

NDT POLICY WATCH

QUARTERLY UPDATE

April – June 2015



INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

1. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

World Committee on Tourism Ethics proposed the International Convention on Tourism Ethics

The World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE) proposed the transformation of the Global Code of Ethics into a full international convention. Currently, the Global Code of Ethics in Tourism is not legally binding although some governments and private sectors have implemented it. The proposal to convert it into an international convention was deliberated on the 15th Meeting of the World Committee on Ethics. The proposal sought to empower governments in the area of tourism ethics and maximise the impact of the Code.

Parallel to this discussion, the Committee also deliberated on the level of implementation of the Code by public and private sector. This included discussions on child exploitation; accessibility; all inclusive holidays; and the impact on local communities¹. Reflecting on the achievements, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) indicated that invaluable work was done in raising awareness and promoting responsible tourism policies and practices in the tourism sector, for the past ten years. Pascal Lamy, Chairperson of WCTE, also highlighted the importance of implementing the principles of the Code of Ethics by UNWTO Member States and the private sector, in the quest to promote ethical and responsible tourism development. Lamy then supported the proposal to convert the Code into an International Convention and remarked that ‘tourism has immense potential to be a force for good but requires concrete action from all stakeholders’².

With regard to children's rights, Carol Bellamy, the Chairperson of UNWTO World Tourism Network on Child Protection supported the notion of transforming the Code into a Convention in order to help enforce the principles related to child protection. It was also reported that the WCTE approved recommendations on accessible tourist information, which will be presented to the UNWTO General Assembly for adoption. The next meeting (16th) of the WCTE is scheduled for November 2015.

International Air Transport Association introduces Emergency Response Best Practices Handbook and Standard Safety Assessment Program

Following a handful of high profile global airline's accidents, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) continues to introduce new measures with a view to improve safety. In April 2015, IATA announced the publication of the first edition of the Emergency Response Best Practices Handbook. This edition provides information critical to building effective emergency response plans for ground service providers, airports and other aviation-related activities.

The handbook will, according to IATA, enable the industry players to improve their readiness in line with global best practices, especially when they need to deal with an operational event or emergency situation³. It was reported that the handbook provides a comprehensive step-by-step guidance on planning and implementation of actions such as humanitarian responses; team management; crisis communications; drills and exercises.

To compile the Emergency Response Best Practice, IATA partnered with industry's emergency response experts around the globe. Basically, this is designed to give operators the tools necessary to respond to an incident or accident and build on their existing emergency response protocols⁴.

¹ UNWTO. (2015). World Committee on Tourism Ethics proposes International Convention on Tourism Ethics. Press Release no 15036.

² As cited in UNWTO Press Release.

³ Koumelis, T. (April 2015). IATA introduces emergency response best practices handbook. <http://www.traveldailynews.com>.

⁴ As cited in Koumelis.

Furthermore, IATA's Standard Safety Assessment (ISSA) for airlines not eligible for the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) was launched. ISSA is a voluntary safety audit program aligned with global best practices and created mainly for airlines operating aircraft which have a lower maximum take-off weight than the 5,700 kg threshold, for participation in IATA safety audits⁵.

Although not linked to IATA membership, ISSA helps airline operators to conform to global safety standards, shares best practices and provides them with an opportunity to evaluate and improve their existing operational and management control systems. ISSA also introduces elements of a Safety Management System (SMS) and assessments will be performed by IOSA Accredited Audit Organisations⁶.

In addition, IATA hosted the second annual Cabin Operations Safety Conference from the 05th to 07th May 2015 in Paris, France. More than 300 delegates representing numerous aviation stakeholders including regulators and investigative organisations from around the globe were targeted⁷. It was reported that the Cabin Operations Safety Conference gave an opportunity for stakeholders to address current and emerging safety challenges through sharing of expertise based on global standards and best practices. IATA further emphasised that safe, efficient and effective cabin operations are an integral part of its broader commitment to flight safety⁸.

