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Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
Media Statement

MINISTER MOOSA UNVEILS INITIATIVES TO BOOST TOURISM

The Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Mohammed Valli Moosa, today announced tourism initiatives by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) which will significantly contribute to tourism promotion and growth in the country.

Minister Moosa launched a handbook on tourism support programmes for Small, Medium and Macro Enterprises (SMMEs), unveiled a poster campaign against illegal tour guiding and released guidelines on responsible tourism.

Launching the handbook, the Minister said, "The transformation of the tourism industry continues to be our major commitment. To transform the industry, we should strive to aggressively support the emerging tourism businesses of previously disadvantaged communities".

He said to this end, DEAT, in partnership with the private sector, has formulated a strategy aimed at transforming the industry.

The action plan of the strategy identified short, medium and long-term priorities that DEAT would implement over a three-year period. The short-term priorities that would address the strategic thrust include:

- The formulation of policy aimed at ensuring that all government departments support black businesses in the tourism industry
- The establishment of a private-public sector forum to improve communication on the implementation and monitoring of programmes aimed at transforming tourism
- The formulation of an information booklet outlining the funding opportunities and assistance programs available to SMMEs within the tourism industry and the development of a database of black businesses in the tourism industry. DEAT has managed and will continue to develop a database for black businesses in the tourism industry.

"Through partnership with the private sector we are today launching an information booklet, which will provide information on tourism funding programmes from the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Department of Trade and Industry, the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA), Investment Development Corporation (IDC), Tourism Enterprise Programme (TEP) and Khula Enterprise," said Minister Moosa.

The handbook is aimed at providing information regarding different types of programmes aimed at assisting SMMEs within the tourism industry, the criteria for funding, the process for applications and the contact details of the relevant institutions.

Furthermore, the Minister said the department has received information on illegal tourist guides, and emphasised that DEAT remains committed to combating illegal tour guiding.

"We shall continue to monitor and ensure that illegal tour guides are not allowed," he said. "It is with this commitment that we are today launching the anti-illegal tourist guide brochure and poster. The purpose of the brochure and the poster is to create awareness to tourists when choosing tourist guides, to inform tourists that they have the right to ask the tour guide if he/she is registered or not".

Brochures and posters will be distributed at tourist destinations, airports and district tourism offices.

The responsible tourism guidelines, developed during 2001, provide a national framework for the tourism industry to exercise its commitment towards the principles of responsible tourism. These principles are embodied in the 1996 White Paper on the "Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa."

The White Paper concluded that tourism development in South Africa had previously largely been a missed opportunity, and that the earlier focus on a narrow market had reduced the potential of the industry to spawn entrepreneurship and to create new services.

"Responsible tourism is about enabling local communities to enjoy a better quality of life, through increased socio-economic benefits and an improved environment. It is also about providing exciting holiday experiences for tourists, and stimulating business opportunities for tourism enterprises.

"Responsible tourism must become the key guiding principle for tourism development in South Africa. Government, the private sector and communities are working together to practice tourism responsibly, and the guidelines provide the mechanisms through which this can be realised," said Minister Moosa.

In the development of these guidelines, the different tourism enterprises and associations are expected to develop their own agenda for action, and to prioritise those issues that will make a significant socio-economic and environmental impact.

"This approach is necessary to ensure that the tourism sector in South Africa keeps pace with international trends towards responsible business practices. I hope the brochure on responsible tourism guidelines will continue to educate and create awareness to the tourism industry," said Minister.

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