

From: Natasha Rockman <nrockman@tourism.gov.za>

Date: Thu, 12 Aug 2010 13:19:16 +0200

Subject: MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF TOURISM - MINISTER COMMENTS ON UK TOURISM ANNOUNCEMENTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THURSDAY 12 AUGUST 2010, 13:00

**MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF TOURISM,
MR MARTHINUS VAN SCHALKWYK**

MINISTER COMMENTS ON UK TOURISM ANNOUNCEMENTS

The South African Tourism Minister Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk today welcomed the commitment by the British Prime Minister David Cameron in his first major speech on the topic to further mainstream tourism in the United Kingdom (UK) Government's policy and planning framework. "We look forward to working with the newly appointed Minister for Tourism and Heritage, Mr John Penrose," Minister van Schalkwyk said.

In particular, Minister Van Schalkwyk welcomed Mr Cameron's announcements on the intention to review aspects of the UK visa system. Although the British Prime Minister did not commit to removing visa requirements for key source markets, Mr Cameron did indicate that obstacles to travel to the UK would be reviewed and that new technology would be deployed to streamline visa application processes.

Minister van Schalkwyk commented: "The onerous UK visa system has increasingly become a frustration for South African travellers. The time-consuming and complex administrative process of applying for UK visas has convinced many South Africans to avoid London and to use other European hubs. It has simply become too expensive and too burdensome to travel via London when it is not your primary destination. Although the resistance to travel via London is still fairly contained, there is no question that the intense frustration will lead to more travellers over time choosing hubs other than London."

Mr Van Schalkwyk also called on the UK Government to reconsider its contentious passenger departure tax on long haul outbound travellers. This tax has outraged South African outbound tourists, airlines and British and South African tourism stakeholders alike.

"This unilateral levy on departing passengers equates to a tax on tourism. Considering that it is levied in addition to visa costs, it adds significantly to the cost of travel for South Africans to the UK. But more importantly, it also adds significantly to the cost of outbound travel from the UK to long haul destinations such as South Africa. This tax hits developing country destinations hardest and we trust that the UK's internal review process will consider ways of preventing the creation of new trade barriers of this kind which only serve to undermine our best efforts to grow and develop our destination," Minister van Schalkwyk said.

Ends/

Media Enquiries:

Department of Tourism
Trevor Bloem
012-310-3631
082-771-6729
tbloem@tourism.gov.za

Ministry of Tourism
Ronel Bester
021-465-7240
083-242-7763
rbester@tourism.gov.za

Natasha N Rockman
Deputy Director: Communications
Ministry of Tourism - South Africa
120 Plein Street
Parliament
Tel: 021 465 7240
Fax: 021 462 5237
Cell: 076 429 2264
Email: nrockman@tourism.gov.za

This message and any attachments transmitted with it are intended solely for the addressee(s) and may be legally privileged and/or confidential. If you have received this message in error please destroy it and notify the sender. Any unauthorized usage, disclosure, alteration or dissemination is prohibited. The Department of Tourism (TOURISM) accepts no responsibility for any loss whether it be direct, indirect or consequential, arising from information made available and actions resulting there from. The views and opinions expressed in this e-mail message may not necessarily be those of TOURISM or TOURISM-Management.