

MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF TOURISM,
MR MARTHINUS VAN SCHALKWYK

17 SEPTEMBER 2010

MINISTER OF TOURISM BOOSTS TABLE MOUNTAIN'S NEW7WONDERS BID

Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk, the Minister of Tourism, was the first person to use his cell phone today to vote for Table Mountain to be recognised as one of the seven natural wonders of the world.

Minister van Schalkwyk has made use of a new SMS voting mechanism to support South Africa's entrant in the global New7Wonders of Nature contest.

The minister, who was at Parliament for a meeting between himself and provincial MECs for tourism (MinMEC), announced the new voting platform in an effort to drum up national public support for Table Mountain's campaign.

"Following on from the massive success of the 2010 World Cup, South Africans can now focus on 2011 and a completely different contest. This is a race that aims to preserve the top seven wonders of nature for future generations and which gives South Africa the opportunity to be written into the history books for thousands of years to come," Minister van Schalkwyk said.

To vote for Table Mountain fans can SMS the word TABLE to 34874. SMSes cost R2 each and voters can vote as often as they like.

Previously, voting could only be completed online at www.votefortablemountain.com or by phoning +44 203 347 0901 and keying in Table Mountain's code 7725. Supporters can now vote by SMS in addition to still using the existing platforms.

Table Mountain is on a shortlist of 28 natural sites from around the globe competing to be named one of the official New7Wonders of Nature. The final seven wonders will be determined entirely by votes from the public, with the organisers aiming to attract more than 1 billion voters across the globe.

Table Mountain is competing against other iconic sites including the Grand Canyon, the Amazon and the Great Barrier Reef.

Voters who participated in the preliminary rounds of the contest and helped to catapult Table Mountain

onto the top 28 shortlist in 2009 can vote again in the final round to ensure Table Mountain makes it into the final list of seven.

Visit www.votefortablemountain.com or SMS TABLE to 34874 to vote.

Ends/

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Background information

Table Mountain is one of only 28 natural sites from around the globe competing to be named one of the official New7Wonders of Nature.

From an initial list of 261 magnificent natural sites announced in January 2009, Table Mountain was voted onto a list of 77 sites prior to being selected for the final shortlist of 28 in July 2009. It is the only South African site to be competing in the contest.

The campaign is run by the New7Wonders Foundation in Zurich, Switzerland, an organization which works to foster and facilitate global dialogue through participatory democratic campaigns, and, through these campaigns, promotes conservation efforts worldwide for man-made and natural monuments.

The New7Wonders of Nature contest aims to raise awareness of the incredible variety and beauty of nature around us. The New7Wonders of Nature will be determined entirely by votes from the public and the final 7 announced on November 11, 2011. The campaign is well on track to receive more than one billion votes.

Candidates must be clearly defined natural sites that have neither been created nor significantly altered by humans. The awareness and tourism income generated through the New7Wonders campaign means that these natural treasures can be better preserved for future generations. Studies have shown that sites participating in a New7Wonders campaign have to date benefited from a total boost of significantly

more than US\$ 5 billion in increased revenue and brand value.

Table Mountain forms part of the Cape Floristic Region, which was declared a World Heritage Site in June 2004. The Cape Floristic Region is the smallest and richest of the six floral kingdoms on earth, boasting an amazing 8200 rare and endangered plant species, some of which occur nowhere else on earth.

Table Mountain Aerial Cableway has formed an official supporting committee to champion the mountain's cause.

Table Mountain's competitors include the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, the Grand Canyon in the USA, the Amazon in South America and Yushan in Chinese Taipei and the official supporting committee is calling on all South Africans and tourists who love this icon to cast their vote.