



tourism

Department:
Tourism
North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH BY

MEC DESBO MOHONO NORTH WEST DEPARTMENT OF

TOURISM DURING THE TOURISM MONTH LAUNCH

HELD AT ROYAL MARANG HOTEL

RUSTENBURG

ON THE, 31ST SEPTEMBER 2017

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Bojanala Tourism Association

Ladies and Gentlemen and All Media Houses

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen. I take this moment to thank everybody who responded to our call of launching this thrilling month of Tourism and Heritage in our country. Ladies and Gentlemen today we launch the Tourism month amid challenges that the Department has been through and still going through, but let me be quick to assure the house at large that all will be well within no time. Re tla simega kolobe ka bothale, gore e se ke ya re tshela ka mphososo, e se re gongwe ra lebega jaaka ditumuga. On the affirmative note I must say that the sector is forever emergent and answering to challenges relating to job creation, heightening the cutback, providing foreign exchange while improving infrastructure and promoting environmental conservation in a broader sense facet.

It is for this reason that the sector has been prioritised in the New Growth Path and the Industrial Policy Action Plan 2017/18 -2019/20 by our government. Within the context of the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality, it is perhaps the National Tourism Sector Strategy that succinctly captures the essence of the tourism sector as a catalyst for local growth and development. Ladies and Gentlemen as a Province we are also not doing badly at all when coming to Tourism offerings thus improving our overall performance. We are aware that in our province Tourism is consumed at the point of production, we have provided opportunities for the development of small local businesses and informal economic activities in such areas as tour guides, arts and craft and small taxi operators, to name but a few.

Recent statistics (2016/17) provided by two reliable sources clearly depicts a picture of steady growth within the North West Province. According to African Source Markets Performance (ASMP) 2016 and Statistics South Africa Report (Stats SA 2015/16/17) the total number of African Tourist arrivals to the North West Province in late 2016 stands at 788 277 out of 893 318 international arrivals. This shows that our people are contributing immensely towards our province growth.

Botswana happens to be the leader of the pack with a staggering 466 264 of arrivals which constitutes to about 59%, with formal bed nights standing at 143 000 mostly sleeping for about three nights and contributing to a whopping R800 million. The second country that's boosting our economy happens to be none other than Lesotho standing at 101 982, with a whopping R177 million followed by Mozambique, Zimbabwe and lastly Malawi. Stats SA states that Shopping was the main reason cited for travelling to these shores, while leisure and funeral were the second and third most specified reasons. The travelling was on the **terra firma** or rather commuting **on land**.

By Air, our Province is also doing wonders with countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania and Ghana soaring in our province. These statistics show that there is hope at the ultimate end. Ladies and Gentlemen again, one of our brawny folds as a department is that we work very hard to establish and maintain a good rapport with external stakeholders who have contributed greatly to our 10, 6% and as number 4 as a contributing vehicle economically as stipulated by the 4th quarter report of Stats South Africa. We really appreciate efforts and inputs from all our stakeholders and product owners including our marketing team who are always with us in this journey.

We are really humbled by that gesture and I am saying we will all arrive at the utopia. We are working in close partnership with the private sector to enable new entrants to come in and contribute to the tourism industry's diversity. In particular, we are focusing on up skilling small tourism enterprises that create jobs, especially for the youth and women living in rural areas of our country. These efforts support our **"We Do tourism"** and the **"5 in 5"** strategy to attract five million additional domestic and international travellers to South Africa in the next five years including business travellers.

There is so much untapped potential for our entire province to grow as a premier destination for business events. It's time for our province to show its immense value to the rest of the world as a business destination. We must strike while the iron is hot. It's an exciting and invigorating space to be in, with lots of good news coming out of tourism. **This year's mantra is "Sustainable Tourism-A tool for development as declared by the United Nations.** Ladies and Gentlemen it cannot further be emphasized that tourism is a strong driver for fiscal development. In maximising the impacts of tourism expansion for local communities, a critical role must be played by all relevant stakeholders through the design of a sustainable and credible tourism.

This should also include sector plans, marketing and how to penetrate germane markets. This is recognition of the importance of global tourism and its contribution to greater awareness about diversity of humanity, and importantly, its contribution to economic upliftment of marginalized communities and world peace. This should provide all of us with a rare opportunity to advance the contribution of the tourism sector to sustainable development and raise consciousness in a broader sense.

Ladies and Gentlemen the month of September will see the Department been nomadic with programmes that are going to contribute towards the growth of the sector. Amongst others we will visit the Getaway Show in Johannesburg, Service Excellence Workshops and Blitz around the districts, World Tourism Day that is going to be held in Mpumalanga as the host's province and the National Tourism Career Expo, that will see the Executive Authority nominating about 45 students from strictly rural or village schools partaking in this eye opening experience. Finally, I am of the opinion that as a Department the time for policies and strategies has long passed. Our energies, efforts and resources should be channelled to impactful implementation to make our communities sustainable tourism attractions, as we implement the Back to Basics Approach let's do so "Doing it the Tourism way".

KE A LEBOGA. I THANK YOU.

MEC-DESBO MOHONO

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM NORTH WEST PROVINCE