

NDT POLICY WATCH QUATERLY UPDATE

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INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL
POLICY DEVELOPMENTS



tourism

Department:
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UN General Assembly Resolution: Ecotourism key to eradicating poverty and protecting environment

The United Nations' World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) passed a landmark resolution recognising ecotourism as key to eradicating poverty and protection of environment. This was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on the 21 December 2012. The resolution is called "Promotion of ecotourism for poverty eradication and environmental protection".

It calls on member states to adopt policies that promote ecotourism, highlighting its positive impact on income generation, job creation, education and the fight against poverty and hunger. Furthermore, the resolution recognises that ecotourism creates significant opportunities for the conservation, protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural areas. Most importantly, the resolution highlights the significance of encouraging local indigenous communities within the host country and tourists, to preserve and respect the natural and cultural heritage.

The resolution was facilitated by Morocco and supported by a record of 105 delegations. In light of the overwhelming support, the UNWTO encourages member states to promote investment in ecotourism, in line with their national legislations. This include the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises, promotion of cooperatives and facilitation of finance through inclusive financial services e.g. micro-credit initiatives for the poor, local and indigenous communities in areas with ecotourism potential, particularly in rural parts of the countries.

UNESCO's commitment to rebuilding Timbuktu

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) committed to assist in rebuilding the Mali's extraordinary cultural heritage, which was destroyed as a result of the recent conflicts. UNESCO committed to mobilise its expertise and resources to rebuild the mausoleums of Timbuktu, the tomb of Askia in Gao and help in preserving the ancient manuscripts which are testament to the region's glory as a centre for Islamic learning¹. Such restoration will include digitisation where possible.

Timbuktu mosques, called Djingareyber, Sankore, and Sidi Yahi, along with 16 mausoleums were recorded on the UNESCO's list of World Heritage List in 1998. However, in July 2012, the mausoleums and Sidi Yahi sites were inscribed on the UNESCO's list of the World Heritage in Danger, after they were damaged. Furthermore, UNESCO acknowledged the risk of illicit trafficking of cultural objects during conflicts.

It then urged those involved with the art market to be vigilant to the illegal export and traffic of the Mali's renowned ancient manuscript. The negative impact of conflicts on cultural heritage appears to be on the rise. Africa and some parts of the Middle East have experienced the unwarranted destruction of valuable cultural heritage sites. This perhaps indicates the need for the contemplation of proactive measures to protect heritage sites or assets during conflict by all stakeholders. Besides the above,

¹UNESCO's commitment to building Timbuktu <http://whc.www.unesco.org> site visited on 06 February 2013

UNESCO has initiated a programme called World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism.

The programme is meant to promote dialogue and stakeholder cooperation, where planning for tourism and heritage is integrated at a destination level. This includes ensuring that natural and cultural assets are valued and protected, and ensuring that appropriate tourism is developed.

Nordic Alcohol and Drug Policy Network advocates for airline companies to abandon free alcohol

The Nordic Alcohol and Drug Policy Network is calling on airline companies to rethink their policies on alcohol. The network, which has 80 member organisations from Nordic and Baltic countries, is agitating for an end to the provision of free alcohol on board. The network sees alcohol as a commodity which has the potential of causing serious problems in an extraordinary situation such as flying.

The network acknowledges that airlines have policies on alcohol, including those that prohibit intoxicated personnel on the planes. However, the network argues that prohibiting intoxicated personnel becomes difficult because airline staffs are expected to be service minded. According to the network, this has led to situations where people become intoxicated to a point of posing a threat to other passengers and the flight.

Further to that, they see the combination of alcohol and flight altitude as not an ordinary condition for human beings. According to the network, changes in air pressure, fatigue from flying, and dehydration causes alcohol to be more potent than usual². Moreover, the network

points out that the majority of people avoid places where others get drunk but they don't have that option on the plane. They emphasise the importance of protecting other customers from such inconveniences, especially children who also fly. Lastly, the network points out that access to alcohol and alcohol related harms have decreased in the Nordic countries due to restrictive alcohol policies.

