

AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA INJECTS HALF A BILLION INTO CITY'S ECONOMY

DURBAN recorded impressive economic spin-offs during Africa's Travel Indaba which took place from 13 to 16 May at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre. The Indaba was a resounding success and surpassed expectations. This indicated the recovery of Durban and KwaZulu-Natal's tourism sectors, which further translated into a boom for local businesses.

Winile Mntungwa, Deputy Head of Durban Tourism said the economic activities triggered by Africa's Travel Indaba have exceeded their initial conservative projections. She said this includes event infrastructure, accommodation establishments, restaurants, and shuttle services.

"The direct economic impact for the City was R226 million, with a spillover effect contributing an additional R333 million. The overall contribution to the City's GDP exceeded R500 million, indicating significant economic benefits with over 1 000 jobs created, especially for the youth," said Mntungwa.

She said the economic ripple effect extended beyond the city centre as the Indaba also benefited township and rural tourism. Hospitality businesses that benefitted included The Silokazis and Octavia Boutique Hotel based in Inanda, Max's Lifestyle located in the heart of uMlazi, and the Coastal Resort based in Umgababa which hosted Indaba delegates.

Durban Tourism also hosted a series of activities and engagements at the Indaba.



Africa's Travel Indaba, which was hosted in the City from 13 to 16 May, was a resounding success. Among the 9 200 delegates that attended, Durban Tourism hosted buyers and media from Japan and China. The delegation was treated to the best Japanese cuisine in the City on the sidelines of Africa's Travel Indaba to further position Destination Durban.

This included hosting nine community tourism organisations as well as four of the best township and rural based tourism businesses who showcased at the Durban Tourism exhibition stand. This afforded them exposure to an international platform with meetings that could lead to new potential business leads.

Zinhle Mqadi, Chief Executive Officer of Max's Lifestyle said: "We are grateful to be afforded an opportunity to align our tourism destination products to an international audience. It was an amazing opportunity for delegates to get a taste of uMlazi through our shisanyama. We further networked, which could lead to possible future

business prospects from different countries."

Statistics generated show a great improvement post COVID-19, with an impressive 9 280 delegates registered over the four-day period compared to last year's 8 629. There was also the participation of 26 African countries, including the addition of new countries such as Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Guinea, Togo, and Turkey to name a few.

EThekweni City Manager Musa Mbhele led a conversation with other strategic partners to discuss investment opportunities and developments. This was part of awareness campaigns during

City-led programmes geared towards tourism development and investment.

Durban Tourism also utilised the Indaba to host side events where buyers and media from key target source markets were taken to explore Durban's various attractions. They visited fine dining restaurants to get a taste of the local cuisine as well as to explore the city centre onboard the open top double decker Ricksha bus. There was also a cruise tour networking session and other activities that showcased the City's hidden gems and tourism potential. This was done to further promote the City and cement Durban as a tourist mecca.

GAINS MADE IN THE INNER CITY REGENERATION

THE inner city regeneration is forging ahead with ambitions to improve service delivery, restore law and order, and establish further partnerships with civil society. This initiative ultimately aims to renew the confidence of business, residents, investors, and tourists alike.

The vision is to make Durban Africa's leading, most vibrant, liveable, walkable city centre.

Numerous successes have been noted thus far with teams committed to restoring confidence in the inner city. Cleaning and repairing of infrastructure has improved with officials working on future sustainable projects that will ensure socio-economic benefits.

More than 30 problem buildings have been identified for repair and recovery by the Problem Buildings Division. Contractors have been appointed to carry out this work.

The demolition of the China Emporium brings the number of demolished buildings to nine in the last five years.



The City is offering property owners an opportunity to wrap their buildings and to use this advertising revenue to pay Municipal debts or renovate their properties. BELOW: The City has embarked on the demolition of the China Emporium.



In addition, seven hijacked buildings have been returned to the rightful owners following interventions from the court, the Problem Buildings

Division, and law enforcement agencies since 2019. In some instances, property owners stepped up to the plate to reclaim their buildings.

The City calls on property owners to work together with the Problem Buildings Division to take advantage of the incentives offered and avoid penalties. The programme strategically offers property owners an opportunity to wrap their problem building, allowing them use of the advertising revenue to settle debts and fund renovations.

The enforcement teams have been hard at work with 3 095 fines issued from January to March, 77 criminals arrested, 2 975 summons served, and 2 212 spot fines issued. In addition, 16 404 fines were issued for by-law infringements.

