



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001, Tourism House, 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside, Pretoria  
Tel. (+27 12) 444 6780, Fax: (+27 12) 444 7027, Email: [ministry@tourism.gov.za](mailto:ministry@tourism.gov.za)  
Private Bag X9154, Cape Town, 8000, 120 Plein Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Cape Town,  
Tel. (+27 21) 465 7240, Fax: (+27 21) 465 3216  
[www.tourism.gov.za](http://www.tourism.gov.za)

**Media Statement by the Office of Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk, Minister of Tourism**

**Nearly 2,5 million discount travel offers made available to South Africans to mark the start of Tourism Month 2012**

DOMESTIC TOURISTS are the lifeblood of South Africa's tourism industry, which is regarded as a major driver of the country's economic growth. This tourist grouping contributed R20,2 billion to the national economy in 2011.

This was the message from National Tourism Minister, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, as he today officially launched South Africa's National Tourism Month (September) at the Getaway Show in Johannesburg.

Minister Van Schalkwyk announced that almost 5,5 million domestic trips were taken in the first quarter of 2012, which contributed R5,2 billion to the economy. This is over R600 million, or 13%, more than last year's economic contribution over the same period.

He called on South Africans to be "tourists in their own country" and to enjoy on their doorstep that which attracts millions of foreign tourists each year: a beautiful destination, rich in culture and heritage, and unsurpassed in its warm, friendly, welcoming way of life.

"When domestic tourism grows, we create a nation of tourism ambassadors who are knowledgeable and speak positively about our destination, who warmly welcome foreign tourists, and are helpful when they meet visitors. Well-travelled locals can easily and confidently recommend to both foreign tourists and fellow South Africans the best places to visit in South Africa for the best local experiences," said Minister Van Schalkwyk.

"So, I would like to encourage all South Africans to go and explore this wonderful destination. Go and meet your fellow South Africans, spend quality time with the people you love, and reward yourself with a much-needed break from everyday life. Whatever holiday experience we crave is available right here on our doorstep, and is easy, accessible and affordable," Minister Van Schalkwyk added.

The Minister's message to the South African tourism industry was to value the customs of domestic tourists as much as they value those of foreign visitors.

"Take the leisure travel needs of domestic tourists – the lifeblood of our industry – as seriously as you take the travel needs of foreign tourists. It is critical for the tourism sector to engage fully

with domestic tourists and to hone their products and tourism offerings for the domestic market, which in 2011 accounted for 76% of the total tourism volume in the country,” Minister Van Schalkwyk said.

The Minister said South African Tourism and the country’s tourism trade were doing their utmost to stimulate domestic travel, announcing the release of nearly 2,5 million special offers to the South African public during Tourism Month, which is aimed at making leisure breaks even more accessible and affordable.

The special offer vouchers, which include substantial discounts on rates at accommodation establishments and a range of leisure travel activities countrywide, will be handed out to the thousands of visitors expected at the Getaway Show at the Coca-Cola Dome in Northgate, Johannesburg, this weekend, i.e. from 31 August to 2 September 2012. A total of 30 000 vouchers, with 82 discounted travel offers each, will be distributed at the Getaway Show. The vouchers will be redeemable from 1 September 2012. An additional 4 400 vouchers will be distributed on South African Tourism’s VayaMzansi Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/vayamzansi](http://www.facebook.com/vayamzansi), as part of the organisation’s “VayaMzansi It’s Here” domestic tourism campaign.

For the launch of Tourism Month, Minister Van Schalkwyk was joined by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Edem Duke. South Africa and Nigeria have close trade and investment ties, and Nigeria is one of South Africa’s key regional African tourism markets.

“Nigeria is a major growth market for our destination. We saw major growth of 37,5% from Nigeria in 2011, while arrivals from Nigeria grew by 28,7% in the first four months of this year. So, Nigeria is an extremely important partner of ours, and one of the countries that are critical to our plans for further regional African tourism growth,” said Minister Van Schalkwyk.

“The regional African tourist market is undoubtedly our most important tourist market, and contributed over 73% of South Africa’s total tourist arrivals and more than R50 billion’s revenue in 2011. We are therefore delighted to enjoy continued support from Africa’s tourism leaders, such as Chief Edem Duke, who we are very happy to have with us here today as we look to strengthen tourism on the continent,” Minister Van Schalkwyk added.

The Minister expressed his satisfaction with the rate of overall tourism growth from all markets at the start of 2012, which was up by 11,7% in the first four months of the year, with regional African growth up 9,8% in the same period.

“South Africa is now one of the most desirable tourist destinations in the world, and South Africans have the advantage of being able to enjoy the wonders of this destination on their doorstep,” said Minister Van Schalkwyk.

“It is our sincere aim to use this visit to continue to forge partnership and bilateral relations between Nigeria and South Africa to boost and grow our tourism sectors even further, to provide employment opportunities for our people, as well as to contribute a significant percentage to the economies of both our dear nations,” said Chief Edem Duke.

The United Nations World Travel Organisation’s World Tourism Day takes place on 27 September this year, and will be themed “Tourism and Sustainable Energy: Powering Sustainable Development”.

South Africa's World Tourism Day celebrations will take place on the same day in the Eastern Cape, while all nine provinces will mark Tourism Month with a range of activities during September.

For further information, contact:

### **Ministry of Tourism**

Melene Rossouw

Tel: 021 465 7240/082 753 7107

E-mail: [mrossouw@tourism.gov.za](mailto:mrossouw@tourism.gov.za)

### **National Department of Tourism**

Trevor Bloem

E-mail: [TBloem@tourism.gov.za](mailto:TBloem@tourism.gov.za)

Tel: 012 444 6000 / 082 771 6729