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## Tourism KwaZulu-Natal

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27 May 2018

**For immediate release**

**To: All media**  
**Attention: News Editors and Journalists**

### **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AGENTS EXPLORE ZULU KINGDOM**

Durban, South Africa: Sixty travel agents from around the world have descended on KwaZulu-Natal on Friday as part of a tour to explore what the Zulu kingdom has to offer to the rest of the world.

They, in turn, will market our destination, from beaches, to game parks, to cultural heritage tourism, to international travellers.

The agents who hail from several European countries like Denmark, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Germany as well as Russia, have arrived in the province to attend a travel academy hosted by Followme2Africa.

The UK-based outbound tour operator is an influential player in the European market and also serves as an inbound operator in South Africa. For this travel academy they have partnered with Tourism KwaZulu-Natal for the programme which runs from 25<sup>th</sup> May to 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

Over the next two weeks the visiting travel agents will be in workshops and participate in site visits throughout the length and breadth of the province. The aim of this annual gathering by Followme2Africa is to ensure that the agents are well informed about all the tourism offerings available in KwaZulu-Natal so that they can return to their countries and package the Zulu Kingdom as a premier destination.

The Acting CEO of Tourism KwaZulu-Natal, Phindile Makwakwa, said: "Knowledge is power. By making foreign travel agents experts on the myriad of sights and sounds which KZN has to offer, and the diversity of experiences on hand, they will be better equipped to drive more people to the province. First-hand experience makes it easier to market a destination."

The travel agents start their journey of discovery in Mkhuze and will make their way to various destinations including Hluhluwe, the Midlands, the battlefields and then Durban. Currently at least 150 000 tourists from Germany, the UK and the USA visit KwaZulu-Natal every year, which makes this the second biggest international key source market for the province.

Tourism KwaZulu-Natal believes that relationships form the cornerstone of any good marketing campaign and that the hospitality extended to individuals and companies in the industry will give them a clear idea of what visitors can expect when they arrive.

"It's not only about what they see but also how they feel when they experience in our destination. The entire experience must be good and that will eventually convert into sales for the benefit of KZN. The idea is to turn the agents to our ambassadors as they are the first point of call when someone is considering their next holiday." said Makwakwa.

Tourism plays a pivotal role in the country's economy and is considered an important catalyst for the province's economic transformation.

The provincial government hopes that through Tourism KwaZulu-Natal and the opportunities it offers emerging small, medium and micro tourism companies, it will have positive spin-offs for trade and change the lives of the historically disadvantaged.

Makwakwa said travel academies played a vital link in the tourism chain and that educating agencies and tour operators gave the province a competitive edge over other destinations. She said KZN offered a variety of activities which catered to all tastes, from hiking in the Drakensberg, romantic settings in the Midlands, sun and sea along the coast to a variety of fine dining and even gambling experiences. "We are very confident about what we can offer to the tourists. It is a worthwhile destination for them to explore," said Makwakwa.

Tourism KZN has a full program lined up to grow international tourism arrivals. Just two months ago Tourism KwaZulu-Natal also hosted a travel academy for top South African inbound tour operators. Several of the big names in the industry like Thompson Tours, Springbok Atlas, FollowMe2Africa, Tourvest, and Akilanga met with tourism product owners from across KZN to showcase and sell their products.

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### **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](http://www.zulu.org.za)

Facebook: Page: Tourism Kwazulu-Natal

Twitter: @TourismKZN

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