

SPEAKING NOTES

MINISTER STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

ADDRESS BY: MEC MASHININI

DATE: 25 AUGUST 2016

Minister of Tourism: Derek Hanekom
Executive Mayor of Xhariep: Councillor Motshehoa Sehanka
Executive Mayor of Kopanong Municipality: Xolile Matwa
All other councillors present
Chairperson of FSTA and all other board members: Glen Netshivodza
Chairperson of SAT and all other board members: Dr Tania Abrahamse
HOD: Matilda Gasela
Acting CEO of SAT: Mr Sthembiso Dlamini
CEO of FSTA: Dilosen Pillay
Industry stakeholders
Members of Media and
All government official
Ladies and gentle men

Good morning and welcome to the Free State, this is the place to be at the right time.

Programme Director, on Tuesday, South Africa welcomed back our athletes, our heroes who represented us so well at Rio Olympic Games. It is indeed befitting before I can go any further, to congratulate team South Africa for 10 medals they brought home. Of course we do have bragging rights on our own Wayde van Niekerk who not only flew the flag of South Africa in Rio but also put the Free State on the international map. #freestatelikewildfire.

Minister, I would also like to welcome you to the first of many visits to come to this province and hope that you enjoy your stay. Your presence here is very much appreciated.

We would also like to thank Minister Derek Hanekom for giving the Free State the opportunity to host the World Tourism Day on the 27 of September. This gives us an opportunity to contribute towards building a holiday travel culture amongst South Africans and to promote Universal Accessibility in Tourism through ensuring #TourismForAll.

The selection of the venue to host this media launch is by no means an accident. We are at Xhariep District Municipality which located in the Southern part of the Free State. This is one of the most economically depressed areas of the Free State probably because of it being far from the disposable income even though it has several comparative advantages including natural beauty, well managed provincial parts and one of the biggest man made water body in South Africa, the Gariep Dam.

Programme Director, I would also like to thank media contingent present here today who have had the time to visit several parts of the Free State and have an experience of what the Free State has to offer. We hope you managed to discover this province and experience the warmth

of its people. We rely on you to go back to your desk and respective media houses to write and give testimony about the Free State.

Despite the slump in the industry due to global economic factors, the Free State has tourists influx has increased from 227783 in the first quarter of 2015 to 311030 in the first quarter of 2016. The length of stay has also increased from 8.5 to 9.7 days on average. The most visited attractions by the tourists in the Free State are Golden Gate National Park, Cheetah Experience and Waterfront which are mostly natural attractions.

Statistics indicate that tourists spend 85.5% of their time in the Free State on social activities with other spending 35.7% on night life, other 33% of their time on shopping and 18.9% of travellers spend their time on church activities. Of concern is that despite the natural riches in the Free State tourists and travellers spend a mere 1.1% of their time on wild life and 1.9% on natural attractions. This calls for a strategic intervention.

To address some of these shortcomings and improving the marketability of the Free State, we came up with the Big 5 tourism routes aimed at promoting the Free State as a preferred inland destination of choice. These are: Springbok Route in the southern tip of the Free State which is where we are, which covers Jockbdsdal, Koffifontein, Jagtersfontein, Phillipolis, Bethulie and Gariiep Dam where water sport enthusiasts are always at home. Cheetah Route which covers Bloemfontein, Thaba Nchu, Botshabelo and Ladybrand is the home of the cheetahs, Iefatshe la Masele and the birth place of the ANC and other political formations. The Eagle Route in the eastern parts of the Free State, the jewel of South African Tourism covers Warden, Golden Gate, Qwaqwa, Clarens. Lion Route in the northern parts of the Free State along the monstrous Vaal River is a weekend getaway in Parys, Salolburg, Deneysville and Vredefort. Flamingo Route on the Western side of the Free State is the cultural melting pot which covers Odendalsrus, Welkom, Virginia, Brandford and Windburg.

In our effort to improve domestic tourism and cultivate a culture of travelling among our people, we have targeted the following key consumer segments:

- **Spontaneous budget explorers** (Young people of all races who impulsively go away for short breaks with friends, and who prefer activity-filled breaks over quiet weekends away)
- **New-horizon families** (Professionals older than 35, with or without families, who go on holiday to reward themselves for hard work, and who take advantage of special holiday and flight deals)
- **High-life enthusiasts** (Successful go-getters who travel to boost their social status and seek out exceptional service and luxury experiences)
- **Seasoned leisure travelers** (People aged about 25 to 45 who have a travel culture, and who go on holiday regularly. They understand the value of memory over commodity, and travel to relax and spend time with loved ones.)
- **Well-to-do Mzansi families** (People who travel to escape the city, stress and the pressures of daily life. They seek new and different locations to relax in, and they take advantage of special deals and offers.)

Tourism Product Development is part of the Free State government's tourism transformation agenda which includes diversified tourism development so as to have variety of products and

attractions for both domestic and international tourists to enjoy in the Free State. To this end, a catalogue consisting of 1037 B&Bs owned by black people in the Free State has been compiled.

To improve their chances of competing favourably with other well established facilities R4 million has been allocated and is immediately available. In line with our objectives and the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS), we have identified and prioritized the following areas in the tourism sector to receive grants:

- Grading of accommodation establishments, prioritizing the historically disadvantaged
- Enterprise development in tourism
- Development of tourism products and attractions
- Green/Responsible Tourism projects
- Community based tourism
- Home stay tourism
- Events tourism development
- Tourist Guiding Development
- Arts & Crafts

Programme director, tourism products and service standard cannot be separated. Tourism is a service sector and the kind of service delivered is critical for the satisfaction of the tourists and the sustainability of tourism products. Tourism product owners play an imperative role in providing travellers with a unique and memorable experience. Tourism role players are encouraged to always give the best in terms of service standards to make sure that travellers come back for more.

The Service Excellence Campaign therefore seeks to create a culture of service excellence by among others capacitating the industry, especially products owned by the previously disadvantaged individuals and community based tourism products on service excellence standards.

Service excellence is crucial that is why the department is participating in the Lilizela Tourism Awards aimed to provide excellence by recognising and acknowledging those who are giving their best in the tourism industry.

Programme director, allow me at this stage to give our guest here our plans for this tourism month and beyond.

FS Lilizela Awards
Date: 08 September 2016
Venue: Bethlehem

Media launch Flower Festival
Date: 15 September 2016
Venue: Parys

F2 Powerboat
Date: 24 September 2016
Venue: Parys

World Tourism Day Celebration
Date: 27/09/16
Venue: Parys

National Tourism Career Expo
Date: 29 September 2016
Venue: PACOFS

Cherry Festival
Date: 17-19 November 2016
Venue: Ladybrand

MACUFE
Date: 2-11 October 2016
Venue: Bloemfontein

Global Trade Bridge
Date: 3-5 October 2016
Venue: Bloemfontein

Flower Festival
Date: 11-12 November 2016
Venue: Parys

At this stage, I would like to invite you to join me in welcoming the next speaker.

(MEC to introduce the Minister, the CV is attached)

THANK YOU