



a world class African city

City of Johannesburg  
Group Communications and Tourism Department

---

A Block  
Metropolitan Centre  
158 Civic Boulevard  
Braamfontein

PO Box 1049  
Johannesburg  
South Africa  
2000

Tel +27(0) 11 358 3696  
Fax +27(0) 11 358 3636  
[www.joburg.org.za](http://www.joburg.org.za)

## Welcome Address Delivered by His Excellency, the Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, Councillor Parks Tau - All Roads Lead to Johannesburg

24 February 2014

---

*The Executive Mayor of Johannesburg's Welcome Address to Meetings Africa 2014, delivered at a Gala Dinner at the Sandton Convention Centre tonight, paid tribute to the City's status as the continent's commercial hub – and a vibrant, cross-cultural metropolis - which is still regarded as a place of opportunity and potential for people from all over the country, the continent and the world.*

*"In one of South Africa's most acclaimed novels, **Cry the Beloved Country**, written by Alan Paton, the narrator says "**All roads lead to Johannesburg.**" This was true at the time of the writing of the novel, in 1948, when Johannesburg was the only place where people living in abject rural poverty under apartheid, had a glimmer of opportunity to make a living in the city. At the time, people were almost forced to take the route to Johannesburg. It is equally true that all roads still lead to Johannesburg in 2014, when we celebrate South Africa's 20<sup>th</sup> Year of Freedom," said Tau.*

*"In this period, Johannesburg has gone from strength to strength as the economic hub of a united, democratic country; a regional generator of opportunity, technology and knowledge; also as one of the most sought after tourist destinations on the continent of Africa. It is an increasingly global player on issues that confront communities across the world, such as climate change, poverty, food security and the sustainable use of limited natural resources," said Tau.*

*While the city is relatively young as a global competitor, Tau acknowledged the advances made by Johannesburg on many fronts, not least of which its reputation, credentials and track record as an unparalleled host of important, global events – especially over the past 20 years. **[Full speech below/attached].***

---

In one of South Africa's most acclaimed novels, **Cry the Beloved Country**, written by Alan Paton, the narrator says "**All roads lead to Johannesburg.**" This was true at the time of the writing of the novel, in 1948, when Johannesburg was the only place where people living in abject rural poverty under apartheid, had a glimmer of opportunity to make a living in the city. At the time, people were almost forced to take the route to Johannesburg.

It is equally true that all roads still lead to Johannesburg in 2014, when we celebrate South Africa's 20<sup>th</sup> Year of Freedom. In this period, Johannesburg has gone from strength to strength as the economic hub of a united, democratic country; a regional generator of opportunity, technology and knowledge; also as one of the most sought after tourist destinations on the continent of Africa. It is an increasingly global player on issues that confront communities across the world, such as climate change, poverty, food security and the sustainable use of limited natural resources.

Programme director,

I want to extend a warm welcome to your organisation and delegates in our world-class African City of Johannesburg. A city that is young in global terms; but punches above its weight in its influence on international issues. Joburg is a city that might not have the stereotypical type of natural attractions often associated with tourism destinations; but makes up for it by the quality of our top class infrastructure, the efficiency of our services and the warm and accommodating attitude of our people.

We are delighted that **Meetings Africa** has, once again, decided to hold its annual exhibition right here at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg. This has developed into the premier showcase event for the meetings industry on the African continent, and plays an increasingly important role to create awareness of opportunities that exist for the hosting of meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions.

Your theme, **Advancing Africa Together**, is most appropriate, coming so shortly after our 50<sup>th</sup> celebration of the establishment of the Organisation for African Unity – the forerunner of today's African Union. Last year, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, envisaged the creation of a dedicated pan-African body to advance knowledge and information about tourism and cultural heritage sites across the continent.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Your organisation, **Meetings Africa**, focuses on a very specific, but highly significant segment in the global tourism industry. Recent figures released by the International Congress and Convention Association, indicate that the number of significant meetings which attract people across national and continental borders, has almost doubled to more than 10 000 in the ten-year period leading up to 2012. More than 5.5 million people attended such meetings which the Association kept track of.

It therefore stands to reason that Africa, and specifically Johannesburg, wants to attract a growing share of this market, which is expected to grow exponentially as the global economy recovers - following the deepest slowdown in our generation.

Programme director,

Johannesburg is, undoubtedly a world-class host city for local and international events, meetings, conferences and exhibitions. I think our reputation as a host city was truly cemented with the excellent arrangements we made for the 2010 Soccer World Cup. This prompted even a very 'demanding and difficult observer' such as FIFA President, Sepp Blatter, to say he was more than satisfied with the organisation which was "**very close to perfect.**"

In the past six months alone, Johannesburg has successfully hosted the One Young World Summit, the meeting of the Metropolis group of World Mayors, and the very recent C40 Summit on Climate Change, which brought together decision-makers, thought-leaders and media from the world's largest cities.

