



MEDIA STATEMENT

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Attention: Journalists, News Editors and Executive Producers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MKHATSHWA EXPRESSES GRATITUDE TO VISITORS TO MPUMALANGA OVER THE HERITAGE DAY LONG-WEEKEND

Mbombela – MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Mr Vusi Mkhathshwa, says the avalanche of people, who visited Mpumalanga over the heritage day long-weekend, is an indication that the Province remains the tourist destination of choice, for both domestic and international markets.

“I would like to express our gratitude to our people, South Africans at large, and the people from our neighbouring countries, for choosing Mpumalanga as their preferred destination of choice, over the past heritage day long-weekend. This clearly shows that our message, that Mpumalanga has re-opened for tourism business, has reverberated in the ears of our people and international tourists, alike.

“All accommodation establishments at all our provincial parks were full, due to the avalanche of people, who chose to visit us over the long weekend of 24 September. To all those who visited our Province, thank you very much. Your visit means a lot to us; please do come back to experience the hospitality of our people, even further”, said Mr Mkhathshwa.

Since the beginning of the tourism month (September), provincial parks were visited by 53 515 people, and this has generated almost R777 000 for the Province. This excludes visitors to the Kruger National Park and other private operations.

“The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has really negatively affected our tourism sector, and when we receive such high number of visitors, we become too excited. What is particularly pleasing, is that the majority of the visitors were predominantly black South Africans, including the people of our Mpumalanga, who opted to explore their beautiful Province. I can say without doubt, that we are back in business; we are ready to welcome more visitors.

“Tourists create jobs, and this ultimately leads to economic growth. We really need to create more jobs given that quite a number of jobs were lost as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. I cannot stop to express our gratitude to all those who elected to visit our Province over the past long weekend”, added the MEC.

Meanwhile MEC Mkhathshwa also indicated that the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, in collaboration with the Department of Health and the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, will in October, go on a roadshow across the Province, to encourage people to vaccinate for tourism.

“I urge our people to go and vaccinate, so that they can be protected from the deadly COVID-19. When the majority of us vaccinate, we can quickly fully re-open our tourism sector. I can assure our people that the vaccine is safe; I myself have already vaccinated. They must not listen to conspiracy theories flying around; they must remember that government has vaccinated them and your children for many years; and it is not different this time around.

“We further urge our private sector counterparts in the tourism industry, to encourage their workers to vaccinate, as we believe that vaccinated workers will give the much-needed sense of safety to vaccinated people who wish to visit our Province. A tourism business with fully-vaccinated employees can use their vaccination status as a competitive advantage over others; this can drive numbers to their doors”, explained MEC Mkhathshwa.

ENDS

Issued by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism

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