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Registrars converge to share best practices in Tourist Guiding sub-sector.

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Rustenburg – The status quo of tourist guiding in South Africa was recently reviewed and scrutinized when provincial registrars from all nine provinces recently converged in the North West Province for the 3rd quarterly registrar's workshop.

Amongst other things of vital importance, the workshop was aimed at putting in place methodologies and systems which will advance the tourist guiding sub-sector and also share best operational practices amongst provinces. The forum also looked at emerging technologies with special reference to new and secure systems which can be used to register tourist guides.

Head of North West Department of Tourism, Adv. Neo Sephoti said that her provincial government regards tourism as the new gold and that as a province which prides itself on their culture and heritage, having competent, qualified and accredited tourist guides is crucial.

“As part of the provincial government pronouncements we need to have a tourist guide for every village. This is a mammoth task but we are confident that it can be achieved as we need our people to tell our stories. We don't need strangers to come from outside and narrate our stories to us. Our own people are better placed and capable to narrate their own stories far better than the people who do not live in that area”, said Adv. Sephoti.

This she said is part of the reason why the idea of having a tourist guide in each village would work. She said that they will work together with the national department of Tourism in ensuring that these guides are properly trained and that they fulfill all legislative requirements.

“The national department of Tourism will also have to come on board and assist us with skills development and implementation of correct legislation. As government in Bokone Bophirima we are committed to spend at least 70% of our budget in Villages, Townships and Small Dorpies so that we empower our communities and ensure that there is tangible socio-economic change and we can do that through tourist guiding programs”, Adv. Sephoti added.

The National Registrar of Tourist guiding and also Deputy Director General for Tourism Sector Support Services, Ms. Morongoe Ramphele encouraged provinces to continue working together in ensuring that they address challenges faced within the sub-sector. She said it was important to synchronize systems and put plans in place to ensure that tourists do not struggle when visiting South Africa.

“Provinces need to advise the National Department on possible future collaborations so that our plans are aligned with those of your departments. This will assist with logistical arrangements when providing support and also ensure that we work together as a team”, said Ramphele.

The workshop also covered issues of compliance, illegal tourist guiding, new technology used in the guiding industry and also new ways of beefing up security in accreditation and registering of tourist guides.

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