

Remarks by MEC for LEDET Dr Tshiṭereke Matibe on Behalf of Premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba at the World Tourism Day Celebration 2026 at the Legends Safaris and Golf Resort (Famous for its extreme 19th Golf Hol)

Theme: "Growing South Africa's Tourism Sector in the Digital Era" – 27 September 2026

Programme Director

Minister of Tourism, Ms Patricia de Lille

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms Maggie Sotyu

Executive Mayors, Local Mayors and Municipal Leadership

Representatives of the National Department of Tourism

Leaders of the Tourism Industry

Traditional Leaders

Tourism Businesses and SMMEs

Distinguished Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning, Avuxeni, Thobela, Silotshile, Goie More

Madam Minister the locals have an expression that says: “Moeng e tla re je ka wena”, “Mueni i da ri le ngawe”. Loosely translated it means “Visitor, come to our homestead so that we may enjoy the benefit of your presence”.

Your visit in August and September brought tourism into focus and reminded the province that its natural and cultural abundance should be shared with visitors.

Limpopo’s greatest tourism assets are its people, heritage and stories. From Hangklip (where you teed off from the 19th hole) and the Waterberg’s

rivers to Marakele, Mapungubwe and Kruger National Park; from the Wolkberg's mountains and forests to the open bushveld, cultural villages, traditional communities, towns and rural destinations, the province offers experiences that cannot be replicated elsewhere.

These treasures must be marketed, packaged and made more accessible to potential visitors through digital platforms. The address therefore supports this year's World Tourism Day theme, "Growing South Africa's Tourism Sector in the Digital Era," and calls on Limpopo to use digital tools to showcase its unique offerings to the world.

The traveller has changed.

Today, the journey often begins before the traveller leaves home. It begins with a search on a phone, a video on TikTok, an Instagram post, a recommendation from an influencer, a Google search, an online review or a digital booking platform.

As a province we therefore recognise that digital transformation must become part of the way we develop, market and manage tourism in Limpopo.

Digital transformation must be inclusive transformation.

A small guesthouse in a rural village must have the same opportunity to be discovered online as a large hotel in a major city.

A young tour operator must be able to reach an international visitor.

A community tourism project must be able to tell its story beyond the boundaries of its municipality.

Technology can help us close that gap.

Our recently launched “We Are Limpopo” digital campaign is part of this approach. It is about changing the way we tell the story of our province by allowing the people who live here and those who visit us to become ambassadors of Limpopo.

Because Limpopo is not only a place that must be marketed by government. Limpopo must be marketed by Limpopo and all those who experience it because our stories are everywhere.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

However, evidently, having world-class attractions alone is not enough. We must ensure that travellers across South Africa, Africa and the world can discover Limpopo through digital platforms, access information easily and engage with our tourism offerings seamlessly.

Limpopo’s tourism sector shall embrace digital storytelling, smart tourism and AI-powered services to reach wider markets, improve visitor experiences and create business opportunities.

The province’s tourism entrepreneurs, workers, guides, conservation practitioners and cultural ambassadors are recognised for their resilience and contribution to economic growth.

Digital innovation can attract visitors, increase spending and create jobs, while opening new opportunities for young people in technology, content creation, marketing and entrepreneurship.

Transformation must also include SMMEs and community-based businesses, especially in rural and township areas. Tourism growth must remain sustainable by protecting the environment, preserving cultural heritage and promoting responsible tourism for future generations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The success of tourism depends on strong partnerships. Government alone cannot achieve the objectives we have set for the sector. We require continued collaboration between government, the private sector, tourism associations, communities, traditional leadership institutions and development partners.

Together, we can position Limpopo as a leading tourism destination that embraces innovation while remaining authentic to its cultural and natural heritage.

As we commemorate World Tourism Day 2026, let us embrace the opportunities presented by the digital era. Let us invest in innovation, empower our people, support our entrepreneurs and work together to grow a tourism sector that is inclusive, sustainable and future-ready.

But today, I do not want us to leave here having only spoken about digital transformation. I want us to demonstrate it. So, I am issuing a simple challenge to everyone in this room.

At the end of this programme, take out your phone, record yourself. Tell the world about your most memorable, most beautiful or most beloved experience of Limpopo.

It could be a sunrise in the Waterberg. The bright moon that shone over our night skies last night. A visit to Kruger National Park . A dance at Mutiwa Vatsonga. A walk through Mapungubwe. A solemn moment by Tjate reminiscing about the conquering spirit of Sekhukhune. A cultural experience. A meal. A golf experience. A wildlife encounter. Or simply a moment when Limpopo made you feel at home.

Record it. Post it. Tag it. Share it.

Use #WeAreLimpopo.

Let this World Tourism Day celebration be remembered not only for what we said about growing tourism in the digital era, but for what we did immediately afterwards.

I thank you.