

NDT POLICY WATCH QUARTERLY UPDATE

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INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL POLICY
DEVELOPMENTS



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

1. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

International Air Transport Association Releases 2013 Statistics on Safety Performance.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) released 2013 statistics on commercial aviation safety performance. Tony Tyler, IATA Director General and CEO, highlighted safety as the highest priority and noted aviation industry's unity in its commitment to ensure continuous safety improvements. IATA also called on governments and industry to focus on partnerships, data analysis and runway safety in the on-going quest to make flying even safer.

With regard to safety figures, IATA reported a decrease of fatalities, from 414 commercial aviation accidents in 2012, to 210 fatalities in 2013. Moreover, the 2013 global Western-built jet accident rate of commercial aviation which is measured in hull losses per million flights of Western built jets, was reported at 0.41 percent. This, it was reported, is equivalent to one accident for every 2.4 million flights¹. Although the percentage appears to be low, this was a step back when compared to 2012 results, which were at 0.21 percent of global Western-built jet per accident. The latter figure was reported as the lowest in history. Most importantly, when looked over a period of five years i.e. from 2009 to 2013, the year 2013 shows a 14.6 percent improvement on the five-year average of 0.48 percent².

Regionally, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean saw their safety performance improve in 2013, when compared to 2012. Put differently, Africa moved from 4.55 percent to 2.03 percent whilst Latin America and the Caribbean moved from 0.45 percent in 2012, to 0.44 percent³ in 2013. Asia-Pacific, Commonwealth Independent States, Middle East - North Africa and North America experienced a decline in safety performance.

In the light of the above figures and safety improvements, IATA Director General emphasised the significance of a commitment from all stakeholders, including governments. According to IATA, effective safety oversight can only be achieved through implementation of International Civil Aviation Organisation's (ICAO) safety standards and practices. IATA has indicated by that only 11 African states have achieved 60 percent implementation of safety related standards and recommended practices.

IATA advocates for improvement in safety measures

Following the recent disappearance of Malaysian flight MH370, IATA has called on the industry and governments to focus on partnerships, data analysis and runway safety to make flying even safer. IATA also committed to facilitate a unified industry position on global tracking of aircraft and urged governments to make more effective use of passenger data⁴.

On partnerships, IATA pointed out that every flight taking off involves thousands of coordinated actions from various business and organisations. Therefore, IATA saw a need not only to understand and work with partners every day, but also to compare notes and collaborate in ensuring global safety standards.

¹ Koumelis, T. (2014) IATA releases 2013 safety performance. <http://www.traveldailynews.com>

² As cited in Koumelis April 2014.

³ International Air Transport Association. (2014). IATA Safety Fact Sheet- Results as of 31 December 2013.

⁴Rokou T. (2014) International Air Transport Association: Making a safe industry even safer. <http://www.traveldailynews.com>.

Effective data analysis was also seen as a driver of safety improvements. According to IATA, 'the major thrust for safety improvements has historically come through the well-established system of air accident investigations'⁵. It was reported that accidents investigations will continue to play a significant role in safety. However, there was a concern that with fewer accidents, it becomes increasingly difficult to produce trend data, which is critical in managing safety. Despite the trends data challenges, IATA indicated that they have established the Global Aviation Data Management Project, which includes data from 600 sources, making it the most comprehensive collection of industry information on safety.

With regard to runway safety, information analysis was seen as the driving force. IATA reported that the focus has been historically on runway excursions but has now been broadened to the discussion on runway safety, including the whole runway environment, air traffic management, airports and airlines. The approach will allow decision makers not only to understand what happened when the aircraft landed, but to have access to airport data on conditions around that runway.

