

**MEC'S REMARKS DURING THE OCCASION OF NTCE OPENING CEREMONY
01 October 2015
Sand du Plessis Centre - PACOFS, Bloemfontein**

**Thank you for the opportunity Programme Director!
Let me acknowledge you Deputy Minister,
All MECs present,
Our honourable Legislators present,
Executive Mayors and Mayors,
All Senior Executives and Administrators in both Government and SOEs,
The Provincial Leadership of the ANC and its Leagues present,
Our Educators and all learners in attendance,
Graduates and Youth in general,
All our esteemed invited guests,
Ladies and gentlemen!**

We find it inescapable even at the risk of sounding repetitive, to express our gratitude towards all the partners responsible for this noble undertaking we are proudly hosting called: “**National Tourism Career Expo**”! A lot about what the NTCE represent has been revealed during its media launch that was held on the 25th of August here in Bloemfontein at Naval Hill as well as through subsequent media campaigns.

Perhaps it will just suffice Programme Director in summing up the rationale of what prompted this NTCE to emphasize the point that: “**the tourism economy**”, a vital source of employment, revenue, investment, trade and unity, continues to play a critical role in our country and the entire world, more especially as we are still confronted with the persisting after-effects of the 2008 global economic crisis.

Having noted the latter, we are particularly excited about how well the NTCE is received in the province, looking at the registration numbers from all the districts, which add-up to about **7 800 learners and educators from the Free State alone**. This indicates the dedication that the learners and educators of the Free

State have towards tourism as a valuable and vibrant career of choice. There can be no doubt therefore that we are keenly looking forward to this NTCE being able to help sway the thinking in terms of tourism continuing to be regarded as an inferior subject both at high school and tertiary level.

As the Deputy Minister has alluded, part of the intentions of hosting this event is to precisely inculcate a culture of creative tourism-related ideas through positive competition amongst attendees or participants, because of the proven economic contribution tourism can yield.

Worth-mentioning again is the fact that NTCE for 2015 will see the advent of brand new platforms being introduced by the Free State as the new host of the NTCE! These are the **Liberation Heritage Platform** that will showcase political history through an educational theatre and the **Responsible Tourism Platform** that will showcase recycled material and demonstrate how a green building is developed. The province in introducing these new platforms, aspire to teach our youth and instill a culture of embracing South Africa's liberation heritage as well as upholding "**Responsible Tourism**" practices in the province and in the country.

We are excited about the **Youth Business Zones platform**, which affords students from our tertiary institutions such as the University of the Free State and Central University of Technology to present their business ideas. The provincial National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), National Empowerment Fund (NEF), Free State Development Corporation (FDC) and Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) are going to form the adjudication panelists. The winning concept will be taken to the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) to fine tune and

make it a more bankable and viable business idea or product in order for it to can be implemented in the province.

Realizing that the NTCE present opportunities for new partnerships in the tourism sector, we are very delighted to have developed a relationship with the **Hilton Worldwide South Africa** wherein from this year, we have introduced a new **networking partnership** event, which was hosted last night at one of our province's iconic attractions, **the Planetarium at the Naval Hill**. We trust that more partnerships will be developed and enhanced in the three years that the Free State will be hosting the NTCE. The Planetarium is certainly a must visit for all!

Once again, the Free State Province continues to make a concerted effort to deliver world class visitor experience as it regards service excellence a vital ingredient for a memorable experience by tourists. As the country's tourism learners, tourism students, educators, industry stakeholders and everyone center themselves in the heart of South Africa, we anticipate that the NTCE will amongst other things, stimulate both new and repeat visits in the Province.

There will also be excursions where we have packaged tours which include **Kasie tourism** to tour Mangaung which is the host city of the NTCE. We trust that you will find these tours educational, entertaining and fulfilling.

My colleagues, MEC Khompela of Police, Roads & Transport and MEC Makgoe of Education, have given us all assurance that our learners will be able to move around all the exhibition stalls with their educators in a peaceful, safe and welcoming Mangaung environment.

Enjoy the hospitality and friendliness of the people of Margaung and the Free State!

Thank you.

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