Global Travel & Tourism leaders set landmark agenda for growth

The Global Travel Association Coalition (GTAC), which is the leading global Travel & Tourism private sector and government organisations, launched a pledge for aligned advocacy and action to harness the full potential of the sector i.e. to create jobs, drive inclusive growth and foster development⁹.

The pledge was launched at the World Travel & Tourism Council Summit held in Madrid from the 15th to 16th April 2015, under the theme "Powering Travel & Tourism into the next decade: An Agenda for Growth and Development"¹⁰. Basically, this is a landmark manifesto setting forth key areas of action necessary to ensure that travel and tourism contribute to consolidate the global economic recovery; increase resource efficiency; create decent jobs; and inclusive economic opportunities.

The members of GTAC pledged to work in a coordinated manner with governments and the private sector, to advance Travel Facilitation, Infrastructure Development, Environmental Sustainability and Investment in Human Capital. Ultimately, this pledge will be fulfilled by¹¹.

- Continued research-based evidence on the value and impact of travel and tourism including the impact of policy shifts;
- Ensuring that travel & tourism be an effective driver of inclusive economic growth and sustainable development; and
- Calling on governments to agree to national tourism policies that bring together all relevant government agencies, while creating or strengthening public/private sector cooperation and coordination of tourism planning and development at all levels.

⁵ Rokou, T. (April 2015). IATA launches standard safety assessment program. <http://www.traveldailynews.com>.

⁶ As cited in Rokou.

⁷ Karantzavelou, V. (April 2015). IATA Cabin Ops Safety Conference to address legacy and emerging issues.

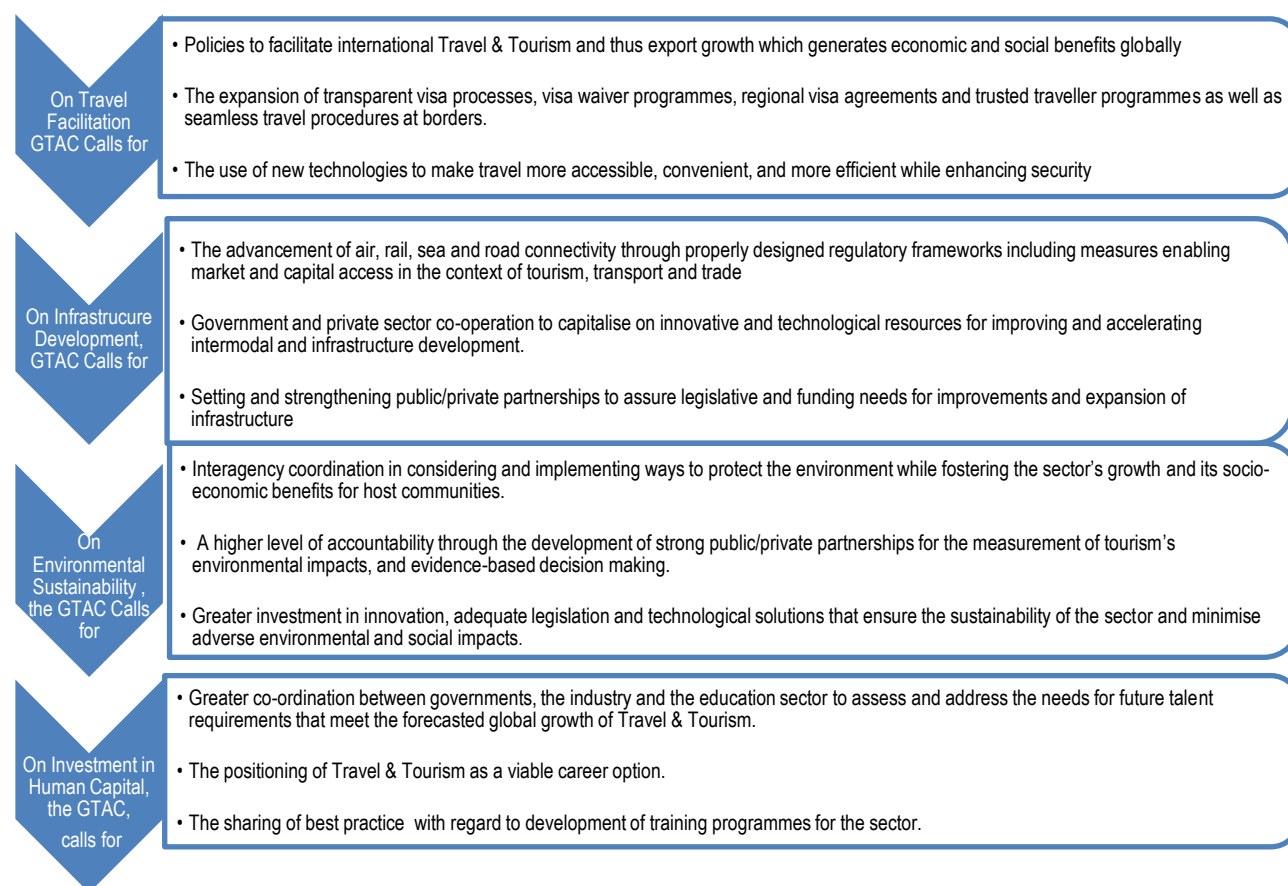
⁸ As cited in Karantzavelou.