On aircraft tracking, IATA reported that the disappearance of Malaysia flight MH370 has highlighted the need to improve tracking of aircrafts **in-flight**. According to IATA, 'it is unbelievable that an aircraft could simply disappear, especially in this world where our every move can be tracked'. Accordingly, IATA has expressed confidence in the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) to come up with a global solution to this problem. Lastly, IATA highlighted the significance of passenger data and indicated that airlines are not border guards. Amongst other things, IATA proposed the harmonisation of passenger data collected by airlines on the ICAO standard elements, elimination of collecting passenger and cargo data using paper forms and creation of a single harmonised window, through which airlines can submit electronic data to governments.

Air Connectivity key to seizing Africa's Tourism Potential

United Nations World Tourism Organisation's (UNWTO) African Members States gathered from the 28th to 30th April 2014, on the occasion of the 56th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Africa, to discuss tourism and air transport. The African Members States highlighted the need for better coordination between tourism and air transport policies, to fully explore the tourism sector's capacity to deliver on growth and development in the continent. The meeting also discussed the on-going poaching crisis in the African continent and its negative impact on tourism.

UNWTO Commission for Africa meeting and the seminar on Tourism and Air Connectivity in Africa discussed ways to overcome existing barriers in advancing Africa's tourism. This included a discussion on travel facilitation, air connectivity and infrastructure development. Underlying the aforementioned discussion was the understanding that international tourists' arrivals in Africa have repeatedly outgrown other regions over the last decades. It also reported that by 2030 Africa's international tourists' numbers could grow from the current 56 million to 134 million⁶. Taleb Rifai, UNWTO Secretary General, indicated that tourism accounts for 7 percent of all exports in Africa and 58 percent of its service exports and is one of the most important sectors for the economies of the continent.

⁵ As cited in Rokou, April 2014.

⁶ United Nations World Tourism Organisation. (2014). Air Connectivity key to seizing Africa's tourism potential Press Release no 14031. <http://media.unwto.org>.

He also emphasised the significance of working towards a better alignment of tourism and air transport policies in the region in order to realise the potential that tourism has in promoting growth and development in Africa.

With regard to factors hampering the development of tourism and air transport, producing sub-optimal air transport and tourism policies, infrastructure limitations, unsuitable taxation, restrictive visa policies, and lack of consideration of tourism benefits and coordination between tourism and aviation, were identified as challenges. Critically, the seminar laid groundwork for the first UNWTO and ICAO Tourism and Transport Ministerial Conference for Africa, scheduled for the 14th and 15th of October 2014 in Seychelles.

Proposed Measures by the European Commission to facilitate the processing of Schengen Visa

The European Commission proposed a package of measures to facilitate Schengen Visa. The new measures are aimed at improving application process, facilitating repeat travel and introducing a new visa allowing stays longer than 90 days⁷. This initiative was welcomed in the context of reducing barriers to tourism growth from valuable origin markets to benefit the whole European Union economy. It was reported that the visa code, which has been in existence since 2010, brought gradual improvements.

However, challenges relating to bureaucratic red tape; lack of application material on mother tongue and online access; the cost of attending interviews and inconsistency of information requirements were reported by the original markets. As a result of numerous challenges, it was reported that some people give up halfway towards completing an application or decide to go elsewhere. For example, the visa regime in question requires details of a holiday accommodation. This, it was reported, cannot be confirmed until tourists' group sizes are finalised. Such requirements lead to loss of potential business.

The European Commission acknowledged that the proposal will not solve all problems but will promote intelligent travel facilitation, whilst controlling irregular migration and ensuring appropriate level of security. Most importantly, the European Commission recognised that streamlined processes and consular cooperation will provide necessary correction to Schengen areas' challenges. Supporters of the package view the initiative as a critical step towards creating a transparent, efficient and smarter visa policy that will contribute towards Europe's economy, by attracting visitors from source markets like China, India and South Africa⁸.

UNWTO cautions against potential tourism tax in Africa

UNWTO has expressed grave concern about the negative impact that a new tourism tax on air passengers and hotel guests in Africa would have on the tourism sector. This, according to UNWTO, is currently being discussed amongst African Union Members.

