

R100 million investment for domestic tourism

Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom says President Jacob Zuma's announcement of a R100 million investment to boost local tourism is music to his ears. The Minister said this when he participated in a debate of President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address in the National Assembly, on Tuesday.



HelenOnline via [Wikimedia Commons](#) - Passengers boarding Sikhululekile ferry docked at Murray's Bay Harbour in Robben Island for return trip to V&A Waterfront. Sikhululekile means "We are free" in the Xhosa language.

"Mr President, in your address to the nation on Thursday, you said that South African Tourism will invest R100 million a year to promote domestic tourism encouraging South Africans to tour their country.

"Your emphasis on the importance of domestic tourism came as music to the ears of all of us who are working in tourism who so passionately believe in the great value tourism offers our country," he said.

Making domestic tourism affordable and accessible

In his debate, the Minister said the Department of Tourism was putting a great deal of effort and resources into domestic tourism. He said the department was determined to ensure that in order to promote domestic tourism, iconic attractions are accessible and affordable to all citizens. "More people should be able to travel to the Kruger National Park to see the great wildlife extravaganza ... Our people must have the opportunity to take the ferry to Robben Island and experience the story of the triumph of the human spirit of oppression.

"Many more school children must be able to visit Mapungubwe and take pride in the history of this ancient African civilisation that cast the golden rhino long before Africa was colonised.

"This is our heritage to be shared by all our people," he said.

Tourism shows growth

One of the most impressive aspects about tourism in South Africa was that it has grown over the past two decades.

"Tourism arrivals in South Africa have grown from 3.9 million in 1994 to 8.9 million arrivals in 2015.

"According to Stats SA'S satellite account, in 2013, 655,000 people were directly involved in producing goods and services provided to tourists. We are confident that tourism can grow rapidly, offering most of our people work and livelihood opportunities," said the Minister. Currently 1.5 million people are employed by the tourism sector, directly or indirectly.

Stimulating tourism and SMMEs

In his speech on Thursday, President Zuma said South Africa's tourism sector should take advantage of the weakened exchange rate as well as the recent changes that were made to visa regulations to boost inbound tourism.

The Minister said government was working closely with the Ministry of Small Business Development to stimulate to establishment of new SMMEs. "Some of these small businesses will become big successful businesses of the future," he said.

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