

SIYANAMUKELA, WELCOME TO AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA 2025!

We are honoured to welcome you to the vibrant city of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, the host of Africa's Travel Indaba – where cultures converge and the spirit of Africa shines through. Your presence here affirms our shared commitment to shaping a bold and inspiring future for tourism on the continent.

Africa's Travel Indaba 2025 is more than just a trade show – it is a celebration of collaboration, creativity, and collective growth. Under the theme: “Unlimited Africa” we continue with our commitment to capture the essence of what our continent has to offer – from its rich heritage to its innovative travel and tourism experiences.

Throughout the event, you will have access to a dynamic programme and invaluable networking opportunities. As we come together, we do so with a deep responsibility – not only to our visitors, partners, and communities, but also to the planet.

That's why Africa's Travel Indaba 2025 proudly aligns with the principles of green, sustainable events. In

partnership with The Event Greening Forum, we are committed to minimising our environmental impact and promoting a sustainable tourism future. We encourage all delegates to:

- **Recycle and reduce waste by using designated recycling bins.**
- **Bring reusable water bottles and coffee cups.**
- **Choose plant-based or responsibly sourced meal options when available.**
- **Walk, use shuttles, or carpool to reduce carbon emissions.**

Respect and protect the natural environment while visiting Durban and its surroundings.

Your role in these small actions contributes to a much greater impact – a greener, more sustainable Africa. Please remain alert, make use of Indaba's official shuttle and city taxi services marked with Africa's Travel Indaba signa, and do not hesitate to approach our Tourism Safety Monitors who will be wearing reflective vests if assistance is needed.

We also invite you to download the Africa's Travel Indaba 2025 App to help you navigate the hidden gems, schedule meetings, connect with other delegates, and get real-time updates. The built-in chatbot is your go-to digital assistant for any Indaba-related queries.

We are delighted to have you join us on this journey of collaboration, innovation, and storytelling. Use #ATI2025 #TravelIndaba25 #G20SouthAfrica #SouthAfricaAwaits, tag us at @SATravelTrade and @Travel_Indaba, and let the world see the beauty and strength of African tourism.



Once again, siyanamukela and welcome to Africa's Travel Indaba 2025 where will see over 1300 exhibitors, 1000 buyers and more than 400 small, medium and micro enterprises over the next few days.

Warm regards,

Nombulelo Guliwe

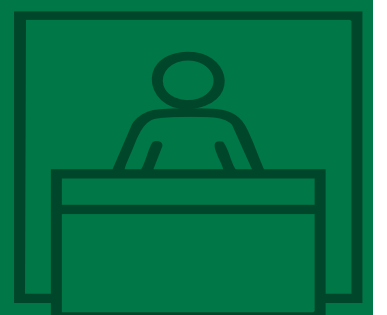
Chief Executive Officer: South African Tourism



THEME: “UNLIMITED AFRICA”

1000 Hosted Buyers

1300+ Exhibitors



27 African Countries Represented

<400 SMMES

USE #ATI2025 #TRAVELINDABA25 #G20SOUTHAFRICA #SOUTHAFRICAawaits

TAG US AT @SATRAVELTRADE & @TRAVEL_INDABA

BONDAY PROGRAMME

Time	Event	Venue
9:00AM -10:50AM	BONDAY OPENING PLENARY - MOTHER AFRICA EARTH / UMHLABA	South Foyer , ICC All Registered Attendees
9:00am-9:05am	Opening remarks and introduction of SA Tourism CEO	South Foyer , ICC All Registered Attendees
9:05am-9:10am	Welcoming Remarks : Ms. Nombulelo Guliwe – CEO, South African Tourism	South Foyer , ICC All Registered Attendees
9:10am-9:30am	Africa's Excellence, Endless Possibilities - An African Journey of Resilience, Triumph, and Unstoppable Spirit	South Foyer , ICC All Registered Attendees
9:30am-9:35am	NDT Address : Dr. Gregory Davids - Board Chairperson, South African Tourism	South Foyer, ICC All Registered Attendees
9:35am-10:20am	AFRICAS VOICE AT G20 – A CONTINENTAL COLLABORATION FOR FUTURE TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES	South Foyer, ICC All Registered Attendees
10:40AM-12:15PM	BONDAY STREAM 1 - MOTO / FIRE - DISCOVER - SHIFTS IN AFRICAN TOURISM DEMAND	South Foyer, ICC All Registered Attendees
10:40am-11:30am	Transforming Travel: Crafting Authentic, Sustainable Journeys Through Experiential Travel - Eco-Tourism, Gastronomy & Wellness Exploration	South Foyer, ICC All Registered Attendees
11:30am-12:15pm	Tourism Rates: Navigating Pricing Strategies for Sustainable Growth	South Foyer, ICC All Registered Attendees
12:35pm-13:05pm	Stream Wrap-up	South Foyer, ICC All Registered Attendees
11:00AM-13:05PM	BONDAY STREAM 2 - MAJI / WATER - CONNECT - UNLOCKING VALUE WITH AI INNOVATION	Room 12, ICC All Registered Attendees
10:40am-11:30am	Unlocking Growth through Impactful Localisation Strategies - Aligning regional approaches for effective demand creation	Room 12, ICC All Registered Attendees
11:30am-12:15pm	Regional Collaboration: Uniting Forces to Catapult Africa's Tourism Economy	Room 12, ICC All Registered Attendees
12:35pm-13:05pm	Stream Wrap-up	Room 12, ICC All Registered Attendees
11:00AM-13:05PM	BONDAY STREAM 3 - ARDHI/ EARTH - GROW - SEEDING BUSINESS GROWTH	Room 21, ICC All Registered Attendees
10:40am-11:30am	Post-COVID Recovery: Successful Strategies from African Nations	Room 12, ICC All Registered Attendees
11:30am-12:30pm	Future-Proofing African Tourism: Pioneering Innovations to Lead on the World Stage	Room 12, ICC All Registered Attendees
12:35pm-13:05pm	Stream Wrap-up	Room 12, ICC All Registered Attendees
13:30PM-14:30PM	BONDay Lunch	Room 21, ICC All Registered Attendees

*CORRECT AT TIME OF PRINT



agriculture, environmental affairs,
rural development and land reform
Department:
agriculture, environmental affairs,
rural development and land reform .
NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Experience OUR RESERVES

Camping - Hiking - Wild Life Experience
Namakwaland Daisy Landscape - Kayaking
and more.....



