

# Minister opens Indaba, optimistic about the future of Africa's tourism

**DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA – Thursday, 2nd April, 2019:** When South Africa's Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, opened Africa's Travel Indaba 2019, he asked the audience if the continent was ready to invite 21 million international tourists by 2030. His own response to the question was a resounding yes.

Hanekom, opened Africa's Travel Indaba with great optimism and verve as he welcomed over 1,000 exhibitors and 1,500 buyers to the event, held at the Durban ICC on Thursday, 2nd May 2019.

The UNWTO predicted that 1.8 billion people will be travelling globally by 2030, and that Africa will increase its share from our current 5% to 7% of all global arrivals. This would be 126-million arrivals; almost double the current numbers.

Hanekom said that for Africa to reach that target it would need to see growth of 5,4% per year. "Are we up to it? Yes, we most definitely are."

In his State of the Nation Address in February this year, South Africa's President, Cyril Ramaphosa, said that South Africa is looking to increase its international tourist numbers from 10.5-million in 2018 to 21-million in 2030. To Hanekom, this is do-able. "This 2019 edition of the Africa Travel Indaba will without doubt help us move towards this lofty goal - a goal which has the potential to support 2-million additional jobs in South Africa."

## **Telling real stories of Africa**

Africa's Travel Indaba has become synonymous with storytelling. And this year's theme, Africa's Stories, Your Success re-emphasises the importance of telling our own stories and showcasing our successes. "Too often the real stories of Africa are not told and not heard," said Hanekom.

"Let's work together to replace the sometimes negative narrative of Africa with the real story of so many nations on the move, of people innovating and moving confidently into the future," he added.

## **Collaboration among African nations need improvement**

Hanekom called on leaders to action the AU Agenda 2063 – especially with respect to free movement of people everywhere on the continent, and the easing or dropping of visa requirements in the next few years to enable this.

"Intra-continental tourism from Africa's rapidly growing economies and growing middle class is an opportunity begging to be exploited. We need improved collaborative efforts between our countries to achieve this."

## **Climate change calls for responsible tourism**

The early warning signs of climate change that recently wreaked havoc in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi and on South Africa's east coast will affect the tourism sector. This presents the sector with an opportunity to promote responsible tourism. "We simply must practice responsible tourism. We must

fiercely conserve our natural environment. And tourism must bring tangible and lasting benefits to everyone,” said Hanekom.

For those affected by the recent storms a special collection desk has been set up at the main registration area, for people to offer their donations. Funds collected will be channelled through carefully selected non-profit organisations, to ensure proper distribution and allocation. “In the spirit of Ubuntu, we would like to give you, the tourism industry, an opportunity to open your hearts and extend a helping hand to the victims,” said Hanekom.

When Nelson Mandela, South Africa’s first democratically-elected President opened the first Indaba in a free South Africa, he shared these words:

“It is in tourism that nature and humanity meet most equitably and profitably.... It also provides the resources for the conservation of our natural heritage. Furthermore, tourism is making an important and valuable contribution to the South African economy.”

“Twenty-four years on, and those words still echo throughout our sector,” said Hanekom.

#### African Tourism Facts

Hanekom’s optimism was not unfounded as he unpacked Africa’s tourism story by numbers.

Africa saw 67-million international tourist arrivals in 2018.

This is an increase of nearly 14-million from 2017, when Africa faced Ebola.

This was a growth of 7%, more than the global average of 6%.

This number represents 5% of all global international arrivals.

Ethiopia was Africa’s fastest growing travel economy at 48.6%. Hanekom attributed their success to Air Ethiopia’s great service and the country’s relaxation of Visa regulations, “something which many of our countries could learn from, especially South Africa,” he said.

Kenya follows them, growing by 37% and surpassing the 2-million mark for the first time.

Directly and indirectly, tourism contributed 8.5% to African GDP in 2018, supporting more than 24-million jobs on the continent, or 6.7% of all jobs.

Despite the impressive figures overall, tourism’s contribution to GDP in Africa is still well below the global average of 10.4%. “What this tells us is that we have huge unrealised potential to unlock,” said Hanekom.

Events to look forward to at Africa’s Travel Indaba include the ever-popular Speed Marketing sessions that showcases some of Africa’s finest tourist offerings. Others highlights include:

Green Stand Awards – brought to Indaba for the very first time after successful runs at Meetings Africa

Wall Mural unveiling

Sho’t Left Travel Week launch for 2019, and

Lap of Luxury pavilion at the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa stand

Website [www.southafrica.net](http://www.southafrica.net)

Website: [www.indaba-southafrica.co.za](http://www.indaba-southafrica.co.za)

Faebook: [travelindaba](https://www.facebook.com/travelindaba)

Twitter: [@travel\\_indaba](https://twitter.com/@travel_indaba)

Official Hashtag: [#Indaba19](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Indaba19)