

Local is lekker and rural is restful

September is Tourism Month and World Tourism Day 2020 will be celebrated on September 27 under the United Nations World Tourism Organisation theme of Tourism: Building peace! Fostering Knowledge! However, in order to draw attention to rural tourism development, South Africa will embrace the theme *Tourism and Rural Development*. "This Tourism Month, let's go rural in the Zulu Kingdom," is the message from KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Nomusa Dube-Ncube.

MEC Dube-Ncube said local government is where tourism happens, and this is why local government is best placed to create a memorable experience for tourists.

"Importantly, as set out in the Constitution, one of the objectives of local government is to promote social and economic development.

"As inspired by the South African theme for this year's World Tourism Day - *Tourism and Rural Development*, our main focus is to ensure that tourism becomes a catalyst for socio-economic development at local level. We are committed in harnessing the potential of tourism to transform the lives of rural communities."

Preparing for a post Covid-19 era

"We can confirm that the people of this province across all corners are ready to welcome visitors from different parts of the country and the globe. We have destinations that are abundant in natural beauty, and we have diverse heritage and culture.

The MEC said that coinciding with the country's move to lockdown Level 2, the message from KwaZulu-Natal is: "It's time to travel again...unforgettable experiences are here again."

She urged tourists to explore the hidden "tourism diamonds in the rough" and to take advantage of massively discounted offers by the tourist trade.

Potential travellers are urged to get a better understanding of the fun, affordable and exciting attractions on their own doorstep and, as far as possible, to savour rural tourist attractions to bring much needed growth that is desperately needed in these areas. "KwaZulu-Natal's tourist attractions are in pristine shape, and despite the challenges brought about by Covid-19, the vacation industry will again rise like a phoenix from the ashes with substantial help and support," said MEC Dube-Ncube.