



Minister of Tourism Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane on Coronavirus COVID-19 Alert Level-2 Tourism Sector Directions

19 August 2020

The pandemic has undeniably been devastating for the tourism sector resulting in many businesses not being able to keep their doors open or battling to survive as their revenue and sales continued to shrink, leading to forced staff reduction or retrenchments.

As we pick up, not from where we have left, but rather in a new environment, we are putting together the pieces of a new path towards recovery as many people in our sector return to work to provide for their families following months of hardship as we traverse through one of the most difficult periods in the history of our country and indeed the world.

Our road to recovery as a sector has begun, we will in the coming weeks consolidated inputs received on the Tourism Sector Recovery Strategy before we will submit our plan to Cabinet. Our intention is to start as soon as possible with the implementation of the recovery plan. We are mindful that this is critical as tourism is one of the pillars for the broader South African economic recovery and growth.

We are appreciative of the role played by various organisations in all sub-sectors,

small businesses in townships, rural communities, the Women in Tourism, the Youth in Tourism and other individuals who have reached out to make submissions as we move to rebuild our sector. Heightened cooperation and partnerships amongst all sector players are essential as we implement our response plan and lay a foundation for a healthier, more resilient and competitive future.

Our analysis of the global trends is that today and tomorrow's traveller is looking for a destination that offers diversity, they will be still cautious to move from one country to the other during their tours and therefore are looking for countries that offer more experiences. South Africa as a destination offers variety and diversity attractions, products and activities with world class experiences giving us competitive and comparative advantage amongst other destinations for this new global traveller.

We will continue to do this analysis and rebuilt our marketing proposition of destination South Africa, this as we move One Step at a time.

We are highly encouraged by the interest we are seeing from both domestic and international investors, looking for opportunities in the tourism sector. This gives hope that the supply side of the tourism sector will not only recover, but has the potential to surpass where we were as a sector prior to the pandemic. Our responsibility is to ensure that as we recover and grow, we bring along the previously disadvantaged groups, thereby ensuring inclusivity, transformation and sustainability of our tourism sector. We will use our Tourism Equity Fund as a mechanism to support this transformation imperative in the sector.

The announcement by President Ramaphosa to move to Alert Level 2 of the COVID-19 risk adjusted strategy as from Tuesday, 18 August 2020 marked a significant leap and milestone for the tourism sector. The move will reignite business activities, save jobs and the many livelihoods that facing difficulties due to the pandemic.

We therefore welcome the decision by Cabinet to permit tourism services for the categories as stated in the gazetted Regulations. We have developed directions for the tourism sector to provide further clarity on the existing regulations issued to limit the spread of the virus - and in a manner that they can be adaptable in a rapidly changing context.

As we open up the sector, we are therefore confident that measures have been put in place to protect employees, suppliers, tourists and all those who are involved with the sector. As government, we remain committed to work in a coordinated manner to ensure recovery that meets the national development objectives. Our main goal is to ensure that no tourism facility becomes a source of the spread of the pandemic and we are encouraged that since the beginning of the opening and bringing activities back, we are still doing well. Let us keep this up and also hold one another accountable against this commitment for the sake of our people and our industry.

I will now highlight the areas that have been opened up under Level 2:

ACCOMODATION:

- The requirement announced under Level 3 remain and addition to the direction is to allow accommodation for inter-provincial leisure travellers.
- Accommodation facilities are expected to ensure that their breakfast and reception area keep to 50% of occupancy space.

RESTAURANTS

- The requirement announced under Level 3 remain and addition to the direction to allow onsite consumption of alcohol is permitted at licensed restaurants, bars every day and incompliance with the curfew time that starts at 10pm.
- Having visited many restaurants, I'm encouraged to see innovations such as where you are able to scan a bar code and read the menu on your cellphone.

PLACES OF ATTRACTIONS

- Places of attractions are also open. These include, but are not limited to theme parks, amusement parks, water parks, family entertainment centres, zoos, aquariums, science centres, nature and game reserves, national parks and other entertainment and cultural attractions.
- Tourism attractions must ensure social distancing and marking floors where tourists must stand. We further encourage online bookings were possible, to allow managing of the numbers.
- Ensure that tourists and tourist guides wear their masks and sanitise regularly
- Provide sanitisation, where attractions have touch screens and touch buttons
- For all activities such water, quad bikes, hot air balloon etc, ensure proper sanitisation after every use.

SELF DRIVES AT GAME FARMS

- Directions under level 3 remain

GUIDED TOURS

- Tourist Guides to ensure social distancing (e.g. marking seat or standing areas), sanitise, and wear masks at all times during the tours.
- Tourist guides to keep records of their group tours and make them available when required by relevant authorities.

VENUES FOR WEDDINGS AND FUNCTIONS

- The wedding host or function venue must ensure that they comply with requirement of a maximum of 50 people.

- They must further ensure compliance to Social distancing, sanitising and wearing of masks.

I will be embarking on site visits as part of leading from the front as we encourage South Africans to not only support the tourism sector to preserve the business and the jobs but also to enjoy their beautiful country after months of being in their homes. We request you to do this responsibly and comply with all the protocols, as we travel again we must travel safely.

We will invite the media to join us for the launch of Tourism Month as part of our Domestic Tourism Campaign.

COVID-19 surely impacted our operations, but certainly not our sense of hospitality. The sector stands ready to host you. Whether it is a visit to the local botanical garden, restaurant or an overnight trip to another province – go and enjoy yourself and don't forget to share your experiences as we strive for excellence, resilience and competitiveness.

Na Khensa

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