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AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA: A LEGACY OF SUCCESS AND WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2025

Over the years, the South African Tourism-hosted Africa's Travel Indaba held in partnership with the KwaZulu-Natal Tourism & Film Authority, Durban Tourism and the Durban ICC has firmly established itself as the continent's premier tourism trade show, showcasing the best of African travel, tourism and hospitality.

The much-loved travel trade show has grown exponentially, attracting thousands of exhibitors, buyers, and media representatives from across the globe and has become a vital platform for networking, deal-making, and promoting Africa's diverse tourism offerings.

A Legacy of Success

In 2024, Africa's Travel Indaba saw a 7% increase in attendance with 9,280 registered delegates and featured over 1,200 exhibitors, facilitating 24,000 meetings over three days, while participation from African countries rose by 9%. The show significantly boosted economic activity, benefiting event companies, hotels, transport services, and restaurants, with a direct economic impact of R226 million on Durban and an additional R333 million spillover effect. The ripple effect extended throughout

KwaZulu-Natal, supporting township and rural tourism businesses, and the event's total contribution to the city's GDP surpassed R500 million.

What to expect in 2025

This year's show under the theme, "Unlimited Africa" reflects a strong focus on expanding links across the continent, and features more than 1300 exhibitors, 27 African countries with first-time participation from three new destinations: Burkina Faso, Chad and St Helena. Plus, over 1200 vetted international buyers from 55 source markets.

Attendees and visitors can also expect a content-rich programme that includes panel discussions and BOMA talks structured around themes such as astro-tourism, the intersection of film and tourism, and inclusive and equitable tourism. Curated with industry experts, these sessions are aimed at moving beyond theoretical discussions to delivering practical solutions and tangible strategies for the sector.

Throughout all ATI side events, the trade show has placed sustainability at the heart of its mission, ensuring every aspect of the event aligns with eco-



friendly practices guided by The Event Greening Forum framework to minimise environmental impact. Waste from will be actively reduced through smart planning, while all elements such as flooring, signage, furniture, and décor will be selected or designed for rental, reuse, or recycling.

Additionally, BONday will end with the Africa's Travel Indaba Beach Cleanup to be held at the North Beach from 16:00 – 18:00. This will be a volunteer initiative that encourages delegates to contribute towards the environment as part of the show's greening and sustainability initiatives.

The 2025 edition is set to inspire, connect and offer attendees and visitors a comprehensive experience that caters to the diverse needs of the global travel industry.



AWARDS AT INDABA: CELEBRATING SUSTAINABILITY AND EXCELLENCE

Africa's Travel Indaba 2025 will shine a spotlight on sustainability and innovation with the return of the Green Stand Awards and Inspiration Awards. These accolades recognise outstanding contributions to sustainable tourism practices, excellence, and transformation in the travel and tourism industry.

Green Stand Awards: Championing Sustainability

In partnership with the Event Greening Forum (EGF), South African Tourism will once again host the Green Stand Awards, celebrating exhibitors who demonstrate a commitment to sustainability in their stand designs and operations. As the leading industry body driving eco-conscious practices in events, the EGF ensures that the awards uphold international standards for environmental responsibility.

To qualify for the Best Green Stand Award, participants must complete an entry form, providing detailed information about their stand's sustainable features.

Judges will evaluate entries live during the event.

By promoting green practices, Africa's Travel Indaba reinforces its dedication to local economic development and aligns with global sustainability trends.

Inspiration Awards: Honouring Innovation and Transformation

The Inspiration Awards celebrate trailblazers in the tourism sector who have driven innovation, empowerment, and transformation over the past year. This initiative highlights individuals and organisations making a meaningful impact through:

- **Innovation in Tourism** – Pioneering new approaches to travel experiences
- **Empowerment & Transformation** – Advancing inclusivity and economic growth
- **Humanitarian Efforts** – Contributing to community upliftment and social impact

For the awards, exhibitors and industry professionals are encouraged to submit nominations to recognise those who inspire change and excellence in tourism.

Awards Ceremony: Join the Celebration

Winners will be announced at the Africa Travel Indaba Awards on 15 May 2025 at 14:00 – 15:00, the final day of the show. Stay updated via the Africa's Travel Indaba Mobile App and trade show events calendar for more details. And don't miss this opportunity to celebrate sustainability, creativity, and leadership in African tourism!

Scan the QR code below to submit your nomination.



GASTRONOMY TOURISM: AFRICA'S COMPETITIVE EDGE

It's time to place Africa's gastronomy at the heart of tourism and cultural strategies, writes Elcia Grandcourt, UN Tourism Regional Director for Africa.

Africa is rewriting its leisure tourism narrative by placing food at the forefront, turning its culinary heritage into immersive travel experiences that connect visitors to the continent's kitchens, markets, and ancestral recipes.

This momentum was ignited by the First UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa, held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, in July 2024, followed by the second edition in Arusha, Tanzania, in April 2025. Co-organised with the Basque Culinary Center, both forums have set the tone for a continental shift, placing Africa's gastronomy at the heart of tourism and cultural strategies.

