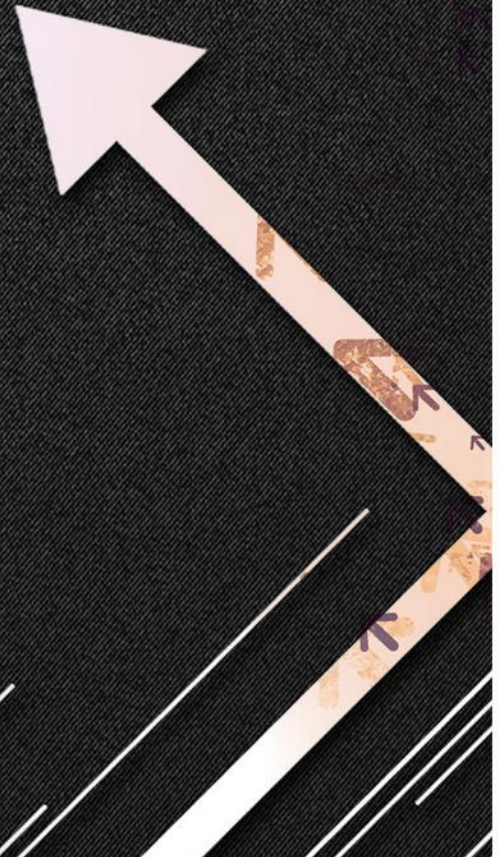


NDT POLICY WATCH

QUARTERLY UPDATE

January – March 2017



INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

1. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

UNWTO Advances the Conversion of the Code of Ethics into an International Convention

The process of converting the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism into an international Convention is continuing. The process is driven by the Intergovernmental Working Groups consisting of representatives from 36 UNWTO Member States. As it stands, the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, adopted in 1999, remains a voluntary instrument. This process seeks to ensure that it becomes a binding instrument.

The UNWTO Secretary General highlighted that the Convention, based on this cornerstone policy document, would be of great significance. The consideration of the Convention is also seen as opportune given the consistent growth of international tourists that reached a record of 1.2 billion in 2016, which is double the figure of tourists in 1999¹. The latter year is also the same year in which the code of ethics was adopted.

The UNWTO indicated that the text of the Draft Convention was discussed from the 30th-31st of January 2017 on the second meeting of the Working Group. The Draft Convention is scheduled to be presented during the 105th session of the UNWTO Executive Council to be held on the 11th-12th May 2017 in Madrid. Subsequent to the executive council meeting, the working group will convene where UNWTO Full and Associate Members will be invited to deliberate.

The intention is to present the Convention for consideration and possible adoption during this year's 22nd UNWTO General Assembly. The General Assembly will take place in Chengdu, China, on the 6th-9th September 2017². If this roadmap unfolds according to plan, it will be the first international treaty for the UNWTO. The adoption would, according the UNWTO, be a seminal moment given the declaration of 2017 as an International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

The final Working Group meeting will take place on the 28th – 29th March 2017 at the UNWTO Headquarters in Madrid with the aim to finalise text of the Draft Convention for its submission to the XXII UNWTO General Assembly in Chengdu, China in September 2017.

Progress on the Convention for Protection of Tourists

Since 2011, the UNWTO has been working on the development of an international convention to protect tourists and ensure confidence in the tourism sector. Spearheading the process, is the Working Group on the International Convention for the "Protection of Tourists and the rights and obligations of Tourism Service Providers" which was created by the Decision of the UNWTO Executive Council in 2011³. The representatives of the Working Group consist of UNWTO Member States, International Organisations and the private sector. The initiative is now on its final phase.

¹ UNWTO Press Release (March 2017). UNWTO advances the conversion of the Code of Ethics into an international Convention. PR17026

² As cited in UNWTO Press Release

³ UNWTO Press Release (2017). PR No 17016. Working Group progresses on the Convention on the Protection of Tourists. <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2017-02-07/working-group-progresses-on-the-convention-on-the-protection-of-tourists>

The continuous growth of the tourism sector present various challenges, including those related to safety and security. The expansion of new business models necessitate an adaptation of the global legal framework. The 9th Meeting of the Working Group on the International Convention on the “Protection of Tourists and the rights and obligations of Tourism Service Providers” took place on the 26th - 27th January 2017. The focus was on advancing the Draft Convention by incorporating comments of UNWTO Member States and members of the Working Group in the framework of Public Consultation⁴.

