

Tokozile Xasa's speech at The National Tourism Careers Expo 2014 media launch

The National Tourism Careers Expo (NTCE) 2014 marks the third and final Eastern Cape version of the event this year, carrying our theme: 'Explore your world of tourism'.



The NTCE theme links up well with the World Tourism Month theme: "Tourism and Community Development," on the basis that the NTCE is about youth development and further to that the National Department of Tourism theme for this month is: "Tourism Transforming Lives," which sums up what the event is all about.

Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa said in her speech, "...it is important for us to note that this is the sixth annual version of the NTCE since it started in 2008 in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal Province. It therefore would be reasonable to expect that NTCE in the Eastern Cape ends on a high note.

I wish to congratulate the NTCE partners for successfully hosting the 2012 and 2013 expo. To date, more than 70,000 South African learners and graduates have attended the expo since its inception in 2008. Knowing that the preparations to host the event this year are at an advanced stage, this media event is meant to launch the publicity campaign that should not only serve to drive maximum attendance and participation, but also to create awareness around the NTCE country wide".

Direct and indirect jobs

Tourism generated 9.5% of South Africa's gross domestic product in 2013, and accounted for more than 1.4 million direct and indirect jobs in the country. Despite our positive contribution, South Africa has the third-highest unemployment rate in the world for people between the ages of 15 to 24, as revealed by the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Risk Report for 2014.

The Deputy Minister invited the media to partner up to publicise the NTCE to ensure that they reach the youths in all the urban and rural areas of our country, and share with them the diverse employment opportunities that tourism offers.

NTCE 2014 is brought to you by the Department of Tourism in partnership with the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) and the Eastern Cape Province. This year's event will take place from 2 to 4 October, 2014, at the East London International Convention Centre.

Our primary target markets are learners and students from grade 9 to 12, especially those doing tourism and hospitality as subjects at high schools, FET College and university students. This target group also includes unemployed tourism graduates, educators and lecturers in high schools, colleges and universities.

Tourism as a career and profession of choice

Through the NTCE, we seek to promote tourism as a career and profession of choice, whilst simultaneously promoting the industry as an employer of choice. The strategic importance of the NTCE to the National Department of Tourism and its partners is to create a future pool of human capital that will support the current and future tourism growth in our country, as we know that tourism is a labour intensive industry. This is against the negative perceptions revealed by an out-of-school youth survey in 2008 about tourism being a sector with menial jobs, long working hours, no professional growth paths, etc. The NTCE also exposes young people to job and entrepreneurial opportunities that exist in the sector.

The NTCE has in the past six annual events provided unemployed graduates with short-term employment exposure for their much-needed experiential learning in the events sub sector in tourism. At least 120 unemployed graduate volunteers are employed annually to assist during the event. This adds up to the business opportunities that are created for the host city to small and medium entrepreneurs as suppliers of services required for the event ranging from transport, accommodation, meals and other related services.

The NTCE partners invested more than R2 million rands each year assisting learners from remote rural areas to be transported, accommodated and provided with meals as they are brought to get exposure to the tourism industry at the NTCE in the Eastern Cape for the past two years. This is without talking about the indirect impact on other business and employment opportunities that have been positively impacted upon by the inflow of NTCE participants during the preparatory period and actual hosting of the event. The two provinces that hosted the NTCE have naturally been exposed to other provinces in the country in terms of the tourism products they offer. All this are obvious by - products of the event whilst a formal impact assessment study is still to be conducted after this year's event.

