

South Africa unveils comprehensive tourism safety initiatives

The South African government has unveiled a comprehensive set of initiatives aimed at enhancing tourism safety and fostering a more welcoming and secure environment for visitors from around the world. The announcement comes as the country gears up for the upcoming summer tourist season, which is expected to see a significant surge in visitor arrivals.



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Addressing the Diplomatic Corps at a briefing, Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille outlined the key pillars of the National Tourism Safety Strategy. The strategy, which is a product of extensive collaboration between government departments, law enforcement agencies, and the private sector, focuses on proactive, responsive, and aftercare measures to address tourism safety concerns.

Proactive measures

Emphasising the importance of proactive measures, Minister de Lille highlighted the successful implementation of the Tourism Monitors Programme (TMP). The TMP, which involves training and deploying unemployed youth in key tourism attractions and sites, has proven to be an effective tool in enhancing tourism safety awareness, upskilling unemployed youth, and reducing tourist vulnerabilities.

"The TMP is a testament to our commitment to creating a safer tourism environment while simultaneously addressing the pressing issue of youth unemployment," Minister de Lille stated.

In addition to the TMP, the Department of Tourism has also taken steps to develop a comprehensive database of crimes against tourists. This database will provide valuable data for trend analysis and proactive crime prevention measures.

Responsive measures

Addressing the need for effective response mechanisms, Minister de Lille announced the development of a Crisis Management Communications Plan and Protocols in collaboration with the private sector. This plan will ensure clear and coordinated messaging in the event of an incident affecting tourists.

"We are committed to ensuring that tourists feel safe and supported in the event of an incident," Minister de Lille affirmed.

Aftercare measures

To address the critical aspect of aftercare, the Victim Support Programme (VSP) is being established in all provinces. The VSP will provide support and assistance to tourists who have been victims of crime, ensuring that they receive the necessary care and attention during their time in South Africa.

Strengthened collaboration with Saps

Recognising the crucial role of law enforcement in tourism safety, Minister de Lille emphasized the strengthened collaboration with the South African Police Services (Saps). A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Department of Tourism and SAPS to enhance collaboration on crime prevention, investigation, and combating crimes impacting the tourism industry.

"Our partnership with Saps is essential in ensuring that crimes against tourists are effectively prevented, investigated, and prosecuted," Minister de Lille stated.

Deployment of tourism monitors

To further enhance safety measures, the Department of Tourism will deploy 2,300 Tourism Monitors nationally. These monitors will be stationed in key attractions and sites managed by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) Gardens, iSimangaliso Wetland Park, Ezemvelo Nature Reserve, South African National Parks (SANParks), and Airports Company South Africa (ACSA).

"The deployment of Tourism Monitors will provide an additional layer of security and support for tourists in key tourism areas," Minister de Lille remarked.

C-MORE Tracking Device

In a significant technological advancement, the C-MORE Tracking Device, an innovative shared awareness and integration platform, is being piloted to ensure the safety of Tourism Monitors while they carry out their duties. This device will provide real-time tracking and communication capabilities, enhancing safety and coordination.

"The C-MORE Tracking Device is a testament to our commitment to leveraging technology to enhance tourism safety," Minister de Lille emphasized.

Engagement with NATJOINTS

The Department of Tourism is also actively participating in the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (NATJOINTS) Stability Priority Committee on Crimes. This engagement will provide access to valuable data and insights on crimes against tourists, enabling the development of data-driven measures to minimize risks.

"Our participation in NATJOINTS will ensure that we are working with the most up-to-date information and intelligence to address tourism safety concerns," Minister de Lille stated.

Database of crimes against tourists

To ensure efficient and effective case management, SAPS is developing a coding system to capture real-time data on tourist attacks. This data will enable trend analysis and proactive crime prevention strategies.

"The development of this coding system will provide us with a comprehensive understanding of crimes against tourists,

allowing us to tailor our prevention efforts accordingly," Minister de Lille noted.

Facilitation of cases relating to international tourists

In cases involving international tourists, the Department of Tourism is committed to providing necessary support and assistance to victims. This includes facilitating communication with authorities, arranging medical assistance, and ensuring access to consular services.

"We are committed to ensuring that international tourists receive the support they need in the event of an incident," Minister de Lille affirmed.

In conclusion, Minister de Lille reiterated the South African government's unwavering commitment to creating a safe and secure environment for all tourists. The comprehensive National Tourism Safety Strategy, coupled with strengthened collaboration with SAPS and the private sector, demonstrates the government's dedication to addressing tourism safety concerns and fostering a welcoming and enjoyable experience for visitors.

"We are confident that these initiatives will significantly enhance tourism safety and position South Africa as a premier destination for visitors from around the world."

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