The Convention seeks to ensure protection of tourist on emergency situations, enhancing cooperation among States and ensure information sharing. These are seen as important elements in the overall protection of tourists and consumers. The UNWTO is of the view that the perennial growth of tourism requires governments and private sector to build a framework guaranteeing tourist protection.

UNWTO’s Network on Child Protection

The UNWTO continues to do some work on the protection of children from harmful tourism practices. The 32nd meeting of the UNWTO World Tourism Network on Child Protection was held on the 9th March 2017 during the ITB Berlin to deliberate on child protection in the tourism sector. The network provides a platform for tourism stakeholders to engage and exchange good practices on challenges around preventing child and youth exploitation in the tourism sector. It also focuses on issues around sexual exploitation, child labour and trafficking.

This year’s meeting focused on the role governments ought to play in fighting exploitation of children in the tourism industry. The network’s chairperson, Carol Bellamy indicated that protection of children from exploitation is the responsibility of all tourism stakeholders, however, governments should to play a leading role.

The UNWTO Secretary General, Taleb Rifai, emphatically underlined the challenges and steps that should be taken. Rifai stated that “there is a bright and black side to tourism, we need to recognize the black side exists and address it with no shame. We need zero tolerance to any form of child exploitation. We cannot allow tourism infrastructure to be used for this and shouldn’t have any issues in exposing it”⁵.

To ensure success in dealing with the challenge, the UNWTO underscored the significance of cross-government coordination and commitment. Cross-sectoral cooperation was also identified as critical to the advancement of child protection in tourism.

The Network’s meetings are held annually at the worlds’ foremost Travel and Tourism Fairs and serve as a platform for key actors to exchange experiences and best practices. Key actors also present awareness-raising materials and capacity building tools, and promote the adoption of professional codes of conduct or other responsible practices in line with the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

⁴ As cited in the UNWTO Press Release

⁵ UNWTO Press Release. (March 2017). Governments needs to lead the protection of children in tourism: UNWTO World Network on Child Protection meets in Berlin

International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development Launched

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) officially launched the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. The launch took place in January 2017 at the International Tourism Fair of Spain 2017. It will be followed by global year long activities aimed at advancing sustainable tourism contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁶

The event underlined the immense economic activities by tourism and its impact to society including its power to advocate for mutual understanding, peace and sustainable development. Antonio Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General, underscored this point during his address by stating that “Tourism has become a pillar of economies, a passport to prosperity and a transformative force for improving millions of lives”⁷.

Similar sentiments were echoed by the UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai, when opening the event. The launch of 2017 as a Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development is seen as providing a unique opportunity to ensure that tourism is a pillar in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The event also marked the launch of the International Year Campaign “Travel, Enjoy, Respect” aimed at promoting sustainable tourism amongst travellers in partnership news networks.

Essentially, the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development aims to support change in policies, business practices and consumer behaviour towards a more sustainable tourism sector that can contribute effectively to the SDGs. The focus will be on promoting tourism’s role in the following five key areas⁸:

- Inclusive and sustainable economic growth;
- Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction;
- Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change;
- Cultural values, diversity and heritage; and
- Mutual understanding, peace and security.

UNWTO is inviting all partners to join the celebrations by sharing their activities and initiatives to advance sustainable tourism for development at www.tourism4development201.org

European Commission Adopts a Proposal for Aviation Emission Trading System

The proposal to revise the European Union Emission Trading Scheme has been adopted. The proposal will prolong the existing temporary limited scope of the scheme that applies to flights within the European Economic Area (EEA) only⁹. This therefore will mean, no new requirements will be introduced for flights into and out of the EEA until 2021 when ICAO’s global scheme will be introduced.

⁶ UNWTO Press Release (January 2017) International year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 kicks off. PR No 17007.

⁷ KoumelisT,(2017). International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 Kicks Off. <http://www.traveldailynews.com/post/international-year-of-sustainable-tourism-for-development-2017-kicks-off>.

