



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Tourism in SA comes out top again

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South Africa's unique tourism attractions and innovative operators continue to garner global recognition.

The Garden Route was this week named as one of the 10 best walking routes in the world by the Telegraph, an influential newspaper in the United Kingdom.

Children in the Wilderness, a non-profit organisation that arranges bush and wildlife experiences for young people to inspire Africa's future environmental leaders, was a runner-up in the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's awards for sustainable tourism in Madrid last week.

Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom said these latest accolades prove that South Africa's tourism sector was a world leader on many fronts.

"This allows us to maintain our advantageous edge in a very competitive global marketplace," said Minister Hanekom. "We are delighted that we are being increasingly recognised as one of the top global destinations. It gives us pride as a nation, and it inspires the tourism sector to continue working together."

"We must continue to improve the quality of our facilities and service, so that we create memorable experiences for all our tourists. They will tell others about our country, tourism will grow and all our people will benefit," said Minister Hanekom.

The Telegraph said the Trails of the Garden Route tour covered some of the best coastal trails, forests and gorges in South Africa. The 16-day trip starts from Table Mountain and includes the Alexandria Trail and the Addo Elephant National Park.

The inclusion of the Garden Route in the top 10 list puts it on par with well-known walking routes in Italy, France and Costa Rica.

The UNWTO awards are the flagship awards for the global tourism sector. The award for sustainable tourism honors people and organisations who work for the benefit of host communities and protect their country's environmental and cultural heritage for future generations.

Children in the Wilderness (CITW) was named as second runner-up for Innovation in Non-Governmental Organisations. CITW takes the novel approach of hosting camps and establishing Eco-Clubs for children and adults, and aims to develop future leaders who have a sound understanding of the links between conservation, tourism and community development.

CITW runs annual camps and Eco-Clubs in seven African countries, focusing on programmes that develop leadership, sustainable environmental education and recreation. Over 5600 children have been on CITW camps and over 2500 children participate in Eco-Clubs annually. CITW is also involved in community development programmes to reduce poverty.

Minister Hanekom congratulated the leadership and staff of SANParks and Children in the Wilderness on their achievements.

“These two awards are the latest in a string of accolades which have been bestowed on South Africa by the international tourism community recently,” said Minister Hanekom. “We are strengthening the collaboration between Government and the private sector to further enhance our facilities and standards.”

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