

SA's oldest Black-empowered tourism company rebrands to Motsamayi Tourism Group

South Africa's oldest Black-empowered tourism company, Thebe Tourism Group is rebranding in commemoration of Nelson Mandela. Part of the stable of companies under the investment firm, Thebe Investment Corporation (TIC), the group has changed its name to Motsamayi Tourism Group.



Jerry Mabena

Earlier this year, the executive management team of the company - consisting of CEO Jerry Mabena, COO Brett Hendricks, CFO Cobus du Plessis and CMO Judiet Barnes - announced a buyout from the former owner, made possible through an investment by Futuregrowth.

Rebranding, a new found independence

The company was originally founded as part of the stable that was established by Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Beyers Naude and Dr Enos Mabuza, for the sole purpose of fostering real economic transformation in South Africa. The values and focus set by these founding fathers remain as core to the business.

The company takes on a new brand identity, inspired by Madiba himself, as well as the apt meaning behind the name. The rebranding initiative resonates explicitly with the roots of the organisation.

Nelson Mandela is known to have disguised himself as a chauffeur, a gardener and a chef in order to travel around the country unnoticed by the authorities in pre-democratic South Africa (before he was arrested and convicted in the famous Rivonia trial), going under the name, David Motsamayi. Motsamayi means 'one who travels' in Sesotho.

The name was also the name of one of his law firm's clients. It was therefore a natural fit that the new company name became Motsamayi Tourism Group.

Through this new identity, the company continues not only to celebrate the man who saw South Africa for what it can become but also to continue his dream of a vibrant tourism industry, which he declared is a key economic sector that can be used to change the livelihoods of all Africans for the better.

Group CEO, Jerry Mabena, says that through this new brand identity, the management team intends to foster purposeful travel amongst both local and international travellers to South Africa: "This is an exciting chapter for us. And we are truly thankful to our partner, Futuregrowth, who, through this investment, has demonstrated its alignment with what we see as the true potential of the country's tourism industry even during a pandemic that has halted virtually all forms of travel.

"It is our belief that this industry is key to economic growth and sustainability, as believed by our founding fathers. We take this opportunity to continue this work with our new identity."

Commitment to transformation, integrity

The new name, as suggested by its inspiration and roots, represents the company's commitment to transformation, integrity and excellence. The journey started many years ago and, although this change of identity means a completely new chapter for the company, what it stands for remains. The company has always been about building communities and creating jobs, especially for a demographic with a history of disadvantage.

"It is this formidable history and a sustainable outlook that informed our decision to partner with the management team in the form of investment. We also appreciate the fact that South Africa boasts one of the most vibrant tourism sectors in the world, and we are thus confident that the industry will rebound and continue to grow in the post-pandemic environment which the whole world is working towards," says Amrish Narrandes, Futuregrowth Unlisted Equity Transactions head.

Motsamayi Tourism Group boasts a portfolio of iconic and unique tourism offerings including Cape Point, Kruger Shalati, Kruger Station, Chiefs Tented Camps, the soon-to-be-launched Sanctuary Mandela and the Skywalk concept to be developed in God's Window in the Mpumalanga Province.

The group will also in the coming weeks announce a new special retreat and hotel offering called Sanctuary Mandela.

"As the country confronts the challenges that arose from the Covid-19 pandemic, our hope as the executive team at Motsamayi Tourism Group, together with our partners, is that the work we have begun will contribute towards the recovery and growth of our economy and create much-needed employment opportunities especially for young people," concludes Mabena.