



Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa. Tel. (+27 12) 444 6780, Fax (+27 12) 444 7027  
Private Bag X9154, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa. Tel. (+27 21) 469 5800, Fax: (+27 21) 465 3216

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**DATE: 3 DECEMBER 2023**

### **MINISTER DE LILLE WELCOMES DIRECT FLIGHT BETWEEN JEDDAH, SAUDI ARABIA AND JOHANNESBURG**

As we look forward to a bumper summer tourism season and the global tourism sector's recovery moves rapidly, we are pleased to welcome the return of the Saudi Airlines direct flight between Jeddah and Johannesburg starting this month.

This is a significant boost to our efforts to grow tourism arrivals between South Africa and the rest of the world.

Direct flights and increased air access are essential to our mission to ensure ease of travel that will encourage travellers and help increase the performance of the tourism sector.

We have been working closely with our counterparts in Saudi Arabia, through the Ministry of Tourism in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Air Connectivity Programme, and other stakeholders to grow tourism between South Africa and Saudi Arabia.

The Department of Tourism has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Tourism to work on various efforts to grow tourism between the two countries.

“We have also submitted a proposal for motivate for a direct flight between Cape Town and Saudi Arabia as this will further boost our efforts to grow tourism especially cultural and religious tourism that will bring great benefits for Hajj and Umrah travellers,” Minister de Lille said.

Earlier this year we also welcomed the move by the Saudi Arabian government to add South Africa to its e-visa system where travellers can easily apply for a visa online, in a quick and easy process. South Africa became the first African country to be added to Saudi Arabia's e-visa system.

“I express my gratitude to all teams involved in the resumption of the direct flight between Jeddah and Johannesburg, including Saudi Airlines, ACSA, and all other roleplayers. The return of the route will see Saudi Airlines offer four weekly flights on this route from OR Tambo International Airport,” Minister de Lille said.

“We will continue working with our counterparts in Saudi Arabia to jointly promote and market these flights and tourism offerings in Saudi Arabia and South Africa to grow tourism numbers in our

respective destinations. This latest move will undoubtedly increase tourism's contribution to our economies,” Minster de Lille concluded.

Ends/

**For Media Enquiries:**

**Zara Nicholson**

Media Liaison Officer

Cell: +27 (0) 79 416 5996

Email: [znicholson@tourism.gov.za](mailto:znicholson@tourism.gov.za)