

**MEDIA STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, MR  
MARTHINUS VAN SCHALKWYK**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 19H00 Thursday 4 February 2010**

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**Minister welcomes 100 travel luminaries from Germany to South Africa**

Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk, the Minister of Tourism, today welcomed one of the largest tourism industry delegations expected to visit the country in 2010 and expressed his confidence that the delegation would be impressed by South Africa's depth of offering as a long term investment market.

"Germany is one of our most important source markets in terms of foreign arrivals and we have always cultivated a special relationship with the German travel trade. Germany is the world's fourth largest source of long haul tourists and South Africa's third largest source of foreign visitors. Over 162 000 German tourists visited South Africa between January and October 2009 alone.

"This visit represents an unparalleled opportunity to market South Africa and to build sustainable relationships. This will in turn help us achieve our goals of growing the South African tourism industry in order to stimulate economic growth, create decent jobs and empower marginalised communities," Minister van Schalkwyk said.

Minister van Schalkwyk also welcomed the fact that the members of the delegation would be able to gain firsthand experience of South Africa as a destination, especially in the light of the fact that the World Cup 2010 was less than 130 days away.

"We have seen a lot of unwarranted scepticism about South Africa's readiness to host the World Cup. Our message to the world continues to consistently be that we are on track with all our preparations, ranging from stadiums, transport, infrastructure, security measures and accommodation to visa measures.

"I am very certain that the members of this visiting delegation will be able to see our readiness for themselves and experience the hospitality, vibrancy and enthusiasm that South Africa is famous for. I would appeal to them to take this message back home to Germany with them," Minister van Schalkwyk said.

Mr. Adi Juen, Regional Director, TUI Germany will lead over 100 German travel agents, TUI management and trade press to South Africa. The delegation will meet with South African travel industry heavyweights, including Minister van Schalkwyk, South African Tourism and Cape Town Routes Unlimited.

TUI Germany is a wholly owned subsidiary of TUI Travel PLC, the world's biggest travel company listed on the LSE. TUI Travel PLC has operations in 180 countries and services over 30 million customers annually.

"TUI Germany's recent investment in a South Africa Winter Travel Catalogue demonstrates its confidence in the destination despite the global down turn in long haul holidays" said Juen.

Minister van Schalkwyk said the powerful combination of TUI's new winter catalogue, the attendance of high profile TUI executives, and the presence of 90 of TUI's leading travel sellers will ensure that South Africa remains a priority destination for TUI and German travellers throughout 2010.

The presence of Christian Bärwind, TUI Germany's Director Longhaul Africa, Orient & Indian Ocean and Dr. Oliver Dörschuck, Vice President Business Manager Longhaul evidenced the importance of this trip to TUI Germany as well as the broader German travel trade.

"Juen, Bärwind and Dörschuck will be accompanied by 90 of TUI's best selling travel agents who, collectively, hold the power to deliver a significant increase in German arrivals to South Africa," said Theresa Bay-Mueller, South African Tourism's Country Manager in Germany.

"Add to this the participants from leading German trade publications, including Travel Talk, Travel One, and Touristik aktuell, and you have all the elements of the kind of visit which will take brand South Africa to a new level in the German market in 2010," concluded Bay-Mueller.

A week-long programme of high level discussions kicks off in Cape Town on 4 February with a dinner at the Grand Café and Beach Restaurant at Granger Bay followed by a beach party. While in South Africa the delegation will discover Cape Town and the winelands as well as experience, first hand, the Eastern Cape's legendary wild life.

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