⁹ UNWTO (2015). Global Travel and Tourism leaders set landmark agenda for growth. Press Release no 15030.

¹⁰ As cited in UNWTO Press Release.

¹¹ As cited in UNWTO Press Release.

The GTAC pledged to work with governments in specifically addressing the following critical issues.



GTAC aims to speak with one voice on key issues shaping the sustainable development of the sector while promoting a better understanding of Travel & Tourism's role as a driver of economic growth, employment and sustainable development.

GTAC has high profile member organisations such as Airports Council International (ACI); Cruise Line International Association (CLIA); International Air Transport Association (IATA); International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO); Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA); World Economic Forum (WEF); World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC)¹².

United Nations World Tourism Organisations' 1st World Forum on Food Tourism

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and Basque Culinary Centre jointly organised the 1st World Forum on Food Tourism. The forum was held from the 27th to 29th April 2015 at the Basque Culinary Centre, in Spain. The Forum provided a valuable platform to exchange experiences, enhance the understanding of food tourism and how to successfully manage the growing tourism segment worldwide.

The UNWTO Secretary General, Taleb Rifai remarked that 'getting a taste of local cuisine has become an essential part of travelling experience, and as such, gastronomy presents a vital opportunity to enrich the tourism offer and stimulate economic development in destinations all around the world, not the least in rural communities'¹³. Gastronomy should be understood as the study of food and culture¹⁴.

¹² As cited in UNWTO Press Release.

¹³ Koumelis, T. (April 2015). UNWTO and Basque Culinary Centre organise the 1st World Forum on Food Tourism.

The UNWTO also expressed optimism that interactions in this area will further strengthen the ability of food tourism to create local job opportunities and spur renewed interest in traditional cultural heritage. Food tourism was also seen as an opportunity to stimulate economic development in destinations across the globe, particularly in rural areas.

Concepts of food tourism, current trends, and links between gastronomy and tourism branding were debated with international experts. The event also featured several workshops where participants had the opportunity to interact with food and tourism professionals from across the globe and learn more about branding, strategy and success factors for food tourism destinations.

The UNWTO also indicated that the interaction on the first forum for food tourism is opportune given that millions of tourists cross borders to try food and other cultures. According to the Basque Culinary Centre, 'food is a fundamental element of all cultures, a major component of the world's intangible heritage and an increasingly important attraction for tourists that remain vastly untapped'.

