

World Travel Market Africa open for business

 By [Sandy Peters](#)

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Mayor of Cape Town Patricia de Lille and Deputy Minister of Tourism Tokozile Xasa declared the 2015 World Travel Market Africa open at the official ribbon cutting on the exhibition floor yesterday, 15 April, at the CTICC.

Surrounded by delegates, travel professionals, exhibitors, buyers and press, De Lille welcomed all to the Mother City, encouraging attendees to build relationships and work together, sharing knowledge with the goal of improving travel products and offerings within the city.



At the opening the WTMAfrica 2015, Mayor of Cape Town Patricia de Lille and Deputy Minister of Tourism Tokozile Xasa.

"Tourism is still one of our major economic sectors in Cape Town, which not only supports our economic growth strategy as a key creator of jobs, but it also exposes us to a lot of international markets. As such, we are very, very proud to support the World Travel Market Africa which acts as a catalyst to unlock new ideas and new possibilities to travel in the African market," said De Lille.

The mayor, in a bold gesture, went so far as to offer her mobile number to attendees, asking that they contact her directly should they have any questions or queries on the city.

Transforming communities

Deputy Minister of Tourism Tokozile Xasa reminded everyone that while Cape Town boasts two of the most iconic features in Africa - Table Mountain and Robben Island - there is a whole lot more on offer.

"We are looking at using this as a platform, this World Travel Market, to showcase our many but unique products, because South Africa can offer more... We want to position South Africa as a global platform for Africa and a stage wherein all of us can converge and make sure we play it according to world standards," said Xasa.

The deputy minister noted that tourism is one of the country's six key growth sectors that has the potential to transform the lives of South Africans - the department's role is to ensure that this is done responsibly and sustainably.

"The exhibition that we are in today, and the platform that has been created by WTM Africa provides the kind of access to markets that is essential for us to continue to grow. It is also important that when you are signing the deals, the buyers that are here, think about the benefits that your business can bring to the communities where these tourism products and services are located."

Tackling afro-pessimism

CEO of Cape Town Tourism Enver Duminy, also present at the official opening, drew attention to afro-pessimism, fueled by a lack of knowledge on Africa and myths, and how we go about addressing it, as the biggest challenge for tourism in Africa. He pointed to governmental leadership and platforms like the WTM Africa as key in changing perceptions.

"My challenge to all of us, to the exhibitors, is to tell a different story, a passionate story that can get those buyers to buy. Buyers, I challenge you to buy more, because by sending more people to our destinations, we can get them to experience more, stay longer, and of course to spend more. But more importantly, through our innovation, we can get them to share those experiences with the rest of the world to influence others to come here all year round, stay longer, experience more and spend more and so the cycle continues," said Duminy.

Big 6 becomes Big 7

Also launched yesterday morning was the new addition to Cape Town's former Big 6, the [Cape Town City Walk](#). For the past 15 year's, Cape Town's tourist draw cards have been Cape Point, Robben Island, Groot Constantia, Table Mountain, Kirstenbosch and the V&A Waterfront. The City Walk starts in the Company Gardens, continues through St George's Mall to Waterkant Street and then leads up the fanwalk to St Andrews Square.



St George's Mall

"It's linked significant places and offerings at the core of Cape Town's city life including museums, libraries, parks, religious

institutions and more. As one of the Big 7 attractions, the City Walk becomes part of an informal partnership that collaborates to show that the city, and in terms of Africa, has many extraordinary places to visit and explore," said Brett Hendricks, GM of Thebe Services.

After noting a rapidly growing demand for urban and cultural experiences, the City Walk has been introduced to fill in this urban attraction gap in Cape Town which will certainly be good for businesses in the CBD.

The [World Travel Market Africa](#) is currently underway at the CTICC until Friday, 17 April 2015.

For more info, go to www.wtmafrica.com.

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