

Rebuilding SA's tourism sector

 By Robin Fredericks

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Tourism Minister Lindiwe Sisulu has called on South Africans to travel domestically to get a better understanding of the affordable, exciting and world class attractions that are available on our doorstep, saying that Tourism Month, which is celebrated throughout the month of September, also serves as an opportunity to promote domestic tourism and create a culture of travel amongst South Africans.



Source: SA Tourism

Speaking at the launch of Tourism Month, which took place in the Western Cape at !Khwa ttu, Sisulu said that the country celebrates Tourism Month to highlight and bring to the fore the importance of the tourism sector, its contribution to the South African economy and the potential it has to transform the trajectory of the country.

“Tourism Month is in line with our country’s vision to ignite inclusive economic growth, sustainable job creation, and transformation, which are all critical for our industry and we need to aim to continue with our collective efforts in driving this.”



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Sisulu explained that Tourism Month also aims to generate awareness of the contribution that the tourism industry makes to provincial and national economic growth and job creation.

Tourism sector recovery

The Department of Tourism recently put out the Draft Framework for Community Participation in Tourism (FCPT) for public

comments and is in the process of finalising it.

"The FCPT in line with the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan, emphasises the importance of developing and reinforcing domestic, regional, and local tourism that is inclusive and prioritises community well-being. The objective is to ensure that tourism provides maximum benefit to communities where tourism serves as a catalyst.

"The goal of this FCPT is to guide the department, provincial tourism departments, and other key tourism stakeholders in their efforts to encourage community participation in the tourism sector and, as a result, to increase the positive impact tourism can have on local economic development and community quality of life," Sisulu said.

Lauding the sector for its 2022 tourism performance thus far, Sisulu shared data for the first half of the year, which shows that 15.2 million domestic trips were taken, marking a 114% increase when compared to the same period in 2021. This is way above the same period in 2019, which saw 8.6 million domestic trips taken.

Reinventing SA tourism

This performance, said Sisulu, is testimony to the strides South Africa's tourism sector has made to reinvent itself and once again draw visitors into the country. "This year's Tourism Month celebrations are incredibly special because we are recognising how far we have come as a sector, despite everything we have been through in the last few years."

Sisulu said the sector is also seeing a steady rebound of business events, with South African Tourism having successfully hosted their flagship shows Meetings Africa and Africa's Travel Indaba in person this year.

"Our international and domestic numbers are increasing gradually, signalling that the sector is well on its way to recovery. It is predicted by the UNWTO that the tourism sector will return to 2019 levels of activity in 2024.

"South Africans have supported and sustained the tourism sector when the world wasn't coming.

"Domestic tourism has been leading the sector's recovery and continues to be the cornerstone of our industry. This is a result of the concerted effort by the tourism sector to place a bigger focus on domestic tourism and 'revenge tourism'."



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This recovery is evident in the domestic tourism performance figures for the first half of 2022, with holiday trips increasing, said Sisulu. "Domestic travel figures have exceeded 2019 which is really fantastic and in the first half of the year, South Africa recorded over a 100% increase in domestic trips compared to the same period in 2021."

“Increasing interest in local travel also brings renewed hope to the tourist industry. Since the travel restrictions were lifted new and seasoned travel enthusiasts are wanting to find out where they can indulge their wanderlust closer to home and looking online for 'things to do' in cities and small dorpies across the country.”

“I would like to encourage all South Africans to use this Tourism Month to go out, have fun and explore their surroundings but also to join in the festivities in all nine provinces as we not only celebrate tourism month but Heritage month as well.”

Take a Sho't Left with South African Tourism and [view discounts](#) from participating airlines, hotel groups, tour operators and tourist attractions this Tourism Month.

ABOUT ROBIN FREDERICKS

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