In relation to the above, Gastronomic Tourism (basically travelling for food) has also been a topic of interest amongst tourism researchers. The 2015 Journal of Gastronomy and Tourism indicated that food has always been part of tourists' experience and gastronomic tourism is becoming a real player in the tourism market, with food and wine related services/events attracting huge numbers each year¹⁵.

2. OTHER INTERNATIONAL NEWS

European Regions' Airline Association advises Airlines to guard against criminal proceedings

The European Regional Association (ERA) has cautioned airlines, particularly directors, on the trend of criminal proceedings arising from air accidents. The association deliberated at the report detailing about 9 prosecutions that took place in Europe as result of air accidents.

The association indicated that 'the criminalisation of air accidents is increasing, particularly within the European Union (EU), and is an alarming element of the responsibilities of directors and key post holders in air operating companies'¹⁶. Accordingly, the report highlighted the need for airline's board of directors and senior management to prepare not only for accidents or incidents but also for criminal prosecution emanating from such.

In addition, the report indicated that the same type of preparation is needed for any civil action that may arise following an incident or an accident. Related to that, the report highlighted that states can and have acted to introduce legislation to make it a criminal offence when a gross failure, negligence or breach of duty in an organisation results in death or serious injury. According to the report, failure by senior managers to take necessary measures can expose companies to corporate manslaughter charges. Therefore, executive, non-executive directors and management of airlines need to be fully aware of their legal obligations¹⁷.

¹⁴ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gastronomy.

¹⁵ Anne-Mette Hjalager. (2015). Journal of Gastronomy and Tourism Vol.1, 2015. <https://www.cognizantcommunication.com/journal-titles/journal-of-gastronomy-and-tourism>.

¹⁶ European Regional Association. (2015). Personal and corporate responsibility and liability in air accidents and incidents. <http://www.eraa.org>.

¹⁷ As cited in the European Regional Association report.

Visa Developments

On the occasion of the 5th UNWTO Silk Road Ministers' Meeting at ITB 2015, visa facilitation; infrastructure development; and marketing were the priorities identified to advance transnational routes. The UNWTO Silk Road concept has its origins from past centuries where traders; nomadic warriors; prophets; emigrants and adventurers travelled the Silk Road from Europe to the Far East. The UNWTO is therefore reviving these ancient routes as a tourism concept for cultural exchange, trade and heritage.

Participating countries in the aforementioned meeting reported on measures taken to promote Silk Road tourism with a clear focus on visa facilitation, e-marketing and cooperation with tour operators¹⁸. Despite the progress achieved, Ministers acknowledged that lack of travel facilitation remains high on the agenda given that it constitutes one of the major obstacles for tourism development along the Silk Road.

The UNWTO also emphasised the significance of enhancing links by promoting transnational route development and facilitating travel. In line with the UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture, an emphasis was made on the need to ensure that tourism and culture work closely to build a sustainable future, whilst safeguarding the region's unique cultural heritage.

3. NATIONAL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

New Minimum Wage for Hospitality Sector

The Department of Labour (DOL) released the new minimum wage for the hospitality sector which comes into effect on the 1st of July 2015. According to the department, the change in the minimum wage is in line with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA), which empowers the Labour Minister to adjust wages in various sectors. The upward adjustment will be applicable until June 2016. For employers with 10 or less employees, the adjustments are as follows:

Types of rates	From 2014/15	To 2015/16
Monthly	R2 601,88	R2 760,59
Weekly	R600,48	R637,10
Hourly	R13,87	R14,15

The minimum wage for employers with 10 or more employees is as follows:

Types of rates	From 2014/15	To 2015/16
Monthly	R2 900,08	R3 076,98
Weekly	R669,30	R710,12
Hourly	R14,87	R15,77

The above figures apply to any commercial businesses or part of commercial businesses in which employers and workers are associated for the purpose of carrying on or conducting one or more of the following activities for reward. These include hotel; motel; inn; resort; game lodge; hostel; guest house;

¹⁸ Karanzavelou, V. (March 2015). Visa facilitation, infrastructure and marketing: key priorities for Silk Road Ministers. <http://www.traveldailynews.gov.za>.

guest farm; or bed and breakfast establishment including short stay accommodation; self-catering; time shares; camps and caravan parks¹⁹.