⁷ Rokou, T. (2014). European Commission proposed a package of measures to facilitate Schengen visa processing. <http://www.traveldailynews.com>.

⁸ As cited in Rokou T

The discussion, it was reported, has also created anxiety amongst Tourism Ministers in Africa and was raised as a concern in the 56th meeting of UNWTO Commission for Africa, which was held in Angola in April 2014⁹.

UNWTO pointed out that tourism is one of the main contributors to Africa's balance of payments, a source of livelihood for millions and one of the sectors where the region has a competitive advantage in international markets. Accordingly, UNWTO Secretary General cautioned that, 'a tourism tax in Africa is a threat to the competitiveness of the region and to all economies that have tourism as a key pillar to their development'. Furthermore, UNWTO indicated that although Africa received 56 million visitors in 2013 and generated US\$34 billion in exports in Africa, tourism is still in its early development stage and faces several barriers to its growth and competitiveness¹⁰. UNWTO has been consistent in its opposition to taxes and Air Passenger Duties (APD) because of its negative impact to tourism growth.

United Kingdom (UK), which was fiercely criticised by UNWTO for its passenger duties, has taken a decision to reform its APD. UNWTO has welcomed this move and highlighted that the APD, which has been in place in the UK since 2008, has significantly hindered tourism and created market distortion, affecting long-haul destinations¹¹. UNWTO reported that the UK review follows that of countries like Netherlands, Ireland, Germany, and Australia, which froze the Passenger Movement Charge.

2. OTHER INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Poaching in Africa a threat to Tourism and Livelihoods

UNWTO held a discussion on the on-going poaching crisis and its impact on tourism and livelihoods of millions living off the sector in the region. The discussion occurred during the occasion of UNWTO Commission for Africa Meeting held on the 28-30th April 2014. Amongst the resolutions, member states mandated UNWTO to pursue its advocacy work around anti-poaching and explore ways in which the tourism sector can assist in contributing to the global fight against wildlife crime¹².

The notion of exploring ways in which tourism can assist came up after a report by UNWTO confirmed that wildlife-watching-tourism is one of the main tourism draw cards in the majority of African regions. The report highlighted that about 80 to 90 percent of tourists are wildlife-watching-tourists in protected areas. The report went as far as indicating that illegal wildlife trade has a potential of affecting tourism development, raising safety concerns for visitors and changing the international perceptions on African destinations.

Literature on illegal poaching of wildlife indicates that the negative impact of such activities affects one of South Africa's lucrative sectors i.e. tourism and has a potential of getting worse.

⁹United Nations World Tourism Organisation. (2014).UNWTO cautions against potential tourism tax in Africa. Press Release no 14033. <http://media.unwto.org>

¹⁰ As cited in the UNWTO Press Release

¹¹Karantzavelou, V. (2014) UNWTO welcomes the UK government decision to review the Air Passenger Duty. <http://www.traveldailynews.com>.

¹² United Nations World Tourism Organisation. (2014). poaching in Africa: a threat to tourism and livelihoods. Press Release No 14031. <http://media.unwto.org>

This is currently happening in Tanzania where the Tanzanian Wildlife Research Institute reported that poaching of elephants has contributed to a declining tourism economy over the last two years¹³.

Migratory Birds and Sustainable Tourism

On the 10th -11th May 2014, UNWTO celebrated the World Migratory Bird Day, which is celebrated in over 70 countries. The 2014 theme focused on the role sustainable tourism can play in conserving what UNWTO referred to as 'the world's natural wonder i.e. the spectacular movement of migratory birds along their flyways'¹⁴.

