



tourism

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Statement by the office of the Minister of Tourism, Marthinus van Schalkwyk

17 December 2013

Tourist arrivals to South Africa grew 5,1% during the first 6 months of 2013

Tourism enjoys continued growth

Tourist arrivals to South Africa grew 5.1% during the first six months of 2013 compared to the same period in 2012. This was on top of the growth of 10.5% recorded last year during the same period. We have thus consolidated the significant gains achieved in 2010-2012 on the back of the FIFA 2010 World Cup, and have further increased the baseline to reach an historic high of 4 642 217 international tourist arrivals for the 1st two quarters of the year. Over a 4 year period, we have averaged 9.4% compound annual growth for the first half of the year, despite ever increasing global competition, tough trading conditions in some of our source markets and the fluctuating Rand.

“Tourism arrivals to South Africa continue to grow in 2013, with growth in arrivals recorded from all regions. Our growth is in line with global averages for the period. According the UNWTO, growth in global tourist arrivals was 5.2% during the first six months of 2013,” said South African Minister of Tourism, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk.

Europe

Tourist arrivals from Europe grew by 5.5% during the first six months of 2013 to 675 595 arrivals, up from 640 231 arrivals in the same period last year.

South Africa continued to see good strong growth from Germany, its third biggest source market, with arrivals growing by 13.8% in the first six months of 2013. There was also positive growth in arrivals from France (10.8%) and Italy (7.1%).

However, two of South Africa’s traditional source markets, the United Kingdom (UK) and the Netherlands are still under pressure and recorded marginal declines in arrivals of -0.6% (UK) and -1,2% (Netherlands) during this period.

North America

Arrivals from North America grew by a further 3.7% in 2013. A total of 194 586 tourist arrivals were recorded for the first six months of 2013 compared to 187 703 in 2012.

“For us to compete as a destination in the current economic environment where many travellers in our traditional core markets are choosing to travel for shorter periods of time and closer to home, we need to work harder than ever to be seen as a destination that offers brilliant value for money. Working with our private sector partners, we are focused on nurturing this value proposition,” said the Minister.

Asia

Asian growth figures for the first six months of 2013 showed growth of 12.7% to 210 776 tourist arrivals compared to 186 981 tourist arrivals during the same period in 2012. Arrivals from China grew by 23.9% and India by 11% during this period.

Africa

Arrivals from our continent grew by 4.8% in 2013. Arrivals from Africa land markets grew by 4.4% in the first six months of 2013 whilst arrivals from African air markets grew by 11.4%.

There was strong growth especially from West African air markets, albeit from lower baselines: Ghana (+27.3%) and Nigeria (+15.9%).

“We remain confident in the growth in tourism arrivals from Africa, particularly from our air markets in West and East Africa,” Minister van Schalkwyk said. “We are therefore proud to open a South African Tourism office in Lagos on the 28 January 2014. We look forward to being part of the larger Nigerian travel community. Having a marketing home in this critical West African region will do much to bolster the relationships we have with both trade and consumers in the region, and unlock the full potential of tourism.”

Tourism’s contribution to the economy

Minister van Schalkwyk said: “Tourism’s contribution to the South African economy remains a key driver of growth and employment. Tourism injected R35.3 billion into the economy from January to June this year. Compared to other economic sectors, this is more than, for example, the R32.6 billion that gold exports contributed during the same period.”

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Issued by The National Department of Tourism