In addition, it also includes restaurants; pubs; taverns; cafés; tearooms; coffee shops; fast food outlets; snack bars; industrial or commercial caterers; function caterers; contract caterers and all activities or operations incidental to or subsequent to any of the activities mentioned above²⁰. The DOL also indicated that the Hospitality Sector’s Sectoral Determination excludes workers and employers involved in the trade of letting of flats, rooms and/or houses. It also excludes all workers and employers covered by another Sectoral Determination in terms of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, as well as areas covered by a Statutory Council or a Bargaining Council.

Lastly, the DOL highlighted that the current wage increases have been determined by utilising the Consumer Price Index reported by Stats SA in April 2015. The current level of CPI is 4.6%²¹. The minimum wage increases are therefore determined by adding 4.6% plus 1.5% as stated in the current Sectoral Determination. The total increase is 6.1%²².

Draft Airport charges 2015/16-2019/20

The Regulating Committee, which is established by Section 11 of the Airports Company Act of 1993, published the draft permission to levy airport charges for comments. The Government Gazette no 38818 indicated that these will come into effect on the 1st of October 2015 to the 31st of March 2020.

The draft permission outlines passenger services charges, landing charges and parking charges. The landing and parking charges are levied according to the maximum certificated mass in kilograms. For landing charges, the price range from R86.50 for an aircraft with a maximum certificated mass in kg of 500 to R1007, 78 for an aircraft with a mass in kg of 10 000. On parking charges, the price will range from R65, 43 for an aircraft with a maximum certified mass in kg of 2000 to R1902, 83 for an aircraft with a mass in kg of 200 000. Meanwhile the passenger services charges are as follows²³.

	Excluding VAT
Passenger service charge per embarking passenger where such passengers will disembark from the aircraft at an airport within the Republic.	R111,40
Passenger service charge per embarking passengers where such passengers will disembark from the aircraft at an airport within Botswana; Lesotho; Namibia or Swaziland.	R230, 70
Passenger service charge per embarking passenger where such passengers will disembark from the aircraft within any state or territory other than those mentioned above	R303,51

¹⁹ Department of Labour. (2015). Hospitality Sector has a new minimum wage. Media statement <http://www.labour.gov.za>.

²⁰ As cited in the Department of Labour Media statement.

²¹ As cited in the Department of Labour Media statement.

²² As cited in the Department of Labour Media Statement.

²³ Government Gazette. (May 2015). 2015/16-2019/20 Permission for Airports Company South Africa.no 38818. Notice 473 of 2015.

Regulations regarding fees for the provision of aviation meteorological services

On the 29th of May 2015, the Department of Environmental Affairs published regulations regarding fees for the provision of aviation meteorological services. The regulations are published in line with the South African Weather Service Act no 8 of 2001, which provides for the charging of fees for the provision of any commercial services.

The regulations indicated that the Weather Service charges aircraft operators fees for aviation's meteorological services in respect of a flight undertaken within any flight information region²⁴. Such flight information region is determined by the Director for Civil Aviation in terms of the Civil Aviation Act of 2009. The regulations highlighted that the Weather Service uses relevant information provided by an aircraft operator to the Air Navigation Services Company SOC Limited of South Africa. This then enables that company to calculate an air traffic service charge for the flight.

The fees are paid by both South African and Foreign State Aircrafts unless other provisions have been made by means of a written agreement with the Weather Service. Most importantly, there are no fees to be paid by aircrafts engaged in search and rescue operations and coastal patrol flights by the South African Air Force²⁵. The fees for the provision of meteorological services for an aircraft with a maximum certified mass (MCM) of 2000 kg and above are as follows²⁶:

Tariffs for the next 3 financial years		
From 1 April 2015	To 31 March 2016	R51,43
From 1 April 2016	To 31 March 2017	R54,52
From 1 April 2017	To 31 March 2018	R57,79

Lastly, the regulations indicated that the tariffs for aircrafts with MCM of less than 2000 kg are set at zero.

