

KZN, Durban open for business as it readies for Africa's #Indaba2018

All eyes will be on KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and Durban this week with Africa's Travel Indaba taking place from 8 - 10 May. More than 7,000 delegates from across the world (64% international and 36 % South African) are expected to descend on Inkosi Albert Luthuli Convention Centre (ICC) with some 20,000 meetings to be held between exhibitors during the course of the three-day event. The 26th Indaba will showcase the widest variety of Africa's top tourism products with 31 African countries participating this year compared to the 18 countries in the previous financial year. Forty-nine countries from outside Africa are allocated.

“ It's that time of the year again!💎💎 [#Indaba2018 pic.twitter.com/Ta1VxLKMAx](https://twitter.com/Ta1VxLKMAx)— Tourvest DMC (@TourvestDMC) [May 7, 2018](#) ”

Energising economies, fueling transformation

Underpinning Africa's Travel Indaba is tourism which energises economies and fuels the economic transformation of countries on the continent. Its benefits range from livelihoods improvement to export diversification.

The economic direct spend for the Indaba is projected to be about R53m with some 200 part-time jobs created, apart from the spin-off – and with delegates from at least 80 countries expected.

Zikalala said KwaZulu-Natal was excited to host the 26th Indaba and said this year's three-day show was expected to inject a whopping R89 million to KwaZulu-Natal's GDP. “The tourism showpiece has brought major spin-offs for the tourism industry and associated businesses, big and small in KZN. Indaba is crucial to us as tourism is a key sector for spurring inclusive economic growth and employment creation,” Zikalala said.

He explained that this was the reason the province had put in place and implement the KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Master Plan. “This wide-ranging plan is, itself, aligned to the National Tourism Sector Strategy, whose chief concern centres around creating and maintaining an environment conducive to sustainable growth. We call on our people to welcome our visitors with warmth so that when they go back to their respective countries, they become good KZN ambassadors,” Zikalala explained.

Africa's private sector is increasingly attracting investment from the United States and Europe, with China, India and others also investing heavily in the region. Tourism is one of the key industries driving the current change and tourism could be a transformative tool within this take-off.

“ In preparation for the start of the [#TravelIndaba](#), let's look at what happened this time, last year:

<https://t.co/oe59r2Seh3>

Delegates, we'll see you tomorrow! [#INDABA2018](#)

💎: [@SATravelTrade](#) [pic.twitter.com/oUKmQj7VEV](https://t.co/oe59r2Seh3)— Durban ICC (@DurbanICC) [May 7, 2018](#) ”

Highlights

Africa's Travel Indaba brings together a showcase of Southern African tourism products and services for the international travel trade. Categories include accommodation, tour operators, game lodges, transport, online travel, luxury products, Hidden Gems, media publications and industry associations. Outdoor exhibitors include transport, camping and safari companies.

Indaba 2018 also marks the Mandela Centenary and Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN) will highlight stalwart Nelson Mandela's footprint in the province.

“ Calling all [@travel_indaba](#) delegates. Get your copy of [@NelsonMandela @G_MachelTrust](#) 'Dare Not Linger The Presidential Years' when you check in at [@capetownint](#). An amazing gift courtesy of [@SouthAfricaNet #WeDoTourism #DiamondWorksTour #Indaba2018 #AfricaMovesYou](#) [pic.twitter.com/AcZ2ODzQ48](https://t.co/AcZ2ODzQ48)— The Diamond Works (@TheDiamondWorks) [May 7, 2018](#) ”

Among some of the events include MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Sihle Zikalala and the Mayor of eThekweni Municipality, Councillor Zandile Gumede holding a business breakfast which will be attended by members of the tourism trade, media, strategic partners and stakeholders from government and the private sector on Tuesday, 8 May 2018.

A much-awaited anticipated surprise announcement is to be made.

Showcasing the future stars of local tourism

Phindile Makwakwa, acting chief executive officer for TKZN, said the Indaba was a showcase for the “future stars” of the local tourism industry. “It is a great opportunity for the industry and its stakeholders to come together and discuss the issues and opportunities facing the industry,” Makwakwa said. She added that small businesses were the true “Hidden Gems” of African tourism.

“Managed sustainably, tourism is an effective development tool. When tourism's environmental, social, and economic and other constraints are addressed, tourism energizes economies. The region has abundant assets, with expansive beaches, plentiful wildlife, extensive natural and cultural attractions, and adventure opportunities. Considerable opportunities for expansion exist in safari, beach, business, and diaspora tourism,” Makwakwa said.

“ South African Tourism has partnered with [@satsa_sa](#) and the [@Tourism_gov_za](#) to bring new and emerging players to [#Indaba2018](#). Find out more about our [#HiddenGems](#) Programme here: <https://t.co/0TeLn11peq> [pic.twitter.com/Y6A7ZpBlei](https://t.co/Y6A7ZpBlei)— SATravelTrade (@SATravelTrade) [May 5, 2018](#) ”

“ Following today's training session, the [#HiddenGems](#) Speed Networking platform is the ideal opportunity for our SMME's to implement some of their learnings and pitch their ideas to buyers. [#Indaba2018](#) [pic.twitter.com/M250Y5g3FL](https://t.co/M250Y5g3FL)— SATravelTrade (@SATravelTrade) [May 6, 2018](#) ”

“ We've come to the end of an interactive [#HiddenGems](#) Networking Session where all SMME's got the opportunity to mingle with industry members & raise their concerns to SA Tourism executives. [#Indaba2018 #AfricaMovesYou](#)

pic.twitter.com/KrfixLtbQG— SATravelTrade (@SATravelTrade) [May 6, 2018](#) ”

Makwakwa said the African continent had great potential to expand products that were more recently in greater demand, such as nature/adventure tourism, cultural heritage tourism, and travel for wellness, health and retirement purposes.

According to a United Nation's report, Africa's total share of the global travel market currently stands at 5% and was growing at a higher rate than global travel figures. Some 62 million travellers visited Africa in 2017, but Makwakwa said there was room for growth.

This year there is a 50% increase of small business exhibitors at the "Hidden Gems" pavilion with 135 small South African businesses exhibiting.

“If we want to grow tourism in our province and our country, we must focus on small and developing businesses. They are the true future because it empowers people, provide job opportunities and instil pride in our beautiful country,” Makwakwa said.

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