

Tourism safety campaign launched in Cape Town

The National Tourism Safety Awareness Campaign has been launched at Table Mountain in Cape Town, following isolated incidents of violence directed at tourists. "Incidents of crime directed at tourists and tourism products create a negative perception and reputation about a destination and in turn, impact on both the visitor experience and visitor numbers," said Minister of Tourism, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane during the launch.



Image via City of Cape Town

International tourism trends indicate that personal safety and security issues are of high importance in potential tourist's choice of a destination. The collective collaborative effort of government was evidenced today by the partnerships formed to work together for the safety of all our visitors and to ensure that South Africa remains a destination of choice.

In response to tourism safety challenges as well as enhancing the tourist experience, the Department of Tourism has been working with various stakeholders to compile a safety plan of which the **Tourism Monitors Programme** forms part of. The programme involves the recruitment, training and deployment of youth to assist with the safety of the tourists at key tourism sites with high volumes of tourists or those sites that have a high potential of personal risk to tourists.

Ensuring tourist safety

The tourism monitor's role is to among other things: raise awareness about safety and security matters to tourists; coordinate emergency and other relevant support for tourists; guide tourists on safest routes and areas as well as report incidences of crime against tourists.

This programme has been launched throughout the country including protected areas under the management of South African National Parks (SANParks) and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). A total of 86 tourism monitors have been recruited to be deployed within Table Mountain National Park. "This programme also gives expression to the department's mandate of skills transfer and job creation" added the Minister.

The minister also announced the development of a safety mobile app to provide tourists with basic tourism information and safety tips with relevant contact details that tourists in distress can use. Further consideration will be to ensure that UN/AU working languages are incorporated into the app to ensure effective communication and quicker better response time.

Integrating technological innovation

"We are currently engaging with mobile network operators and hope to pilot the app by December this year," said the minister. "Another initiative that we want to look at is the model that is currently being used in the Kruger National Park where rangers, drones and cameras are being deployed to monitor rhino poaching. This way, we plan to augment our safety monitors with technology and innovation."

MEC for economic opportunities in the Western Cape, David Maynier, commended the minister for her commitment to ensuring the sustainability of the sector through building strong partnerships. He also highlighted the opportunities that programmes like these extend to young people. These sentiments were echoed by Alderman James Vos, Mayco member for economic opportunities and asset management for the City of Cape Town, who said working together to address issues which could be barriers to our growth, underpins the value proposition of tourism to our economy.

"Tourism is a key economic pillar and a significant generator of revenue and employment. Government's recognition of the critical importance of tourism in the economy is evident in the sector's inclusion as one of the priority areas in the National Development Plan.

"Tourism is everybody's business and we all do tourism. South Africans are encouraged to identify those who tarnish the image of our country and we urge them to report any suspicious activity. When tourists visit our country, there are multiple benefits through the tourism value chain.

"We therefore must at all times ensure that they enjoy an authentic and proudly South African experience. At the same time, we urge all our visitors to exercise caution and vigilance and to observe universal safety measures to minimise risk," said Alderman Vos.

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