National Liquor Policy: discussion document

The Department of Trade and Industry published the National Liquor Policy discussion document for public comments. The policy seeks to, amongst other things, improve regulatory collaboration; eradicate trading and manufacturing of illegal or illicit alcohol; and resolve challenges regarding capacity and enforcement.

The discussion document outlines various proposals. It proposes the amendment of the Liquor Act of 2003 to empower the Minister of Trade and Industry to determine restrictions and parameters for advertising and marketing of liquor, in line with the Control of Marketing and Beverages Bill. This Bill calls for the imposition of restrictions on the advertisement of alcohol beverages, prohibition of sponsorship and promotion associated with alcohol beverages²⁷.

²⁴ Government Gazette no 38842. Department of Environmental Affairs. Regulations regarding fees for the provision of aviation meteorological services.

²⁵ As cited in Government Gazette no 38842.

²⁶ As cited in Government Gazette no 38842.

²⁷ Department of Trade and Industry. (2015). National Liquor Policy: Discussion Document.

The discussion document also proposes that liability for manufactures and suppliers be introduced to ensure that they take responsibility not to supply their products to unlicensed traders. The document also emphasises that retailers should not serve alcohol to an intoxicated person in line with the agreed norms and standards. In case where this happens and the person gets involved in an accident and crime related to substance abuse, the manufacturer, retailer and trader should bear liability for any harm or damages²⁸. There is also an attempt by the policy to regulate the availability of alcohol by highlighting the need for norms and standards around trading hours and days.

Furthermore, the policy proposes that the national minimum legal age at which alcohol can be purchased and consumed be raised from 18 years to 21 years. Accordingly, it places the responsibility to licence holders, managers or any other person dispensing liquor at premises to take steps by verifying the age for persons appearing to be under 21 years²⁹. This, the policy specifies, ought to be done by requesting an identity document, passport or drivers' licence prior to selling or supplying them with liquor. The policy also indicates that it would be an offence for such persons to sell liquor to persons under the age of 21 and for the person under that age to provide false information regarding their age to get alcohol.

With regard to location, the policy proposes that liquor premises be located at least 500 metres away from schools; places of worship; recreation facilities; rehabilitation or treatment centers; residential areas and public institutions. In addition, the policy indicates that no liquor licences shall be issued to petrol service stations; premises attached to petrol service stations; premises near public transport; and areas not classified for entertainment or zoned by municipalities for the purpose of trading in liquor³⁰. Most importantly, the policy proposes that the license be terminated within the period of two years in cases where the license was already issued to these forbidden areas.

The notice indicated that comments are expected 30 days from the date of publication, which was 20 May 2015. Comments can be posted to the Director-General at the Department of Trade and Industry, Private Bag X84; Pretoria; 0001 or email at NRamphele@dti.gov.za or hand deliver in the DTI premises.

Department of Home Affairs issued new guidelines for travelling with minors

The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) issued new guidelines for travelling with minors, which came into effect on the 1st of June 2015. The guidelines provide clarity in instances where, parents are travelling with a child; one parent is travelling with a child; a person is travelling with a child and is not his or her biological child; where the minor is unaccompanied and clarity on any child who is in alternative care.

In cases where parents are travelling with a child, such parents ought to produce an unabridged certificate reflecting particulars of parents and proof of adoption for adopted children. For one parent travelling with a child, the requirements are an unabridged certificate reflecting both parents;

²⁸ As cited in the National Liquor discussion document.

²⁹ As cited in the National Liquor discussion document.

³⁰ As cited in the National Liquor discussion document.

consent form of the other parent; and a court order granting full parental responsibilities or legal guardianship if he/she is a legal guardian of a child³¹. In addition, the guidelines indicate that legally separated parents should provide a court order when the other parent does not give consent and a death certificate must be provided where applicable. It's important to note that the Director-General may give permission to a relative or another person to travel with a child in instances where both parents are deceased.

