

MEDIA STATEMENT

Date: Thursday, 21 May 2026

Attention: Journalists, News Editors and Executive Producers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEC SIDELL BELIEVES THE STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS SHE HELD AT THE 2026 AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA WILL TRANSLATE INTO REAL TOURISM GROWTH IN THE PROVINCE

Mbombela – The MEC for Economic Development and Tourism, Ms. Jesta Sidell, says the 2026 Africa's Travel Indaba, recently held at the Durban ICC served as a springboard in our quest to grow the tourism sector in Mpumalanga.

MEC Sidell led a delegation from Mpumalanga - the *Place of the Rising Sun* to the annual Africa's Travel Indaba to promote Mpumalanga as the prime tourist destination.

As the Executive Authority responsible for tourism development in the Province, MEC Sidell, together with the Interim Board Chairperson of the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), Mr. Fish Mahlalela, held a number of strategic engagements with both local and international buyers and key stakeholders. The engagements were rooted on establishing symbiotic partnerships and collaborations with a view of increasing tourist arrival and spend in our respective countries.

Among other engagements, the MEC and the Interim Board Chairperson held productive meetings with the Indian Consulate, delegations from the Republic of Mozambique, and the Kingdom of Eswatini, as well as neighboring provinces including Gauteng, Limpopo, and KwaZulu-Natal, with the objective of strengthening partnerships and promoting tourism collaboration.

During the engagement with the **Indian Consulate**, a number of strategic undertakings and commitments were made towards building a strong partnership aimed at developing tourism between the parties. The Indian Consulate committed to use its social media platforms and various marketing platforms to promote Mpumalanga as a preferred tourism destination of choice.

As it relates to the current existing **TriLand Agreement** between South Africa (Mpumalanga), the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Republic of Mozambique all parties reaffirmed their commitment to service the agreement for the benefit of the three countries. Through the engagements, the parties have agreed to consider the possibility of establishing a joint website to promote the TriLand tourism package.

Furthermore, the MEC also held a successful high-level **Mpumalanga Tourism Investment Dialogue** with potential investors. The dialogue served as a catalyst to build investor confidence in Mpumalanga by positioning the province as an attractive, credible and investment-ready tourism destination and to unlock investment. The dialogue also served as a precursor for our inaugural **Mpumalanga Tourism Investment Conference**, proposed to take place later this year”

“We are delighted to indicate that we held a successful Tourism Investment Dialogue with potential investors to engage on various investment opportunities Mpumalanga tourism can offer. Our discussion with the potential investors were anchored on the understanding that tourism is a vital, labor-intensive pillar on the developmental agenda, driving inclusive economic growth, poverty alleviation and infrastructure investment. I can assert without fear of contradiction that the **Place of the Rising Sun** is uniquely positioned to become a leading tourism investment destination,” explained MEC Sidell.

The Africa’s Travel Indaba presented the province with a strategic opportunity to promote Mpumalanga’s tourism product offering to predominately international hosted buyers.

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Issued by the Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development and Tourism

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Notes to Editors:

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism, under the Mpumalanga Provincial Government, is mandated to stimulate economic growth and development in the Province, so as to create sustainable and decent employment, economic transformation and to alleviate poverty.