Therefore, free alcohol access on the planes contradicts policies enforced on the ground and may tempt travelling recovering alcoholics, who do not have an option to run away from the temptation. The network proposes payment for alcohol if not totally abandoning it.

The initiative by the Nordic Alcohol and Drug Policy Network is not only interesting but relevant to the South African tourism sector. It is not unusual to hear reported cases of passenger's misbehaviour emanating from intoxication in South African Airlines. Perhaps the sector ought to monitor this policy proposal with a view to see the outcome and the lessons that can be learnt.

Visa facilitation

The UNWTO recently released the research findings on Visa facilitation. The research shows that Asia, the Pacific and the Americas are the most open regions in terms of tourist Visa requirements³. The research evaluated Visa requirements globally and discovered that Asia and the Americas were the most open regions for tourist's entry. Statistically, the research shows that an average of 20 percent of the world's population were not required a Visa to visit Asian destinations,

companies to abandon free alcohol. Site visited on 31 January 2013.

³<http://www.pata.org> Asia and The Pacific and The Americas The most "Open" Regions for Travellers in Terms of Visas. Site visited on 06 February 2013.

²www.traveldailynews.com Tourism Policy: Nordic Alcohol and Drug Policy Network urges airline

while 19 percent could obtain Visa on arrival, and 7 percent an e-Visa -31percent, 8 percent and 1 percent in the case of Americas⁴.

In light of the research, the UNWTO's Secretary General views Visa policy restrictions as damaging to the aspirations of economic growth and jobs that tourism could bring to destinations. Further to that, the Secretary General welcome the moves by USA, European Union and other countries who have implemented and are looking at instituting open Visa regimes. The Schengen-type Visa for the Southern African Development Community (SADC), advocated by the National Development Plan, is in line with the UNWTO's aspirations on improving Visa processes. It presents an opportunity for the tourism sector to intensify engagement with the Department of Home Affairs.

The positive impact of Visa facilitation is not a new discovery, it was highlighted by the report commissioned by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and UNWTO, which was prepared for the T-20 in May 2012. The study developed a model to estimate the potential gains the G-20 economies can realize through the implementation of Visa facilitation policy reforms over the period 2013-2015.

The report revealed that case studies point to the increase in international tourists' arrivals of affected markets following the implementation of policy changes. Statistically, the G-20 countries have the potential of gaining an additional 20 million to 112 million international tourists' arrivals by 2015. According to the report, this represent a gain of 3 percent and 16 percent⁵ respectively in tourist arrivals above

the baseline forecast. This has a potential of creating between 560 000 to 3.1 million⁶ additional direct jobs in the tourism sector in the G-20 economies by 2015. The focus on Visa facilitation policy reforms therefore appears to be a rational approach that should be pursued earnestly by all stakeholders.

The Holiday Health Experiment

The study conducted by tour operator Kuoni and Nuffield Health revealed that holidays can help people live longer. Dubbed the Holiday Health Experiment, the United Kingdom's largest healthcare charity conducted the study between the summer and autumn 2012, and the results were released in early 2013. The study, touted as the first of its kind, was aimed at establishing whether the much discussed "feel good factor" generated by vacations is based on physical or psychological facts⁷.

It was reported that 12 participants were divided into a travel group and a non-travel group, and all had stress-resilience testing and a 360+ Health assessment by Nuffield Health. Parallel to that, was a psychotherapeutic tests conducted by a psychotherapist. The experiment found that those who took part benefited from lower blood pressure, improved sleep, quality and improved stress management. Statistically, the study found the following⁸.

-The average blood pressure of holidaymakers dropped by a beneficial 6 percent, while the average of non-holidaymakers went up over the same period, by 2 percent. (Avoiding high blood pressure is important to avert risk of stroke and heart attacks)

⁴ As cited in www.pata.org

⁵ The Impact of Visa facilitation on Job Creation in the G-20 economies. Report prepared for the 4th T20 Minister's meeting in Mexico 15-16 May 2012, p. 17.

⁶ As cited the report for T20 Ministers, p.17.

⁷ The Holiday Health Report 2013. Revealed: holidays can help you live longer. Kuoni and Nuffield and Health.

