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Media Advisory

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KWAZULU-NATAL IS PROUD TO HOST ONE OF THE HIGHEST INTERNATIONAL LINE-UPS FOR THE 2023 COMRADES MARATHON

Durban, South Africa - June 7, 2023: This weekend, thousands of local and international runners, their families and support teams will be in KwaZulu-Natal for the 96th Comrades Marathon which will be held on Sunday, 11 June 2023 and the exceptional Zulu Kingdom is ready to welcome them with open arms.

The MEC for KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Mr Siboniso Duma said the province is ready to ensure that all runners and spectators will have a world-class experience and a memorable stay and that they would promote the Zulu Kingdom when they returned home.

“We are thrilled that the number of runners is on an incline, this year we have 2 354 international runners from 84 countries who will take on the 2023 Comrades Marathon, alongside 17 920 South African athletes who have qualified to line up at the start of this gruelling 87.70-kilometre race.

“The Comrades Marathon Association has confirmed that this is one of the highest numbers of international entrants making this a truly international event, and we hope these athletes will not only enjoy the race but take the time to explore our province - from the beach to the berg,” said MEC Duma.

The lion’s share of the international athletes are from India with 403 athletes, Zimbabwe with 255, the United Kingdom with 224, the USA with 173 and Brazil with 142 runners.

“In addition to Zimbabwe, we are pleased to see that South Africa’s SADC neighbours, Eswatini, Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia, and Malawi are listed among the top 20 international entries along with Zambia and Kenya from the rest of Africa. This is a testament to our efforts in forging greater air access linkages with our SADC neighbours.

“Other countries on the list, are the US, Brazil, Australia, Russia, Germany, Canada, the Netherlands, France, Japan and Ireland. Some of these are our key source international markets where we want to cultivate more travellers to come to KZN in the future.” Said, MEC Duma.

He pointed out that major sports events such as the Comrades Marathon were vital for the province. Not only did they highlight what KwaZulu-Natal has to offer but they provided a much-needed boost for the tourism industry. For instance, we expect 100% occupancy for Pietermaritzburg spilling over into the Midlands and that eateries will also be busy. This and other related spending have a positive economic impact on the region. Last year the estimated direct economic spend for the Comrades Marathon was over R248 million, and this year it is expected to well exceed this.

The province has a well-established history of rich cultural landscapes and a wide range of the finest destination routes. Its appeal ranges from safaris, beaches, good cuisine, and a myriad of tourism experiences. This is a good reason for runners, their families and support teams to stop and relax after months of preparation for this thrilling race and explore some of what KZN offers.

While urging Comrades’ visitors to take advantage of what’s on offer MEC Duma said he hoped that the cash injection will trickle down to all communities along the 87.70-kilometre route and throughout the province.

This year’s theme is This is it – Ziyasha, which sums up the feeling of every race participant as they prepare for the race that will test their endurance to breaking point.

“The excitement, camaraderie and spirit of the race will once again spill over thousands of spectators cheer the runners on encouraging them to keep going to the end.

“We can’t wait for the second post-pandemic Comrades Marathon this Sunday, and we wish all the runners the best of luck for this year’s down-run. Don’t leave us in a hurry, but stay on longer, rest and enjoy our hospitality,” concluded MEC Duma.

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ISSUED BY THE KZN DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS.

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