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NORTH WEST DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM EMERGE VICTORIOUS AT THE INTER TOURISM GAMES.

By: Kamogelo Pooe | Pictures by Tiro Appolos

Gaborone, Botswana - Former statesman and apartheid struggle stalwart Nelson Mandela who once said that Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair.

This was evident when four countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) namely Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa represented by North West Department of Tourism converged for their 2018 edition of the Annual Inter Tourism Games held during the past Easter weekend in Gaborone, Botswana.

This is where the North West Department of Tourism emerged as the overall winners of the Inter Tourism Games for the second time in a row. The department represented South Africa and North West Province and has managed to retain their number one spot which they attained in Lesotho last year.

Head of North West Tourism Department, Adv. Neo Sephoti said that it was important to understand that at the end of the day, Tourism within the SADC region should be the real winner and emphasized that official in attendance should carry forward the message of selling SADC as a region and not as individual countries.

“Let Tourism within the SADC region be the real winner. We need to start collaborating and formulating conducive partnerships which will create an enabling environment for us to sell our SADC region as one wholesome tourism package. That is possible through gatherings like these where we can network and derive best methods which will enable us to can share tourists”, said Adv. Sephoti.

Adv. Sephoti added that these games was not only about countries challenging each other through various sporting codes. She said they were also a platform to forge relations, share best tourism practices and exchange destination marketing tactics. “In South Africa we have the Five in Five (5 in 5) tourism strategy where we intend to attract 5 million people in 5 years. As the North West Province we are looking at attracting at least 390 000 people which we can then share with other countries such as Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. When we work together we can even do better than Europe”, added Adv. Sephoti.

Meanwhile, North West MEC for Tourism Desbo Mohono, congratulated her team for doing well at the games and said that these games are a real tool for social cohesion between countries. She said that it allows officials to network and create a conducive environment for creating partnerships and building relations.

“I’d like to congratulate my Team for their stupendous performance at the games. To who participated in various sporting codes well done but we should not forget why we have these games every year. We want to enhance the manner in which we communicate, we want to break barriers and collaborate even form partnerships. These interactions are of paramount importance, they allow officials within the sector engage in matters which can grow tourism within the SADC region. We want SADC to speak in one voice and we want SADC to be packaged as a region for tourists to explore”, concluded Mohono

North West Tourism was the overall winners of the 2018 Inter Tourism Games, they won Gold in both Soccer and Netball, Silver in Tug of War and Bronze in Volleyball. The 2019 games will be held in Mababane, Swaziland.

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