



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH BY PREMIER DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA ON THE LAUNCH OF TOURISM MONTH AT FUMANI LODGE, WATERBERG

22 AUGUST 2024

Programme Director,
MEC for Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Mr Tshitereke Matibe
Executive Mayor of Waterberg District Municipality, Your Worship Cllr. Jack Maeko
Mayor of Modimolle-Mookgophong Local Municipality, Your Worship Cllr. Aaron Sebolai
Other Councillors present,
Chairperson of LTA Board, Mr. Andrew Dipela,
LEDET Head of Department, Mr. Matodzi Rathumbu
All Government Officials
Members of the media

Good evening,

It is with great pleasure and honour that I stand before you on this momentous occasion - the launch of Limpopo Tourism Month. This month-long celebration is not merely an annual event; it is a tribute to the rich tapestry of experiences that our beloved province has to offer. It is also a powerful reminder of the significant role tourism plays in driving economic growth, creating employment opportunities, and fostering social cohesion among our people.

As we gather here today, we reflect on the remarkable strides we have made in the tourism industry over recent years. Limpopo is blessed with breath-taking natural beauty, a vibrant cultural heritage, and a diverse array of activities that cater to every visitor's interests. From the awe-inspiring landscapes of the Kruger National Park to the vibrant cultural festivals that echo the spirit of our communities, to the rich flavours of our local cuisine, Limpopo offers something truly special for everyone.

Programme Director, the adventure tourism scene in our province has flourished tremendously. We are proud to showcase key sites like the majestic Waterberg Plateau— a UNESCO Waterberg Biosphere Reserve spanning approximately 5,000 square kilometres - and Magoebaskloof, where lush forests, cascading waterfalls, and misty mountains create an enchanting landscape. These sites, among many others, offer immersive wilderness experiences that are unparalleled.

Limpopo continues to hold the top spot as the most favoured domestic tourist destination in South Africa. Our strategic location, bordering Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique,

has earned us the title of "Gateway to Africa." This proximity allows tourists to explore our province while easily venturing into neighbouring countries, making Limpopo a perfect springboard for discovering the riches of this vibrant region of the continent. Whether it's outdoor adventure, cultural exploration, wildlife encounters, agricultural tourism, sports, or leisure activities, our province offers an abundance of choices.

The addition of new lifestyle events has further elevated our province's appeal to both domestic and international visitors, solidifying our status as a premier tourism destination.

Programme Director, Limpopo is endowed with remarkable natural resources, boasting 54 provincial reserves and numerous private game reserves. Our province presents a mosaic of stunning landscapes, a rich cultural heritage, an abundance of wildlife species, and countless nature-based tourism opportunities.

Limpopo is truly a land of legends, home to ancient lands and pre-historic sites like Lake Fundudzi and Mapungubwe. The ruins and relics that dot our ancient forests, sparkling trout waters, and hot mineral springs—such as Tshipise Tsha Sagole and Warmbaths—tell stories of a time long past. Much of our land has remained untouched for centuries, offering unlimited opportunities to experience the untamed beauty of Africa.

Let us not forget that Limpopo is the proud home of Modjadji, the legendary Rain Queen, as well as the Stone Age and Iron Age relics of Makapansgat Valley. The treasures of the World Heritage Site at Mapungubwe, which date back millennia, are a testament to our province's rich historical significance.

Programme Director, beyond the intrinsic beauty of our province, tourism has the potential to be a major economic driver for our people. We must recognize the pivotal role that tourism plays in poverty alleviation, job creation, and the development of small businesses.

As a government, we are committed to creating an enabling environment for growth and opportunities within this sector. This commitment requires continuous investment in infrastructure, support for tourism industry stakeholders, and a steadfast focus on promoting service excellence and unforgettable visitor experiences.

As we embark on this month of reflection and celebration, I urge all citizens of Limpopo to seize the opportunities presented by the tourism industry. Let us work hand in hand to showcase the very best that our province has to offer. Let us be ambassadors of our rich heritage and culture, welcoming visitors with open arms and warm hearts. By doing so, we will contribute to the growth and sustainability of tourism, transforming it into a vibrant and prosperous industry for all.

Programme Director, in closing, I want to extend my deepest appreciation to all our partners and stakeholders in the tourism industry. Your tireless efforts have brought us to this remarkable moment. I also wish to thank each and every one of you for your presence and participation in this launch event. Together, we look forward to a successful Limpopo

Tourism Month and a continued journey of growth and prosperity for the tourism industry in our province.

Thank you.