⁸ As cited in www.travel.dailynews.com

-The sleep quality of holidaymakers improved while that of non-holidaymakers deteriorated. Holidaymakers saw a 17 percent improvement, while the average for non-holidaymakers reduced by 14 percent. (Quality of sleep is important for the body to physically and mentally repair)

-The ability to recover from stress (known as the stress-resilience test) saw an average improvement of 29 percent among holidaymakers. This compared to 71 percent fall in stress resilience scores among the non-holidaymakers. (The higher the stress resilience score the better the body is recovering from stress efficiently).

The medical doctor at Nuffield Health therefore, recommended to the workforce to plan for taking holidays and highlighted that, working

hard is important, and so is taking time to rest and recuperate.

In light of the above ground breaking scientific study, it is important for policy makers in government and the private sector to reflect on the findings of this study especially in the domestic tourism awareness messages and campaigns.

The targeted audience for domestic tourism must be sensitised that travelling and taking a holiday is not only a function of economic activity, but has been scientifically proven to have health benefits.

2. OTHER INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The **Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)** launched the **Rapid Recovery Task Force (PRTT)** at its head office in Bangkok on the 31 January 2013. The PRTT consist of the PATA CEO and 7 volunteers, who will collectively assist member destinations during and after the times of crises such as SARS, floods, Tsunamis, disease outbreaks and terrorists incidents. The intention is to help destinations to return to normal as quickly as possible⁹. The PRTT will receive direct updates from the affected destinations and PATA's Strategic Intelligence Centre during major crises. This initiative is encouraging given the lack of coherence that the tourism industry had displayed in handling major crises.

The **International Air Transport Association (IATA)** and the **European Union Aviation Partners** launched the European Action Plan

for Preventing Runaway Excursions. IATA, together with 16 other aviation stakeholder organisations, formed the initiative with a view to reduce occurrences of one of the most common types of airline accidents. This was done through providing operational and system recommendations to aircraft operators, air navigation service providers, airports and regulatory authorities. According to IATA, in 2011, 13 percent¹⁰ of all accidents in Europe were runaway excursions. Globally, the runaway excursions are 19 percent of all accidents.

The action plan includes best practices and recommendations in preparation for the Runaway Excursions Risk Reduction Toolkit and IATA member airline expertise in preventing runaway excursions gathered

⁹<http://www.traveldailynews.asia>

¹⁰<http://www.iata.org> News Brief: IATA and European Aviation Partners Launch European Action Plan of Preventing Runaway Excursions

through their Safety Management Systems. The initiatives are a positive step towards reducing global percentage of runaway excursions and needs to be emulated. The **World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)** will be holding its 13th annual Global Summit in Abu Dhabi from the 9th to 13th April 2013. Touted as the most influential Travel and Tourism event, and bringing together almost 1000 industry leaders, the summit is expected to tackle pressing issues facing the tourism industry. The former United States' President,

and the founder of the William J. Clinton Foundation, Bill Clinton, will deliver the keynote address in the Global Summit. The WTTC highlighted that attendance is by invitation of the council and the Global Summit Host Committee and reserved for leaders in Travel and Tourism enterprises as well as organisations in the private sector and public sector policy. Those who have never attended the WTTC summit may apply for invitation at enquiries@wtcc.org

3. NATIONAL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

National Development Plan

South Africa has developed the National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP is a long term framework that will guide the country's development to the year 2030. It envisions a South Africa where poverty will be eliminated and inequalities reduced by the year 2030. The plan points out that this goal can be realised through societal partnerships, leadership, drawing on the energies of the people, growing an inclusive economy and enhancement of the state's capacity.

The plan was accepted by the ruling party in December 2012 and recently formed the key component of the President's 2013 State of the Nation Address and the 2013 Budget Speech by the Minister of Finance. The National Development Plan identifies tourism and creative industry as labour intensive with a potential to stimulate the growth of small businesses.

Furthermore, the plan emphasises the importance of full participation of rural communities in the economic, social and political life of the country. Mining, Agriculture,

Fisheries, and where possible Tourism, were identified as sectors to support the rural economy. As indicated earlier, the plan also advocates for a Schengen-type Visa for the SADC region. This is aimed at making it easier for tourists to travel between countries in the region. In light of the above developments, the tourism sector is directly or indirectly implicated. The sector, like any other sector, is expected to conceptualise and play its role towards the implementation of the country's vision.

