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## **Tourism sector acknowledges dynamic role played by Minister Sisulu in elevating South Africa's tourism**

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The Department of Tourism has welcomed the tourism private sector's positive attributes and appreciation of Minister Lindiwe Sisulu dynamic role in the recovery of the sector and her visit to Dubai which was aimed at strengthening tourism relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) into a more comprehensive and strategic partnership. The UAE is one of South Africa's top bilateral trade partners in the Middle East, with total exports worth R25.4 billion in 2018.

The visit to Dubai was also aimed at amplifying messages that South Africa is a COVID -19 safe destination.

Minister Sisulu had bilateral engagements with potential investors, members of the trade that sell South Africa to the world, executives of the airlines and members of the SA Diplomatic Community during her four-day working visit to Dubai from 12 to 16 December 2021.

Key to Minister Sisulu's dialogue with stakeholders, were issues of safety and security for tourists and tourism investments; visa waivers; packaging of tourism products to suit different markets and the international travel bans to and from South Africa.

Minister Sisulu acknowledged that although tourism has the greatest potential for long term sustainability, challenges like tourist safety does hurt the tourism economy.

The Minister also assured stakeholders that the department would continue to work tirelessly to ensure that South Africa is profiled as a warm and welcoming destination with limited barriers to ease of access as well as the removal of South Africa from Travel Red list.

To date, international travel bans imposed by foreign countries since November 2021 due to the association of the COVID 19 variant Omicron with South Africa are lifted. "Tourism will thrive when borders are open and the increased resumption of inbound travel is likely to speed up the recovery of the industry as we allow vaccinated travellers to visit our shores," said Sisulu.

Through the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan, tourism intends to match specific tourism investment opportunities to potential financiers and thus contribute towards the Presidential Investment Mobilisation Drive, launched in 2018 to generate about \$100 billion (or R1.2 trillion) fixed investments over five years. The investors in Dubai have shown interest to invest in tourism-mega projects and Minister Sisulu thanked the UAE for having faith in our country.

The Minister also visited the South African Pavilion, which featured tourism during the month of December to elevate South Africa's position as a premier leisure and investment destination. "It is very critical that South Africa should continue to position itself to the world in a way that stands out. South Africa is a country with a rich tapestry of history, culture and storytelling," said Sisulu.

The tourism sector welcomed more than 50 000 visitors to the pavilion during December where they showcased unique tourism offerings from all nine provinces and South Africa's cuisine, which was welcomed by all.

"We are coming out of here excited because we have met many countries that are interested in us because of numerous tourism packages that our country can offer" said Sisulu

**Issued by Ministry of Tourism**

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