⁸ As cited in the press release

⁹ Rokou T, (2017). European Commission adopts proposal for aviation emissions trading system. <http://www.traveldailynews.com/post/european-commission-adopts-proposal-for-aviation-emissions-trading-system>

The European Regions Airline Association (ERA) always doubted the effectiveness of the ETS in the absence of a global scheme. They argued that the current reduced scope of the European Union Emissions Trading System (ETS) has limited environmental effectiveness, but imposes considerable administration burdens on many ERA members. Thus the desire by ERA to suspend the scheme until the global scheme is introduced.

In anticipation of the global scheme, ERA is seeking assurances from the EC that European operators will not end up with two schemes for flights within the EEA post 2021. The EC's proposal will also bring clarity for operators inside and outside the EEA. Although the aviation industry expressed its commitment to address emission, the EU states underlined the need to further refocus on delivering European projects that have a huge potential to reduce aviation emissions. The EU is of the view that economic instruments such as the Emission Trading System are the only means of reducing aviation's CO2 impact.

Meanwhile improvements in technology, infrastructure (air traffic management) and operational measures are seen as part of the solution to reduce CO2 emissions¹⁰. ERA is also calling for a renewed focus on delivering major infrastructure projects such as the Single European Sky with greater potential to reduce aviation's CO2 emissions than economic instruments.

Simon McNamara, ERA's-Director General, indicated that their members would like to see a commitment that the EU ETS will ultimately be replaced by the global emission scheme. ERA have already committed to addressing the climate impact, investing in technology and making operational improvements. McNamara emphasised the need for EU states to make the same commitment and put a renewed effort into delivering major infrastructure projects such as the Single European Sky that have been gaining little headway recently. These projects are viewed as having potential to reduce aviation's CO2 emissions and improve flight efficiency than economic instruments such as the EU ETS.

Procedurally, the European Commission's proposal now has to be ratified by the European Council and the European Parliament in order to be formally adopted.

Future International Standard on Accessible Tourism for All

The first meeting for the development of an International Standard on Accessible Tourism was held in Madrid on the 13th-14th February 2017¹¹. The process is driven by a Technical Committee TC 228, responsible for tourism and related services within the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO). The Committee will develop a global and transversal international standards that will initially include a systematic inventory of existing standards; technical criteria; recommendations and requirements in the field of accessible tourism¹². In addition, recommendations and requirements will be suggested for those segments of the value chain and related activities whose international standardisation in terms of accessibility is still pending.

¹⁰ As cited in Rokou

¹¹ UNWTO Press Release (2017). PR No 17020. Future international standard on accessible tourism for all. <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2017-02-27/future-international-standard-accessible-tourism-for-all>.

¹² As cited in UNWTO Press Release

It is envisaged that the standard will influence destination planning and management by setting clear guidelines. The standard will be referred to as ISO 21902 Tourism and related services-Tourism for all-requirements and recommendations. This standard will result in the establishment of the globally accepted practice guiding destinations. The new standard is expected to be approved in 2018 after consensus at the ISO level and promulgated during 2019. It will then be applied to different stakeholders of the tourism sector, both public and private and at different levels.

In line with the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, the UNWTO views universal accessibility as a right and a business opportunity for destinations and companies. Similarly, accessible tourism is seen as an answer to everyone's universal right to travel and discover the world. Universal accessibility also has advantages for the tourism industry. It presents an opportunity for the tourism industry to capture a global market place that includes millions of people with disabilities, seniors, families with young children and many other who encounter numerous barriers, both physical and cultural when travelling¹³.

2. NATIONAL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

Draft Regulations for the Manner and Procedure for Dealing and Lodging Tourism Complaints Published for Public Comment

The Minister of Tourism, Honourable Derek Hanekom, issued the draft regulations on the manner and procedure for dealing and lodging tourism complaints, for public comment in the Government Gazette No.40637, on the 24th February 2017. The draft regulations were issued in terms of section 61 (1) (b) & (c) of the Tourism Act, 2014 (Act No.3 of 2014). This section empowers the Minister to make regulations on various issues including the manner and procedure for lodging complaints with the Tourism Complaints Officer.

As part of lodging the complaint, the complainant must submit information concerning the alleged contravention or incident of non-compliance in writing to the Tourism Complaints Officer. Submission mechanism includes emailing to the department (complaints@tourism.gov.za); hand delivering to Tourism House at number 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside; filing it electronically to the department website (www.tourism.gov.za) or utilizing any other means. A tourism complaints form is also contained in the draft regulations.

