



**MINISTER
TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, PATRICIA DE LILLE,
LATAM INAUGURAL FLIGHT ARRIVAL IN CAPE TOWN
02 JULY 2026**

PROTOCOL LIST

The leadership of LATAM Airlines;
Our partners from Airports Company South Africa, Cape Town Air Access and the Western Cape Government;
Leaders of the tourism and aviation industries;
Members of the diplomatic corps;
Members of the media;
Distinguished guests;
Ladies and gentlemen.

Good evening. Molweni, Salam alaikum

Today marks an important milestone for the future of connectivity, trade, investment and cooperation between two dynamic regions of the Global South.

The arrival of LATAM's inaugural direct flight between São Paulo and Cape Town is an expression of confidence in our travel market growth, comes on the back of the cabinet-approved Tourism Route Development Marketing Plan.

Our strategy seeks increase direct connectivity, while ensuring marketing support and alignment with provincial route development structures as we spread the befits of tourism.

Air route development is not simply about adding flights. It is about unlocking economic growth, creating jobs and making South Africa more accessible to the world.

As fellow BRICS partners, South Africa and Brazil share a commitment to building stronger South-South cooperation, deepening trade and investment, and advancing people-to-people exchange.

Brazil advocacy for South Africa stretches as far as the corridors and meeting rooms of G20. President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has been resolute in protesting the barring of South Africa from the 2026 G20.

Despite this geopolitical tension, look what tourism does; according to the latest data on International Arrivals to South Africa, in the month of May 2026 the USA topped the list of overseas arrivals surpassing the UK, which traditionally gives is the biggest overseas source mark.

We welcomed 41 846 Americans, compared the to 22 160 arrivals from the UK.

The grandest story is, the 40.6% increase in tourists from Brazil when compared to May last year. While between January 2026 to May 2026, we welcomed 29 920 this is 32% growth.

This reminds me of what President's Lula da Silva said during the State Visit by President Cyril Ramaphosa earlier this year, *"the Atlantic ocean doesn't separate us, it actually connects us"*.

It was during this session that myself and the Brazilian Minister of Tourism, Gustavo Feliciano signed the 2026-2029 Action Plan to implement the Memorandum Of Understanding between our two nations.

The Areas of cooperation include; joint destination marketing, exchange of information on tourism product development and collaborate on air access including

supporting the sustainability of direct flight routes, like this direct flight LATAM is launching today.

During the state visit, I held a workshop with tour operators in Brazil to unpack the potential that lies in the 2026-2029 Action Plan and how we will work towards stimulating demand.

We will be participating in various trade shows, while the annual South African, South American Trade Show, which will mark its 9th anniversary next year will continue.

South African Tourism is already working closely with LATAM Airlines through joint marketing initiatives designed to increase destination awareness and support Brazilian travel trade partners in packaging and promoting South Africa.

This partnership demonstrates what becomes possible when government creates an enabling environment and the private sector responds with confidence and investment.

To the leadership of LATAM Airlines, thank you for your confidence in South Africa. To our aviation partners, tourism stakeholders and industry leaders, thank you for your continued collaboration.

Together, let us continue to connect people, unlock investment, creating opportunity and ensuring that tourism remains a powerful force for inclusive growth and shared prosperity.

I thank you.

THE END

For streaming links, images, videos and further information please scan the QR Code and join the Tourism Department's National Multimedia WhatsApp Group.



Media Queries:

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