Visionary Leadership

Leading this movement is Zimbabwe's First Lady, Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa, whose visionary efforts have elevated Zimbabwe as a pioneer in gastronomy tourism. Since launching the Provincial Traditional Cookout Competition in 2019, Dr. Mnangagwa has scaled the initiative to national and regional SADC levels, featuring culinary talents from eight countries by 2023.

She has also taken her advocacy to the global stage, spotlighting Zimbabwean cuisine at the 8th UN Tourism World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism in San Sebastián, Spain, and the World Travel Market (WTM) in London. Her leadership continues to inspire regional policies and community-driven initiatives across the continent.

Academy for Culinary Arts

Another major milestone was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Zimbabwe and UN Tourism to establish the Africa International Academy for Culinary Arts in Victoria Falls. The academy will focus on sustainability, innovation, and skill-building - key priorities of the UN Tourism Agenda for Africa - Tourism for Inclusive Growth - aiming at training a new generation of African chefs and tourism professionals.

Building on these, the 2nd UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa, held in Arusha, Tanzania, brought together over 400 delegates from 30 countries and laid out a clear set of four priorities to shape a roadmap for gastronomy tourism in Africa.

Priorities for roadmap

- **Education and skills development:** Through modernizing culinary curricula, building chef networks, improving infrastructure, and securing private-sector partnerships and funding. In line with this, UN Tourism announced 100 scholarships for African students via its Online Academy and signed an MoU with Chefs in Africa to boost skills development, advocacy, and visibility of culinary professionals.
- **National strategies and political leadership:** Developing robust national frameworks to document, preserve, and promote traditional food knowledge.



- **Communication and product development:** Leveraging storytelling, digital tools, cultural events, and food routes, to create immersive culinary experiences.
- **Sustainability and community empowerment:** Promoting local food systems, reducing waste, improving nutrition, and empowering women and rural communities through gastronomy tourism.

Furthermore, the Tour of African Gastronomy - a flagship UN Tourism publication - features iconic dishes from over 30 countries. It is more than a cookbook, it is a strategic tool to connect food, identity, and travel.

To conclude, as tourism stakeholders gather at Indaba, one message should resonate: Gastronomy is more than food; it is Africa's competitive edge, ready to be fully unlocked.

"Tourism is a powerful tool for development, and gastronomy brings us even closer to communities. Africa's culinary heritage is a key asset - one that can generate jobs, support rural development, and strengthen the continent's global identity."

- UN Tourism Secretary-General,
Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili



WHEN YOU VISIT MY COUNTRY YOU MUST EAT...

We asked delegates at the 2nd UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa about the must-try dishes for tourists visiting their countries. Here are their responses:



Didier M'Pambia
Minister of Tourism,
Democratic Republic
of Congo

If people come to my country, I'll give them fufu, and cassava leaves, and different kinds of fish and meat, especially goat with peanut butter.



Chef Mounir El Arem
Tunisia

If you come to Tunisia, please taste our favourite couscous with fish, shakshuka with kadid (dried meat), mloukhia with beef and many other good things like briq and soup, a mosaic of cartage.



Chef Nti
South Africa

I come from Johannesburg, South Africa, Soweto, born and raised. When you come to South Africa, try the Durban curry with a roti, and for good measure have a koeksister or amagwinya.



CULINARY DELIGHTS IN DURBAN: WHAT YOU MUST TASTE

Delve into the traditional and contemporary culinary offerings of Africa's Travel Indaba's host city.

This guide to the gastronomic tourism of Africa's Travel Indaba's host city is not exhaustive; rather, it serves as a starting point to explore the rich culinary traditions of Durban and its surrounds.

Goundens Restaurant and Takeaway

No culinary tour of Durban is complete without indulging in Bunny Chow, a celebrated icon of the city's food culture. For a Bunny Chow steeped in history, visit Goundens Restaurant and Takeaway in Umbilo Road. Established in 1985, it is one of the oldest Indian restaurants in Durban, renowned for serving what many consider the best curry in the city. Owner Devan Gounden attributes their enduring success to the unwavering consistency of their dishes, all prepared using the same cherished recipe since their inception. Daily specials range from mutton and cabbage to a spectacular Durban fish curry, but Goundens is particularly famous for its mutton Bunny Chow.

Bovine Head Market

For an authentic taste of Zulu traditional street food, embark on a walking tour through the Markets of Warwick, stopping at the Bovine Head Market to sample cow head meat, puthu, and amagwinya. The preparation of this unique dish begins with trolley operators collecting cow heads from local butcheries.

Skilled women then skin the heads, cleave the meat from the skulls, and boil it in large pots alongside dumplings, a type of traditional steamed bread.

Once cooked, the tender meat is presented on wooden chopping boards, ready for customers to enjoy with dumplings, broth, and a selection of condiments, including salt and chilies. This culinary experience is truly unforgettable!

Café Skyzer

A favourite among locals, this food and live music lounge in Chesterville offers delectable meat platters featuring a variety of premium cuts, served alongside uJeqe (steamed bread) and their signature spicy chakalaka, a cherished recipe from owner Bless Makhanya's mother.

In addition to these favorites, they serve modern interpretations of traditional dishes, such as nhloko (sheep's head meat) and mxabiso (tripe). Inspired by the vibrant eateries lining Soweto's Vilakazi Street, Makhanya aimed to recreate that lively atmosphere in the Durban township of Chesterville. He has successfully established a warm and inviting venue where great food and community come together.

The LivingRoom at Summerhill Estate

The LivingRoom has consistently been celebrated as one of South Africa's premier dining destinations, where sustainability, storytelling, heritage, and generous

hospitality meet on every plate.

