



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
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African Tourism Ministers unite to find common ground on Tourism Development in Africa

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Issues pertaining to the growth and development of tourism in the African continent featured highly on the agenda at the round table discussion, hosted by Minister Derek Hanekom, on the eve of the official opening of the Pan-African Tourism INDABA 2015 in Durban.

Themed 'Africa: Open for Tourism Business', the session afforded thirteen African Ministers and key tourism industry players an opportunity to discuss and debate the current state of Tourism in Africa with a view of collectively formulating solutions to grow and develop tourism on the continent.

"The African market is undergoing unprecedented growth in tourist arrivals. Global interest in the continent, and a growing middle class with disposal income, is driving economic growth. Today's meeting was not only a testimony of our commitment to strengthening relationships with our African counterparts, but a positive step forward towards finding workable solutions to advance tourism within the continent," said Hanekom.

The African region has many assets for tourism development, but challenges to infrastructure development, visa facilitation and connectivity, and the financing of tourism development have the potential to offset that growth.

"Although the continent is overwhelmed by social and economic challenges, challenges such as the outbreak of Ebola and the recent attacks on foreign nationals have the potential to impact negatively on tourism on the continent. We have to rise against these challenges, and commit to work together to address them for the future of tourism," added Hanekom.

"Africa must work with Africa to advance tourism in the continent," said Ms Elcia Grandcourt, Regional Director for Africa at the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). Speaking on the state of tourism in the African continent, Grandcourt reasserted the UNWTO's commitment to supporting Africa in growing tourism.

"Cultural and historical resources in Africa are not being adequately harnessed to lure tourists to Africa. To show our commitment, we will host our first image and branding conference in Accra - Ghana with the view to impart skills within the continent, so it can better profile itself," said Grandcourt.

"Africa is fast establishing itself as one of the most promising regions for tourism. Africa will receive 85 million international tourist arrivals by 2020, and 134 million in 2030, representing respectively 6,3% and 7,4% of international tourist arrivals worldwide," added Grandcourt.

The ministerial discussion focused on the State of Africa's readiness for Tourism investment and constraints to investment promotion; the importance of the tourism sector towards building the economies of various regional economic communities; collaboration between public and private sector in growing tourism; visas and travel facilitation and ways of improving intra-African travel.

The session concluded inter alia with consensus on the following issues:

- The African Union should strive to include tourism on its agenda, in order to elevate the tourism as the economic driver in the continent;

- It was proposed that the next African Ministerial session should consider putting systems in place to advance uni-visa's on the continent;
- Africa should strive to harness its cultural and historical resources to market and present Africa as a truly unique and authentic destination for the world to visit.

Tourism Indaba remains the largest tourism marketing event for Africa. This year, INDABA 2015 will again open its doors to the African continent, and feature a number of African destinations on the exhibition floor. According to South African Tourism (SAT) the following destinations have confirmed to exhibit at Indaba 2015: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, the Comoros, Congo Brazzaville, the DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria and Niger State, Reunion, Rwanda, Senegal, the Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

For more information visit: www.tourism.gov.za and www.indaba-southafrica.co.za

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