The draft regulations also outline the responsibilities of the Tourism Complaint Officer. The Officer is required to record the complaint, upon receipt; give a reference number for the complaint to the complainant and investigate the tourism complaint as soon as possible; acknowledge receipt in writing and refer to the relevant institution in line with the Act; make regular follow-up with the institution until the complaint is resolved; and inform the complainant of the outcome¹⁴. The Tourism Complaint officer also has the responsibility to deal with minor tourism complaints which doesn't require referral to other institutions.

¹³ As cited in UNWTO Press Release

¹⁴Government Gazette No. 40637. <http://www.gov.za/documents/tourism-act-regulations-manner-and-procedure-dealing-and-lodging-tourism-draft-comments>

The draft regulations empowers the Complaint Officer to interact with the perpetrator on the complaint received and the proposed solution. The regulations also indicates the point at which the complaint can be considered as resolved.

Members of the public are requested to submit written comments to the draft regulations by 18 April 2017 for attention to Ms MM Setwaba by email: msetwaba@tourism.gov.za or by fax: 012 444 7101. Alternatively comments can be posted to the Director General, Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001 or hand delivered at Reception of Tourism House, 17 Trevenna Street, Sunnyside. Any enquiries in connection with the draft regulations can be directed to Ms Setwaba at 012 444 6313.

Drone Operators Urged to Abide by Relevant Regulations

The South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) noted a dramatic increase in the number of drones in the country. According to SACAA, the review of the register shows an increase in the number of Registered Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) i.e. from 216 in January 2016 to 465 in 2017. The increase in technology and the availability of drones at low prices present a challenge to authorities in that some owners may use RPAS in a manner that violate the civil aviation regulations.

SACAA expressed a concern that the increase in the number of unregistered and unapproved RPAS operations taking to the skies illegally are being potentially operated by unlicensed individuals. For every registered and licensed RPAS taking to the sky, SAACA estimates that there are two or more doing so illegally. The main concern for civil aviation authority are those who are operating illegally and have no idea of the risk they pose to other airspace users. A collision of these RPAS with a helicopter or a jet full of passengers can result in a catastrophic disaster. Also, the reported incidents of these devices following individuals around and flying into other people's properties without permission was identified as a serious concern by the authority.

SACAA is therefore urging owners of RPAS to familiarise themselves with relevant regulations. Failure to abide by relevant regulations will result in hefty fines. The authority reported that operators who are not compliant may be imprisoned for a period of 10 years or be fined R50 000. Meanwhile individuals who use RPAS irresponsibly may face legal liability.

The civil aviation authority underlined the fact that no remotely piloted aircraft shall be operated unless it is registered with SACAA and has been issued with the letter of approval. In addition, SACAA emphasised that no person shall operate these RPAS unless that person has been issued with a valid remote pilot's license. SACAA also reminded RPAS pilots to adhere to restrictions especially the fact that¹⁵:

- An RPAS should always be in a fit-to-fly condition with relevant authorisation to fly
- The aircraft is not flown in a formation or swarm
- The aircraft is not flown 400 feet above the surface or within a radius of 10km from the airport
- The aircraft is not flown adjacent to or above a nuclear power plant; prison; police station; crime scene; court of law; national key point or strategic installation.

¹⁵ South African Civil Aviation Authority. (February 2017). Drastic increase in the number of drones in South Africa: Drones urged to abide by applicable laws. Media Statement.

Revised Preferential Procurement Regulations 2017

The National Treasury released the revised Preferential Procurement Regulations (PPR) 2017 in terms of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act of 2000, in the Government Gazette No. 40553 on Friday 20 January 2017. This is the second revision of the regulations since the initially promulgation in 2001 and first revision in 2011.

