

MEDIA STATEMENT

TOURISM PUNTED AS A CAREER OF CHOICE

Bloemfontein: Tourism is tipped to become a career of choice for young people in South Africa in the immediate future. This came out during the launch of National Tourism Career Expo which took place on the 25th of August at the Edge Restaurant in Naval Hill Bloemfontein.

The Expo appropriately themed, “**Tourism: Alive with Opportunities**” will be held in the Free State for the next three consecutive years at PACOFS in Bloemfontein. This event provides the Free State Province with the opportunity to create a platform where tourism’s appeal as employment of the future is exposed to learners and unemployed graduates.

In her spirited articulation of opportunities available in the sector, Deputy Minister of Tourism Ms Tokozile Xasa told the media and tourism stakeholders that tourism should be made more appealing to young people. In the last 4 years, the department has introduced programmes such as Food Safety Assurers Programme where young, unemployed tourism and hospitality graduates are exposed to the theory and practise of food safety. The other programme is Professional Chef Training which is an NQF Level 3 qualification. Lastly is Sommelier Training Pilot Programme where young people from the townships were exposed to the world of wine tasting and Tourism Buddies Programme which is an on-the-job learnership that exposes young people to the world of hospitality, giving them knowledge, skills and work experience to enter the job market to attract new entrants in the sector. These programmes, said the DM, have yield 68% absorption rate into the tourism job market.

Positioning tourism as a potential job catalyst in unemployment in the country, MEC for Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs; Sam Mashinini lamented the trend that young people still exclusively flock to apply for jobs, particularly in government, rather than to create jobs themselves. The availability of high quality infrastructure like roads, PACOFS, Seisa Ramabodu Stadium amongst others, says MEC Mashinini, should be a launching pad for careers in tourism in South Africa.

The NTCE is the initiative of National Department of Tourism with a purpose of promoting tourism as a career and profession of choice while at the same time promoting the industry as an employer of choice. Schools and learners will be invited to register to participate by visiting www.tourismcareers.gov.za or 051 4009595.

The primary target market for the Expo is learners from grade 09 – 12, and students at FET Colleges and Universities, especially those doing tourism and hospitality as subjects. This target group also unemployed tourism graduates, educators and lecturers at high schools, colleges and 7 universities. Parallel to this target market are the industry players who drive the tourism products from various sub sectors.



Learners and educators will come from all 9 provinces through South Africa and will go through exhibition stall by 60 industry players.

Since its inception, the expo has attracted collaboration of institutions like CATHSSETA, The Hilton Hotel Group World Wide, Aviation Academy, Tourism HRD Training Academy and the Department of Education.

MEC Mashinini urge all stakeholders to work together with the government and the FSTA to offer guests into the Free State during the tourism month and Macufe a memorable experience which could ignite more opportunities in tourism.

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