Safety and security in the inner city has also been enhanced with the introduction of 300 Urban Improvement Precinct Ambassadors who serve as an integral component of the Inner-City Regeneration Programme. An additional 20 ambassadors have been strategically deployed to oversee the night shift operations along Florida Road, over the next three months.

Stage set for the ReSURGEncE Conference

IN THE bustling halls of Africa's Travel Indaba 2024, one event stood out as a beacon of promise for the economic future of Durban and Africa at large.

This event, a precursor to the upcoming reSURGEncE Conference taking place in the City in July, drew attention from delegates worldwide.

At the forefront of this gathering was Reverend Dennis Dillon, representing the New

York Christian Times, who is poised to lead a delegation from the United States to the forthcoming reSURGEncE Conference.

His impassioned address echoed the overarching goal of the conference which is to bolster Black business capacity by fostering connections between investors in Durban, Africa, and New York City.

Among the distinguished speakers was eThekweni

City Manager Musa Mbhele who delivered a message of anticipation for the reSURGEncE Conference.

With its theme 'Moving the needle forward towards economic emancipation,' the conference aims to galvanise a diverse business delegation from the United States, Africa, and South Africa to converge at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre from 17 to 21 July.

Mbhele underscored the significance of positioning eThekweni as a premier investment destination and unlocking new avenues for partnerships and growth.

He recounted the genesis of the ReSURGEncE Durban initiative, born from a fruitful visit to New York by a delegation from eThekweni Municipality, led by Councillor Thembo Ntuli and himself.



R15M GRIFFITHS MXENGE INFORMAL TRADERS HUB OPENED

UNDERSCORING the Municipality's commitment to economic growth and social upliftment, eThekweni Mayor Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda proudly officiated the opening of the Griffiths Mxenge Informal Traders Hub on 20 May.

This significant initiative is part of the City's broader strategy to enhance the township economy and support small businesses in rural areas and townships.

Mayor Kaunda said the project, which cost over R15 million, aligns with government's dedication to promoting the township economy and restoring the dignity of local traders.

"By providing proper shelter and facilities, we are ensuring that traders who previously worked in open, challenging conditions can now operate in a comfortable and secure environment. This enhances their business prospects

and customer experience," explained Mayor Kaunda.

The Griffiths Mxenge Informal Traders Hub, located in uMlazi V-Section on Griffiths Mxenge Highway, is a state-of-the-art facility featuring 48 formal units. These prefabricated structures include trading stalls, ablution facilities, and essential bulk infrastructure.

"This development marks a significant step in transitioning informal economic activities to the formal sector, ensuring income security, sustainable livelihoods, and entrepreneurship opportunities," added Mayor Kaunda.

Extensive consultations with affected traders ensured their needs and concerns were addressed. The new hub accommodates a variety of businesses, including salons, electrical appliance vendors, food handlers, dry cleaners, fruit and vegetable sellers, dry goods merchants, cabinet

manufacturers, and office spaces. This development brings much-needed dignity and formalisation to these

businesses, potentially increasing their client base and economic stability.



EThekweni Mayor Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda officially opened the Griffiths Mxenge Informal Traders Hub which cost over R15 million. This state-of-the-art facility features 48 formal units to enhance the township economy and support small businesses in rural areas and townships.

Implementing measures to boost investor confidence

IN A bid to enhance investor confidence and stimulate economic growth, the Municipality has implemented a series of measures aimed at streamlining business processes and reducing red tape. EThekweni City Manager Musa Mbhele highlighted the Municipality's commitment to creating a more investor-friendly environment.

"Our goal is to reduce red tape and increase efficiency through enhanced Municipal functions that align with innovative and world-class service delivery," he said.

One of the key initiatives introduced by the Municipality is the Inclusive Growth Strategy, which was developed in collaboration with various sectors of society, including

academia, business, industry, and investors. Mbhele emphasised the importance of this strategy in driving economic growth and creating meaningful employment opportunities within eThekweni.

Another significant programme is the Ease of Doing Business Programme, which focuses on promoting customer-centric, innovative, and optimised Municipal functions. This programme seeks to create efficiency in Municipal business architecture, ultimately leading to an improved and favourable experience for investors.

The Municipality is also participating in the World Bank Sub-National Doing Business Programme, which aims to make Municipal systems more

efficient through reforms. Mbhele highlighted the importance of these reforms in reducing turnaround times, streamlining procedures, and lowering costs for investors.

In addition to these programmes, the Municipality is implementing automated systems to streamline processes such as rates clearance and building plan approvals. These improvements will significantly reduce turnaround times and enhance the overall efficiency of Municipal operations.

