



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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## **Tourism Minister attends Global Conference**

**20 May 2016**

Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom this week participated in the first World Conference on Tourism for Development and the 7<sup>th</sup> G20 Tourism Minister's Meeting in Beijing.

The conference was hosted by the United Nations World Tourism Organization and the Government of the People's Republic of China. It is the first high-level meeting of the world's tourism leaders to address how tourism can contribute to the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 universal goals.

Speakers at the conference included the UN Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, Wu Hongbo. Delegates included Tourism Ministers and officials from Argentina, Bahrain, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Czech Republic, Ethiopia, Germany, Georgia, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Lithuania, Malta, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, South Africa, UK, USA, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe.

Minister Hanekom said that South Africa shared many challenges with other countries attending the conference.

"The conference provided a unique opportunity for a high level dialogue on the contribution that tourism can make to sustainable development and poverty alleviation. It also provided insights into how tourism brings greater understanding and social cohesion between people around the world," he said.

Minister Hanekom participated in a media session moderated by CNN's Richard Quest to discuss alignment of tourism development with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

"Tourism plays a direct role in three of the sustainable development goals, those relating to creating economic growth and jobs, ensuring sustainable production and consumption, and marine conservation," said Minister Hanekom.

"But tourism has a very long and diverse value chain, which means that it has an impact on other sectors in the wider economy, and it has the potential to advance many of the other sustainable development goals as well."

He said it was essential for the public and private sector to work together at every level, and to do the right things together, to grow tourism sustainably.

The 7<sup>th</sup> G20 Ministers of Tourism meeting was themed "Sustainable Tourism – An Effective Tool for Inclusive Development".

During his opening address, the Secretary-General of the UNWTO, Dr Taleb Rifai, commended South Africa for its pioneering approach in calling for this meeting of tourism leaders of the G20 countries.

The G20 countries adopted the Beijing Declaration: "Sustainable Tourism - an Effective Tool for Inclusive Development". The declaration acknowledges that tourism is a key driver of economic growth and accounts for about 10% of the world's GDP; tourism is a major generator of jobs; tourism promotes development and social inclusion; and tourism can contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

By adopting the declaration, the G20 countries agreed to develop policies that contribute to a more open world economy and to promote innovation, resource efficiency, quality jobs and safety for travellers. They also agreed to develop inclusive domestic tourism policies in partnership with the private sector, promote investment in tourism, and enhance the contribution of tourism to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

During the visit to Beijing Minister Hanekom had a bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart, the Chairperson of China National Tourism Administration, Dr Li Jinzao.

China is the world's leading source of outbound tourists, and is an important market for South Africa. Over 120 million Chinese nationals took outbound trips last year. The number of Chinese tourists who visited South Africa dropped by about 8% to 85 000 last year. Arrivals have recovered dramatically this year, with January arrivals up 93% compared to the same month last year.

An Accredited Tourism Company program has now been implemented in China to allow travel operators to apply for visas on behalf of travellers to South Africa.

Minister Hanekom and Dr Li Jinzao discussed ways of enhancing tourism relations between South Africa and China. These included providing training in the use of basic Mandarin by tourist guides and frontline staff at South African hospitality establishments, which will start this year.

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