

PRESS RELEASE

## 200 delegates from all over Africa flock to Langa today for Africa Travel Summit

*Airbnb organizes first ever three day event to discuss how technology can help more people to benefit from tourism*

- **Summit convenes over 200 Pan-African founders, CEOs, influencers and politicians to explore how technology and tourism can support greater economic and social empowerment**
- **Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Tourism Najib Balala, BBC Africa editor Larry Madowo and the founder of She Leads Africa Afua Osei are among the speakers**
- **Airbnb organises Summit as part of its \$1 million investment to boost community-led tourism projects in Africa**

**LANGA / CAPE TOWN, 12 September 2018** - Guga S'thebe in Langa will be home to some of the brightest minds in African tourism for two days starting today. More than thirty high profile speakers and panelists will be taking the stage to discuss how tourism and technology can enable economic empowerment all across the African continent. The opening keynote will be held by Chris Lehane, Head of Global Policy and Public Affairs at Airbnb, who will reveal a new report on how the Airbnb platform is promoting travel that is local, diverse and inclusive in South Africa. Among other findings, the report shows that the ripple effect of host and guest activity on the Airbnb platform in South Africa resulted in an economic impact of \$678 million in the past year, supporting over 22,000 jobs.

Other notable names speaking at the event are Director of The World Bank Group Sebastian Molineus, Mich Atagana who heads Communications at Google, and visual artist Trevor Stuurman among many others. The Africa Travel Summit is part of Airbnb's \$ 1 million investment to promote and support community-led tourism projects in Africa.

More than 200 delegates will be expected to share expertise and ideas on what tourism can do to empower more people in Africa, hear from innovators who are helping democratise tourism in Africa, and learn about the [Airbnb Africa Academy](#), Airbnb's newest programme to connect underserved communities to tourism in South Africa through technology. What are the real drivers of change? How can the economic benefits of tourism be brought to small businesses and local residents in Africa? How can governments facilitate community-led tourism?

Discussion topics include:

- **Tourism for All:** A scene-setting discussion on the potential of innovation and technology to help tourism deliver economic empowerment in communities across Africa

- **Telling the Africa Story:** The role and responsibility of the media in shaping Africa's narrative. A discussion with travel writers, bloggers and journalists on how media can help in getting people off the beaten track and support underserved communities
- **Financing as an enabler for technology and tourism development:** A discussion facilitated by the World Bank Group on innovations in flexible financing that can help more people and SMEs access financing for their innovations
- **Resilient Tourism in times of Crisis:** Cape Town is facing its worst drought in over 100 years. Delve into an in-depth discussion on building sustainable, resilient tourism fueled by innovation and technology
- **Government as an enabler for Innovation:** A discussion on the role of government in advancing new forms of tourism and innovation that benefits everyone.

The programming for the Africa Travel Summit already kicked off yesterday with the Innovators Programme: 15 African grassroots organisations from eight different countries across the continent discussed how The Airbnb Africa Academy can best be scaled in communities across Africa.

Chris Lehane, Global Head of Public Policy and Public Affairs for Airbnb, says:

“Tourism has become a powerful people-driven economic force and when done right it also has the power to drive belonging through such people-to-people connections. With that power comes a massive responsibility. Tourism’s potential for inclusivity presents an opportunity to distribute the economics of a booming global industry more broadly, to communities and people who have not benefited from tourism before. By hosting the Africa Travel Summit we will bring together the leading thinkers from what is an incredibly diverse continent so that we can listen, learn and apply those learnings. We want to discuss how we can learn from what is working so as to best leverage technology and innovation to empower more local families and their communities to benefit from the economics of African travel.”

Two days of inspiring discussions will be rounded out with opportunities for delegates to connect while seeing community-driven tourism come to life. Attendees of the Africa Travel Summit will have an opportunity to attend a concert listed on Airbnb, learn traditional gumboot dance from locals hosting this Experience on the Airbnb platform and attend dinners all over Cape Town.

South African Tourism is partnering with Airbnb on the event. CEO of South African Tourism Sisa Ntshona says:

“It’s an honour for us to support the first Africa Travel Summit in the vibrant neighbourhood of Langa, Cape Town. We are thrilled that key decision- and policy-makers combined with influencers and innovators from across Africa will be joining this event. We are certain that they will inspire and ignite much-needed debate around tourism in South Africa and the continent. Inclusivity is a key driver and focus for us at SA Tourism, and Airbnb’s offerings speak to this and also help with providing a variety of options for the domestic and international traveler. Homestays are a new category for us to look at and working more

closely with Airbnb on this will certainly assist us in achieving our goals of attracting additional visitors.”

Airbnb is looking back on a year that has seen the \$1 million investment come to life with three major commitments implemented. The Airbnb Africa Academy has been scaled to provide tools and information to more than 50 participants, especially women and young people, from more than 12 rural and underserved communities in Gauteng and Western Cape Provinces. Experiences on the Airbnb platform has been rolled out to all of South Africa, allowing more locals to turn their passions into economic opportunities and showcase the best authentic experiences that guests might otherwise miss. And, lastly, the Africa Travel Summit is expected to spark important conversations that will help realize Airbnb’s vision to empower communities through home sharing and to promote people-to-people tourism that benefits local families until 2020.

**Note to editors**

More information on the Africa Travel Summit can be found at <http://africatravelsummit.com/>. Interested journalists are invited to partake in the Africa Travel Summit and can obtain an accreditation at the event venue, Guga S’thebe.

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