

MAURITIUS TOURISM REJOICES OVER NEW AIR ROUTES



Direct connections between Mauritius and new markets are essential for further development of Mauritius tourism. Additional air routes to Europe and the Middle East have been announced by the authorities.

As the last quarter of 2017 approaches, the opening up of Mauritius's airspace has taken on a new dimension. **After Saudi Arabian Airlines which made its maiden flight to Mauritius last week, it will be the turn of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines to begin its Amsterdam-Plaisance service beginning on the 30th of October.**

"To support the growth of the last two years, we have to move towards buoyant markets. The arrival of KLM beginning in October will increase connectivity to Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and to Benelux. These are markets in which the MTPA and various operators have done a lot of work; they are also places where we have done road shows," Kevin Ramkaloan, Director of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) explained.

The new connection via air routes will serve to close the circle of already established tourism by avoiding the need for visitors from Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg to make large detours via Paris, Dubai or Germany.

The new flights will be augmented by additional capacity from companies already operating in Mauritius during the high tourism season. Other developments at the European and regional levels are also anticipated. In addition, Air Mauritius is currently working towards broadening its offering. **Beginning on the 28th of November, the national airline will offer weekly flights to Geneva, Switzerland.** These seasonal flights will continue until the 23rd of February 2018.

With the increased capacity, Mauritius tourism industry is well positioned to achieve a growth rate of 7% to 8% compared to the previous year, Kevin Ramkaloan emphasized. According to Statistics Mauritius data, the number of arrivals has been estimated at 1.36 million and revenues of Rs 58.8 billion are expected. This should allow the tourism industry to set new records.

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