

SOUTH AFRICA TO HOST FIRST-EVER AFRICA'S TRAVEL AND TOURISM SUMMIT



The Department of Tourism and South African Tourism will host Africa's first-ever Travel and Tourism Summit

The hybrid summit, which coincides with Tourism Month in South Africa, is set to take place from **19 to 21 September 2021**.

The summit aims to be a catalyst for engagement on the current state of tourism on the African continent.

Speaking ahead of the summit, Acting SA Tourism CEO, Sthembiso Dlamini, said taking into account challenges facing the global tourism industry, Africa's Travel and Tourism Summit would, through various engagement sessions, gather the tourism sector to share insights and ideas to explore collaborative efforts that can lead to recovery.

With an array of issues currently facing the sector, Dlamini said the summit aimed to attract African community delegates, African tourism ministers, industry associations, tourism boards, destination marketing organisations, as well as various partners across the tourism value chain.

He said that some of the major topics to be discussed at the summit included aviation, innovation, technology, the health and safety protocols currently in place, as well as the continent's positioning post the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The African continent is resilient and this summit is important, as it will contribute towards picking up the momentum within the sector, as it works towards an inclusive recovery.

"The COVID-19 pandemic may have dealt both business and leisure tourism a heavy blow, but we are now in the recovery phase, and a summit of this nature is critical in ensuring that we are aligned as a continent, while reigniting the tourism industry," Dlamini said.

Dlamini noted that the delegates participating in the summit would have the option of attending virtually or at an identified venues across South Africa, or at three additional locations on the rest of the African continent, pending COVID-19 lockdown regulations.

"All venues will have COVID-19 health and safety protocols in place. We have opted for the hybrid format in order for us, as a continent, to lead the way in demonstrating how tourism can be enjoyed safely while adhering to health protocols. It is important that we are diligent in reigniting the sector, as it contributes significantly to the African economy," Dlamini said.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Tourism as well as South African Tourism were not able to host the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions-focussed Meetings Africa, and leisure-focussed Africa's Travel Indaba 2021 editions, which usually take place in February and May annually.

Africa Tourism Partners CEO, Kwakye Donkor, said while Africa's Travel and Tourism Summit should not be seen as a replacement, it provides a platform to showcase the African continent's leisure tourism offerings and business event capabilities.

"In the absence of Africa's Travel Indaba in 2020 and 2021, Africa's Travel and Tourism Summit is an innovative initiative for promoting intra-Africa tourism and also for sharing insights into the "state of readiness" for South Africa and the rest [of] Africa to welcome the world during, and post the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I commend South African Tourism and the South African National Convention Bureau, for once again, showing commitment and leadership in tourism promotion across the continent. It will be so great to meet traditional and emerging trade partners again during the summit. We look forward to a very fruitful summit," Donkor said.

Committed to ongoing transformation and development of the South African tourism industry, Africa's Travel and Tourism Summit will on 19 September feature a dedicated day to empower small, medium and micro enterprises in the sector, as a precursor to the two-day conference on 20 and 21 September 2021.

– Source: SAnews.gov.za