

South Africa wows at the Sanganai World Tourism Expo

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South African Tourism is celebrating a successful trip to the 2023 Sanganai Hlanganani World Tourism Expo. Organised by the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, the expo took place in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, from 12-14 October.



Leading up to the Expo, South African Tourism (SA Tourism) and the South African Embassy in Zimbabwe hosted a networking event in Harare where the South African Ambassador to Zimbabwe, HE TR Mabudafhasi, expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to enhance the bond between the two countries.

In her speech at the event, Ambassador TR Mabudafhasi said, “Africa is an important source market for South Africa and continues to bring the largest share of tourist arrivals to the country. Tourism is a strategic sector in our respective economies. It provides economic opportunities for women and youth through employment and supports the development of SMMEs through enterprise development. Tourism has multiple linkages with other sectors of the economy and generates significant multiplier effects.

“South Africa’s tourism sector has shown great resilience after the Covid-19 pandemic, and our Tourism Sector Recovery Plan was successfully implemented. It is therefore not a surprise that South Africa has reclaimed its position as a top destination for business events, ranking 42nd globally in the 2022 International Congress and Convention Association report, released in 2023.”

From January to July 2023, a total of 4.8 million international tourists arrived in South Africa, signifying a remarkable 70.6% growth compared to 2022. Within these 4.8 million arrivals, the African region has the most significant share. I want to commend the fantastic work that South Africa Tourism has done.”

After the successful event at the South African Embassy, the team made their way to Bulawayo for the annual expo, which attracted exhibitors and buyers worldwide to showcase the widest variety of Africa’s best tourism products alongside international visitors and media.



Reflecting our country's beauty, culture and vast tourism offerings, SA Tourism was among the wide variety of exhibitors who showcased their tourism products, service offerings and potential as an exceptional travel destination. The country's participation is part of tangible efforts to connect nations across our continent – evidenced by rising visa-free travel – and focus on strengthening relations between SA and Zimbabwe through tourism further to grow the strategic business alliances in the SADC region.

SA Tourism built a compelling and beautiful 'Visit South Africa Village' for the country's stand. As part of the mandate toward transformation, the Limpopo Tourism Agency travelled with two SMME partners, Miyelani Travel and Nhlamulo Destinations, to grow their business and network in the region. The Mpumalanga Parks & Tourism Board was also amongst the provincial tourism authorities who showcased their offering, corporate partners South African Airways and SA Airlink, Sun International, South Africa National Convention Bureau and business and holiday travel operators Thompsons Africa and Peaks of Africa.

On winning Best International and Overall stand at the expo, SA Tourism Regional Manager for Africa Evelyn Mahlaba said, "We are immensely proud to have received these two accolades. Our stand was intentionally curated with business in mind, focused on building sustainable relationships with those we meet, and showcasing our incredible tourism offering to our neighbours."

SA Tourism recently launched a business innovation tool, MeetSA Portal, designed as a one-stop shop for trade and tourism professionals to engage with the destination. One such tool is Get Connected, where buyers could schedule in-person meetings with SA product owners and continue to create more extended partnerships post the event. A masterclass was held as an extension of the Get Connected tool to empower buyers and MICE professionals with tips on analysing clients' preferences and behaviour, customising event content, and making targeted marketing and sales recommendations, all while building meaningful connections. Amongst the many meetings held during the three-day event, 184 new trade registrations were recorded on the business portal, and over 1,000 visitors were recorded at the stand. This is just one of the many ways SA Tourism makes selling South Africa easier.

Talking about the successful media visibility created during the event, Ms Bontle Madiba says, "As part of our efforts to extend brand awareness, we partnered with local radio stations to expand our brand awareness - creating awareness of our SA product owners who were exhibiting and encouraging expo visitors to come and meet SA. International media and their product interviewed Local Travel partners and gained much-needed exposure; 12 Radio and TV media interviews were conducted over the three days.

Dr Mavungu Musitha, senior manager of destination marketing for Limpopo Province, said participating in the expo created much-needed leads for the SMME product owners. “Miyelani Travel had 15 qualified leads just by exhibiting at the expo. We thank SA Tourism for creating the feeling, energy and experience of South Africa away from home. The magnitude of the stand showed that there is always more to see in the country, giving potential travellers and trade partners an idea of South Africa’s diverse tourism offerings.”

For more information on what places to visit while in South Africa, please visit the tourism social media platforms:

- Instagram: [@visitsouthafrica.africa](#)
- Facebook: [@visitsouthafrica.africa](#)
- TikTok: [@visitsouthafrica.africa](#)
- YouTube: [@visitsouthafrica.africa](#)

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