"At this point, I would to share with you what South Africans can expect as part of the highlights at this year's NTCE:

- The NTCE will officially be opened on the morning of 2 October, 2014. At the opening ceremony we will announce the Global Travel and Tourism Partnership South Africa (GTTPSA) Schools Competition winners; launch the Best Tourism Awards programme and the NTCE Programme for the three days;
- The NTCE this year will also focus on encouraging youths to take tourism entrepreneurship seriously as there will a competition on business plans presentations at the Student - Preneur Platform. This platform will be managed by organisations such as TEP, SEDA and NYDA, which will have adjudication of best and viable business ideas taken through the SABS Innovation Design Laboratory for further development and enhancement into fully fledged small businesses. The SABS version of this platform is a new innovative development, which we all should applaud;
- As part of the three-day programme, we will share the findings of the Tourism, Hospitality, and Consumer Studies Curriculum Evaluation Report. This report will offer insight on the value and the quality of our tourism curricula in relation to international standards. Educators can look forward to the Educators' Seminars. The seminars will focus on technical topics that have posed challenges for educators in the classroom. This segment will equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach with confidence;

- A dialogue will be held with tourism stakeholders and members of the academic fraternity on Tourism Graduates' Employability. This platform will give participants an opportunity to discuss, with the view of finding solutions, the challenges that contribute to the inability of our graduates to market themselves in the workforce, and the reasons behind the industry's reluctance to employ our tourism/ hospitality graduates;
- Representatives from Higher Education South Africa (HESA) will be among the speakers at the NTCE. HESA will present and offer clarity on the much-talked-about "hurdle" that prevents learners from taking tourism as a subject due to its "non-designation" classification. As a department, we have engaged HESA on this matter and have reached a mutual understanding on how we can work together to allay our learners fear's in this regard;
- Our exciting debate competition for learners will also be part of this year's proceedings. Learners from the nine provinces will compete against each other, debating on tourism related topics, for the national title. A revolving trophy will be awarded to the winners for their school and province.

Moving on to the Exhibition floor:

- We have invited industry players from various sub sectors in tourism to showcase tourism products, their expertise and offer employment opportunities for unemployed graduates. The pool of exhibitors will constitute public and private product owners, government departments, and their entities;
- Unemployed graduates and final-year students can make use of the Virtual Classroom that will assist them with CV compilation skills and will offer guidance on how they can best present themselves during job interviews. The Recruitment Arena will be situated close by for unemployed graduates who wish to learn and apply for existing vacancies in the industry;
- We have taken great care to ensure that an aftercare arrangement is in place to assist and support graduates who wish to follow up on their employment applications post the NTCE. This support programme is the key to ensuring that we facilitate the absorption of unemployed graduates into the tourism workforce;
- Our popular Chefs Corner will be on display again this year. Professional chefs, who will expose young people to South African delicacies and the creative elements of the culinary arts, will manage the corner. The cook-off competitions by the learners will give them first-hand exposure of what it takes to be a professional chef. The Mixology platform, which seeks to demonstrate the innovative bar tendering expertise wherein beverage concoctions are creatively mixed and served, will also be available;
- We will have a new platform that brings on board the aviation industry. This could either be in the form of aeroplane simulation or audio-visuals, coupled with presentations on the profession in the aviation field. It will also showcase elements of the hospitality skills and services that are rendered during air travel. This will be an interactive platform that will expose learners and graduates to professions in this industry;
- The Marine Tourism Industry will also be part of the NTCE 2014. Learners and graduates will be introduced to the various professions in this industry. This is one area of expertise that young people in the country are not widely exposed to, and the expo will bring it to their doorstep;
- Adventure tourism products synonymous with the Eastern Cape Province will also be on display. Learners will be exposed to the required skills and careers opportunities that exist in the specialised Adventure Tourism area.

For the media:

- We will host a briefing session with the media where we will be outlining the gains made during the three years of hosting the NTCE in the Eastern Cape Province, as well as announce the legacy projects that the NTCE will be leaving behind. A host province 2015 to 2017 bidding process is underway. We hope to announce the host province for the NTCE 2015 to 2017 at the gala dinner.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the NTCE represents the ideas, initiatives and engagements of all education and training stakeholders that share the common goals of taking Tourism Human Resource Development to greater heights in our country. The time has come to put the skills development and employment needs of our youths at the fore, in order to sustain the current growth of the tourism sector.

NTCE takes place from 2-4 October 2014, in East London ICC.

For more, go to www.tourismcareers.co.za

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>