Dubbed Destination Flyways-Migratory Birds and Tourism, the project aims to develop sustainable tourism at destinations along the world's major migratory bird route. It also seeks to provide a framework for sustainable tourism management, diversifying and channeling its revenue back into sites conserving birds' habitats and creating jobs for local communities along flyways.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon indicated that tourism is the generator of national wealth, corporate income and local employment. He further pointed out that sustainable management of tourism can benefit people and the planet alike. UNWTO also emphasised the significance of tourism in advancing biodiversity protection. This was raised in the context of flora and fauna's ability to attract millions of tourists.

Airline On-time Performance Report.

FLIGHTSTATS released the Airline On-time Performance Report for the period of 01 March 2014 to 31 March 2014. The report compares on-time arrival performance of scheduled passenger flights operated by top airlines throughout various regions. The report breaks down data by carrier, on-time, late, very late and excessively late arrivals and departures, as well as flights cancelled.

Lufthansa topped the global list with 93.09 percent on-time arrivals on a sample of 31 308 Lufthansa flights. The percentage of late arrivals of the same airline was at 4.72 percent, very late arrivals at 1.09 percent and excessively late at 1.09¹⁵. The percentage of cancelled flights for Lufthansa was at 1.09. Air Europa, Austrian Airlines and Air Berlin were amongst the top five globally on on-time arrivals. Late arrivals means being late by 15-30 minutes, very late means being late by 30-44 minutes whilst excessively late means being late by 45+ minutes.

With regard to Middle East and Africa, Gulf Air topped the list, followed by Saudi Arabian and South African Airways respectively. On a sample of 4 157 flights, South African Airways on-time arrivals was at 85.34 percent. The percentage of late arrivals for the South African Airways was at 8.04 percent, very late arrivals at 3.04 percent and excessively late at 3.57 percent. The cancelled flights were at 0.38 percent.

¹³ The Green Times (2013). Rhino losses could impact lucrative tourism industry. <http://thegreentimes.co.za/rhino-losses-could-impact-sas-lucrative-tourism-industry>

¹⁴ United Nations World Tourism Organisation. (2014). World Migratory Bird Day 2014 spotlights pioneering sustainable tourism initiative. Press Release no 14032. <http://media.unwto.org>.

¹⁵ FLIGHTSTATS On-Time Performance Report. Summary of airline arrival performance for the period March 1 2014 through March 31 2014. Published 04 April 2014.

Delta Airlines introduces sleep kits for international economy customers.

A new sleep kit including several updated amenities for passengers has been introduced by Delta Airlines. The new kit is targeted at passengers seated in the economy cabin on long-haul international flights¹⁶. The sleep kit, which is to be offered by flight attendants to each customer, include individual eyeshades and ear plugs, to help passengers get better rest when travelling between the continents.

Moreover, it was reported that all Trans-Atlantic flights of 3850 miles or less from United States (US) to Europe in the economy cabin will get a full-size bottle of water following meal service and updated snack offerings for morning and afternoon/evening arrivals. In addition, it was reported that a mid-flight ice cream service will also be offered. These services are intended to expand to long-haul international flights in early summer.

The introduction of some new amenities will also extend to customers flying domestic first class. Domestically, customers will be offered ear-buds that will be theirs to keep and use with Delta's seatback entertainment systems. Delta pointed out that they are the only US carrier to offer personal on demand entertainment at every seat on all long-haul international flights.

UNWTO Member states set priorities for European tourism

The 57th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe, held in Azerbaijan on the 3rd and 4th of April 2014 identified international cooperation, innovation, private-public partnerships and accessibility as the main priorities towards ensuring tourism competitiveness. Titled 'Developing Effective Tourism Clusters', the seminar deliberated on innovative collaborative approaches for sustainable tourism development in Europe.

Apart from that, short term challenges were identified. These amongst others included travel facilitation, connectivity and taxation¹⁷. The issue of private-public partnerships and the creation of a favourable business environment to stimulate investment and innovation were also identified as critical.

