

SOUTH AFRICA CONCERNED ABOUT THE FALL OF TOURISM



The Minister of Tourism of South Africa, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, has noted and expressed concern over the report on the decline in visitors traveling to South Africa. The data on Tourism and Migration released in September 2019 by Statistics SA revealed that the total number of tourist arrivals (7,562,743) shrunk 2.1% (164,989 fewer visitors) from January to September 2019, over the 7,727,732 arrivals registered in that same period last year.

“The biggest impact on the numbers has been a concern for the safety of tourists in our country. In early December, together with our interest groups, we will announce our Tourism Security Strategy and implement plans in response to concerns raised by our key markets,” said the minister.

The hardest fall in tourism numbers was regarding arrivals from Australasia and Europe, which decreased by 5% and 3.9% respectively.

“Although international tourism figures decreased from January to September 2019 compared to the previous year, we are pleased that tourist arrivals from the Middle East increased 4.2%, followed by Asia (1.3%), Central and South America (0.3%), and North America (0.2%). It is a good sign that the most focused and aggressive marketing strategies in these regions will produce positive results,” said Kubayi-Ngubane.

The minister together with her team visited different markets such as China, Japan, Ghana, and Nigeria with the goal of attracting more tourists to the country.

The situation of the industry was worsened by the recent announcement of South African Airways bankruptcy or the business rescue state. Considered one of the most important airlines in Africa it connects over 40 local and international destinations across Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, South America, and Oceania.

The South African Minister of Finance P.J. Gordhan said that **the government has launched a radical restructuring process at South African Airways** in order to ensure its financial and operational sustainability. Business Rescue is a well-defined process that will allow SAA to continue operating in an orderly and safe manner and to keep planes and passengers flying under the direction of a business rescue practitioner. The uncertainty of the state of the company, however, is not likely to boost the number of visitors.

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