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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Richards Bay, KwaZulu-Natal – 28 August 2025; Richards Bay Welcomes the World to Tourism Investment Forum Africa 2025

The City of Umhlathuze today proudly opened its doors to global investors, policymakers, and tourism leaders as it hosts the Tourism Investment Forum Africa (TIFA) 2025 for the very first time in Richards Bay, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This prestigious forum, held at Thembela Events Venue and scheduled to run from 27th to 28th August 2025, with infrastructural development site visits held on the first day.

The TIFA's primary goal is to highlight the province's untapped tourism potential, creating a platform that will lead to new innovations, partnerships, and sustainable economic development. The theme for this year's forum is "Tourism and Infrastructure Investment: Driving Economic Transformation and Enhancing Community Well-Being," which emphasises the goal of connecting global investors with high-potential tourism and infrastructure projects across Africa.

TIFA 2025 brought together thought leaders, innovators, and investors from across the globe to explore strategic partnerships, investment opportunities, and innovative approaches to tourism development in the City of Umhlathuze. Richards Bay is uniquely positioned as an economic hub and a tourism destination, boasting the country's largest deep-sea port, thriving industries, and rich cultural and natural heritage. Richards Bay's close proximity to Zulu heritage sites, game reserves, and the globally acclaimed iSimangaliso Wetlands underscores the opportunities for investors to tap into diverse tourism experiences.

Delivering the official welcome, His Worship, the Mayor of the City of Umhlathuze, Councillor Xolani Ngwezi, described the occasion as a historic milestone for the city, the province, and the African continent.

"It is the proudest moment that we, the City of Umhlathuze, are hosting the 2025 Tourism Investment Forum Africa." "This platform is not only a privilege but also a profound opportunity for collaboration. Together, we can unlock Africa's full tourism potential." Mayor Ngwezi said.

Rev. Musa Zondi, MEC for Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs, delivered the keynote address, emphasising the province's readiness for business and its commitment to fostering a stable investment environment.

"My emphatic message to you is that as a city, the district and the province, we are open and ready for business," Rev. Musa Zondi said.

The City of Umhlathuze's economy has demonstrated a high degree of resilience, successfully navigating challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic and a sluggish global economy. This resilience

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has attracted a significant influx of people seeking better economic prospects, which in turn demands more new investments.

The conference serves as a continuation of the city's initiatives to promote and mobilise tourism investment, with the hope that it will provide a platform for international and domestic investors to share knowledge and experience the wide array of tourism products on offer. The engagements following the conference are critical to jump-start the region's economic growth and facilitate economic prosperity for everyone.

Ends…

About the Tourism Investment Forum Africa (TIFA): Built on the principle of "a global platform for local action," TIFA seeks to profile and promote secondary and tertiary cities and regions, showcasing them as premier investment, tourism and business events hubs. By positioning these regions for sustainable growth, TIFA helps drive their economic ambitions while providing access to critical capital, networks, and strategic insights on investment in trade-in-services sectors such as tourism.

For media enquiries contact:

Baleseng More

baleseng@millvest.co.za

+27 78 234 1487

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