



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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SA and DRC strengthen tourism ties

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KINSHASA (DRC) – Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom and his counterpart in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mr Elvis Mutiri wa Bashara, have signed an agreement that will strengthen ties between the two countries and promote cooperation in the field of tourism.

Speaking at the signing yesterday, Minister Hanekom lauded the DRC's efforts to advance tourism in the country, and in the region.

"This agreement reinforces the great strides this country has taken to prioritise tourism as an economic growth driver that will not only have a positive impact domestically, but will also boost tourism in the SADC region," said Minister Hanekom.

The agreement will lay the foundation for the promotion of tourism exchanges between the two countries. A Joint Technical Tourism Committee consisting of government representatives from both countries will be formed, and a five-year plan of action will be developed to focus on the following issues:

- The preservation and promotion of heritage and cultural tourism
- Tourism investment
- Research and planning
- Marketing and promotion campaigns
- Quality assurance
- Human resource development
- The promotion and practice of sustainable tourism development

The DRC is the largest country in Central Africa, and a regular exhibitor at the Tourism Indaba that takes place in Durban annually.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council report, Travel and Tourism contributed 1.1 % towards GDP in the DRC's in 2014, which generated 137,500 direct jobs in their tourism sector. This is anticipated to rise by 5.3% in 2015.

The agreement between the two countries will lead to new initiatives and projects that will boost tourism in a manner that is beneficial to both countries.

"Africa is fast establishing itself as one of the most promising regions for tourism," said Minister Hanekom. "The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) estimates that Africa will receive 85 million international tourist arrivals by 2020, and 134 million in 2030, representing 6,3% and 7,4% respectively of international tourist arrivals worldwide. Africa needs to be prepared, and it is through such agreements that we will be able to work together to ensure our continent's readiness and success."

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