The Commission concluded that Europe ought to take the lead on issues of innovation and inclusive tourism in the light of the globally competitive tourism industry. Such leadership, the Commission indicated, would include exploring new models of cooperation which effectively bring diverse stakeholders involved in delivering a tourism experience together. In addition, the significance of tourism policy to consider the fragmented nature of tourism was seen as paramount.

3. NATIONAL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

Tourism Act No 3 of 2014

The Tourism Act No. 3 of 2014 was signed into law by the President on the 07th April 2014. The Act makes provision for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism for the social, economic and environmental benefit of South African citizens, provides for the continued existence of the South African Tourism Board, provides for the establishment of the Tourism Grading Council,

¹⁶ Rokou, T. (2014). Delta introduces sleep kits for international economy customers and adds new amenities. <http://www.traveldailynews.co.za>

¹⁷ Rokou, T. (2014). UNWTO member states set priorities for European Tourism. <http://www.traveldailynews.com>

and regulates the tourist guide profession. The objectives of the Act include promoting responsible tourism practices, ensuring effective marketing of South Africa (domestically and abroad) and promoting quality tourism products. In addition, the Act advocates for the promotion of economic growth and development of tourism and the establishment of concrete intergovernmental relations to develop and manage tourism¹⁸.

The Act empowers the Minister to designate a suitably qualified officer within the National Department of Tourism, as the Tourism Complaints Officer. The Act stipulates that the Tourism Complaints Officer must deal with any complaints received in respect of tourism services, facilities or products. With regard to resolving complaints, the Act outlines institutions wherein the complaint can be referred to by the Tourism Complaint Officer. These include handing over the complaint to amongst others, an accredited scheme, National Consumer Commission, South African Police Service if a complaint alleges that a person has committed an offence, Equality Court if the complaint alleges unfair discrimination against the tourist and any other authority with jurisdiction over the matter or deal with the matter in the prescribed manner. The Minister of Tourism is also mandated by the Act to establish a national tourism information system.

A significant output of the Tourism Act No. 3 of 2014 will be the establishment of the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) as a legal entity. The Act makes provision for TGCSA to be responsible for the implementation of a grading system that will oversee quality assurance of tourism product, services and facilities. This is an important step towards improving the quality of tourism products being offered to consumers. The enactment of the Tourism Act no 3 of 2014 has ensured that tourism legislative framework is in line with the Constitution of South Africa.

Airports Company South Africa increased tariffs by 5.6 percent with effect from 01st April 2014

Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) has increased its tariffs by 5.6%, effective from 01st April 2014¹⁹. The increase, which was approved by the Regulating Committee, was implemented in consultation with the relevant industry stakeholders. The tariff increase was published in the government gazette dated 20 December 2013 (Notice 1228 of 2013) as required by the Airports Company Act No 44 of 1993. According to ACSA's Financial Director, 'airport charges are one of the revenue sources for the company and that this practice is not peculiar to South Africa's aviation industry but a standard practice globally'.

In addition, the Financial Director indicated that the increase is CPI-linked and considered the sluggish economic conditions and the impact of high fuel prices on the operational viability of the aviation industry. The tariff increases, ACSA remarked, represent the period whereby the company continues to recoup the R17 billion-investment made during the period 2007 to 2010.

With regard to the increase, the domestic charge is at R127, regional charge at R263 (i.e. Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland) and International charge at R346²⁰. The aforementioned increase covers the Passenger Service Charge, which includes VAT.

¹⁸ Tourism Act no 3 of 2014

¹⁹ Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) Communication (2014). Airports Company South Africa increases Tariffs by 5.6 percent with effect from 1 April 2014. <http://www.acsa.co.za>

²⁰ As cited in ACSA Communication

Airports Company South Africa has proposed a review of the current economic regulatory framework to ensure transparency, predictability and balancing rewards and risks. Numerous countries have reviewed airport tariffs to ensure competitiveness. Countries such as the UK, Netherlands, Ireland Germany, and Australia have scrapped the passenger movement charge in order to increase their competitiveness.

