



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
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SA strengthens tourism ties with Egypt

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Egypt and South Africa have agreed to strengthen their relationship for the mutual benefit of tourism in both countries.

South Africa's Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, and his Egyptian counterpart, Hisham Zaazou, today signed an agreement that details how the two countries will cooperate to extract the potential economic and cultural benefits of tourism.

Minister Hanekom is on a three-day visit to Cairo to promote South Africa as a destination of choice among the Egyptian travel trade and tourists. The visit will strengthen bilateral relations between the two tourism ministries and cement the implementation of the Agreement of Cooperation in the field of Tourism.

"Egypt is an important outbound tourism market for South Africa, and the number of Egyptian tourists visiting South Africa is growing steadily," said Minister Hanekom.

"We are a Muslim-friendly country with all the prayer and other facilities for religious practices, and many of our establishments provide Halaal meals.

"Egypt's awe-inspiring ancient monuments have captured the imagination of travellers for thousands of years. The country also boasts modern facilities which South Africans will enjoy. Egypt is working hard to plug any gaps in security, and tourism officials are confident that tourists will soon return to its ancient sites, desert treks and beaches.

"It makes perfect sense for Egypt and South Africa to work together and unlock the full potential of tourism in our countries," said Minister Hanekom.

"Our ultimate aim is to create a strong tourism chain that links the north of Africa to the south, and includes as many of our sister nations in between as possible, so that we all benefit from tourism together.

"Africa has great potential to grow tourism, and tourism can provide the jobs and resources needed for the advancement of people across the continent."

Egypt has one of the largest populations in the Middle East and North Africa region, the third largest economy in Africa, and a large youth population that makes it an attractive tourism market. The Egyptian tourism market is amongst the top three in Africa, together with South Africa and Morocco.

Flights from South Africa to Egypt depart from OR Tambo International Airport daily.

According to the Implementation Plan signed today, Egypt and South Africa will exchange information with regard to the organisation of festivals, conferences and symposiums and tourist fairs, and will participate in tourism events, and fairs held in both countries. Travel agencies in each country will be encouraged to arrange travel programmes for tourists.

There will be cooperation on training and the exchange of experts and skills. There will also be meetings and study tours between tourism institutions to share best practice and exchange tourism related information to enhance market intelligence. The exchange will include information related to

grading standards and classifications; tourism policy, legislation and planning initiatives; marine and coastal tourism; tourism statistics; sustainable tourism development; cultural and heritage tourism, and responsible tourism.

The countries will encourage their business communities to seek opportunities to invest in each other's tourism industry.

Minister Hanekom said he was delighted that the visit to Egypt was proving effective in strengthening relations between the two countries and focussing attention on taking positive steps towards achieving their goals.

"Egypt and South Africa are now on a firm footing to grow tourism between our countries, and to share skills, information and ideas. We will now focus our efforts on the practical implementation of our plans for the mutual benefit of our countries and our people," said Minister Hanekom.

For more information, visit our website on www.tourism.gov.za;

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