



Tourism body says Mbalula's sports ban will hurt sector

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SPORT Minister Fikile Mbalula's ban on four federations from bidding for international events could have a devastating effect on inbound tourism, an industry body has warned.

Mr Mbalula has revoked the rights of Athletics SA, Cricket SA, Netball SA and the South African

Rugby Union to bid for major international tournaments because they failed to reach their set transformation targets.

The ban will not apply retrospectively, meaning SA remains the host of the 2020 Commonwealth Games. But the minister's directive will effectively put a stop on the four federations hosting international events until April next year, when the department

will review its decision. However, the Tourism Business Council of SA (TBCSA) warned yesterday that the development could have a negative effect on inbound tourism, a key driver of growth and job creation in the sector.

Council CEO Mmatšatši Ramawela said: "We are not ignoring ... transformation.

"We face the same challenges in our sector and we would not want

to dictate to the minister how he should address the issue of transformation.

"However, given that sports events are a key driver of inbound tourism, we believe that the minister, as part of government, should reconsider his decision taking into account the possible negative consequences for sectors such as travel and tourism."

In January, the English cricket

team's tour to the country is estimated to have boosted the economy by R140m.

Department of Sports and Recreation spokesman Esethu Hasane dismissed the council's concerns as premature.

"We understand the importance of tourism, but we also have a national agenda of transforming this country."

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