
Tourism KwaZulu-Natal



For immediate release

To : All media

Attention : News Editors and Journalists

THRONGS OF RUNNERS HEAD TO THE ZULU KINGDOM FOR THE BIGGER AND BETTER COMRADES MARATHON

Oldest ultra-marathon to enjoy increased runner numbers

Durban, South Africa - June 5, 2018: Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (TKZN) welcomes the thousands of visitors with open arms to the exceptional Zulu Kingdom for the 93rd Comrades Marathon which will take place, this Sunday, 10 June, 2018.

With the province's warm winter season, visitors and runners can escape the winter chills and descend to KZN for a bit of fun in the sun.

This year's theme is "*Asijiki – No turning back*" will see thousands of runners descend to KZN from all over the world.

TKZN's Acting CEO, Phindile Makwakwa said the destination KwaZulu-Natal was ready to ensure that runners and spectators, both national and international, have an amazing, unique and world class experience.

Makwakwa said the Comrades Marathon was an important event for the province especially in terms of the economic impact. The Comrades Marathon Association (CMA) confirmed that they predict an economic boost of up to R700 million for this year's Comrades Marathon.

"We hope that the cash injection will trickle down to all communities along the 90 kilometre route and through-out the province.

"We want to showcase our beautiful province, world class facilities and tourist attractions. The race is going from strength to strength with more international athletes competing this year compared to 2017 and we hope they will not only enjoy the race, but also take the time to explore our many sites and wonders - from the beach to the berg," Makwakwa said.

More than 21 000 runners will wait for cock's crow to signal the start of the race, at the Pietermaritzburg City Hall for the Down-Run of the world's biggest and oldest ultra-marathon that will end 12 hours later at the iconic Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban.

There are 370 more international athletes competing this year compared to last year. A total of 1 430 international entries were received and 554 from the rest of Africa.

Tourism KZN has been working closely with the CMA over the years to attract more international runners to the marathon.

"Our vision is to grow Comrades into a bona fide international event and increase the number of international participants. We believe that this marathon can stand head and shoulder with the likes New York Marathon, the London Marathon and Gold Coast Marathon in Australia. It is for this reason that we are supporting the CMA with promoting this marathon at international platforms," Makwakwa said.

A study by TKZN following last year's marathon indicated that KwaZulu-Natal was recommended as a tourist destination for reasons that include: attractions, beach and diverse culture.

"Visitors also sited KZN as a favorite family destination, a beautiful province with friendly people and good weather. We have lots to offer including many sporting events," said Makwakwa.

KwaZulu-Natal has a well-established history of rich cultural landscapes and a wide range of its finest destination roots. Its appeal ranges from safaris, beaches, good cuisine and diaspora tourism. Comrades visitors are urged to take advantage on what's on offer.

Makwakwa said the Comrades should also act as an incentive to get fit and live healthy.

"It is an exciting event and a fun outdoor experience for the whole family including spectators. The atmosphere is unbeatable."

"We wish all the runners the best of luck for the 46th Down-Run in Comrades history and encourage them to stay on longer and enjoy our hospitality with and family. Enjoy our hospitality and all we have to offer," Makwakwa said.

Over the years, the Comrades Marathon has attracted celebrities and media personalities and this year will again see, Kabelo Mabalane leading South African influencer and performer and radio commentator Redi Thlabi as well as South African mountaineer Sibusiso Vilane take on the *Ultimate Human Race*.

ENDS

Notes to editors

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal is responsible for the development, promotion and marketing of tourism into and within the province, both domestically and internationally. The organisation is an entity that reports to the provincial Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

For updated information go to:

Website: Tourism KZN: www.zulu.org.za

Facebook: Page: Tourism Kwazulu-Natal

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Hashtags: #Comrade2018 #ComradesTKZN #Asijiki #DoKZN

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