's top ten overseas markets have also shown a steady increase, with total tourist arrivals increasing by 300 068 to just under one million visitors in the first three months this year.

## **BRICS**

The BRICS countries constitute the largest trading partners of Africa and the most significant new investors.

This year, the BRICS countries overtook the G7 countries as the most significant combined economy. Together BRICS contribute nearly 31.5 per cent of the global GDP.

In 2023 South Africa holds the chairship of the forum. South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa will host the 14<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit in August. The Theme is BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Develop and Inclusive Multilateralism".

The significance of South Africa's participation in BRICS is enormous for Africa and underpins our commitment to participate in the continent's development, "building a better Africa and a Better World." Growing tourism is one of the focus areas for BRICS.

And while these visitors are from traditional markets like the UK, Europe and the USA, important markets like the resumption of travel from China are a critical focus.

Countries like China, India and Brazil have a massive emerging middle class ready to explore South Africa and the continent.

Brazil showed the highest increase in volume for the first three months of 2023, more than any other Central and South American country.

It is encouraging that later this year, Brazilian airline LATAM is reinstating its direct flight between Johannesburg and Sao Paulo.

Based on this commitment, South Africa's BRICS Sous-Sherpa Mr Ben Joubert is here to discuss the potential of the BRICS markets for all African countries, especially in the tourism sector.

But before then, we will welcome the AU Representative from the Commission for Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry and Minerals.

In conclusion, I look forward to hearing all the inputs from my fellow African Minister to the Dialogue.

Let us rethink and sharpen our focus for a better Africa that attracts visitors to the continent and create sustainable industries, infrastructure and employment for our citizens.

We must walk the talk with new vigour to go back home and implement before the 66<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UNTWO Commission for Africa meeting.

Jambo Africa.

Thank you and God Bless you all.

Ends/

**Issued by:**

**The Ministry of Tourism**

Zara Nicholson: Media Liaison Officer

Mobile: +27 (0) 79 416 5996.

Email: [znicholson@tourism.gov.za](mailto:znicholson@tourism.gov.za)