



tourism

Department:  
Tourism  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **Accolade for Africa - South Africa gets ready for seat on UNWTO Executive Council**

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South Africa was recently nominated to serve on the executive council of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). At its 64th Meeting held in the Island of Sal, Cabo Verde on 2 September 2021, the UNWTO Commission for Africa (CAF) nominated South Africa for one of the five seats available for the Africa region for the UNWTO Executive Council for 2021-2025. This is in line with the provisions of South Africa's foreign policy which supports the development of the region and the continent. Other countries nominated include Zambia, Mozambique, Morocco and Cabo Verde.

The UNWTO is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. As the leading international organisation in the field of tourism, UNWTO promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.

As the Executive Council is the governing board of the UNWTO and is responsible for ensuring that the organisation carries out its work and adheres to its budget, the four-year term on the Executive Council will strategically position South Africa in the global system of tourism governance to enhance international response to the needs of South Africa and African countries. The term on the Executive Council will also intensify South Africa's cooperation with the global tourism sector to position tourism as a key driver for economic recovery from COVID-19 pandemic, job creation, poverty eradication and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. South Africa's nomination also promotes the principle of rotation within the UNWTO Executive Council and will enable South Africa to contribute capacity given its track record of having served on the Executive Council for three terms (1996-1999, 2010-2013 and 2014-2017).

South Africa's nomination will be approved by the 24th Session of the UNWTO General Assembly to be held in Marrakesh, Morocco on 30 November to 3 December 2021. The UNWTO General Assembly is the supreme organ of the Organisation and meets every two years to inter alia approve the Programme of Work and Budget and elect Members to the Executive Council.

"Our membership of the executive council, will assist to reposition Africa, establish our continent as a destination of choice and highlight our tourism offerings for travellers. It will be a great honour for us to serve Africa in this way, advancing Brand Africa and unlocking growth for the continent. Through this, we will intensify our cooperation and contribute to the global tourism sector," says the Director-General of the Department of Tourism, Mr Victor Tharage.

Tourism is a significant economic pillar and lever for job creation and income generation in South Africa. It directly accounts for 2.9% of South Africa's GDP and 8.6% indirectly and this industry supports about one-and-a-half million direct and indirect jobs. It supports a vibrant and complex value chain and it generates foreign direct investment and significant export earnings.

### **Enquiries:**

**Mr Blessing Manale**  
**Chief Director: Communications**  
**Department of Tourism**  
Cell: +27 (0)66 487 8867  
Email: [bmanale@tourism.gov.za](mailto:bmanale@tourism.gov.za)