



## MINISTRY OF TOURISM REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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### **Tourist arrivals to South Africa grew by 10,5% for the first six months of 2012, more than double the global average of 5% for the same period**

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According to the most recent tourism figures, tourist numbers to South Africa increased by an impressive 10,5% during the first six months of 2012, which is double the global tourism growth rate of 5%. Stats SA's tourism figures indicate that South Africa experienced an excellent first half of the year, attracting 4 416 373 tourists to the country between January and June 2012, compared to 3 996 760 tourist arrivals for the same period in 2011.

The tourism industry experienced particularly strong growth in overseas tourist arrivals, recording 17,1% growth in arrivals from outside of the African continent. A total of 1 163 477 overseas tourist arrivals were recorded for the first six months of 2012, compared to 993 364 tourist arrivals for the corresponding period in 2011.

"Despite the global economic downturn, our focused marketing efforts and the hard work of everyone in the tourism industry are paying dividends," said South Africa's Tourism Minister, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk.

"Although the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) does predict a slowdown in global arrivals in the second half of this year, we are delighted with our very strong start in 2012, and are confident that it will be a year worth celebrating for us as far as the tourism industry is concerned," he added.

For South African tourism, regional Africa as a whole has been one of the strongest performers so far this year, with tourist arrivals from the region growing by 8,3% over the first six months of 2012.

"We are very encouraged to see that our carefully formulated tourism growth strategy to increase tourist arrivals to South Africa is yielding the desired results, with excellent growth achieved in the markets where we are actively marketing Destination South Africa, and good returns being realised in markets that we have identified as sources of strong tourism potential for our country," the Minister said.

### ***China, India and Brazil showing their worth***

Growth in tourist arrivals for the first six months of 2012 has been strong in all regions, with particularly strong growth from emerging markets, with Asia growing by 40,7% and Central and South America by 54,4%.

For the first time, China is one of South Africa's top five source markets of overseas tourists, overtaking France as the country's fourth-largest overseas source market. A total of 60 272 Chinese visitors came to South Africa in the first half of 2012, which represents a massive 68,4% growth compared to the first half of 2011, when South Africa received only 35 796 Chinese arrivals.

"China's outbound tourism market continues to grow phenomenally, with 30% growth in outbound tourism reported for the country for the first half of 2012. The fact that South Africa managed to record more than double this rate clearly proves that we certainly have not missed out on this opportunity, and that our conversion efforts on the ground are delivering results," said the Minister.

"The launch of SAA's direct flight between Beijing and Johannesburg in January this year has contributed to growth from this market, helping to meet some of the obvious demand for Destination South Africa in China," he added.

South Africa is also reaping significant benefits from its marketing efforts and strong trade-relations work in other emerging markets, including India and Brazil, with arrivals from India continuing its steep upward growth trajectory. South Africa recorded 21,1% growth in arrivals from India for the first six months of this year, and a phenomenal 68,4% growth in arrivals from Brazil.

"In the two short years since our successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup, Brazil emerged as one of South Africa's most promising tourism markets, and we've followed the success of the tournament with strong trade work to capitalise on increased interest in our country from this important market," said the Minister.

To capitalise on South Africa's surge in popularity in Brazil, South African Tourism has embarked on a number of initiatives to promote the country in Brazil, including signing joint marketing agreements with some of Brazil's biggest tour operators, which have resulted in strong returns.

### ***Strong performance in all key markets***

All of the markets where South African Tourism is present have shown good growth so far this year. Although the UNWTO reported slow or negative outbound growth for the United Kingdom, Australia, Italy and France for the first six months of the year, all of these countries showed very healthy appetites for Destination South Africa.

South Africa's largest market, the United Kingdom, grew by a respectable 5% in the first half of 2012, accounting for 215 514 arrivals, while Australia, Italy and France, which are all core markets for South Africa, recorded double-digit growth in arrivals, at growth rates of 16,3%, 16,2% and 13,7% respectively.

South Africa's second-largest tourism source market, the United States of America, grew by a very healthy 16,3%, with 155 522 arrivals recorded, while Germany, our third-largest tourism market, also boasted double-digit growth of 12,2%, representing a total of 118 776 arrivals.

"This positive growth from Europe in particular, which is still facing volatile economic times, gives us confidence that the work we are doing to grow tourist arrivals is paying dividends, and that South Africa has every reason to have faith in the health of its tourism industry going forward," said Van Schalkwyk.

"I hope that the tourism industry will take heart in these figures, and continue working together to grow tourism to South Africa. It is also vitally important that we ensure that every new tourist

that arrives in our country is given the best experience possible, as word of mouth remains our most important marketing tool,” the Minister added.

South Africa also saw strong growth in many of the markets that South African Tourism has identified as so-called ‘watch-list markets’, i.e. markets that show potential to become core markets in the future. Strong growth was recorded from the Swiss market in particular, with arrivals growing by 26,2%. The hosting of 60 Swiss travel agents in November last year, leading Swiss editors in April 2012, and the signing of a number of joint marketing agreements with that country have no doubt helped drive this growth.

Other watch-list markets that performed well in the first half of the year include Portugal, Austria, Spain and Denmark. After a big drop in arrivals following the 2010 World Cup, watch-list market Argentina also bounced back this year, while South Korea continues to perform well.

### ***Africa remains a solid driver of growth***

Growing at 8,3% for the first six months of this year, Africa continues to prove itself as the pillar of the South African tourism industry. African arrivals growth strategies include an investment of an additional R218 million over the next three financial years to extend our marketing and trade presence on the continent. We are confident our marketing investment in regional Africa will yield attractive long-term returns and will maintain solid arrivals growth to South Africa.

Accessibility, value for money and effective positioning of South Africa as a major lifestyle destination are important drivers of regional African arrivals and the 2013 African Cup of Nations tournament is a major marketing opportunity for us.

### ***“Our marketing efforts are on the right track”***

“Apart from our ground-level marketing and conversion efforts in the countries where we are present, it is also important that we help ensure that our industry is at the forefront of global trends in tourism and destination marketing. The success of the recent E-tourism Africa Summit, which gave us and the industry an opportunity to strengthen our work with the world’s leading online travel marketers, is a case in point, as is the excitement that has already been generated by our latest campaign with *National Geographic*, “Through the Lens”, which is building on the great traction we achieved with our collaboration with two of the world’s leading photographers, Joel Sartore and Jody Cobb, last year,” said Minister Van Schalkwyk.

South African Tourism and *National Geographic*’s latest “Through the Lens” campaign follows the journey of three award-winning *National Geographic* photographers to three iconic South African destinations: Cape Town, Durban and the Drakensberg. The photographers will portray the beauty of each destination and its people through their personal journeys and images, which will then be cut into three short *National Geographic* films to be aired in January 2013.

“In order to maintain and build on these excellent figures, we will continue to focus on driving value for money in our local industry, centring our marketing efforts around our people, and ensuring that we maintain our leadership in wildlife and adventure, while at the same time showcasing South Africa’s incredible lifestyle offering,” concluded Minister Van Schalkwyk.

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