

MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE OFFICE OF MARTHINUS VAN SCHALKWYK, MINISTER OF TOURISM, SOUTH AFRICA

T. 20 TOURISM MINISTERS MEETING IN MERIDA, MEXICO 2012

The Minister of Tourism, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk attended the 4th T.20 Ministers Meeting (Ministers of Tourism of the G20 countries) that was held in Merida, Mexico on 15-16 May 2012. The South African Minister hosted the inaugural T.20 Ministers Meeting in Sandton in February 2010. The T.20 has since met in South Korea and France.

International tourism contributes substantially to the economies of the G20 nations. In 2011, 656 million international travellers visited G20 countries, which is 67% of all international tourist arrivals. These travellers spent approximately US\$ 830 billion, generating 78 million jobs. Reducing barriers to tourism represents a clear opportunity for governments of G20 countries to encourage visitor spend, thereby stimulating job creation.

Research by the UNWTO and World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) presented at the meeting showed that in 2011, 109 million tourists visiting G20 countries required a visa. This represents 17% of the total international tourism market to the G20. Based on this, the meeting participants considered that improvements in visa facilitation could result in opportunities to stimulate wealth creation and employment generation. This same research suggests that the development and implementation of visa facilitation processes by the G.20 countries could generate up to 112 million additional international tourists by 2015, increase tourism receipts by as much as US\$ 206 billion and create up to 5.1 million additional jobs during the next three years. Minister van Schalkwyk said that Tourism Ministers support the E-Visa concept because it is an opportunity to simultaneously enhance security and facilitate travel.

Minister van Schalkwyk also alluded to the ever increasing challenge of double counting and double taxation of aviation emissions. In support of his submission, he pointed out that 43 per cent of all international tourists globally arrive by air. Civilian air transport, which involved some 1 570 airlines, operating 24 000 commercial aircrafts serving 3 850 airports and which connects just under 35 000 city pairs globally is the lifeblood of the tourism industry. The Minister said that “unilaterally introduced and unfair taxes on air transport or retaliatory taxes will ultimately have a negative effect on tourists and those employed in the tourism sector. We need a sensible and reasonable global solution. This is a transnational sector requiring a global approach.”

Find below the Final Declaration of the T.20 Tourism Ministers Meeting.

Ends.

Ministry of Tourism

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FINAL DECLARATION OF THE T.20TOURISM MINISTERS MEETING

4th T20 MEETING

Merida, Mexico – 16 May2012

DECLARATION

1. The G20 Ministers of Tourism and Heads of Delegation of G20 member countries and other invited States, as well as representatives from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Air Transport Association (IATA) and International Trade Centre (ITC), met in Merida, Mexico, on May 16th 2012, and focused on ‘Tourism as a means to Job Creation’.

I. Importance of Travel and Tourism

2. Tourism accounts for as much as 9% of world's GDP, considering its direct, indirect and induced impacts(1).
3. Tourism represents one of the fastest growing economic activities. In comparison with other sectors, it is also one of the most resilient. In 2011, amidst growing economic uncertainties, international tourist arrivals grew by 4.6% to reach 982 million, whilst international tourism receipts grew by 3.8%2.
4. Forecasts suggest that tourism will experience sustained development in the coming years, reaching one billion international travellers in 2012 and 1.8 billion in 20302.
5. Tourism is a major driver of job creation, accounting for 8% of global employment. Each job in the tourism sector is estimated to create up to two jobs in other sectors. Tourism also creates significantly more jobs than other industries, employing six times more people than the global automotive manufacturing sector, four times more than the mining sector, and a third more than the financial sector(1). We firmly believe that productivity and service quality of the tourism sector offer a unique opportunity for poverty reduction and entry point, especially for young workers.
6. Tourism plays a major role in international trade. Exports from international tourism (including passengers' transport) reached over US\$ 1.2 trillion or 30% of the world's service exports, in 20112.
7. Representing around 45% of service exports for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), tourism provides one of the most competitive paths to access the global economy, and has therefore been identified by most LDCs and Small Island Development States (SIDS) as a powerful engine for economic growth and poverty reduction(2).

(1
(2 Source: UNWTO)

Source:

WTTC)

II. Tourism as a driver for economic growth

8. At a time when economic growth and job creation are at the top of the global agenda, Mexico, as the G20 President, and host of the Leaders' Summit in June 2012, has defined the generation of quality jobs within the Framework to Promote Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth as one of its priorities.

9. To ensure that tourism can play a key role in creating employment opportunities, both directly and indirectly through linkages to the local economy, raising national income, improving the balance of payments and boosting economic growth, priority should be given to facilitating travel and tourism.

10. Preliminary research by UNWTO and WTTC presented at the meetings shows that in 2011, 656 million international tourists visited G20 countries. Of these, an estimated 109 million tourists originated from source markets which required a visa. This represents 17% of the total international tourism market to the G20. Based on this, the meeting participants consider that improvements in visa facilitation could result in opportunities to stimulate wealth creation and job generation.

11. This same preliminary research suggests that the development and implementation of visa facilitation processes by the G20 countries could generate up to 112 million additional international tourists by 2015, increase tourism receipts by as much as an additional US\$ 206 billion, and create an estimate of up to 5.1 million additional jobs during the next three years, amongst the G20 economies.

III. Proposal

12. In an era of globalisation, States have the opportunity to promote travel and tourism as an economic activity, whilst maintaining national security.

13. We recognize the sovereign right of States to control the entry of foreign nationals to their territories within the framework of their international commitments, and we invite them to consider the following:

14. Leveraging new technology, including electronic visa processes and delivery, as appropriate to the visa regime of each State, could make travel more accessible, convenient, and more efficient without a diminution of national security.

15. Bilateral, regional and international cooperation on visa and other travel facilitation arrangements could be explored to allow international visitors to move more freely and efficiently. We therefore propose, at each Member States' discretion, the exploration, and possible implementation of bilateral, regional and international visa facilitation programs and other travel facilitation regimes which benefit the entire region.

16. G20 Ministers of Tourism and other invited States work within the framework of their international commitments, together with International Organizations, to improve visa regimes and issuance processes without detriment to the authority or security of each State.

17. Member States will further work to ensure fast, transparent and effective travel facilitation and visa programs based upon existing international commitments, for the purpose of increasing

travel and tourism and job creation.

18. We therefore encourage that the G20 recognizes the role of travel and tourism as a vehicle for job creation, economic growth and development, and commit to travel facilitation as a conduit for job creation, decent work, poverty alleviation and global growth.

19. We express our gratitude to President Calderon for his decision to propose the inclusion of the role of travel and tourism in the preparatory work of the G20 in regards to growth and employment, and our appreciation to the Minister of Tourism, Ms Gloria Guevara Manzo, for the leadership in hosting the 4th T.20 Ministers' Meeting.

20. We express our appreciation to the Government of Russia for its gracious invitation to host the 5th T.20 Ministers' Meeting.

Merida, 16 May 2012.