

SOUTH AFRICA, AND INDEED CAPE TOWN ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The South African government wishes to encourage tourists and visitors that South Africa and indeed the city of Cape Town, are open for business. As the country battles the effects of climate change that has led to drought in the city of Cape Town, it has now joined the global fight to save the world's natural resources; in this instance water. The city of Cape Town is not in this alone as almost every big city around the world including Los Angeles, Sao Paulo, Tokyo and many others have been in a similar situation to the one we are facing. South Africa is working together with experts and citizens around the world that have been in its very situation to learn best practices, and find innovative solutions to not only address the situation in Cape Town, but to ensure it mitigates the chances of other cities in the country experiencing similar challenges.

South Africa is a destination abounds with a kaleidoscope of tourist attractions ranging from adventure activities, heritage and culture, food and wine, beautiful beaches, and city lifestyle. It is a magical destination that has offered its people with opportunities of making livelihoods from its natural beauty. Employing approximately 1.5 million people, and contributing 9.3% towards the country's GDP; tourism is truly a sector that will help in the eradication of poverty, closing the inequality gap, and creating decent employment for South Africans.

Looking at the benefits of tourism, it goes without saying that visitors need to be encouraged to explore other magnificent parts of this vast country.

Looking at the dynamic nature of the situation in Cape Town, it is important that all South African stakeholders lead with facts to avoid panic and misunderstandings.

A few facts that need to be emphasised at this stage are:

- South Africa is not experiencing water shortage, only the city of Cape Town is
- Cape Town does have water, even though it is restricted and more than ever needs to be consumed with care,
- Efforts to save water are working as the day for water restrictions to possibly reduce further are getting pushed back,
- All major tourist attractions are currently operational as well as restaurants, bars and all planned conferences are going ahead, and

- All measures are being put into place to ensure that incoming tourists and visitors will still receive the world-class treatment and experiences that South Africa, and the city are known to deliver.

Considering that Cape Town welcomes international tourists of no more than 1% of its population, their consumption of water is minimal. The sector has created 300 000 jobs in the Western Cape, and in order to secure these, it is key that travellers are encouraged to visit Cape Town and to do so responsibly.

A new normal in terms of travel is being set as nations confront the causes and effects of climate change. The current status requires of us as global citizens to take better care of our natural resources and enjoy destinations responsibly in the ambit of sustainable tourism.