



Thumbs Up for Africa's Travel Indaba

The significance of tourism to Africa and its economy was once again cemented at this year's Africa's Travel Indaba with delegates from 80 countries in attendance.

Overall Registrations reached the 7 000 mark, resulting in an increase of 4% from last year's figures.

"Indaba's goal is to create a platform that allows the world to do business with Africa and business is happening. We are therefore encouraged by the number of buyers and exhibitors who have come from various parts of the world. They are our valued partners, who assist us to package and sell Africa to the world," says South African Tourism's Chief Executive Officer, Sisa Ntshona.

There was a total of 1 747 registered buyers, an increase of 14% from last year, while there were over 1 100 registered exhibitors, an increase of 5.7% from last year. Of the exhibitors, 200 were first time exhibitors. 23 African countries attended the Indaba.

"When we took the decision to make Indaba a pan-African event, it was a deliberate strategy on our part to boost the African economy," says Ntshona.

"The growing number of African countries at Africa's Travel Indaba has bolstered their commitment to being here. They are seeing the benefit of the expo and being part of a show that focuses only on Africa. The show is for Africa. The media are here for Africa and places the continent on the international stage."

It is important that Indaba creates a lasting legacy for the City of Durban and the economy of the KwaZulu-Natal Province by encouraging and supporting local procurement. Last year it was announced that the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Convention Centre would be home to the Indaba for the next five years.

This year's three-day show is expected to inject a R89 million to KZN's GDP. "This is the 21st anniversary of the Durban ICC this year - a fitting way to start our five-year journey with this award-winning venue," says Ntshona.

"The city of Durban is excited to host Africa's Travel Indaba in 2018. Tourism remains the major economic contributor and vital in creating job opportunities," Phillip Sithole, Deputy City Manager for Economic Development and Planning for the city of eThekweni.

"Indaba is one of the events we are proud to host as it gives us the results that the city needs to boost tourism and investor participation in the city's key infrastructure programs that aim to change the landscape of the city," he adds.



Boosting the City and province is the recent announcement of the direct flight from Heathrow to King Shaka International Airport. “This means the gateway to UK and Europe is now opened for investors and visitors. Real work has begun, together with our partners - KwaZulu-Natal Tourism, South African Tourism to ensure that this flight becomes a success,” he says.

Phindile Makwakwa, Acting CEO of KwaZulu-Natal Tourism adds to this. “This was a very successful Indaba and it kicked off on a high note with the announcement that BA was going to start direct flights from Heathrow to Durban. The UK market is keen on a collaborative relationship with Durban and that is critical and welcomed.”

During this Indaba KwaZulu-Natal Tourism also positioned its marketing on the different routes offered in the province. “We also ensured that there is a strong focus on positioning SMMEs and affording them the opportunity to engage with big business,” says Makwakwa.

South African Tourism’s Hidden Gems programme included 135 SMMEs from across the country. In addition, the Provinces hosted SMMEs from their areas on their stands.

Another highlight of this year’s Indaba is its partnership with the Nelson Mandela Foundation on the Nelson Mandela 100 centenary programme, with various activations throughout the three days of the Indaba. The networking opening event celebrated the global icon with local flair with a local cast directed by renowned local director. “We invite you to the 100 places of Madiba and share your experiences with the world. Walk in the footprints of Madiba and find the better person in you,” says Ntshona.

A record 62 million people visited Africa in 2017 - an 8% year on year growth. It is also symbolic that May is Africa Month and that the Indaba falls within this month.