MINISTER
TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X 424, PRETORIA, 0001, Tourism House, 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside, PRETORIA, 0002, Switchboard: +27 (0)12 444 6000, Fax: +27 (0)12 444 7000, Website: www.tourism.gov.za

MESSAGE BY MINISTR PATRICIA DE LILLE

TBCSA TOURISM LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

SUN CITY, NORTH WEST

27 OCTOBER 2026

Greetings to everyone gathered at Sun City. To the leadership of the Tourism Business Council of South Africa, the Chair, Jerry Mabena, the CEO, Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa, to all our tourism leaders, partners and friends.

I am truly sorry that I cannot be with you in person this year. You know how much I enjoy being among the people who make our tourism industry what it is. And you also know that I never miss an opportunity to engage with you, challenge you, and sometimes be challenged by you!

This year is particularly special as TBCSA celebrates 30 years of representing, supporting and championing our tourism private sector.

Thirty years of partnership. Thirty years of resilience. And thirty years of people who have never stopped believing in the extraordinary potential of South African tourism. I want to use this opportunity to thank everybody for their collaboration, the hard work you have done. I want to thank you in advance for the work you'll still do in the future. Thank you.

Thank you for the investments you make, the jobs you create, the risks you take, and the passion you bring to this industry every single day. Thank you for working alongside government, for holding us accountable, for challenging us when we need challenging, and for recognising that our success depends on working together.

Earlier this month, at the World Travel & Tourism Council Global Summit in Malta, I was deeply honoured to receive the WTTC Global Champion Award. It was a very proud moment for South Africa. But I want to be absolutely clear about something. That award does not belong to Patricia de Lille. It belongs to all of us. It belongs to the tourism businesses, the entrepreneurs, the investors, the industry associations, the frontline workers, and the many people across government and the private sector who work tirelessly to grow our tourism economy.

It is recognition of what we can achieve when government and industry stop working in silos and start working as genuine partners. And that is exactly what we have been building together.

Our Tourism Growth Partnership Plan is not simply another government strategy. It is a shared commitment to action, to removing barriers, to opening up air access, improving visa access, strengthening our destination marketing, developing our tourism products, and creating opportunities for more South Africans to participate in this wonderful industry. The acknowledgment of the President that tourism is a key driver has led to the B4SA focus to further support and drive the work we do together.

We have set ourselves an ambitious target of 15 million international arrivals by 2030. But the real measure of our success will not simply be how many visitors arrive. It will be how many South Africans find work, how many small businesses grow, how many rural communities benefit, and how much more inclusive our tourism economy becomes.

We still have much to do. And I know we will not always agree on everything. But I have always believed that a strong partnership is not one in which everybody agrees. It is one in which we trust each other enough to have the difficult conversations, find solutions, and get things done.

So as TBCSA celebrates its 30th anniversary, I want to congratulate you, and every person who has contributed to these three decades of progress. Let us celebrate how far we have come but let us be even more excited about what we can achieve together. Because South Africa's tourism success story is not government's story, or the private sector's story. It is our story. And the best chapters are still to come.

I wish you a wonderful and very productive conference.
Thank you and enjoy beautiful Sun City!

Ms Patricia de Lille, MP
Minister of Tourism
Date: 26 October 2026