Persons travelling with a child not biologically theirs should, according to the guidelines, produce a copy of an unabridged birth certificate for the child; affidavit of a parent or legal guardian giving permission to travel; copies of identity documents or passports for parents/legal guardian and contacts of parents or legal guardian³². In cases where both parents are deceased and the child is travelling with a relative or another person, the Director-General of the Department of Home Affairs can give permission.

Unaccompanied minors are expected to produce proof of consent from one or both parents or legal guardian. It should be in the form of an affidavit allowing the child to travel. In the case where one parent provides proof of consent, a copy of a court order which granted the parent full parental responsibilities is required³³. In addition, the minor is expected to provide a letter from a person to receive the child in the Republic indicating residential address and contacts in the Republic where the child is going, and the contact details of the parents or legal guardian of the child. Lastly, a copy of an authorisation letter from the Head of Department of Social Development where the child resides is required for any child who is in alternative care to travel.

Draft Country Report: Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Department of Social Development published the Draft First Periodic Country Report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for comments. The report outlines measures undertaken by the state to implement the convention and reflects on various sector initiatives including the tourism sector.

For the tourism sector, the report reflected on the Framework for Universal Accessibility in Tourism Destinations which promotes accessibility to tourist attractions for persons with disabilities, elderly and those with accessibility needs³⁴. Amongst others, the report outlined the framework's objectives which are to³⁵:

- Encourage the building of new tourism structures and facilities which are universally accessible
- Encourage the development of tourism experiences, attractions and destinations that are universally accessible
- Enhance South Africa's ability to compete for events and conferences that require universal accessible destinations
- Heighten industry's awareness of organisational benefits that accrue from supplying accessible tourism products.

³¹ Department of Home Affairs (2015) New Immigrations Regulations: requirements made easy.

³² As cited in the Home Affairs requirements.

³³ As cited in the Home Affairs requirements

³⁴ Department of Social Development. (2015). Draft First Periodic Report on United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

³⁵ As cited in draft UN CRPD report.

The Department of Social Development requested public comments by the 12th of June 2015. Stakeholders were expected to indicate whether they agree with the contents of each article and provide additional information for the baseline report on both achievements and challenges to Disabilityrights@dsd.gov.za/fax0862637659.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

City of Joburg's Draft Rates Policy available for comment

The City of Johannesburg published the Draft Property Rates Policy 2015/16, which will come into effect on the 1st of July 2015 upon completion of the necessary processes. The levying of rates is in line with the Municipal Systems Act, which provides for municipalities to levy property rates, with a view to finance operational expenditure of the council.

Numerous properties were identified for property levies including Heritage Properties. However, Heritage Properties- which are outlined in section 27, 28 and 31 of the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999- qualify for rebates. According to the Draft Rates Policy, 'application for rebates ought to be done annually on the form prescribed by the Council'³⁶.

The rebate will also be subject to any limitations that may be placed on financial incentives for the conservation of heritage resources in terms of section 43 of the Heritage Resources Act. In addition, the Draft Policy states that the rebate should be a maximum of 20% of the current monthly rates.

City of Tshwane named South Africa's Earth hour capital 2015

A panel of International experts named the City of Tshwane as South Africa's Earth Hour Capital 2015. This was, according to the World Wide Fund South Africa (WWFSA), a recognition of the city's green initiatives which are moving closer to its goal of becoming the green capital of Africa³⁷. It was reported that the title is awarded as part of the global Earth Hour City Challenge, which is a collaborative effort between WWF and ICLEI-Local Government- a global cities' network for sustainability³⁸. This collaborative effort seeks to mobilise action and support from cities in the global transition towards sustainable energy.

