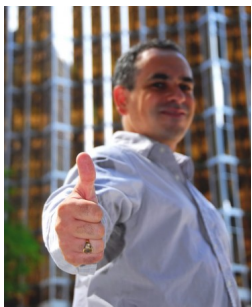


SOUTH AFRICA - IDEAL FOR MICE



The Republic of South Africa is doing very well in business tourism. In 2006 some 490,000 business tourists visited the country and the number has increased to 652,000 or by 7.2 per cent in 2007. According to the South African Tourism Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk, approximately 6 to 7 per cent of all foreign tourists that came to the country in 2007 were business travelers. The popularity of the country as a MICE destination continues to grow. Every year the country hosts approximately 860 international conference events.

Some 3,7 million people visited various events in 2006. South Africa has hosted prestigious events such as the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 or the World Economic Forum in 2007.

Marthinus van Schalkwyk says the industry will continuously grow. Another important event that will certainly bring numerous visitors to the country will be the 2010 Fifa World Cup. Even now the SA hosts some 23 per cent of all meetings in Africa and Cape Town is recognized as Africa's most popular meeting destination.

The MICE industry is attractive for investors as it is very lucrative. Ordinary business traveler spends three times more than leisure traveler. Business travel is also a good marketing strategy for the destination as many (as much as 40 per cent) business travelers return to the destination within five years. They also spread the word about the destination and therefore lure other possible tourists, both business and leisure.

South Africa is likely to stay highly competitive as it continuously improves its infrastructure. New airports are being built and some old ones expanded and renovated. Major highways are being improved and there is also the construction of the Gautrain rapid rail commuter. The country is also highly accessible. Recently Air France started some additional flights and now there are 28 flights weekly between Johannesburg, Amsterdam and Paris.

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