

SA TO BECOME WORLD LEADING CRUISE LINER DESTINATION



The Republic of South Africa is already a favored tourism destination and it plans to include another attraction in its tourism portfolio. Cape Town wants to become one of the best passenger cruise liner destinations in the world. The city longs to benchmark itself against the cities of Miami, Vancouver, Sydney, Melbourne and even Auckland, which have all developed as favored cruise liner destinations. "The time could be ripe to re-establish Cape Town as one of the great passenger liner destinations of the world by promoting itself and the southern African region as a base for destination cruises," said the city councilor in charge of economic development and tourism, Simon Grindrod.

The cruise liner business is a fast growing sector of the tourism industry. The average growth rate of the sector has been 8 percent per annum since 1980. It is also very profitable. Present estimates say the industry is worth some \$29 billion and it employs approximately 559 000 people. Last year, more than 12 million people went cruising and the number is expected to grow to 16 million by 2009.

There are just few players in the cruising sector and therefore it is important to attract their attention. Mr. Grindrod is disappointed because Cape Town and southern Africa had largely failed to benefit from the fact that cruise liner operators were seeking new destinations. According to Mansoor Mohamed, the City's Executive Director for Economics, Social Development and Tourism, it is necessary to contact the cruise liner operations and convince them that it is a good move to include South Africa on their list of cruise destinations.

Nowadays, Cape Town as well as Durban is planning to develop a multi-use cruise liner terminal. The fact is that cruise liner terminals are not profitable investments on their own but it is possible to construct a multi-purpose use facility that can be used as a cruise liner terminal as well as for other uses.

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