Furthermore, the Municipality offers financial incentives for new investments in commercial, industrial, and mixed-use developments through the Economic Development Incentive Policy.

The Policy aims to attract investment and contribute to economic growth and job creation within the City.

Mbhele also highlighted the importance of the Durban Business Confidence Index, which measures business sentiment across various sectors. He said: "This ongoing initiative enables us to plan programmes to support business and to gauge internal and external factors that impact business confidence."

Overall, these initiatives underscore the Municipality's commitment to creating an enabling business environment and positioning eThekweni as a competitive business city in South Africa.



YOUTH EMBRACE DIGITAL ERA



Ugeshini Moodley, Engagement Officer from the Faculty of Accounting and Infomatics at the Durban University of Technology demonstrates the potential of AI to students at a Future Skills workshop recently.

ETHEKWINI Municipality is taking the lead in preparing youth with skills to embrace the digital era and their digital future. The City partnered with Microsoft, Coastal KZN TVET College, Go Digital Foundation, and the Moses Kotane Institute to host a Future Skills

Workshop with 200 young people recently. The aim was to promote learning and skills development in Artificial Intelligence and the digital arena to equip youth with skills and knowledge to thrive in this ever-evolving world. The workshop promoted the skills of the future in line

with District Development Model One Plan - Human Development Transformative Area.

At the event, youth were challenged with conceptualising a system to keep track of human capital development and talent as an exercise for the Municipality. “The collaboration of the City and stakeholders has shown great potential,” said Zama Khuzwayo, Chief Policy Analyst responsible for the project. “By leveraging on future skills as a tool for development and innovation, the youth can be better prepared to meet the challenges of the future job market and contribute to the vision for sustainable development,” she said.

Grade 10 learner, Unami Mnu kwa from Anton Lembede Maths, Science and Technology Academy said the workshop was fruitful.

Durban Film Office announces beneficiaries of funding

EXCITING news is on the horizon for the local film industry as the Durban Film Office (DFO) has revealed the recipients of its Cycle 8 film development funding programmes. With a focus on nurturing talent and supporting the growth of the film sector, the Municipality is set to award grants to deserving beneficiaries.

The announcement comes as the Micro Budget Film Fund and the Development Fund prepare to hand over a total of five cheques to their respective beneficiaries. These grants, totalling R1.5 million, signify the City’s dedication to providing crucial support to filmmakers and producers in Durban.

For the Micro Budget Film Fund, three outstanding projects have been selected to receive funding of R350 000 each. Isilwane Films, Nasi Production, and Gmedia Network have been chosen for their compelling fiction feature projects, including ‘Emanzini’, ‘Hanging by the Thread’, and ‘Farewell2: The Graduation’ respectively.

Additionally, the Development Fund is set to empower two deserving recipients with grants of R250 000 each. Sapere Aude (Pty) LTD and Dream Lab Production have been recognised for their promising film projects, “Retirement from War” and “3 Kitchens” which demonstrate the diverse talent and creativity present within Durban’s film industry. DFO remains dedicated to providing them with the resources, support, and opportunities needed to bring their visions to life.

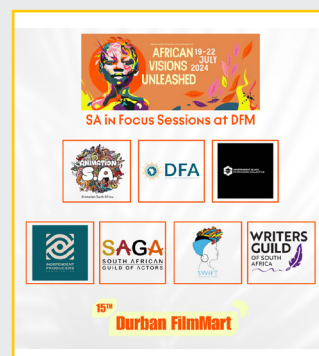
DURBAN FILMMART 2024 CELEBRATES AFRICAN CINEMA

THE Durban FilmMart Institute (DFMI) announced the 15th edition of the Durban FilmMart (DFM). The festival takes place from 19 to 22 July under the theme ‘African Visions Unleashed: From Disruption to Accountability’.

DFM serves as a crucial platform for African filmmakers and industry stakeholders and has shaped discourse around the African film industry over its 15-year existence.

DFM 2024 features sessions highlighting the evolution of the South African film industry. The “SA In Focus” sessions

cover various industry aspects, including the State of the South African Audio-Visual Industry, addressing initiatives shaping its global prominence. Additionally, panels like Regulating the Production Sector and The Business of Storytelling aim to ensure fair working conditions and explore new business models. Other sessions delve into topics such as women’s portrayal on screen, growth strategies for the animation industry, international distribution, accessible archives, and reflections on the industry’s



last 30 years.

Early bird registration for participation is open until 31 May. For more information and registration visit [DFM's website](#).

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