



**tourism**

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Tourism  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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## **Speech delivered by Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk at the Annual Ubuntu Awards in New York**

**16 April 2013**

South Africa has proven itself, yet again, as one of the most successful tourism destinations in the world today.

Travel and tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the world. Last year we grew at more than double the world average – 10.5% for January to November 2012, compared to a global average growth of 4%. Our overseas arrivals (all international arrivals excluding Africa) grew at four times the world average – 16% from January to November 2012 with over 8.3 million tourist arrivals to South Africa. Indeed South Africa continued to entrench its status as a major international tourist and business events destination.

With growth rates of more than double the world average and quadruple the world average if one takes overseas visitors into account, we can look back very favourably on 2012.

South Africa's tourism growth remained stable for the last couple of years, even amidst the 2008/2009 global financial crisis. In 2010, the year in which we have hosted a successful FIFA World Cup, we saw significant growth in the industry but unlike other big event destinations, we held onto that growth in 2011 and saw growth-on-growth in 2012.

The United States, which remains our second biggest market grew by 14.4% from Jan to Nov 2012, with a total of 299 755 people visiting South Africa during that time, compared to 262 013 during the same period in 2011. This is also on top of a growth of a 1.9% in arrivals from the US in 2011, following a massive growth of 22.6% in our World Cup year.

For us to have achieved this extraordinary success we have relied heavily on the travel trade to be frontline ambassadors for our destination in this market, to not only sell our destination but to sell it enthusiastically in the face of significant competition from many other destinations the world over.

Partnerships and collaboration drive destination success, and the UBUNTU Awards are our way of recognising and thanking the US travel industry for its commitment to South Africa and for the role it plays in our destination's success. Our research tells us that 20 percent of the trade produces 80 percent of South Africa's arrivals. This is why it is pivotal that we recognise and celebrate those that are performing outstandingly.

You are breaking through the global tourism marketing clutter and making the experience of South Africa a reality for more and more travellers every year. We appreciate your

enthusiasm, your professionalism, your commitment and the excitement you share about our destination and its potential in the US.

South Africa is indeed a unique and varied destination which offers tourist experiences that suits every taste and budget. Visitors to South Africa stands in awe of how much this country has to offer, which includes the variety of experiences, the value for money, our world-class tourism infrastructure and of course our culturally-diverse people.

I would like to encourage each and every one of you to invite people to meet South Africa with its plethora of cultures and our deep and complex heritage.

This is a very special year for South Africa, as we have entered our 20th year of democracy. Irrespective of what news agencies may tell you, South Africa still remains a story of hope, a story of inspiration and a story of the future, that's why more and more people want to come to our country and see it for themselves.

Once again, my heartfelt congratulations to the winners and nominees tonight and to all whom work with South Africa to market the destination and sell it so effectively.

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