



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Media Statement by the Minister of Tourism, Mr Derek Hanekom – Impact of new immigration regulations on tourism

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The regulation of immigration matters is the constitutional responsibility of the Department of Home Affairs. However, the National Department of Tourism has received representations from tourism stakeholders on the possible unintended consequences of some of the new provisions. Industry role players have highlighted two specific provisions, namely the new requirement for an unabridged birth certificate for minors, as well as the provision for in-person collection of biometric data in tourism source markets. Industry stakeholders argue that these measures may impact on the competitiveness of our destination in an era where countries are attempting to ease visa requirements to promote tourism.

Any matter that could have a detrimental impact on international tourist arrivals to South Africa is a concern. The intentions behind the gazetted immigration regulations reflect South Africa's commitment to contributing to global efforts to combat child trafficking. The prospect, however, of unforeseen and unintended negative consequences must be taken seriously. Like many other destinations, we have a dual imperative: We have to combat child trafficking by aligning our approach to global efforts, while limiting damage to our competitiveness as a tourism destination.

Accordingly, the National Department of Tourism and industry stakeholders are currently studying, from a tourism vantage point, global best practice for responding to these broader policy challenges and the practicalities of implementing such measures.

Officials from the National Department of Tourism are also engaging in urgent discussions with their counterparts in the Department of Home Affairs to clarify any misperceptions and to find appropriate solutions where required. I will also be meeting with my counterpart, Minister Gigaba, to follow-up on these discussions if required.

I want to assure our trade partners and other industry stakeholders that, as government, we understand the value of travel and tourism, which has grown so impressively over the last few years. We will carefully consider any negative impacts of well-intentioned measures on international tourist arrivals and the attractiveness of our destination.

Issued by Ministry of Tourism

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