The revision of the PPR of 2011 was largely influenced by the need for a mechanism to empower certain categories of Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (also classified as EMEs or QSEs Co-operatives, Township and Rural Enterprises) through procurement. The revision is informed by the social dialogue on the New Growth Path (NGP) which agreed on the Local Procurement Accord on 31 October 2011. The revised regulations are as follows¹⁶:

- Prequalification criteria to allow the advancement of these selected categories of people by limiting competition only amongst themselves. This restricts the inclusion of well established companies unless they meet further requirements of subcontracting to these groups should they be successful.
- Regulation 9 requires all those with the ability to deliver required service to demonstrate the element of subcontracting to the categorised groups at a tendering stage. This is an acknowledgement that in the main the high value tender in the region of R30 million and above tend to be awarded to established companies due to economies of scale and affordability leaving aspiring businesses out.
- Regulation 6 and 7 addresses the outcry of categorised groups who felt that the threshold of R1 million is too significant for them to grow to a level of established companies, and this have increased to R50 million. This revision gives smaller companies greater chances to compete in the economy in a meaningful way.

Treasury indicated that the regulations seeks to use public procurement as a lever to promote socio-economic transformation, empowerment of small enterprises, rural and township enterprises, designated groups and promotion of local industrial development. The revised Regulations are available on www.treasury.gov.za.

Revised Traditional Courts Bill Introduced to the National Assembly

The revised Traditional Courts Bill was introduced to the National Assembly on 31 January 2017¹⁷. The move to take the Bill to Parliament follows the approval by Cabinet in 2016. It was reported that the Bill was previously rejected in 2009, by Provincial Legislatures and interest groups on the basis of ascribing too much power to traditional leaders in rural areas. It was also perceived to be open to abuse with the potential to violate the rights of women.

The Department of Justice reported that the Traditional Courts Bill, in its revised form, provides the desired framework in line with the Democratic Constitution. The envisaged legislation is aimed at transforming the traditional courts system in order to ensure that these courts function under and comply with the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

¹⁶ National Treasury. Media Statements.(2017). Revised Preferential Procurement Regulations 2017.

http://www.treasury.gov.za/comm_media/press/2017/2017012301%20-%20Media%20Statement%20revised%20PPR.pdf

¹⁷ Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. Media Briefing: Statement. (January 2017). Media Briefing: Statement by the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, the Hon TM Masutha, MP, 23 January 2017 http://www.justice.gov.za/m_speeches/2017/20170123-TradCourtsBillBriefing.html

The Bill seeks to create a uniform legislative framework regulating the role and functions of traditional courts in the resolution of certain disputes, in accordance with constitutional imperatives and values. The enactment of the Traditional Bill intends to put an end to the abuse of the system which has been manipulated to serve the interests of colonial and apartheid regimes. Most importantly, the Bill is seen as improving access to the justice system for ordinary people, as these courts are easily available to local communities and will dispense justice speedily and cheaply.

In light of the concerns about women exclusion, the Bill now indicates that the system would allow for assistance of women and other vulnerable members of society, as in some communities, women participation in such courts is prohibited. The Bill also states that these courts must be constituted of women and men and for these courts to promote and protect the representation of women. To address other concerns, parties would also be able to “opt out” of the traditional justice system, a provision not in the previous drafts. However the “opt out” option is valid only if made at the beginning of the process.

The previous Bill, which many stakeholders had criticised, focused on fines to be imposed but the current Bill provides for compensation as opposed to fines. The shift on emphasis on restorative justice measure is meant to restore relations between parties and promote social cohesion. Regarding punitive measures, the Bill proposes that an order may be expressed in monetary terms or otherwise, including livestock, for the payment of damages suffered, on condition that the order for damages must be for the good of the community and not for the benefit of any member of the court or a traditional leader.

In promoting conciliation in a non-adversarial way, the Bill indicates that there is no need for legal representation. Instead, it proposes that parties can choose to be represented by a person of their choice. This can include a family member whether male or female, a friend or a councillor. The Bill also provides for an appeal mechanism which allows the aggrieved party to take the matter for review by the traditional structure which could possibly be the Provincial or National Houses of Traditional Leadership.

Draft Regulations on the Reclamations of Land from Coastal Waters Published for Public Comment

The Minister of Environmental Affairs, Honourable Edna Molewa has issued, in the Government Gazette No.40638, draft Regulations on the Reclamations of Land from Coastal Waters for public comment¹⁸. The regulations were issued in terms of sections 7B and 7C of the National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act, 2008 (Act No.24 of 2008). This Act provides for integrated management of coastal and estuarine management including norms standards and policies promoting conservation of the coastal environment.

The reclamation of land from the sea is the process of creating new land from the sea. Parliamentary Committee on Environmental Affairs has identified this process as prone to potential abuse. Some of the problems identified include; the potential abuse by consortia by creating privatised space that is closed off to the public and the mixed use of reclaimed land and re-sale of portions of land that make it difficult to track and monitor.

The draft regulations outlines the approval process for any person intending to pursue reclamation. It also outlines the Minister’s role when it comes to pre-approval; application assessments; minimum information required; and Minister’s powers in assessing applications.

¹⁸Government Gazette No. 40638. http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/40638_r10693gon167.pdf

The adoption of new regulations is seen as ensuring the subjection of all potential reclamation on the South African coast to an appropriate and effective authorisation process. This will be in the national interest, beneficial to the public and state, whilst in line with sustainable development principles.

Members of the public are requested to submit comments with 30 days from the 24th February 2017. Written comments can be posted to the Department of Environmental affairs, for attention to the Deputy Director-General, Branch: Oceans and Coasts, PO Box 52126, V&A Waterfront, Cape Town, 8002. Alternatively comments can be hand delivered at East Pier Building 2, East Pier Road, V&A Waterfront in Cape Town. Any enquiries in connection with the regulations can be directed to Mr Ryan Peter on 021 819 2490.

ACSA Drops Tariffs from April 2017 and Ranks among Ten Most Punctual in the World

Globally, airport charges are seen as counterproductive and the revenue raised is surpassed by the economic benefits that are foregone by the reduced demand of air travel. International organisations like the UNWTO and the International Air Transport Association have extensively studied this area and discovered that cost is always transferred to passengers. The Airports Company South Africa appears to have assimilated the message with the proposed reduction in charges.

ACSA has announced a 35.5% cut in tariffs. From the 1st of April 2017, domestic travellers will pay a Passenger Service of R82, instead of R127, whereas international passengers will pay R223 instead R346. Passengers departing from Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia or Swaziland will see a R94 reduction in charges and will pay R169¹⁹. The reduction in prices bodes well for passengers in particular and tourism development broadly.

In addition, ACSA has also announced that there would be 35.5% reductions to airlines' landing and parking charges. The spokesperson of SAA, Tlali Tlali said "the reductions will result in a drop on the total fare that passengers pay, and is therefore good news for the consumer". Industry experts are waiting to see whether the reduction translates into cheaper airfares to travellers. This includes examining this reduction in combination with other cost elements such as fuel and the fluctuation of the exchange rate.

Meanwhile three of the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA)'s international gateways have been ranked amongst the ten most punctual airports in the world. The list was published in January 2017 by the OAG Aviation Worldwide, a UK based agency which monitors on-time performance (OTP) among airlines and airports globally.

In terms of categories, OR Tambo International Airport achieved 8th place in the large airports category while Cape Town International Airport ranked sixth in the medium airports category. King Shaka International Airport was ranked tenth in the small airports category²⁰. Both ACSA and the Department of Transport welcomed the rating and attributed the milestone to the state of the art Airport Management Centre (AMC), which is the nerve centre of the airports operations.

¹⁹ Smith, C. (2017). <http://www.fin24.com/Economy/price-cut-in-airfares-no-guarantee-with-acsa-slashing-airport-charges-20170105-2>

²⁰ OAG. (2016). On-time Performance Results for Airlines and Airports.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Bilateral Agreements

South Africa continues to enter into cooperation with various countries to advance integrated development within the African Continent. South Africa and Chad have signed a Bilateral Air Service Agreement on aviation in January 2017, in Pretoria. The agreement is expected to bring opportunities that will grow the aviation industry in both countries.

In light of the predicted 194 million passengers to Africa, Minister Peters of South Africa underlined the significance for Africa to consolidate its own air transport market and industry in order to remain relevant. This includes the need to implement liberalisation of African Skies. Similarly, Minister AGHABCH of Chad supported the principle of open market and underscored the importance of consolidating African Aviation Market industry with a view to enhance competitiveness.

Meanwhile, Minister Hanekom went on a working visit to Iran and to attend the 10th annual International Tourism Exhibition, following an invitation by his counterpart in Iran, Vice President Dr Zahra Ahmadipour, also the head of the Iranian Cultural, Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organisation.

