



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

PROVINCIAL CELEBRATION OF WORLD TOURISM DAY 2024

Program Director, Mr Moses Ngobeni

Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism MEC, Mr Tshitereke Matibe,

Vhembe District Executive Mayor Cllr Freda Nkondo,

Makhado Municipality Mayor Cllr Dorcus Mmboyi,

Limpopo Tourism Agency Board Chairperson, Mr Andrew Dipela,

Limpopo Provincial Tourism Agency, Dr. Mashudu Silimela,

Limpopo Women in Tourism (LimWIT), Ms Lerato Sekgobela,

South African Township & Village Tourism Organization (SATOVITO), Ms Bestina Ragoale

Tourism stakeholders present,

Members of the Media

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good day,

It is with great pleasure that we gather here today to observe and celebrate the natural wealth that our beautiful province provides towards driving economic growth, creating employment opportunities and fostering social cohesion among our people through the tourism industry.

Just over a month ago we launched the Tourism month, coupled with a list of exciting activities to stimulate interest among our people to visit our local tourism products and market our province to the rest of the country and globe.

During this month, we, together with many Limpopo residents traversed the different corners of our province, visiting our breathtaking tourism attractions and experiencing our vibrant cultural heritage as part of the Tourism Thursdays launched in August this year.

Allow me to congratulate the Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism department, the Limpopo Tourism Agency, the different MECs, mayors and all staff members who actively participated in the tourism activities of this month.

However, the critical role of marketing this province in order to grow the industry and as a result the positively impact our economy does not end here. As we steer closer towards the festive season, we must intensify the promotion and marketing of province. Beyond the intrinsic beauty of our province, tourism has the potential to be a major catalyst to economic growth and development.

Its potential, especially in a rich province like our own, must be treated with an aggressive marketing sense and not approached with passiveness.

Programme Director, as we gather here, we join the rest of the world as it observed World Tourism Day (WTD) on the 27th of September. Since 1980, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (now known as UN Tourism) has celebrated World Tourism Day as international observances on this day.

In February this year, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) became **"UN Tourism"** to mark a new era for the global tourism sector. This initiative is in keeping with entering a new era with a new name and brand and has identified investments as one of the key priorities for tourism's recovery and future growth and development.

In 2023, World Tourism Day highlighted the need for more and better-targeted investments for people, for planet and for prosperity. On this World Tourism Day, we reflect on the profound connection between tourism and peace.

Every traveller is inadvertently an ambassador, engaging respectfully with local populations, recognizing diversity and our shared humanity, and learning the values that unite us all. This is a method of promoting peace.

World Tourism Day should not only be a celebration but must also be a time of reflection.

By valuing and preserving our cultural and natural heritage, it can help reduce tensions and nurture peaceful co-existence. Tourism can also promote economic interdependence between neighbours, encouraging co-operation and peaceful development.

At the same time, tourism broadens horizons.

As we celebrate tourism, we must also learn to travel responsibly, build bridges, and promote mutual respect amongst cultures and nations.

Together, we can harness the power of tourism to advance peace and prosperity for all.

The movement of people globally results in cultural exposure, and this often encourages people to take on a degree of tolerance and acknowledgement of the rights of others.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tourism has the power to bring us all together, from all walks of life, without discrimination and regardless of race, gender or age. It provides the opportunity to explore the world in new & exciting ways so that we can better understand each other, so that we can experience different destinations and learn all manner of history and cultures.

Together, we can make a difference. We can learn from one another, respect cultures, and open the door to having different conversations so that our world can become a more understanding place.

Tourism is about total empowerment - from youth to women and people with disabilities. Did you know that the tourism workforce is mostly made up of women? This has resulted in tourism also beginning to address matters of gender equality and women empowerment.

Similarly, the sector supports the rights and protection of animals, helping and defending vulnerable species like rhinos, whales, sharks and elephant mistreatment. Limpopo remains popular to tourists for the safari experience and as such, this becomes an important aspect to consider when promoting our province.

I am especially pleased to see the cohesion of culture, heritage and tourism in promoting Limpopo. We have an abundance of small businesses and tourism products, with diverse offerings. I'm glad that you could all come together to celebrate this day and strengthen the collaboration between industry and government.

Tourism is government supported, but industry led. As such, it is imperative that we continue to nurture this relationship and develop the entire tourism value chain in our province, making Limpopo the preferred tourist destination in the country.

In closing, ladies and gentlemen,

Limpopo has won the bid to host the National Tourism Careers Expo taking place between the 8th and the 10th of October for the next three years.

We will be welcoming grade 10 – 12 pupils from all provinces across the country, a majority of which will be coming from Limpopo to be exposed to tour operators, hospitality, food and beverage exhibitors.

These are the kinds of tourism opportunities for growth and job creation that we want to see in our province.

I thank you.