

## **Media statement by the Minister of Tourism, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk**

8 December 2009

"South Africa can confidently say that it has enough accommodation for the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup," the Minister of Tourism, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, said today.

Minister van Schalkwyk addressed the media at a briefing in Cape Town about the results of an extensive accommodation audit undertaken by the national Department of Tourism.

"The results of the audit show that South Africa has more than 202 000 rooms available across the country and I am very satisfied that this will be enough to provide for the approximately 450 000 visitors we are expecting for the world cup. This audit has given us the first comprehensive overview of its kind of accommodation establishments in South Africa, and the resulting national accommodation database will be a powerful tourism tool long beyond the word cup," the Minister said.

The audit was undertaken in cooperation with stakeholders from all nine provinces, the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA), South African Tourism (SAT), the private sector and MATCH, the professional services company appointed by FIFA to manage the official accommodation solution for the world cup.

"The wide ranging nature of the process has ensured that we have a very good picture of the number of accommodation establishments in South Africa, the number of rooms and where these rooms are situated.

"The accommodation database is a product we can be very proud of and the strategy we have developed for its future use will be to the advantage of the entire tourism industry in South Africa. The more than 202 000 rooms countrywide should make ample provision for the 450 000 visitors we are expecting," the Minister said.

He noted that the results of the audit showed the following:

- \* there are at least 18 882 accommodation establishments in South Africa, of which 7 492 are graded and 11 390 are ungraded
- \* there are at least 202 712 rooms in the country, of which 107 119 are graded and 95 593 are ungraded
- \* there are at least 7 520 accommodation establishments in host cities (within a 50 kilometre radius of stadiums)
- \* there are at least 100 853 rooms in host cities (within a 50 kilometre radius of stadiums).

It is important to note that the 202 000 total rooms available includes the 55 000 rooms MATCH has to contract to provide for the FIFA family (including the FIFA delegation, commercial affiliates, media and hospitality) and the participating tour operators and members of the general public who buy accommodation through MATCH.

"I am very pleased that MATCH has already contracted more than 48 000 rooms and that it is nearing its target of 55 000. Our audit shows that in addition to the rooms contracted by MATCH, there are at least 152 000 additional rooms available in the country for the rest of the visitors coming to the world cup. I am satisfied that the supply will be enough to meet the demand during the tournament," the Minister said.

Minister Van Schalkwyk also elaborated on a joint initiative between the national Department of Tourism, the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) and the Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa (FEDHASA) on the management of a South African accommodation booking portal.

The database which was created as a result of the audit will form the basis of the booking portal. All establishments on the database will be pre-registered on the booking portal and FEDHASA will also be undertaking a process to verify information and ask establishments to add information in the course of December and January. Any establishment in the country which is not on the database and wishes to be can register with FEDHASA.

Minister van Schalkwyk announced that the web address for the accommodation booking and listing portal will be <http://www.Rooms4U.travel>. The portal serves as a tool for accommodation service providers to get their stock to market and to be exposed to a greater number of potential customers, and it is also an easy to use point of service for local and international travellers to locate and book accommodation in South Africa.

"I would like to call on all accommodation establishments in the country to verify their details by the end of January 2010 and to use the facility to assist them with the sale of all available rooms. This database and booking portal creates a legacy that puts South Africa in a better position to maximise future tourism revenues and growth and is to the advantage of all of us," the Minister said.

Establishments will be able to register and check their details in December and January. The portal will be ready to facilitate bookings by early 2010 and it will also allow establishments to sell their last minute stock. Some of the benefits of the portal for the tourism industry will include that all players will be able to make use of automatic real time bookings, that all payments on the portal will be secure and guaranteed and that any establishment, regardless of size, can load stock onto the system.

Finally, the Minister also launched the first ever national Tourism Contact Centre for South Africa, a single point of call for all tourism related information.

"The contact centre consists of a comprehensive website and a call centre which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and will serve customers in seven international languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch and Portuguese). The website and call centre provide a wide range of accurate and up to date information on tourism and travel. This includes information on attractions, activities, experiences, services, restaurant and routes," the Minister said.

The number for the call centre is +27 87 803 INFO (4636) and the address for the website is <http://www.southafrica.net>. The website is hosted by South African Tourism (SAT).

"These are products which will make it much easier for visitors to plan their trip to South Africa and I consider it an immense feather in our tourism cap. It will serve us very well for the world cup, but also far beyond that. This contact centre is another initiative that helps cement our reputation as a world class destination supported by a superior tourism sector. I would like to urge all role players in the industry to help us market the website and call centre number as services to our visitors," the Minister said.

Accommodation establishments can register or make enquiries about the booking portal on <http://www.Rooms4U.travel> or can contact their regional FEDHASA offices for further assistance.

National Tourism contact centre:  
Call centre: +27 87 803 INFO (4636)  
Website: <http://www.southafrica.net>.

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Issued by: Department of Tourism  
8 December 2009  
Source: Department of Tourism (<http://www.tourism.gov.za/>)