Blending his French training and love for Japanese cuisine with the nostalgia of his Durban upbringing and a deep love of KwaZulu-Natal's culinary diversity, Chef Johannes Richter, Eat Out Awards Chef of the Year, offers a six- or eight-course tasting experience showcasing local and indigenous ingredients such as amadumbe, umsobo, pigeon pea, and amathungulu, all sourced from a close network of small-scale, ethical producers or grown on-site.

The Oyster Box Hotel

For a delightful lunch with a view of the iconic red and white lighthouse that inspires the hotel's vibrant candy-striped aesthetic, the award-winning Oyster Box Hotel stands out as one of South Africa's most celebrated hotels, symbolizing luxury in the resort town of Umhlanga. Signature dishes created by founder Bea Tollman remain on the menu, thoughtfully adapted to suit modern tastes. The renowned Curry Buffet at the Ocean Terrace Restaurant continues to attract fans from near and far. Set in a casual atmosphere with stunning views of the Indian Ocean, the buffet features an impressive selection of at least 11 curries daily, including meat, fish, and vegetarian options.

Another popular highlight is the "catch of the day," showcasing fresh, locally caught seafood..

GASTRONOMY: A GROWING MOTIVATION FOR TRAVELLERS



WHEN YOU VISIT MY COUNTRY YOU MUST EAT...

We asked delegates at the 2nd UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa about the must-try dishes for tourists visiting their countries. Here are their responses:



Chef Gibbs
Nigeria

You'll want to try iconic dishes like suya, jollof rice, afang soup, egusi, and amala. Don't miss out on our vibrant street food culture - it's an experience you'll absolutely love.



Mavis Neema
Uganda

If you visit my country, head west for malewa, travel east to enjoy lesu, and don't miss the central region, where you'll find luwombo and nsenene. Wash it all down with waragi, our local gin.



Nancy Mandara
Tanzania

If you come to Tanzania, you must taste ugali matembele. You must have nyama choma and chipsi mayai. Make sure you visit our national parks. They're amazing.

G20 TOURISM WORKING GROUP MEETING AGREES ON FOUR PRIORITIES FOR 2025



The Second G20 Tourism Working Group (TWG) meeting kicked off on Sunday with South Africa's Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille addressing delegates and the media.

The meeting runs till 13 May 2025 in Durban alongside Africa's Travel Indaba, bringing together senior officials, authorities and experts in tourism to engage on the G20 Tourism Priorities that are poised to drive sustainable tourism growth among the member countries.

At the first virtual G20 TWG meeting in March 2025, the member countries agreed on four priorities that will inform the G20 action plan on tourism development, namely:

1. **People-Centered Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Innovation to enhance Travel and Tourism Start-Ups and SMMEs;**
2. **Tourism Financing and Investment to Enhance Equality and Promote Sustainable Development;**
3. **Air Connectivity for Seamless Travel**
4. **Enhanced Resilience for Inclusive, Sustainable Tourism Development.**

At the virtual meeting chaired by the Director-General of the South African Department of Tourism, Nkhumeleni Victor Vele, senior officials and experts in the tourism sector of the G20 member states, invited guest countries and international organisations exchanged knowledge and best practices with a view of crafting actionable deliverables for each priority.



Going forward, the next G20 Tourism Working Group Meetings are planned to take place in South Africa as follows:

- **Second G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting: 11-13 May 2025, KwaZulu-Natal Province**
- **Third G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting: 10-11 September 2025, Mpumalanga Province**
- **G20 Tourism Ministers' Meeting: 12 September 2025, Mpumalanga Province**

The Tourism Working Group is among the 16 working groups of the G20, focusing on "solidarity, equality and sustainability," a theme for South Africa's Presidency that seeks to harness global will and capabilities to confront the enormous challenges the world is facing.

The G20 economies represent around 85% of the global gross domestic product (GDP), over 75% of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population. In 2023, the G20 welcomed 69% of all international tourists and accounted for 71% of tourism exports worldwide. In 2023, Tourism Direct GDP reached 3.1% of the G20 economies.

Tourism is recognised for its immense potential and its significant contribution to the economy. It plays a

critical role in the global economy. Tourism is one of the vital economic sectors contributing significantly to socio-economic development, but it remains vulnerable to natural and manmade hazards. For many countries, the tourism economy is growing faster than most other economic sectors. With its extensive value chain and labour absorption capacity, it is acknowledged as a tool for inclusive economic development, playing a significant role in responding to socioeconomic challenges.



Tourism is an important economic sector in Africa. In 2023 the continent's, Tourism direct gross domestic product reached 85 US billion representing 3.5% of the region's GDP. This value is still below the pre-pandemic US billion 94 reached in 2019 (4.3% share).

The challenges facing the African travel and tourism sector include air connectivity, limited investments, financing for tourism development, positioning and marketing, social and environmental sustainability, as well as safety and security amongst others.

South Africa's tourism priorities for the 2025 G20 Presidency are aligned with the continental priorities as expressed in Agenda 2063 as well as with the core objectives contained in the UN Tourism Agenda for Africa – Tourism for Inclusive Growth, the strategic

roadmap guiding the promotion of tourism sustainable development across the African continent.

As the first African country to assume the G20 Presidency, South Africa is utilising its term to advance the African developmental agenda. As one of only four developing countries (including Indonesia, India and Brazil) in the G20, the meeting also supported South Africa's intent to build upon the work of the last three Presidencies of these countries to champion the agenda of the global South within the group.

Appreciating the composition of the G20 as a bloc of developing and developed countries, the work of the Tourism Group also endeavours to strengthen North-South Cooperation and commit to multilateralism within the tourism industry and global governance at large.

NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION OF TOURISM TRAILBLAZERS

The energy in Sandton, Johannesburg, was electric earlier this month as Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille officially launched the second South African edition of the Middle East Africa (MEA) Future Leaders Challenge (FLC), an initiative dedicated to fostering the development of future leaders in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Organised by MEA-SA Game Changers, the FLC is more than a competition, it's a 36-hour immersive platform where students from up to 18 leading tourism and hospitality institutions across South Africa collaborate, innovate, and pitch real-world solutions to real-world problems. Their focus? Strengthening the industry by tackling critical issues around skills development, digital transformation, and sustainable tourism.

"The Future Leaders Challenge creates a community to solve future problems and jump future barriers," said Minister de Lille, addressing a room full of eager students, educators, and industry stakeholders. "It gives youth the chance to propose solutions that directly improve the tourism sector and adapt to global trends such as AI and digital nomadism."

The Minister also used the occasion to announce the G20 Tourism Hackathon Challenge, a major opportunity

for students participating in the FLC to further showcase their talents. Hosted under South Africa's G20 Presidency, the Hackathon focuses on leveraging people-centred AI and innovation to strengthen start-ups and SMMEs in tourism - a strategic alignment with global efforts to future-proof the sector.

The Minister called for strong collaboration between government, academia, and private enterprises, urging all stakeholders to invest in upskilling youth, promoting entrepreneurship, and driving inclusion. "Despite tourism's leading role in the economy, unemployment remains high, especially among young people. Skills development and entrepreneurial leadership can address this," she said.

Digital literacy, AI-driven experiences, and sustainable tourism practices are among the top skills needed by tomorrow's tourism professionals. The FLC plays a pivotal role in ensuring these needs are met through youth empowerment, mentorship, and public-private partnerships.

As the conference unfolds, the spotlight remains firmly on the next generation - the game changers who will shape a vibrant, resilient, and inclusive tourism future for South Africa and beyond.

G20 PANEL ON BONDAY AT INDABA

Don't miss the panel discussion: Africa's Voice at G20 – A continental collaboration for Future Tourism Opportunities taking place during the BONDay Opening Plenary.

Facilitated by Carol Ofori

An award-winning broadcaster and MC, author and podcast host

Panellists include:

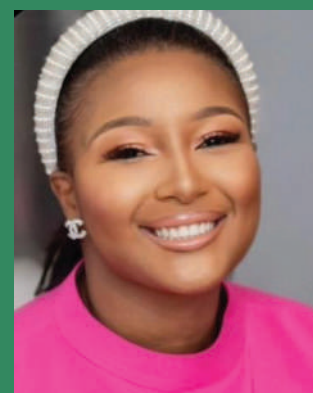
- Jacqui Mabuza : Head of Commercial at Cruises International
- Zimasa Vabaza :Dynamic Media Entrepreneur & Small Business Economist
- Lethabo Sithole – Trade & Investment Lawyer, Pan-African Development Strategist Dr. Vumi Msweli – Philanthropist, Author, Pan-African Most Influential Woman in Business



Jacqui Mabuza



Zimasa Vabaza



Lethabo Sithole



Dr. Vumi Msweli



HOW TO MAKE EVERY MEETING COUNT: MAXIMISING IMPACT AT TRADE SHOWS LIKE INDABA

To really stand out, we need to shift our approach from transactional to emotional, says Lindsey Walter, Founder of Impact Travel Lab.

Africa's Travel Indaba is nothing short of electric. A vibrant marketplace of ideas and opportunity, it brings together the continent's most passionate tourism voices with global buyers eager to connect. But in a show of this scale and intensity, simply showing up is no longer enough.

I've spent much of my career helping travel businesses build meaningful partnerships, so I know that success at trade shows, like Indaba, comes down to more than meetings and marketing materials. To really stand out, we need to shift our approach from transactional to emotional.

Travellers today are seeking experiences that go beyond logistics. They want meaningful connections – to people, to place, and to purpose. That means buyers are looking for more than just rooms and rates; they're looking for



partners who can help them deliver trips that will ignite emotions for their guests.

For exhibitors, this is a chance to lead with feelings rather than purely features. What is the impact of your business on the communities around you? How do you support conservation and culture? How do your guests feel and how do they leave changed – more connected, more aware? These stories create resonance and help buyers envision the value you bring beyond the brochure. At the same time, trade shows are practical environments. Be proactive, ask thoughtful questions, and make your stand memorable for the right reasons. And after the show, follow up with relevance. Reflect on your discussions and suggest meaningful ways to collaborate. Buyers, too, have a role to play. Rather than focusing solely on price and availability, dig deeper. Look for partners whose values align with yours and who can deliver experiences that your clients will find authentic and enriching. Curating responsibly is not only good for business – it's good for Africa.

There are clear trends shaping our sector.

Transformational travel is no longer niche; it's mainstream. Consumers care more than ever about impact and want assurance that their journeys are responsible. Meanwhile, digital enablement is reshaping service and marketing expectations, demanding agility from all of us. Africa is uniquely positioned to lead in this space. Our landscapes, cultures and stories naturally lend themselves to deeper emotions, but we need to articulate this more powerfully and consistently.



At Indaba, deals will be done. But those who look beyond transactions and who connect on values, who tell stories that resonate emotionally, will shape Africa's travel future. This is your opportunity to lead the global conversation on purpose-driven, meaningful tourism. Let's make every meeting count.

Author bio

Lindsey Walter is the founder of Impact Travel Lab, a strategic partner for forward-thinking travel, tourism and hospitality brands. The company helps organisations embrace bold thinking, unlock growth and build a resilient and regenerative future for travel. Lindsey has spent over 20 years leading commercial and purpose-driven strategies across Africa's travel and conservation sectors.

