



MINISTRY
TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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

Tourists Are Back in Numbers: Minister Lindiwe Sisulu

1 September 2022

Minister of Tourism, Lindiwe Sisulu, told the media today that “the South African tourism sector is poised for a tremendous bounce back and positive growth after from the the first half of the year (2022) show a staggering 147% in arrivals reaching an impressive 2,285,746.”

Sisulu was speaking in Johannesburg during a media briefing where she presented the domestic and international tourism performance for January to June 2022. “We are particularly pleased that the arrivals from the Americas increased by 331% and represented 128,991 arrivals,” Sisulu said.

According to the Minister, Europe remains our key overseas market and despite external shocks such as the war in Ukraine, it still “had the most considerable percentage increase in arrivals of 563%.”

However, she maintains that the African land market is our bread and butter, and it also showed impressive growth, dwarfing the Europe and Americas arrivals numbers. She added: “The African air market brought in 1,634,244 arrivals.”

Tourism’s upward trajectory is overwhelming on the domestic front; where between January and June 2022, 15,2 million domestic trips were taken. The Minister described this as “A major win for the tourism sector as this is higher than pre-pandemic levels, indicating that South Africa’s domestic tourism sector has also experienced a revenge travel trend.”

Sisulu said the most heart-warming aspect of the numbers was that the share of holiday trips has increased by 23,8% compared with the same period in 2021, and the average spend has skyrocketed to 28,6%.” As a rule of thumb, you must have “A buoyant domestic market because it is a silver bullet that turns locals into storytellers and ambassadors of their country,” the Minister said.

The performance report shows that South Africans spend R 2,850 on their domestic trips. “The biggest driver of domestic travel in the first six months of 2022 was the easing of Covid-19 travel restrictions,” the Minister insisted. On global airlift, the numbers are also picking up quite nicely. “There is a steady increase in global seat capacity – Air capacity is just 61% of the 2019 levels, with Airlink as the largest airline, which has seen fares up by 7%,” she said.

Most remarkable, she said, “75% of seat capacity in South Africa is on Johannesburg routes. Seat capacity on the routes to Johannesburg grew 71% over 2021 – Qatar is the largest source route.

She said Cape Town has an impressive 1.2 million seats, with Emirates Airways being the largest route.

“And, Durban – King Shaka International Airport is punching above its weight with a 150% growth from 2021 representing 4% of all seats,” she said. “The Durban routes grew with Emirates seats up over 400% and was the most extensive route in the region,” she added.

“Kruger also had 23 100 seats in 2022 (less than 1% of all seats on international routes). The two airlines active on the route are Lufthansa from Frankfurt and Airlink from Livingstone,” the tourism performance report reveals.

The future looks even brighter as a new emerging trend known as forward bookings takes hold. The Minister disclosed that “forward bookings increased by 328% (85,960) in August.” Notably, “Between August to October, there was a 287% (187,667). For August to January 2023, there was a 227% (294,220) increase in bookings,” she added.

“We will continue to intensify targeted communication on our digital platforms to sell South Africa as a destination of choice, inviting the world to come and “Live Again” with us,” she concluded.

For enquiries, please contact:

Issued by Ministry of Tourism

Steve Motale on 0837840719

MLO Mpumzi Zuzile on 0725509019 /0609559035

Thandiwe Mathibela at South African Tourism

Email: thandiwe@southafrica.net

Tourism House

Sunnyside, Pretoria, 0001