



**MINISTRY: TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**Tourism Minister Lindiwe Sisulu and private sector hold urgent meeting to address South Africa's return to the Red List**

**28 November 2021**

Tourism Minister Lindiwe Sisulu convened an urgent meeting with tourism private-sector stakeholders recently to address proactively how private and public sector could collaborate to mitigate the effects on the tourism sector of the travel bans instituted this week against South Africa due to the discovery of the new Covid-19 variant.

The stakeholders outlined how the Red List announcement and consequent knee-jerk reaction from other governments had impacted their existing and future business as South Africa enters its peak inbound international tourism period.

Professor Marc Mendelson, Professor of Infectious Diseases and Head of the Division of Infectious Diseases & HIV Medicine at Groote Schuur Hospital provided a scientific perspective on what the next steps would be to determining the extent to which vaccines would be effective against the new variant. "Today's engagement was the first of many we will be holding as a public-private tourism sector War Room to deal with crises such as that experienced this week, as well as legacy issues that hinder the extent to which tourism can contribute to South Africa's economy," said Minister Sisulu.

Acknowledging and appreciating the positive impact of the joint approach by community of tourism stakeholders in preserving domestic tourism, Minister Sisulu said: "Our War Room will be meeting on a regular basis to roll out and follow up on practical actions adopted by industry stakeholders to deal proactively with the obstacles and crises that our tourism and hospitality sector faces; with the immediate priority to ensure that we preserve domestic tourism over this festive season to secure the livelihoods our sector supports."

While we await scientific certainty surrounding this new variant, the impact to Brand South Africa and the deep tourism value chain has been devastating.

The immediate priority is to protect our domestic tourism over the festive season so that save livelihoods and keep the doors of tourism and hospitality businesses open.

To this end, private-sector tourism stakeholders provided a number of alternatives, including among others, reducing the size of indoor gatherings, expanding curfew and prioritising vaccination of South Africans to mitigate the impact on South Africa's healthcare system.

Rosemary Anderson, National Chairperson of FEDHASA said: "There is no question that South Africans need to go out and get vaccinated as a matter of urgency. To be locked down on a semi-regular basis and banned for international travel because of our advanced genomic sequencing capability and low vaccination rates cannot continue. We depend on tourism for jobs and livelihoods."

Further, as we head into the festive season with a rising infection rate and the prospect of local lockdowns which directly impact the hospitality sector, Anderson calls on South Africans to do everything in their power to stem the spread of a fourth wave.

"We simply cannot have a repeat of December 2020 where restaurants and hospitality businesses bore the brunt of COVID regulations making travel and restaurant patronage unappealing and difficult. Our industry has had to endure being thrust from wave to wave for the past 20 months and it simply isn't

sustainable to keep businesses open and livelihoods intact. It is up to every South African to do their part and help us keep our doors open by complying with the protocols and getting their #jab4tourism," Anderson concluded.

It is up to every South African to play their part in helping to keep the doors of tourism and hospitality open by adhering to the health and hygiene protocols that have been established and by getting vaccinated so that this industry, which supports 1.5 million direct and indirect jobs, may get back to business without the ongoing spectre of international travel bans.

Attending the session were key tourism industry associations, including TBCSA, FEDHASA, SATSA, SAACI and Cape Town Tourism, as well as industry stakeholders who had been involved in the previous lobby for South Africa to be removed from the UK's red list.

**Enquiries:**

**Steve Motale**  
**Ministry Spokesperson**  
Cell: 083 7840 719