MATCHMAKING AT INDABA: WHERE CONNECTIONS BECOME COLLABORATIONS

In a world where meaningful business connections can open doors to global success, Africa's Travel Indaba has once again raised the bar with its revitalised Business Matchmaking programme. Spearheaded by B&T Matchmaking and powered by smart technology and hands-on concierge support, this year's matchmaking effort is delivering real results for exhibitors and buyers alike.

"Business Matchmaking is all about finding synergy," says Bianca Taylor-Hindmarch, co-founder of B&T Matchmaking. **"We connect companies with shared business interests, complementary services, and aligned growth ambitions — whether they're based in Africa or across the globe."**

And it's working. The 2025 programme has already outperformed expectations, with more meetings scheduled than ever before and lightning-

fast response times to meeting requests via email, WhatsApp and even phone calls. Behind the scenes, a sophisticated AI system filters and recommends matches based on buyer intent, product offerings, and regional focus. These connections are then personally refined by the B&T team, ensuring both parties are fully aligned and prepared to make the most of their face-to-face time. The entire process is streamlined through a user-friendly digital diary, now optimised for mobile use. Participants receive meeting calendars directly via WhatsApp and email and are reminded of sessions in real-time — helping everyone stay on track. Feedback surveys sent out immediately after each meeting ensure that the value of each interaction is captured and improved upon in future editions. The result? Exhibitors and buyers are no longer

walking blind into the event. They're arriving prepared, connected, and ready to do business. For small and emerging tourism businesses, particularly SMMEs, the impact can be transformative. **"We've seen one conversation spark distribution deals or international partnerships,"** says Taylor-Hindmarch. **"That kind of exposure is life-changing for a business trying to break through."**

Even with the scale of Africa's Travel Indaba, where thousands of meetings are coordinated, the B&T team remains on-site and hands-on — offering real-time support and ensuring no opportunity is missed. In today's fast-paced travel industry, it's not just about who you know — it's how you connect. Thanks to the Matchmaking Programme, exhibitors at Indaba are turning handshakes into high-impact collaborations.

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Trade shows are more than just events; they are the heartbeat of innovation, connection, and opportunity. In a world where relationships drive business, showing up isn't just important—it's essential. If you're not present, you're not part of the conversation shaping the future.

- Enver Duminy, CEO, Cape Town Tourism

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SHAPING THE FUTURE - WHY GROWTH DEPENDS ON GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD

While certain regions brim with visitors, others remain under-visited, says David Frost, CEO of SATSA.

While Cape Town and Kruger have rebounded strongly post-COVID, with iconic destinations nearing or hitting capacity during peak season, South Africa's overall tourism recovery is more subdued. By the end of 2024, national recovery hovered just below 82% of 2019 levels. Early 2025 figures show overseas arrivals up by 3% year-on-year - encouraging, but still 10% shy of pre-pandemic volumes.

According to David Frost, CEO of SATSA - the voice of inbound tourism in Southern Africa - the current model needs a strategic rethink.

"We've built a tourism economy that leans heavily on seasonal peaks and a narrow set of iconic destinations," says Frost. "While certain regions brim with visitors, others - such as the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, and large parts of Mpumalanga - remain under-visited. That's a missed opportunity for inclusive growth, job creation, and sustainable conservation funding."

Recovery statistics suggest untapped potential: South Africa welcomed 2.6 million overseas tourists in 2019, but only 2.1 million in 2024. Frost identifies a "missing middle" - mid-market travellers who once ventured off the beaten path, particularly from source markets like Germany, the UK, and France.

"What we're seeing is the result of a legacy approach - selling the same itineraries to the same markets, without adapting to evolving traveller preferences or tapping into high-potential emerging markets," he explains.

Destinations like Cape Town are already operating at peak capacity during high season, leaving little room for further growth. While efforts to boost low-season travel are worthwhile, Frost notes they're unlikely to fully close the recovery gap. The real opportunity lies in elevating underexplored regions across South Africa - many of which offer world-class tourism experiences.

Time for a Strategic Shift

Fortunately, several practical levers are within reach to rebalance growth: reimagining itineraries to spotlight hidden gems, improving connectivity to support multi-destination travel, promoting niche experiences such as



adventure, wellness, and heritage tourism, and ensuring international buyers are exposed to the full spectrum of what South Africa has to offer. Unified, targeted marketing can also drive interest from both traditional and emerging markets.

"This isn't about a quick fix," says Frost. "It's a long-term investment in a more resilient and inclusive tourism economy. With high repeater rates and world-class offerings across all nine provinces, we have every opportunity - we just need to act with intent."

Turning Words into Action

SATSA is already working alongside partners to champion this shift. From supporting emerging enterprises to advocating for enabling policy and infrastructure, the organisation is driving action where it matters. One standout opportunity is adventure tourism, a segment with strong local employment potential and direct benefits for rural communities.

South Africa boasts over 100 adventure experiences - from mountain biking and shark diving to rock climbing and cultural immersion - available across the country. Promoting these experiences can help position the country as a destination rich in diversity, depth, and authenticity.

In line with this vision, SATSA's 2025 Annual Conference will be hosted in Johannesburg - a deliberate move to spotlight one of South Africa's vibrant urban tourism hubs.

"We're excited to explore Jozi through fresh eyes and to share that perspective with the world," Frost concludes. "It's time to rethink the map, tell a broader story, and unlock the full potential of South African tourism - together."

