

**OPENING REMARKS BY MR TALEB RIFAI, SECRETARY GENERAL,
WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION(UNWTO)**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On behalf of the world tourism community may I thank South Africa on three counts:

- **First:** I would like to thank you personally President Zuma, for gracing this session with your presence, which reflects the great importance that you give to Travel and Tourism and the leadership you provide for the sector in your country's social and economic development.

And I hope you will forgive me, Your Excellency, if I take this opportunity to urge you to take that leadership with you into the broader international community. This sector can contribute very significantly to the two challenges that we face today, and which are in fact one and the same: that of supporting the recovery of the world economy and that of greening our activity in this planet, to pursue a more balanced, sustainable and fair growth. In this endeavour, travel and tourism can play a relevant part, especially for the world's developing economies, so many of which are important tourism exporters. And for Africa in particular, where your unique nature, culture and traditions represent an exceptional comparative advantage.

- **Second:** I want to thank your government, particularly the Ministries of Tourism and Sport, represented here today by Minister van Schalkwyk and Deputy Minister Oosthuizen, for the vision of hosting this landmark Summit on Tourism, Sport and Mega-events. And particularly, I want to thank Minister van Schalkwyk for the truly incredible collaboration we have enjoyed as well as for the support he has given to the work of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

- **Third:** for the model way in which South Africa has approached 2010 - including your outreach to make this the first African World Cup and a beacon for an inclusionary global engagement. I am certain that this will be the best world cup ever.

Ladies and gentlemen

Global challenges - the economic crisis, climate change and poverty alleviation - require global solutions. We have seen the international community coming together in increasing cooperative efforts such as the G20, or the climate talks. We are convinced that tourism can play a much more important part in addressing these challenges as set in the UNWTO *Roadmap for Recovery* and its agenda for boosting tourism's contribution to global economic resilience, stimulus and transformation to the green economy. We will continue to remind the world that travel and tourism mean exports, infrastructure development, investment, but particularly **jobs**. As we slowly return to growth we must do everything possible to galvanize tourism job creation. And in this respect sports and mega-event can make a fundamental contribution.

Our presence here today is to visibly demonstrate the strong international support and engagement of our sector with sports and mega-events and to send a message around the world that the synergies between tourism, sport and mega-events are immense. Sport and tourism capture the best of us - the wish to explore our boundaries and our sense of pride and unity. Sport and tourism bring people together in many unimaginable ways and can play a major part as instruments of change.

Who can forget the beaming face of President Mandela in a rugby jersey symbolizing the peaceful rebirth of a nation in 1995? Who can ignore the amazing outreach of a 'supercool' Germany after the 2006 FIFA Cup showed a warm and relaxed country - lifting it to the top of brand index - or forget how Barcelona, a city transformed by the Olympics, reached the highest level of international recognition? And who wasn't amazed by the innovative infrastructure developments in China in the run up to the 2008 Olympics, of which the superb design of the Beijing Airport and the iconic Beijing National Stadium, better known as the Bird's Nest, are lasting testimonies? The same can be said on the mega-events of 2010 - the Vancouver Winter Olympics, the Shanghai Expo and the Commonwealth Games in India, to quote a few.

The benefits of mega-events can be readily seen in terms of national image, new infrastructure, urban regeneration and development, more responsive trained skilled workforce and tourism

positioning. But of course, they do not come free of challenges. One of the major challenges is to ensure that any mega-event has a **legacy strategy** and is part of a nation's long-term development plan.

It is also critical that we are all aware that there is an increasingly important social and human 'legacy' deliberately built into such events which goes way beyond the economic benefits and challenges and is rightly becoming a critical component of any successful bid, including regional integration, community building and sustainability. In this respect, I must again commend South Africa's vision for the World Cup.

This is not the first Sports and Tourism Conference that we have championed, but it is the first that seeks to evaluate the importance of legacy and the immense social, environmental and economic global opportunities that can result from the links between tourism, sport and mega events.

As you said Mr President "We want to ensure that this tournament leaves a proud legacy that our children and our communities will enjoy for many years to come and which contributes to the long term development of the country".

Mr President you are so right and that is why the World Tourism Organization with our strong belief in the interrelationship of tourism, sport and development is so pleased to co-host this event, in this country at this time. To support your efforts. And to celebrate Africa's Cup and humanity with you.

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ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM ON BEHALF OF THE UNWTO