South African Weather Service Act 2001: Proposed regulations regarding fees for the provision of aviation meteorological services

The Department of Environmental Affairs published an intention to make regulations regarding fees for the provision of aviation meteorological services. This is in line with section 4 (2) (e) and 21 (1) (b) of the South Weather Service Act no 8 of 2001¹². The fees apply to South African and foreign state

¹¹ <http://www.wtcc.org/events/abudhabi> site visited on 05 February 2013.

¹² Government Gazette 29 June 2001 no 22422

aircrafts, unless a provision has been made through the written agreement with the South African Weather Service. The proposed regulations exclude aircrafts engaged in rescue services operations and coastal patrol flights of the South African Air force. The proposed tariffs for the three financial years were as follows¹³.

1 April 2013-31 March 2014: R36.72

1 April 2014-31 March 2015: R38.72

1 April 2015-31 March 2016: R36.84.

These are calculated in terms of two categories. The first category relates to the aircraft with the Maximum Certificate Mass (MCM) of 2000 kilograms and above. This category looks at the distance flown in kilometers within the flight information region of South Africa in kilometer divided by 100, tariff amount in ZAR, and Square root of MCM in metric tonnes divided by 50.

The second category relates to aircrafts with the MCM below 2000 kilograms, or those aircrafts qualifying according to the exception rule, and the tariff is set at zero. Invitations for written representations and objections to the proposed regulations are expected to be submitted thirty days after the 27th January 2013. It is important for the tourism sector to closely monitor this development because of its potential to increase airlines cost and consequently ticket prices.

Tourism Bill

The National Department of Tourism presented the Tourism Bill 2012 to the Portfolio Committee on tourism. As indicated in the previous Policy Watch Issue, the Bill provides for sustainable tourism development to benefit all South Africans. The Bill will be taken to public hearings for more inputs before

¹³ Government Gazette 25 January 2013 no 36107

finalisation. The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on tourism highlighted the need to solicit ideas to grow tourism sector from all stakeholders. These include exploring issues around growing small businesses and transformation without compromising nation building¹⁴. Stakeholders intending to influence the Bill ought to monitor the public hearings to be rolled out by parliament. Public hearings will provide the public with an opportunity to have a final say prior to the finalisation of Bill.

Western Cape Tourism, Trade and Investment Promotion Agency Amendment Bill, 2012

The Bill was tabled at the Western Cape Provincial Cabinet on the 16th January 2013. It was then sent to parliament on the 24th January 2013 and is awaiting publication in the Provincial Gazette. As indicated in the October-December Policy Watch, the Bill seeks to repeal the Western Cape Tourism Act, 2004. Furthermore, the Bill seeks to review the tourism marketing function, previously implemented by Cape Town Routes Unlimited.

The overall intention of the repeal, the department emphasises, is to extend the current mandate of the Western Cape Trade and Investment Promotion Agency, to include tourism destination marketing. Latest developments can be obtained by visiting the website of the Western Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism at www.westerncape.gov.za under useful information.

Gauteng Liquor Regulations 2013

The Gauteng Department of Economic Development published the Gauteng Liquor

¹⁴Public hearings on tourism Bill <http://www.thenewage.co.za> site visited on the 28 February 2013

Regulations 2013 for public comments. The public was expected to submit their inputs before the 25th February 2013. The regulations emanate from the Gauteng Liquor Bill 2013. Amongst other things, the Regulations intend to restrict sale of alcohol during particular trading hours. This includes total ban of alcohol trading on Sundays.

Further to that, the Regulations require additional information for the application of a liquor license and renewal. This includes provision of information by the applicant of the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE). In light of these requirements, some sections of the tourism industry have expressed grave concerns about the proposed Regulations.

The prohibition of trading alcohol on Sundays in hotels, and other critical establishments, was seen as compromising the potential of tourism growth. For example, some international and domestic consumers' expectations will not be met¹⁵ as a result of a total ban of alcohol on Sundays and other trading hours.

