

Building sustainable tourism in developing countries

Tourism practitioners met for a two-day workshop in Durban recently to share best practices and methodologies that have the potential to shape the future of sustainable tourism economies in developing countries.



Photo: AWOL Tours

Hosted by the Department of Tourism in collaboration with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, the Best Practice Workshop sought to highlight the importance of policy and planning strategies in addressing the challenges that affect tourism development.

Director General of Tourism, Victor Tharage said the need for countries to develop integrated strategies in lieu of the global demands levelled on tourism to deliver on addressing socio-economic challenges, and in achieving Sustainable Development Goals. “Tourism’s ability to create employment opportunities, and transform economies is a reality that is rapidly being embraced by the global community.”

“As the demand for tourism to deliver on creating economic opportunities rises, pressure is mounting on countries to develop strategies that will enable the industry to meet the demand, and ensure its sustainability.”

“Our shared quest to see tourism become a critical economic driver in our respective countries has brought us together today. Let us leverage on the opportunity we have at the Best Practice Workshop to share innovating ways that will aid us in charting a new path for sustainable tourism development,” said Tharage.

People-based activity

According to the UNWTO and IPSOS online survey conducted across 15 countries and targeting 12,000 people, more than 50% of the participants believe that tourism has a large impact on wealth and income generation. Despite the positive sentiment, there is a growing need for tourism to be managed in a manner that is beneficial to both visitors and local communities.

"Tourism is a people based activity that thrives on authentic experiences that are imparted by the people in our communities.

"As we strive to grow our tourism numbers and economies, we should ensure that the communities wherein we implement our strategies enjoy the socio-economic gains of tourism," concluded Tharage.

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