A Holistic Approach to Unlocking Growth

To unlock tourism's full potential, we must take a holistic view of the value chain. South Africa offers a far more rich, diverse and immersive tourism product than many of our long-haul competitors, yet countries like Australia continue to outperform us by a ratio of three to one - a reality that should be the reverse. To change this, we must be honest about our own narrative: we cannot continue to centre our offering solely around Cape Town and Kruger.

At the point of sale, we often default to two-destination



itineraries, missing the opportunity to showcase the breadth of what our country offers.

Repeat visitors frequently return to discover more - and are consistently blown away by destinations like KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape, and Mpumalanga. This tells us the product is not the problem. As the private sector, we must be bolder in how we package and position our itineraries, ensuring new regions and experiences are placed firmly on the map.

That said, there are significant challenges beyond our control that directly affect geographic spread. Road quality, heavy freight traffic that damages infrastructure, and safety and security concerns all impact travellers' willingness to self-drive and explore lesser-known areas.

This is where we need a coordinated, cross-sectoral approach. Imagine the impact of a Public Works Programme focused on restoring critical tourism infrastructure - not just to support tourism, but to create jobs for the youth sector, drive skills development, and uplift local communities. Take the Belfast-Lydenburg corridor as one example: restoring this route could dramatically improve access to key tourism areas while generating tangible economic benefits for the region.

Tourism is not just a talking point - it's an economic enabler. Minister, we urge you: let's make this happen. Together, we can create a tourism economy that delivers meaningful, lasting benefits across every corner of our country.

THE IMPACT OF RESIDENT PHOTOGRAPHERS ON LUXURY SAFARIS

The unique set of skills possessed by these professionals elevates East Africa's safaris into a guided visual journey for guests, writes Harriet Akinyi.

In East Africa's luxury safari circuit, a quiet but impactful evolution is taking place. Beyond the traditional elements of high-end lodges, personalized service, and exclusive game drives, resident local photographers are emerging as key figures in enriching the guest experience and amplifying conservation narratives.

These photographers, often stationed at luxury camps and lodges, bring a unique blend of technical skill, intimate knowledge of the landscape, and an instinctive understanding of wildlife behaviour. Unlike visiting photographers, resident professionals spend extensive time in the same ecosystem, allowing them to anticipate animal movements, understand seasonal changes, and recognise storytelling opportunities others might miss. Their consistency and proximity provide luxury travellers with curated, deeply immersive photography experiences.

Guided Visual Journey

For guests, this presence elevates the safari into a guided visual journey. Safaris offer rare, unpredictable encounters with wildlife in breathtaking landscapes. Photography allows guests to freeze those fleeting moments like a

lioness with her cubs or a cheetah mid-hunt and relive them forever.

"Taking a great wildlife photo, especially of such moments, feels rewarding and most guests take pride in capturing their own images rather than relying solely on professional ones," says Jay Supeyo, a conservation photographer and Angama's resident lensman.

More Mindful Approach

Resident photographers offer one-on-one mentorship, host photography sessions in the field, and assist with editing or organising photo books and portfolios. This hands-on support not only helps travellers return home with professional-quality images but also encourages a more mindful, observant approach to the natural world. Guests often engage more deeply with their surroundings when guided by someone attuned to the subtleties of light, behaviour, and environment.

Luxury lodges Like Angama (both in the Mara and Amboseli), Ishara Mara, JW Marriott, Serengeti Explorer by Elewana, are integrating these photographers into the broader guest experience. From private photographic

game drives to on-site studios and curated exhibitions, the role of the photographer has expanded from behind-the-scenes content creation to a front-facing, guest-focused asset. Their work also contributes significantly to the visual branding of safari camps, with authentic imagery used across digital platforms, marketing campaigns, and conservation messaging.

Contributors to Conservation

Beyond guest enrichment, resident photographers are also vital contributors to conservation. Their continuous presence on the ground enables them to document wildlife trends, identify threats such as poaching or habitat loss, and capture the stories of endangered species



and community conservation efforts.

These visuals become powerful tools for conservancies, and tourism operators seeking to raise awareness on protecting nature. Their imagery fosters emotional connections between global audiences and Africa's wild places, encouraging responsible travel and conservation investment. In some cases, long-term photographic projects initiated by resident photographers have been instrumental in building support for anti-poaching efforts, community outreach, and habitat protection.

"My role is about helping people see beyond the obvious - spotting behaviours, anticipating moments, understanding the stories unfolding around them," he says. **"Photography makes them slow down and pay attention. They leave with more than photos. They leave with memories that resonate,"** says Moses Letura, resident photographer at JW Marriott Masai Mara.



THE FANZONE IMPACT AT BEACH SOCCER WORLD CUP IN SEYCHELLES



As Seychelles takes centre stage in hosting the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup 2025, the spotlight is not solely on the thrilling matches. Equal attention is being drawn to a vibrant space where culture, community and tourism come together – the FanZone.

This unique venue is more than just a gathering point. It is a carefully curated environment that enhances the overall tournament experience while serving as a powerful tool for destination promotion and cultural exchange.

Cultural elements are present throughout the space – from traditional music and dance to arts, crafts and gastronomy. International and domestic visitors are offered an authentic taste of the islands. Seychellois

artists and vendors are central to the experience, transforming the FanZone into a live showcase of the country's creativity and providing meaningful economic opportunities for local communities.

Beyond entertainment, the FanZone is a strategic tool for tourism. It reflects a growing recognition that fan engagement spaces can showcase much more than just enthusiasm for sport. They are platforms to highlight hospitality infrastructure, safety standards, service quality and cultural depth.

In this way, the Seychelles FanZone becomes a demonstration of soft power – bringing the country's brand values to life through experience.

- Republished courtesy of VoyagesAfriq

FROM GUIDING TO GLOBAL SHOWCASING

SMME Joins Africa's Biggest Tourism Platform, Thanks to Government Support

What began as a personal passion for sharing Durban's cultural and environmental richness has grown into a nationally recognised tourism business.