New Immigration Regulations Introduced by Department of Home Affairs.

The Department of Home Affairs has introduced new regulations in terms of the Immigration Act no 13 of 2002. The Act seeks to, amongst other things, ensure that temporary and permanent residence permits are issued expeditiously; security considerations are fully satisfied; the state retains control on the immigration of foreigners into the Republic and that ports of entry are efficiently administered. In addition, the Act seeks to promote economic growth by facilitating foreign investment, tourism and industries in the Republic which are reliant on international exchange of people and personnel.

The new regulations require that an applicant for a visitors' permit ought to provide amongst other things, residential address of the intended place of stay within the Republic and business, residential or physical address for his/her host in the Republic and undertake to report any changes of address at the nearest office of the Department of Home Affairs within 48 hours of such change. Most importantly, the new regulations require that a visitor subject himself/or herself for biometric verification prior to admission in the Republic and upon departure from the Republic.

With regard to parents travelling with children, the regulations require such parents to produce an unabridged birth certificate of a child, reflecting the particulars of the parents of the child. In the case of one parent travelling with the child, he/she is expected to produce an unabridged birth certificate, and consent in the form of an affidavit from the other parent registered as a parent on the birth certificate of a child, authorising the other parent to travel with the child. The parent is also required to provide a court order granting full parental responsibilities and rights or legal guardianship in respect of a child and where applicable a death certificate of the other parent registered as the parent of the child on the birth certificate.

In cases where the parents are both deceased, the Director-General may approve such a person travelling with a child to enter or depart from the Republic with such a child. In addition, where a child is travelling with a person not a biological parent, such a person must produce a copy of an unabridged certificate of the child, affidavits from parents or guardian confirming their permission, copies of identity documents of both parents and contact details of the parent or guardian of the child.

In the light of the above immigration developments, relevant stakeholders are engaged in on-going discussions with a view to find a common understanding on implications to tourism.

Final Draft Environmental Management Framework for the Vredefort Dome World Heritage Site

The Minister of Environmental Affairs has, in line with the provisions of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) 107 of 1998, gazetted the intention to adopt the Environmental Management Framework for the Vredefort Dome World Heritage Site, under regulation 5(4) read with regulations 3 and 4 of the Environmental Management Framework Regulation, 2010 in Government Gazette No 37653 on the 23rd May 2014.

Members of the public are invited to submit to the Minister, within 30 days after the publication of the notice in the Gazette, written representations or comments. The gazette can be accessed on the Department of Environmental Affairs website.

Inputs can be sent to The Director General, Department of Environmental Affairs, attention Mr. Bradley Nethononda, Private Bag x447. Pretoria 0001, or faxed at 0123103688 and or bnethononda@environment.gov.za.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

City of Johannesburg (COJ) Metrobus to go green

The COJ is reported to be expanding its dual-fuel Metrobus fleet and will help in growing bio crops used to produce the fuel. According to the Mayor of the City of Johannesburg, '150 new buses using dual fuel will be purchased in the coming year and an additional 30 more converted to run on a mixture of compressed natural gas and diesel'.²¹ The city further indicated that the buses are significantly cleaner than the diesel versions, emitting 90 percent less carbon emissions into the environment.

Delivering his State of the City Address, the Mayor indicated that biogas fuel can be sourced from a range of natural products, including grass cut by City Parks; biowaste from the fresh produce market and bio crops especially grown for this purpose. The city expects this to create jobs in agriculture and waste sectors, including local manufacturing of biodigesters which produces biogas.

The city hopes that this will divert waste away from landfills, which is one of its priorities. There was also an indication that the initiative can be extended to public and private transport. Most importantly, the COJ intends to partner with the private sector to accelerate implementation of waste-to-energy-projects, which will ensure attainment of 70 percent reduction by 2030.

