

IBTM WORLD 2019

The Head of Mission paid an official visit to Barcelona from 19 to 21 November 2019. During her visit; she gave support for South Africa's stand at *IBTM World 2019*. *IBTM World*, the leading global tourism trade event for the meetings and incentive industry was held at the Barcelona Fairgrounds from 19 November 2018 to 21 November 2019. This year *IBTM World*, which is exclusively a trade event, attracted more than 30,000 visitors as well as 3,000 exhibitors from 150 participating countries and autonomous territories. There were also 2,800 hosted buyers from throughout the world, half of which were first time attendees. More than 1,000 appointments were scheduled between hosted buyers and the 24 South African companies present on the *South African National Convention Bureau (SANCB) Stand* at the Fair, including five small tourism businesses hosted by the National Department of Tourism as part of its Market Access Programme.

The business events industry is of immense importance for the South African economy. South Africa hosts about a million business delegates every year and the local events industry sustains more than 250 000 jobs in the South African economy, directly and indirectly. The business events industry contributes R115 billion to South Africa's gross domestic product every year. Two of the main priorities of the South African Government in this sector are to, firstly, help smaller enterprises (especially black-owned businesses) to enter the tourism market and, secondly, to spread the benefits of both business events and leisure tourism to the less-visited parts of South Africa.

While in Barcelona, the Head of Mission gave support for several events organized by the SANCB at the Stand while an embassy official also provided on-hand logistical and promotional assistance in different areas. Prior to the event, the Mission had also helped to secure South African wines, *Amarula* and biltong for the different promotional events at the stand during *IBTM World 2019*. The Mission also provided logistical and consular support for some of the South African exhibitors travelling to Barcelona.

On the side-lines of *IBTM World 2019*, the Head of Mission paid a courtesy call on the Mayor of Barcelona; held a lunch with leading

stakeholders in the city, and; participated in an event organized by the Euro-Africa Centre, an African diaspora civil society organization.

View of *South African National Convention Bureau* stand at *IBTM World 2019*:





Lunch held with political and business stakeholders from Barcelona