In this same period, Johannesburg was in the global spotlight as the City which hosted the memorial service for our beloved and departed Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, an event which brought together 53 heads of state, numerous other world leaders, dignitaries and delegations. On the sporting front, we are best known for our hosting of the annual Joburg Open Golf Tournament, a signature event on the European Tour and, since this year, serving as an official qualifier for the British Open.

We already have a full programme of confirmed events for the next 12 to 18 months. Among these are the World Orchid Congress and Exhibition, the 2015 Africities Summit, the CIDESCO World Congress, which will focus on new trends in the beauty industry; the congress of the International Public Relations Association and the World Summit on Healthy Ageing.

Ladies and gentlemen,

These events are all indicative of Johannesburg's reputation as a unique "destination facility package" which combines a number of the City's strengths:

- our state of the art convention centres – of which Sandton is just one example;
- our diverse range of accommodation;
- our strengthened public transport system which now comprises a high-speed rail and Bus Rapid Transit to key destinations in the City;
- the experience and enthusiasm of our service providers and hospitality sector; and;
- the myriad of leisure opportunities available in our diverse and vibrant city.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Business Events sector has become a key driving force of many economies across the global arena. It provides countries with the ability to market trade and investment opportunities and showcases unique products and services – in addition to the direct revenue generated from hosting such trade fairs.

This is an important potential growth sector for Johannesburg, and we will continue to look for opportunities to expand into hosting business events and trade fairs.

The global experience has also shown that business events inevitably lead to leisure tourism, as people become acquainted with the facilities we can offer and then consider the options to return to the city for longer stays.

Programme director,

Recent studies and surveys, confirm the trend that Johannesburg is growing in importance, as a destination of choice and becoming one of the world's leading tourism markets:

- According to the most recent MasterCard Global Destination Cities Index, Johannesburg was set to be the most popular destination in Africa, with an estimated 2.54 million international visitors expected to visit the city in 2013.
- Because of the global economic showdown which affected the tourism industry worldwide, the number of international visitors increased by only 5.5% in 2012. However, if you look at

it over a longer term, since 2009, you will notice a substantial 53.6% growth which has propelled it into the MasterCard Index's list of the top 20 fastest growing cities globally.

- Johannesburg also comes out tops in Africa in terms of international visitor spending, with US\$2.7 billion estimated to be injected into the city during 2013.
- In a baseline study conducted by Joburg Tourism last year, the estimated direct spend from tourism-related activities for 2012, was approximately R35bn. When taking economic multiples into effect, this number rises to just under R70bn. The Tourism sector now contributes just under 20% of the Gross Regional Product of Johannesburg.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Tourism and events market has been identified as a priority in the Joburg 2040 Growth and Development Strategy. We see this as a unique sector, to not only grow global awareness of our City and its special qualities, but also to address issues of transformation in the industry, stimulate the growth of the Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMME) sector, and create jobs in the "second economy."

Thus, through our dedicated organisation, Joburg Tourism, we are committed to grow the number of visitors coming to Johannesburg, increase the length of their stay and generate more spend. The combined impact of this will contribute to the growth of the entire regional economy, create jobs and enable the city to better meet its developmental objectives in the areas of housing, healthcare, services and strategic infrastructure.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I want to express my appreciation to the organisers of this event and exhibition, and extend an on-going invitation to use Johannesburg as your host city. I also want to pay tribute to our partners in the Joburg Convention Bureau, the Gauteng Convention Bureau and SA National Convention Bureau, for their efforts to bring more of these types of events to our country and our city.

During this event, you will have an opportunity to join Joburg City Parks in donating and planting 50 fruit trees to a beneficiary organisation. This is all part of a larger city effort to promote greening initiatives, reduce our carbon emissions and contribute to the growth of resilient and sustainable communities.

I trust that you will enjoy your stay in Johannesburg and make use of the opportunity to visit our tourism and leisure sites, also through the utilisation of our excellent public transport facilities.

I thank you.

---

**Laura Vercueil : PR & Communication Manager**  
**Johannesburg Tourism**  
**Cell: 082 469 6333**  
**Tel: +27 11 214 0700**  
**Email: [laurav@joburgtourism.com](mailto:laurav@joburgtourism.com)**  
**Info Line : 0860 333 999**

---

*Johannesburg Tourism is a destination marketing organisation, dedicated to promoting tourism growth in the City. Its primary function is to promote Johannesburg as a business, lifestyle, sport and leisure destination, both locally and internationally. Its operations include running a Convention Bureau, a Visitor Services Bureau, as well as co-ordinating city-wide tourism marketing programmes, tourism information gathering and analysis.*

**Johannesburg Tourism has three offices:**

**Joburg Tourism Head Office, Parktown North**

Tel: +27 214 0700

**Soweto Tourism Information Centre**

Tel: +27 11 342 4316

**Park Station Tourism Information Centre**

Tel: +27 11 333 1488

Operating hours 08:00 – 17:00 Monday - Friday

**Info Line 0860 333 999**

[www.joburgtourism.com](http://www.joburgtourism.com)



Follow us on: