

## Growth of SA business tourism

South Africa, in partnership with 31 trade exhibitors, will be showcasing the country's business meetings and event offerings at this year's IMEX in Frankfurt, Germany, 17 – 19 April 2007. IMEX is regarded as the world's leading meetings and incentive travel exhibition.

Based on last year's figures, some 3400 hosted travel planners and buyers from more than 50 countries are expected to attend.

The 31 partner exhibitors at the South African stand include: representation from our internationally-acclaimed convention centres (ICC Durban, Cape Town International Convention Centre and the Sandton Convention Centre); convention and events bureaux (Durban Africa, KZN Tourism, Gauteng Tourism Authority, Joburg Tourism Company, and Cape Routes Unlimited); experienced destination and event management companies (Africadabra, African Agenda, Global Conferences Africa, Ilanga Travel, Hello Africa, Into Africa, Superior Choices, Terra Nova Tours, The Inside Edge, Walthers DMC, Gilt Edge Travel, City of Tshwane, XO Africa, Thebe Conferences, The Conference Company, Felix Unite, Green Route, Sandown Tours & Incentives, Fairfield Meetings & Incentives ); leading hotel and accommodation establishments (The Arabella Sheraton, Fancourt Hotel and Country Club Estate, Sun International) and the country's national airline (South African Airways).

### Major competitor

"South Africa continues to strengthen its position as a major competitor in the global meetings industry and the increase in demand for pre-scheduled group destination presentations at IMEX, as well the increase in the number of partner exhibitors, is testimony to that claim," says Angeline Lue, GM, South African Business Tourism.

"It is also reflected in the growing demand from our target segments in choosing South Africa as their preferred destination to host their meetings. These range from the contingent of 12 000 delegates at the World Diabetes Congress in Cape Town last year to the 5th World Summit on Media for Children at the Sandton Convention Centre (Johannesburg) last month (March 2007). Future events include: the International Franchise & Entrepreneurs Expo at the Sandton Convention Centre in May, the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) 2007 Congress in Cape Town in June, and the International Trade & Investment Fair at the ICC Durban in October.

"We're becoming an offering that international buyers and decision makers are finding difficult to ignore, based on an exciting combination of the country's Business Unusual proposition with our world-class infrastructure and fantastic leisure attractions – from scenic beauty to amazing safari experiences."

The Business Unusual proposition offers meetings and event buyers and planners the option of including single or multiple

elements of unusual, indigenous, management concepts and methodologies that have universal appeal but are intrinsic to South African ways of thinking and learning.

## Unusual ways of doing business

These include unusual ways of doing business in unusual locations with unusual experiences, often taking executives from the boardroom into the bush. Examples include: using drumming as a team building force to holding a bosberaad (a conference where all have equal authority) out in the wilds, pairing international captains of industry with their South African counterparts using indigenous cultural concepts such as ubuntu (means respect for the dignity of all and an emphasis on partnerships) or hosting an imbizo (meeting of leaders for issues to be resolved) in a locally constructed environment such as the Ubuntu Village in Soweto (Johannesburg).

“Indications are that buyers at this year’s IMEX will be interested in new infrastructure developments in South Africa that meet and exceed their expectations,” Lue elaborated.

“The opening of the new, ultra-versatile, R460 million (US\$64 million) Arena at the ICC Durban with a capacity for 10000 delegates and 4000m<sup>2</sup> of event space and the addition of 1200m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space to the Cape Town International Convention Centre and proposed acquisition of the nearby former Customs House are exciting developments.

“Equally so are the proposed construction of convention centres in some of our other cities, namely Pretoria, Port Elizabeth and Bloemfontein. The refurbishments and extensions to the O.R. Tambo International Airport (formerly Johannesburg International Airport), Durban and Cape Town Airports and the construction of the King Shaka International Airport at La Mercy outside Durban; progress on the Gautrain, the R25 billion US(\$3.5 billion) rapid rail, commuter link between Johannesburg, Pretoria and the O.R Tambo International Airport; new hotels with conference facilities such as those being built in the Battlefields area around Greytown and on the Elephant Coast in KwaZulu-Natal; and the more than R7 billion (US\$1 billion) in additions and developments to the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town are just a few of the examples that illustrate the ongoing investment being made in the country’s world-class infrastructure.”

- Business tourism focuses exclusively on the provision of facilities and services to the millions of delegates who annually attend meetings, congresses, exhibitions, business events and/or who participate in incentive travel and corporate hospitality.

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