

# WTM Africa 2023 sets the stage for a new era in African tourism

WTMA Africa 2023 officially opened its doors today, 3 April 2023. Opening the show, Patricia De Lille, Minister of Tourism, expressed her excitement about the tourism industry's recovery, saying: "We are all ready to come back with a bang. And we've already started coming back." She stressed that the tourism sector has a major role to play in South Africa and said: "I can feel the opportunity in tourism. In my new role, I will focus on implementation, as it is time for us to now walk the talk."



Source: Supplied

This year's show is back to pre-pandemic numbers with over 5,000 registrations, almost 600 exhibitors, 49 new countries, 200 expert speakers and over 80 hours of content sessions.

The event also has 9,200 pre-scheduled appointments, a 35% increase compared to last year. Over 63% of the buyers, this year are new and come from exciting markets such as Malaysia, Pakistan, Thailand, Philippines, Romania, Armenia, San Marino and Uzbekistan

Eddie Andrews, deputy mayor of Cape Town, emphasised the importance of tourism for the host City of Cape Town, saying: "We believe in the possibility of Africa. As tourism is an economic driver for Cape Town, we are building a city of hope. We aim to create a tourism-related job in every single household. People want to hear stories, and Africa has many stories to tell."

Carol Weaving, managing director of RX Africa, highlighted the statistics, saying: "WTM starts today. We have 577 exhibitors and 9,200 pre-scheduled appointments. We are back and ready to do business. Sixty-six per cent of buyers are brand new from new markets like Malaysia, Thailand, Australia, Pakistan, Romania and Bangladesh. The repeat buyers are from our key source markets."

Mark Sham, founder of Suits & Sneakers and a speaker at WTM Africa 2023, urged attendees to have fun, go up to each other and truly connect. He said: "We're back! I will never forget when we couldn't connect and will never take it for granted again. In Africa, we sit on the most amazing potential."

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