



tourism

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SA Tourism Minister to lead New United Nations World Tourism Organisation Initiative on Tourism and Development, Belgrade, Serbia

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At a meeting of the Executive Council of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in Belgrade, Serbia, this morning, the South African Minister of Tourism, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk, was requested to lead a new UNWTO commission on tourism and development. Members of the working group includes France, Germany, Kenya, Jamaica, Egypt, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Mauritania and the Flemish Community of Belgium.

The Executive Council considered a proposal by South Africa on ways and means to leverage the significant official development assistance (ODA) resources available globally towards tourism development.

In a recent development, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) for the first time ever recognised the UNWTO as eligible to receive ODA on a bilateral basis.

During the discussion, Van Schalkwyk identified four priorities for the UNWTO working group:

- Identify the reasons why ODA allocation to tourism is relatively low, given tourism's potential as green growth, economic and social development driver
- Identify the priorities that the development community might find attractive in terms of sustainable tourism development
- Develop proposals for an awareness-raising and advocacy strategy aimed at building our case with donor countries, development banks and United Nations agencies
- Identify options for the design of, and institutional home for, a matchmaking mechanism to link bilateral donor support to ODA-eligible tourism projects

The Executive Council heard that ODA could, for example, be directed towards:

- building good governance and sustainability in tourism;
- promoting investment in the tourism economy;
- fostering the poverty reduction impact of tourism; and
- encouraging human resources development in tourism.

In addressing the meeting, Van Schalkwyk said: "I believe it will be possible to unlock meaningful new financial resources to further our work in the tourism sector by dramatically scaling up our share of official development assistance (ODA).

In so many instances, integration across policy domains and greater policy coherence and collaboration at a global level are indicated. One such area is the often underestimated contribution of tourism to development and the Millennium Development Goals. There is a sweet spot at the intersection of the three policy imperatives of tourism development, social inclusion and green growth that we have been ignoring to our detriment and that could hold the key to substantial new resources."

He further added "Last year, total ODA globally was \$130 billion. Of this, \$90 billion was bilateral ODA and \$40 billion multilateral ODA. The tourism sector received only \$124 million of the \$130 000 million ODA disbursed

globally, i.e. 0,09% of total ODA. For a sector that is responsible for 9% of global gross domestic product (GDP), 30% of total world exports in services and one in every 11 jobs worldwide, that seems hardly enough."

Minister Van Schalkwyk concluded by saying "As a sector, we have a major task ahead of us to convince the OECD Development Assistance Committee, the World Bank, regional development banks, developed-country donors and other United Nations agencies of our sector's important contribution to poverty eradication, the green economy and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals."

Issued by
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