Travel Bug Tours & Safaris, founded by Dominic Naidoo, has become a shining example of how government support can help small businesses thrive in South Africa's competitive tourism sector.

Naidoo started his tourism journey in 2017, working as a freelance tour guide in Durban. In 2018, he formally registered Travel Bug Tours & Safaris as a private company, with a vision to deliver immersive, educational and locally-rooted experiences to both domestic and international travellers.

Since then, the company has made significant strides, particularly in highlighting underrepresented parts of KwaZulu-Natal and collaborating with local communities to develop sustainable tourism offerings.

Travel Bug's commitment to authenticity and community empowerment has been recognised repeatedly, winning multiple awards in the Durban Tourism Business

Awards—including First Place for Best Tour Operator in 2023, Second Place for Best Tour Guide in both 2023 and 2024 and 1st Runner-Up in the 2024 HollywoodBets Foundation Youth Business Awards: Tourism Category.

Now, in 2025, the company has reached another major milestone by participating in Africa's Travel Indaba as an exhibitor for the very first time. This has been made possible through the National Department of Tourism's Domestic Market Access Support Programme (NDT D-MASP), which supports tourism SMMEs with exposure to international markets and platforms.

"This opportunity to exhibit at Indaba not only validates our growth but positions us for international business-to-business connections," Naidoo said. "Government support, particularly through NDT, has been instrumental in opening doors that would've otherwise remained shut."

Travel Bug Tours & Safaris also continues to expand its offerings, moving toward 4- and 5-star experiences while retaining its grassroots ethos. With a strong track record in cultural, environmental and historical tourism, and ongoing plans for international partnerships, the company

is now poised to attract broader global interest.

Through grit, community engagement, and key public sector support, Travel Bug Tours & Safaris stands as a testament to the power of small business in shaping South Africa's tourism narrative.



Travel Bug Tours & Safaris' Dominic Naidoo at his stand during the World Travel Market in Cape Town this year.

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SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM SMMEs HAVE BEEN EMPOWERED TO CONNECT WITH GLOBAL BUYERS AND MEDIA AT AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA, THANKS TO FUNDING FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM'S MARKET ACCESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME.



MADAGASCAR'S WILD HEART BEATS AT AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA

If you think you know Africa, think again. Madagascar Endemics & Resorts, led by visionary founder Manitra Andriamialisoa, is shaking up perceptions at this year's Africa's Travel Indaba. This Antananarivo-based company is not just another tour operator – it is the ultimate gateway to the island's rare wildlife, lush rainforests, and barefoot luxury.

Founded in 2012, Madagascar Endemics & Resorts has earned a global reputation for excellence, winning the prestigious TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Award in 2020 and 2024. Manitra, a native Malagasy with over 20 years' guiding experience and a former Fulbright Scholar at New York University, leads the company with passion and expertise. **"Our motto is to make our clients feel at home, feel safe, and secure the maximum comfort for our clientele,"** he explains. **"We always endeavour to provide the best possible experience in Madagascar."**

Specialising in bespoke wildlife and luxury tours, the company caters to a wide range of travellers – from nature

enthusiasts and birdwatchers who seek unique wildlife experiences to honeymooners looking for romantic escapes and researchers conducting fieldwork in pristine environments. Personalised journeys are curated for clients by Manitra on request. "I recommend people book at least one year in advance to benefit from the best possible experience," he advises.

More than just travel planners, Manitra describes his team as storytellers: **"We are storytellers, not just travel planners. Our mission is to create journeys that connect people with the heart of Madagascar, from its unique wildlife to its vibrant communities."** This ethos sets Madagascar Endemics & Resorts apart, offering travellers immersive experiences that go beyond sightseeing to truly understanding the island's rich culture and ecology. So, what brings Manitra and his team to Africa's biggest travel showcase? "Indaba is the most important platform to connect with the global tourism community and showcase what Madagascar offers," he says. "We want

to change perceptions and put Madagascar firmly on the map as a must-visit destination for nature lovers, adventurers, and luxury travellers alike."

His goals for the event are ambitious and clear: to forge new partnerships with international buyers, network with fellow African tourism leaders, and highlight Madagascar's potential as a world-class destination. **"We want to show that Madagascar is not just a stopover – it is a world-class adventure, a sanctuary for nature lovers, and a playground for luxury seekers,"** Manitra adds.

Madagascar Endemics & Resorts stands out by combining deep local knowledge with international standards of service and safety. Their team of expert guides includes specialists in primatology, ornithology, herpetology, and botany, ensuring every trip is rich in discovery and conservation awareness.

Visit Madagascar Endemics & Resorts at Africa's Travel Indaba. Email: manitra.andriamialisoa@fulbrightmail.org or Whatsapp: +261 34 072 4707.

HOP ABOARD THE RICKSHA BUS

Durban's Ricksha Bus provides travellers with a scenic overview of the city's major attractions.

These include the Beachfront, uShaka Marine World, Emmanuel Cathedral, Victoria Street Market, Juma Masjid Mosque, the City Hall, Francis Farewell Square, Durban International Convention Centre, Kwa Muhle Museum, The Cube on Mitchell Park, Florida Road, Moses Mabhida Stadium, Blue Lagoon park and beach and the Suncoast Casino.

There are two tours daily: one from 09h00 to 12h00; the second from 13h00 to 16h00.

Adults pay R100 per trip, children and South African pensioners R51; children under five ride free.

Bookings can be made at the Durban Tourism North Beach Office at Number One KE Masinga Road, which is also the bus's point of departure.

Find out more: <https://visitdurban.travel/>



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