



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa. Tel. (+27 12) 444 6780, Fax (+27 12) 444 7027
Private Bag X9154, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa. Tel. (+27 21) 469 5800, Fax: (+27 21) 465 3216

Africa agrees to tourism program

06 June 2018

A comprehensive program has been established to strengthen the role of tourism as a key driver of Africa's economy.

Tourism Ministers from across the continent yesterday adopted the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's program of work for Africa at the 61st meeting of the Commission for Africa in Abuja, Nigeria.

South Africa's Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, was the Vice-Chairperson of the ground-breaking meeting.

"This is a significant milestone for tourism on our continent," said Minister Hanekom. "We have agreed to implement a series of measures which will develop and grow tourism in a way that advances economic transformation across Africa."

"Tourism has untapped potential to transform the economies of many countries on the continent. The program provides all our countries with a shared plan to unlock this potential for the benefit of all our people."

Last year Africa welcomed 62 million visitors, which is only 5% of the world's travellers, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization. The UNWTO believes that arrivals could double in the next decade with the right collaboration, policies and investment into the sector.

Africa's tourism sector grew by 8% in 2017, about 1% above the global average, and continued growth is expected in the future. Tourism already contributes about 8 % to Africa's GDP and employs 6.5% of the workforce directly and indirectly, according to the UNWTO.

The program identifies ten focus areas for developing tourism:

- Enhancing Brand Africa by addressing negative perceptions;
- Facilitating travel, air connectivity and visas through improved regulations;
- Strengthening systems to collect tourism statistics;
- Building capacity through training facilities and promoting certification;
- Promoting innovation and technology;
- Managing crisis communication and media messaging by addressing information needs of all stakeholders;
- Promoting and attracting investment through Public Private Partnerships and fostering entrepreneurship;
- Empowering youth and women through building capacity and creating opportunities;
- Advancing sustainability and biodiversity through strengthening practices and wild life conservation;
- Promoting cultural heritage effective strategies and policies.

Minister Hanekom said South Africa's recently revised National Tourism Sector Strategy was already closely aligned to the goals embodied in the UNWTO's development program.

"We will not need to make major changes to our national developmental policies or growth strategy in South Africa to fulfill the goals of the program," said Minister Hanekom. "We are on the right track, and

we are ready to support and collaborate with our sister countries on the continent to implement the program and transform our economies.”

South Africa was elected as one of the Vice-Chairs of CAF until 2019 at the 60th meeting in Chengdu, China, last year. The Chair is Kenya and the other Vice-Chair is Gambia.

The UNWTO reported that it had raised resources to strengthen the branding of tourism in Africa.

The meeting noted that a tourism programme and supportive institutional mechanisms were being developed under the African Union. Tourism Ministers called for closer collaboration and harmonization between the tourism development work of the UNWTO and the AU.

Enquiries:

Mr Praveen Naidoo

Ministry of Tourism

Cell: +27 (0) 71 677 5004

Email: pnaidoo@tourism.gov.za