During the visit, the representatives of the two countries had bilateral discussions on growing tourism relations between their respective countries. Minister Hanekom also engaged members of the tourism trade to discuss ways of increasing tourist arrivals from Iran to South Africa. Statistically, the Minister noted that Iran is amongst South Africa's top 3 source markets for inbound tourists from Middle East whereas South Africa is among the most popular destinations in the world for Muslim travelers. To consolidate the relationship, the Minister indicated that the Department of Tourism is now working with Iranian counterparts to finalise a Memorandum of Understanding on Tourism Cooperation.

In pursuit of possible investments, the Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) for Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs in the Free State Province led a delegation of MECs and senior officials to Sao Paolo in Brazil. The delegation met with the Minister of Tourism in Brazil and the invest arm of the Brazilian Government, Invest Sao Paolo. The discussions centered on possible cooperation in medical tourism, cultural, training and exchange programmes. This paved a way for the signing of heads of agreements between the MEC and the Minister followed by the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Governor and Premier.

Tourism Grading Support Programme transferred to the Tourism Grading Council

The Department of Tourism announced the integration of the Tourism Grading Support Programme under the broader Tourism Incentive Programme of the Department of Tourism to form part of the systems and processes of the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA). The transfer of the programme which became effective from 10 February 2017, will not only make the cost of the grading cheaper, but also streamline the grading processes providing a single point for enterprises to access all the benefits of being star graded.

Launched in 2015, the Tourism Grading Support Programme sought to encourage more accommodation establishments to get graded under the star grading system of the TGCSA. Establishments used to receive between 30% and 60% rebates on assessment fees retroactively. The streamlining process is expected to yield an increased benefit of upfront discounts of up to 90% on assessment fees²¹. It is anticipated that the transfer will also see more establishments registered on the TGCSA.

Meanwhile the TGCSA has also changed the look and feel of its plaques that reflect grading levels of establishments, effective from January 2017. The introduction of the high quality perspex plaque follows the industry's concerns about the widespread theft of the metal plaques and lack of durability.

The new plaque displays the number of the stars achieved in full colour, following concerns by the industry that the black stars were not legible to travellers. To ensure security, TGCSA reported that the plaque will reflect a serial number and distinct message that this is its property, giving it the legal entitlement to remove any plaque displayed on establishments that are no longer graded.

It was also reported that the new plaque will further state that the TGCSA is a business unit of the South African Tourism (SAT), to affirm the connection between SAT as a destination marketing organisation and its business unit, the TGCSA, as the custodian of South Africa's only quality assurance system for tourism establishments.

In ensuring that travellers prefer graded establishments, TGCSA urged all travellers to check and confirm the star grading of their preferred accommodation establishment on their website (<http://www.tourismgrading.co.za>) before finalising their booking arrangements.

South African Tourists Guide Appointed President of World Federation Association

South African leadership has been recognised within the tourist guiding fraternity globally. The World Federation of Tourists Guide Associations (WFTGA) has appointed South African tourists guide, Alushca Ritchie, as its new President. A registered Western Cape tourist guide, Alushca was appointed to head the internationally recognised body at the 17th biennial World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations Convention, which took place in Tehran, Iran.

The WFTGA is a non-profit, non-political association and an affiliate member of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). As President, Alushca will serve a two-year term and will be supported by an Executive Board consisting of delegates from Australia; Iran; United States of America; Canada and the United Kingdom. The recent convention of the WFTGA was attended by about 350 participants and delegates from over 40 countries.

The Tourism Minister, Derek Hanekom has congratulated Alushca on her global leadership achievement and stated that it presents another opportunity for the country to elevate the status of the guiding profession and to acknowledge the important role that tourist guides play in providing superb visitor experiences. Her credentials in the tourism sector speaks volumes. Alushca has been a wine specialist

²¹Media Statement. February 2017. Department of Tourism.

<https://www.tourism.gov.za/AboutNDT/Publications/Cost%20of%20grading%20reduced%20as%20Tourism%20Grading%20Support%20Programme%20transfers%20to%20the%20Tourism%20Grading%20Council%20of%20South%20Africa.pdf>

for the past six years; owns and manage a tourism business; served as the Chairperson of the Cape Tourists Guides Association; a Director in the Cape Town Tourism Board and as the Western Cape Representative of the South African Travel Service Association.

