

MEDIA STATEMENT

30 November 2010

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM MS TOKOZILE XASA MET WITH HER COUNTERPART TO DISCUSS PROGRESS ON THE BILATERAL COOPERATION DURING THE STATE VISIT TO KENYA.

The Deputy Minister of Tourism Ms Tokozile Xasa was part of the team of Ministers, Deputy Ministers and senior government officials that accompanied Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe during the State visit to Kenya this past week. The visit afforded officials to look at progress made on bilateral cooperation in the field of tourism between the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the Government of the Republic of Kenya.

Deputy Minister Xasa took some time to meet with her counterpart, the Assistant Minister of Tourism in Kenya Ms Cecile Mbarire and visit some of Kenya's tourist attractions. The entourage also made stop over at the famous Kenya Utalii College, a government-owned tourism college.

The Agreement was signed in August 2009 and was tabled in Parliament in October this year. "The Action Plan was developed and it was discussed at length with our counterparts today and we have agreed on actions to be taken with due dates for implementation" said Xasa.

Deputy Minister Xasa further stated that "It is critical for South Africa to engage with Kenya at a bilateral level in order to strengthen our relationships politically and economically which will contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals on poverty alleviation and job creation particularly with the emphasis of integrating the African Region in line with the African Union objectives".

"Kenya has been participating in tourism events in South Africa and the relationship between the two countries is strengthened by their engagements in various areas within the tourism field" Xasa said. There has been a gradual increase in the number of tourists from Kenya which saw 28 198 Kenyans visiting South Africa in 2009 as compared to 26 939 in 2008.

The key focus areas of the bilateral discussions include the following:

- **Joint Committee:** the establishment of a joint committee to oversee the implementation of the MOU,
- **Exchange of Scholarships and Fellowships:** organising training programmes and exchange officials on tourism marketing and sustainable development programmes,
- **Tourism Exhibition and Cultural Exchange:** a working strategy on developing culture and heritage tourism, a model which South Africa would like to explore and learn from Kenya,

- **Education and Training:** South Africa will invite Kenya to the National Tourism Career Expo to be held from 27-29 January 2011 and the twinning arrangement between the Kenya Utalii College and the Mafikeng Hotel School will be enhanced.
- **Tourism Investment:** both countries will hold joint seminars periodically for investing companies and inform and educate potential investors on the opportunities and vacancies existing in the form of tourism in both countries,
- **Private Sector Cooperation:** to organise exhibitions, round table discussions and workshops alternating in both countries for businesses to establish joint ventures.
- **Coordination of Cooperation:** countries agreed to lobby support to obtain representation at various structures of UNWTO,
- **Tourism Police:** a workshop on tourism policing will be organised because South Africa want to explore the concept of Tourism Police and would like to look at the Kenyan Model of Tourism Police.
- **Other areas of cooperation** include sharing with Kenya our National and Domestic Tourism Strategy and ideas around development of tourism products and packaging.

“Kenya is also successful in many community tourism projects of which South Africa stands to learn and benefit from. South Africa is also rated the largest investor in Kenya and therefore participation during this State Visit is creating a platform for sharing the best practices” said Xasa.

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