This perhaps may lead to a situation where such clients chose alternative destinations which provide holistic leisure activities. Some sections of the tourism industry such as the Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa wrote a submission to the Gauteng Department of Economic Development, highlighting their concerns.

The tourism sector as a whole needs to actively participate in this legislative process. This may perhaps include attending public hearings, with a view to highlight potential threats to tourism.

Draft Infrastructure Development Bill 2013

The National Department of Economic Development published the Draft Infrastructure Development Bill 2013 for public comments. The Bill provides for the facilitation and coordination of infrastructure development¹⁶, which is critical to economic and social development in South Africa.

Further to that, the Bill seeks to ensure that infrastructure development in South Africa is prioritized in planning, approval, and implementation.

Apart from that, the Bill provides for the identification of strategic integrated projects, which are of social and economic importance to the state or region, as well as the continued existence of the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission. Public comments on the Bill are expected on the 27th March 2013.

Since infrastructure is critical to the development of tourism, the tourism sector ought to perhaps monitor and influence the process, with a view to ensure that tourism infrastructure is catered for within the broader infrastructure projects.

¹⁵ Submission by FEDHASA On the Draft Gauteng Liquor Regulations 2013

¹⁶ South African Government Information <http://www.info.gov.za> site visited on 28 February 2013

4. OTHER NATIONAL NEWS

Local Government Tourism Conference

The National Department of Tourism hosted the Local Government Tourism Conference on the 26th-27th February 2012. The conference deliberated on various policies related issues.

These amongst others include policy alignment, planning for tourism and capacity to deliver on plans thereof. The conference emphasised the importance of the NTSS in policy development processes at local government level and across spheres of government.

Furthermore, the conference noted the huge burden on the local economic development area and the need to deliver on all economic sectors. Consequently, there was an emphasis on the necessity for a comprehensive understanding of local economic development and skills needs, which ought to be followed by capacity building.

Apart from that, best practice case studies and practical institutional arrangement models were presented and policy makers were encouraged to consider these in their policy working environments.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Ombudsman for the City of Johannesburg

The City of Johannesburg (COJ) is in the process of appointing an Ombudsman. The process started with the public participation, where members of the public, some councillors, and legal practitioners met to discuss the functions of the Ombudsman.

According to the COJ, the initiative to appoint an ombudsman was precipitated by numerous grievances from residents, which in some instances, ended up with the Public Protector and Consumer Commissioner¹⁷.

Further to that, the COJ highlighted extensive consultation that it undertook to learn from other cities that have established such an institution. These include the City of Cape Town and EThekweni Municipality. Also, the city indicated that the person to be appointed will either be a judge, magistrate or anyone admitted as an attorney. The appointment is expected to be finalised in June 2013.

¹⁷ <http://www.joburg.org.za> site visited on 28 February 2013

BRICS Summit

South Africa will be hosting the fifth BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) summit. The event is scheduled to take place in Durban on the 26th -27th March 2013, at the Durban International Convention Centre (ICC). Touted as a platform for finding common ground on critical areas in these five economies, the summit is, as customary, expected to deliberate on identified business opportunities, economic complementarities¹⁸, as well as areas of cooperation.

Historically, this economic bloc started as BRIC without the involvement of South Africa, and its first remarkable summit was hosted by Russia on 16 June 2009. South Africa joined the group in 2010. The overall aim of this union is to achieve peace, security, cooperation, development and establish a more equitable world. In light of the above, the tourism industry ought to monitor the developments around such a summit.

¹⁸ <http://www.dfa.gov.za> site visited on 28 February 2013

As a norm, political and economic decisions of such powerful blocs have, at any given day, a potential to influence tourism.

Controlled burn at the Table Bay Nature Reserve by the City of Cape Town

The City of Cape Town has attained permission to conduct an open burn of vegetation at the Zoarvlei Wetland at the Table Bay Nature Reserve. According to the City, the burn will take place during the favourable weather conditions in March, with a view to remove accumulated dry reeds and bulrushes.

The burn is aimed at removing bulrushes which causes seed dispersal and burning is part of an integrated management approach to suppress reed beds. The burn is expected to take a day, and residents adjacent to the area will be informed on the exact date. More information can be obtained at 021 444 0315.

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