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**DIRECTORATE: CORPORATE COMMUNICATION & ICT**

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**Media Release**

**03 October 2018**

**North West Province applauded for hosting the best NTCE**

**Sun City** – More than five thousand (5000) tourism learners from Grade 09 – 12, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and University Students including Unemployed Graduates flocked the Sun City Resorts this weekend to attend the 10<sup>th</sup> National Tourism Career Expo (NTCE) where they were exposed to information on Tourism and hospitality careers, entrepreneurial and job opportunities.

Under the theme: **“Be the legacy, Do tourism digitally”**, the expo aims to drive South Africa’s National Tourism Strategy’s goal of creating 225 000 tourism jobs opportunities by 2020. It is designed to bridge the information gap between the industry, government, learners and educators by providing an opportunity for tourism curricula experts to share information with tourism educators and learners,.

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Elizabeth Thabethe applauded the North West Province for successfully hosting the 2018 edition of the NTCE which was also on its 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. She said that they couldn’t have sort a better host to mark this auspicious milestone.

“Indeed, the North West Province has hosted a successful NTCE, they delivered as promised and I must say they have out done themselves. Furthermore, I would like to encourage learners attending this expo to gather as much information as they possibly could from the more than 30 tourism entities exhibiting, this will help them in making informed career decisions,” said Thabethe

The expo also taps in on the much need and crucial public and private sector partnerships where private sector companies exhibit and provide interactive, edutainment experiences for the learners. They also show their commitment to skills development by offering a number of bursaries, learnerships and internships to learners attending the expo. There's also Speaker's Corner, where tourism entrepreneurs and industry experts shared their success stories.

The North West MEC for Tourism, Desbo Mohono echoed the Deputy Minister's sentiments and also further emphasized how important it was that the province delivers an impeccable 10<sup>th</sup> NTCE. She said that over and above all the hard work that was put in to ensure the successful organizing of the expo, we shouldn't lose sight as to what the expo aimed to achieve.

Mohono said that Tourism plays a critical role in the country's economy and we need more young people to explore the sector for opportunities which lie within.

"NTCE is a seed that we plant in the minds of our children for them to realize that Tourism has a bright future. This expo has afforded them an opportunity to view the sector from another angle. As a department we are encouraging parents to let the kids be the driver of their own careers, gone are the days of persuading children to choose career paths they don't want.

"This is where this expo is very fundamental. It is structured to allow for specialised areas to cater for each of the sectors of tourism and hospitality. Learners and students were also given an opportunity to interact directly with speakers and exhibitors who are experts and industry practitioners," Mohono said.

One of the exhibitors, Managing Director and Owner of Empire Travel and Tours, Gugu Tong hailed the expo for bringing the tourism industry and tourism learners under one roof. She said that it is always good for tourism learners to engage face to face in an unmediated fashion, "I had an opportunity to interact with the learners to hear from them what they know and like about tourism. I also tried to provoke their train of thought and ignite their interest. My advice to them was that tourism needs passionate people that in order to make it in the industry you have to be a people's

person, a great personality will get you far in this industry. Most of it all I emphasized that in order for them to achieve their dreams, they needed to work hard,” concluded Tong.

The NTCE is a collaboration of the National Department of Tourism (NDT), The Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality, and Sport, Education Training Authority (CATHSSETA) and the North West Department of Tourism. The Expo will be hosted by the North West for three years until 2020.

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