

Progress in black ownership too slow, complains minister, but sector representatives disagree

Change crawls despite growth in tourism

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Cape Town – Although many more black people are now working in the rapidly growing tourism industry, “they are doing so more as employees than as owners, directors or shareholders”, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, the minister of environmental affairs and tourism, said yesterday.

But Shamiel Dollie, marketing manager of foreign exchange company Master Currency, and Allan Duke, brand marketing director of unlisted Protea Hotels, both disagreed with the minister’s belief that transformation in the industry was slow.

Duke pointed out that Protea, the largest hotel management company in Africa, was 54 percent black-owned by a consortium including the

National African Women’s Alliance, Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union and AKA Capital. Empowerdex had given it the highest AA rating for BEE compliance.

Dollie said Master Currency, which also had an AA rating from Empowerdex, was black owned. It had been founded by its non-executive chairman, Zitulele “KKK” Kambi. Its general manager in Cape Town, Charlene Lamb, was coloured and its senior manager in Johannesburg, Amon Mohlame, was black.

Dollie said there were many successful small black-owned tour operators in the Western Cape and the first Muslim-owned game reserve in the Eastern Cape, Kwantu, had a five-star rating.

Other significant black investment in the industry has

included the R7 billion buyout of the entire ordinary share capital of Peerment Global, the gaming, resort and hotel company, by a consortium led by the Mining Workers Investment Company.

Van Schalkwyk said progress in black ownership or control of tourism companies had been slow despite the industry’s expansion since 1994.

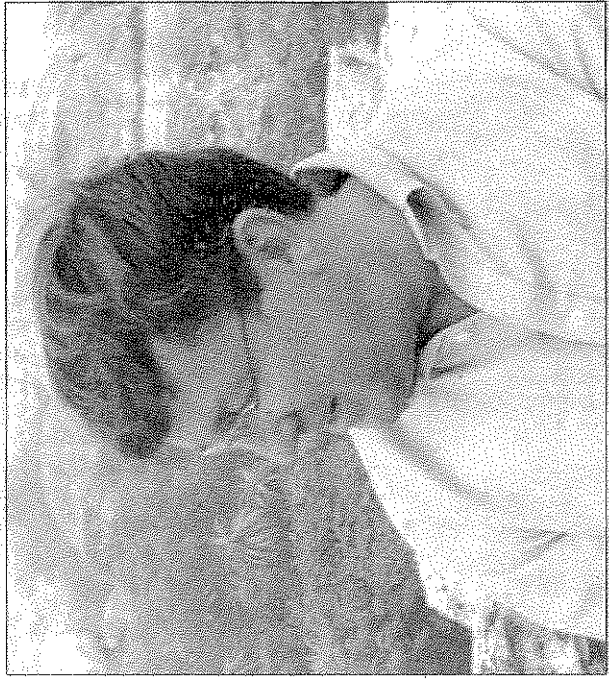
“Large-end listed entities have made the most significant strides in ownership,” he said. “But as one travels down the tourism chain to large unlisted companies and down to small-end microbusinesses, figures reflecting black ownership, co-ownership and even management decline significantly.”

“In the six provinces measured, it was found that on average only 15.6 percent of 321 bed and breakfast opera-

tions – the entry point into the industry for many entrepreneurs – were owned by black operators. Of the 90 hotels examined, only 4 percent were black owned or controlled. Black professional caterers comprised just over 1 percent of 23 establishments canvassed.”

However, many of those involved were making a meaningful contribution towards helping the previously disadvantaged, by taking initiatives to improve service delivery and broaden the supplier base, he said.

“Building the tourism industry doesn’t always mean handing over vast amounts of cash or having a highly paid black executive on your staff. It can mean simply extending a helping hand and identifying opportunities for community growth and participation.”



LAGGING BEHIND Marthinus van Schalkwyk says the tourism industry must do more for transformation
PHOTO: ALAN TAYLOR