

Time to unlock Africa's travel potential

The South African Tourism Indaba should expand its platform by attracting even more exhibitors and buyers from the African continent, Tourism Minister Marthinus Van Schalkwyk said on Sunday (12 May).



Marthinus van Schalkwyk
(Image: GCIS)

"As part of our growth and expansion plans, we will be gradually increasing African participation at the Indaba from next year," said Van Schalkwyk.

"We can do more to tangibly strengthen the African tourism sector through mutually beneficial co-operation - which brings out the best in all of us through healthy competition on our continent," he said.

Van Schalkwyk was speaking at the four-day trade event taking place in Durban. The event attracts nearly 13,000 delegates in the travel and tourism sectors.

Van Schalkwyk said it was time Africans learned from each other's successes instead of resenting one another.

"To achieve this we are willing to invest even more to transform the Indaba into a pan-African trade platform."

Key markets

He said in line with SA Tourism's global strategy, it had identified key markets that could boost growth. He said new SA Tourism planned to open offices in Brazil, Angola, Kenya and Nigeria.

In the mean time he said the organisation would intensify its marketing presence in South Korea, Russia, Scandinavia, China, Uganda, Ghana and Tanzania.

He said SA Tourism would continue focusing on domestic tourism by addressing cost and information barriers.

"We have to create the conditions that improve the tourism experience and make the natural treasures of our country accessible and affordable to a much greater section of our population."

He said an audit of under-utilised state assets and properties that was recently commissioned would reveal areas that could be transformed into tourist attractions.

"We have also commissioned a feasibility study for a pilot budget resort chain, which could in some or other way be established through partnerships," he said.

He said this project was aimed at the market of would-be travellers earning less than R5,000 a month.

"The time has come to unlock our country's tourism treasures and the intrinsic value of travel for all South Africans, thus bolstering our contribution to job creation and poverty alleviation," he added.

Source: Sapa via I-Net Bridge

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