

SPEAKING NOTES
MEC SAM MASHININI
MEDIA LAUNCH 2016 NATIONAL TOURISM CAREER EXPO
VENUE: BOTANICAL GARDEN
DATE: 08 SEPTEMBER 2016

Deputy Minister of Tourism Ms. Tokozile Xasa

Mayor of Mangaung, Mme.Matawana Sara Oily Mlamleli

HOD for DESTEA, Ms. Matilda Gasela

Chairperson of Free State Tourism Authority, Mr. Glen Nitshivhodza

CEO of Free State Tourism Authority, Mr. Dhilosen Pillay

Our partners from CATHSSETA

Captains of industry in the tourism sector,

Educators from the various institutions,

Members of the Media

Ladies and gentlemen

Programme Director

Spring is finally beaconing us to pack away all the 'woollies' forget about the winter blues and embrace the outdoor to admire what nature has to offer. The mountains in the east, the Vaal River in the north, the golden planes of the Goldfields in the west, the hustle and bustle of city life complimented by the rich history in the centre and the confluence of the Caledon and Orange rivers in the South are every traveler's hidden gems. September officially introduces travelling and holiday season. Welcome to the Free State and enjoy the hospitality.

I want you to embrace the breathtaking landscape in this facility. Free State National Botanical Gardens pays homage to the abundant indigenous flora found not only in this province, but also in its neighbours, the Northern Cape and Lesotho. The fragrance of the flowers, plants and the manicured gardens found in this place complements the

beautiful scenic view. The raw natural beauty is indeed intoxicating. As we all know that Free State Province is known as the City of Rose, this is best time of the year to visit this place when most of the beautiful flowers are blooming.

Let me take this opportunity once again to welcome Deputy Minister of Tourism Ms. Tokozile Xasa who has made the Free State her second home. Last year, we toured the length on breath of Bloemfontein where you got the glimpse of what the City of Roses has to offer. Recently, I was looking at the photo where you were relaxed and enjoyed yourself at the popular hangout Ha Sechaba.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are meeting here today, few weeks after the local elections. We know that these was the most testing elections since democratic South Africa. The ANC in the Free State have accepted the outcome as part of our programme of radical socio-economic transformation.

For this reason, let me take the opportunity to congratulate the 1st Executive Mayor of the only metro in the Free State, Matawana Sara Olly Mlamleli. She is part of 13 women mayors in the 23 municipalities run by the ANC. The ANC also elected 11 women speakers demonstrating that the transformation agenda of the ANC is on course.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Free State has been known for producing gold for the country and the world for many years. In the same way, we are immensely proud as the people of the Free State to have artists like Prince Kaybee whose album titled “Better Days” recently went gold. In the sports field we have three time Brutal Fruit Premier league netball champions, Free State Crinums as the only team to have won the league since its existence in 2014. Wayde Van NieKerk also made us proud as South Africans to break the first track and field world record of this game with a blistering 43.03 second run and won gold in the 2016 Rio Olympic. This confirms that Free State province tourism is a golden province. Today we will talk tourism as the “New Gold”, #freestatelikewildfire.

Recently the Honourable Minister for Tourism, Mr. Derek Hanekom and myself officially launched Tourism Month here in the Province to be precise, at Gariiep Dam. The Minister was so blown away by the beauty of the place that he wanted to be the “Mayor of the Gariiep Dam”. He urged the people of Gariiep to take charge of their area and make Gariiep a tourist destination as the place boast with a natural resource like Gariiep Dam. The area is also so unique in the sense that it is surrounded by other provinces.

Today, we are launching the National Tourism Career Expo under the theme: “Tourism alive with opportunities”, a relevant theme that calls upon us to translate our strategies into pragmatic programmes of action from which our communities must benefit. Ladies and Gentlemen, the expo aims to drive South Africa’s National Tourism Strategy’s goal of creating 225 000 tourism jobs opportunities by 2020.

From the 29th of September to the 01st of October 2016, Free State Province will host the second episode of the National Tourism Career Expo which aims at promoting tourism as a career of choice amongst young people.

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 leaners and unemployed graduates. We congratulate the National Department of Tourism to bring the programme known as Tourism Buddies to our shores, where 100 unemployment matriculants where recruited to take part in the programme and saw learners being placed at Mathjabeng Municipality, Dihlabeng Municipality, Maluti A Phofung and Ngwathe Municipality for a period of 12 month to expose them to the tourism and hospitality industry in the Free State. We hope that this exposure will go a long way in absorbing these young people into this industry and assist in targeting unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Programme Director: this programme has put the Free State Province in the map to encourage young people to take up abundant entrepreneurial opportunities that exist in the tourism industry. It is a national priority, as articulated in the National Development Plan, to find ways to create jobs and build the economy in a sustainable way, particularly focusing on the youth, who bear the brunt of unemployment.

Ladies and Gentlemen, positioning tourism as a potential job catalyst for employment in the country, Free State Province has availability of high standard institutions that offer training in tourism and hospitality like the Central University of Technology, Food & Beverage Institute, TVET Colleges, Olive Chef School, Boston College, Jeppe College, Damelin College and University of the Free State. These institutions will ensure exposure of the students to world class hotel environment and provide them with international work experience that will make them more marketable in the tourism sector.

All tourism role players, especially institutions offering qualifications such as Certificate, diplomas and degrees in tourism hospitality are encouraged to participate in the NTCE. Tourism is fast becoming a career of choice to many young people even though it is not easy venturing into this business due to challenges like funding and necessary skills that will make the business sustainable. Mankitsing, the owner of Dash Lodge in Bloemfontein chose tourism over her career as an internal auditor because of her love for this industry and the realization of the difference she can make in other people`s lives.

In few 5years, the lodge is doing well and has created jobs for 6 other people. Information sharing with her peers through different platforms like Tourism Indaba which she was part of last year and manage to market her establishment internationally. Dash lodge also took part in 2014 Lilizela Awards and won. The experience has helped her to improve in so many different ways in ensuring that customers get the best service.

Programme Director, we are convinced that a career in tourism could become the career of the future. Hosting this event, serves as a platform to bridge information gaps between the industry, government, learners and educators and to precisely inculcate the culture of creative tourism-related ideas through positive competitions among the learners or rather participants, because of the proven economic contribution tourism can yield.

Ladies and Gentlemen, before I conclude, please take note that some of the activities lined up to enhance tourism month in the Free State include Free State Global Trade Bridge, Flower Festival and Macufe. As national and international travellers will be coming down to the Free State for some of these events Mangaung Metro often runs out of

accommodation. To address this challenge, the Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs has initiated a Homestay Programme. All interested homestay entrepreneurs can collect and fill forms for consideration to participate in the Homestay Programme. Forms can be collected from Monday the 5th until 09 September 2016 at Room 504 and 512, Agriculture Building, 98 Zastron Street, Bloemfontein.

Thanks