Bus increase in MyCiTi routes in the City of Cape Town

The City of Cape Town intends to introduce 106 new buses on various routes (i.e. MyCiTi routes) across the city, and the first nine new buses were intended to become operational on the 9th of June 2014. The city reported that the first deployment, comprising nine 12 metre buses, will be on a popular T01 route (i.e. Dunoon, Table View, Civic Centre) and the recently launched T03 route (which is Atlantis, Table View and Civic Centre), which will improve commuters experience²².

The R25 million investment in the initial phase is hoped to shorten waiting times and provide more comfortable rides during the morning and afternoon peak hours for commuters. This, according to the city, is in line with its commitment to building a well-run city and an inclusive city where all residents have easy access to affordable, reliable and safe public transport, linking them with opportunities beyond their neighbourhoods.

The city expressed satisfaction on the fact that more residents in Atlantis prefer the MyCiTi bus service over other modes of transport.

²¹ <http://www.joburg.org.za>

²² <http://www.capetown.gov.za>

According to the city's numbers, over 12 333 passengers have boarded MyCiTi buses at the Atlantis Station and an additional 17 400 passengers have boarded the MyCiTi buses on the five feeder routes²³. The city is of the view that the new buses will go a long way in addressing the growing demand for world class public transport.

Rea Vaya connects Sandton and Alexandra.

The Mayor of Johannesburg and the MEC for Transport in Gauteng unveiled a construction board, which marked the start of construction of a Rea Vaya Bus station in Sandton. In the spirit of integrated public transport, the station will be built at the corner of Rivonia Road and 5th Street, which is next to Gautrain station. This, it was reported, will serve as a feeder to the Gautrain and connect commuters to OR Tambo International Airport.

Most importantly, the COJ Mayor indicated that the construction of Rea Vaya phase 1C infrastructure will connect the inner city to Alexandra and the Sandton Central Business District. This is intended to create more business and job opportunities for communities. By 2017, commuters are expected to travel seamlessly between Alexandra and Sandton on Rea Vaya buses²⁴.

Following the unveiling, the MEC and Mayor also toured the streets where Rea Vaya routes will be constructed. This included visiting a site where an underground platform for Rea Vaya interchange station will be built. This will be located at Watt Street in Alexandra. Interestingly, a bridge will also be built from the interchange for buses with dedicated lanes for cycling and pedestrian crossing over M1 route. Other Rea Vaya improvements will be along Louis Botha and Katherine Streets, which consists of 16 kilometres of infrastructure and 10 new stations²⁵.

Durban to host World Architecture Congress.

Durban is preparing to host the 25th World Architecture Congress, which will be held at the International Convention Centre from the 3rd -7th of August 2014. It was reported that the Congress will deliberate on pertinent built environmental issues, including exciting scientific programs. The Congress is also aimed at showcasing local and international architecture talent.

It will also bring together architects, design and built environment professionals, pioneers in urban planning and thinking, activists, city makers, academics, researchers, students, government officials, communities, and decision makers²⁶. These will be deliberating on alternative strategies for the design and delivery of more habitable, functional and beautiful human settlements.

In addition, delegates are expected to embark on walking tours, wherein they will be visiting Markets of Wawick, which is a focus point for this year's student competition. Under the guided tour by the trained informal trader, delegates are expected to experience the resilience, ecology behind this unique space in Durban and the value it gives to the City of Durban.

²³ As cited from www.capetown.gov.za

²⁴ <http://www.joburg.org.za> Rea Vaya connects Sandton to Alex

²⁵ <http://www.joburg.org.za> BRT puts Joburg on the move

²⁶ <http://www.durban.gov.za>

With regard to public art, there will be what is referred to as “Mook Lion’s Murals”, consisting of five site-specific murals within the walking distance of the Congress. Such a collaborative project is aimed at creating artwork which members of the public can relate to, including turning sterile spaces into vibrant areas of cultural interest. The ultimate aim of the project is to make the public aware of their environment while promoting environmental sustainability by using recycled material.

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