SANParks Inaugural Tourism Investment Summit 2017

The South African National Parks (SANParks) will host the first Tourism Investment Summit at the Maslow Hotel in Sandton on 27 March 2017. The purpose of the summit is to present new investment opportunities, attract developers and financiers, and profile national parks in South Africa as viable investment hubs. SANParks CEO Fundisile Mketeni stated that “National parks offer potential investors with an unparalleled diversity of opportunities in various disciplines which includes adventure activities, eco-tourism properties, retail and many more.”

In the year 2000, SANParks adopted a commercialisation strategy with the objective of establishing private public partnerships (PPPs) initiatives. It was reported that the initiatives resulted in a two – tiered approach leading primarily to gathering concessions for the construction of eco-tourism lodges and outsourcing retail shops and restaurants. As a result, there were more than 45 PPP projects in active implementation by March 2016 which led to infrastructural developments worth over R755 million with assets reverting to SANParks and a total of PPP income of R816 million to SANParks²².

In an attempt to stimulate tourism growth whilst conserving the rich biodiversity and cultural resources, SANParks intends to use the summit to interact with current and potential investors and provide insight into future plans as far as PPP investments are concerned.

²²South African National Parks. News. (2017). SANParks announces inaugural Tourism Investment Summit 2017. <https://www.sanparks.org/about/news/?id=57082>

4. REFERENCES

Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. Media Briefing: Statement. (January 2017). Media Briefing: Statement by the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, the Hon TM Masutha, MP. Retrieved from http://www.justice.gov.za/m_speeches/2017/20170123-TradCourtsBillBriefing.html

Government Gazette No. 40637. Retrieved from <http://www.gov.za/documents/tourism-act-regulations-manner-and-procedure-dealing-and-lodging-tourism-draft-comments>

Government Gazette No. 40638. Retrieved from http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/40638_r10693gon167.pdf

Koumelis T, (2017). International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 Kicks Off. Retrieved from <http://www.traveldailynews.com/post/international-year-of-sustainable-tourism-for-development-2017-kicks-off>.

Media Statement. February 2017. Department of Tourism. Retrieved from <https://www.tourism.gov.za/AboutNDT/Publications/Cost%20of%20grading%20reduced%20as%20Tourism%20Grading%20Support%20Programme%20transfers%20to%20the%20Tourism%20Grading%20Council%20of%20South%20Africa.pdf>

National Treasury. Media Statements. (2017). Revised Preferential Procurement Regulations 2017. Retrieved from http://www.treasury.gov.za/comm_media/press/2017/2017012301%20%20Media%20Statement%20revised%20PPR.pdf

OAG. (2016). On-time Performance Results for Airlines and Airports.

Rokou T, (2017). European Commission adopts proposal for aviation emissions trading system. Retrieved from <http://www.traveldailynews.com/post/european-commission-adopts-proposal-for-aviation-emissions-trading-system>

Smith, C. (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.fin24.com/Economy/price-cut-in-airfares-no-guarantee-with-acsas-slashing-airport-charges-20170105-2>

South African Civil Aviation Authority. (February 2017). Drastic increase in the number of drones in South Africa: Drones urged to abide by applicable laws. Media Statement.

South African National Parks. News. (2017). SANParks announces inaugural Tourism Investment Summit 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.sanparks.org/about/news/?id=57082>

UNWTO Press Release (February 2017). PR No 17016. Working Group progresses on the Convention on the Protection of Tourists. Retrieved from <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2017-02-07/working-group-progresses-on-the-convention-on-the-protection-of-tourists>

UNWTO Press Release (February 2017). PR No 17020. Future international standard on accessible tourism for all. Retrieved from <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2017-02-27/future-international-standard-accessible-tourism-for-all>.

UNWTO Press Release (January 2017). PR No 17007. International year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 kicks off. PR No 17007. Retrieved from <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2017-01-19/international-year-sustainable-tourism-for-development-2017-kicks-off>.

UNWTO Press Release (March 2017). PR No 17026. UNWTO advances the conversion of the Code of Ethics into an international Convention. Retrieved from <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2017-02-23/unwto-advances-conversion-of-the-code-of-ethics-into-international-convention>.

UNWTO Press Release. (March 2017). PR No 17029. Governments need to lead the protection of children in tourism: UNWTO World Network on Child Protection meets in Berlin. Retrieved from <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2017-03-10/governments-needs-lead-protection-children-tourism>.