WWFSA applauded Tshwane for being recognised for its commitment to emissions-reduction and its supporting action plan. According to the WWFSA, 'the city's green building bylaw reflects strong policy leadership as do the impressive actions the city has taken to improve energy efficiency in its municipal buildings'³⁹. Initiatives which were noted by judges included green building bylaw (which is the only one in the country); and the retrofitting of all municipal buildings for improved energy efficiency, etc. The city was also commended for setting a good example and its goal of becoming the continent's green capital.

³⁶ Draft Property Rates Policy 2015/16, City of Johannesburg. <http://www.joburg.org.za>

³⁷ WWF South Africa. (2015). Tshwane Named SA's Earth Hour Capital. <http://www.wwf.org.za>.

³⁸ As cited in <http://www.wwf.org.za>.

³⁹ As cited in <http://www.wwf.org.za>.

ICLEI's African Regional Director expressed excitement on the recognition of Tshwane for its leadership role and noted that the city's officials and its political leadership are ambassadors for local action on sustainability. Lastly, the regional director also recognised ICLEI Members like the City of Johannesburg and Nelson Mandela Bay for being national finalists and highlighted interest in helping them take radical steps towards becoming global models for low-carbon, climate resilient development.

Bird Island launched in Western Cape

On the 17th of April 2015, the Western Cape Government and Cape Nature launched a Bird Island after R6.5 million investment. The newly refurbished Island, it was reported, is located off the coast of Lambert's Bay, home to nearly 17000 Cape gannets and is one of just six breeding colonies of Cape gannets worldwide⁴⁰.

The facility now boasts a new exhibition building with skeletal displays of a Cape fur seal; Dusky dolphin; Cape gannet; and krill. It also boasts the only Cuvier's beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*) skeletal display in South Africa. The new developments also include improvements to the current bird hide; a life-size Southern Right whale replica; oversized cormorant nest replica and marine-oriented puzzles⁴¹.

The MEC for Economic Development and Tourism, Honourable Alan Winde, indicated that the bird Island is a vital part of the tourism offering along the West Coast. Moreover, the MEC reported that 'during the recent summer season, several West Coast establishments reported increased tourism numbers and the transformation of Bird Island will draw more visitors to the region, adding to local economic growth and jobs'⁴². Lastly, it was reported that the interactive features which are at the facility will play a key role in educating communities on the need to conserve these animals.

Ethekwini's Integrated Rapid Public Transport Network (IRPTN)

The construction of the R20 billion IRPTN in Durban is progressing. This was reported following the visit of the municipal officials and councillors into the construction sites. Ward councillors noted the progress of the project and indicated that this will assist people in travelling efficiently on a daily basis⁴³.

The IRPTN, also known as the Go Durban, is envisaged to connect 600 000 commuters across the city's 9 transport corridors. Currently, the Corridor 3 route is being constructed and consists of two new dedicated bus lanes. The IRPTN will integrate bus, rail and taxi transportation, ensuring that commuters do not wait for more than 10 minutes during peak hours. The route under construction will have 15 stations which will be accessible to people living with disabilities. In addition, it was reported that the majority of stations are at major intersections so as to accommodate feeder transfer facilities.

Meanwhile the city has acknowledged the economic contribution of the Durban International Convention Centre. The city indicated that the ICC has created over 15000 jobs between 2012 and

⁴⁰ Western Cape Launches Bird Island <http://www.gov.za>.

⁴¹ As cited in <http://www.gov.za>.

⁴² As cited in <http://www.gov.za>.

⁴³ EThekweni Media and Publications. (May 2015). Corridor 3 Progressing well. <http://publications.durban.gov.za/>.

2014 and contributed almost R6 billion to KwaZulu-Natal in 2013/14 financial year⁴⁴. The ICC's marketing manager indicated that the facility has become an icon in the South African hospitality and tourism industry. Lastly, the city pointed out that the Durban ICC has a good track record now and is totally self-funded, without reliance on the municipal coffers for bailouts.

⁴⁴ As cited in EThekweni's media and publications.

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