

South African Tourism to open office in Nairobi

South African Tourism (SAT) plans to open a regional office in Nairobi during the 2013-2014 financial year, South African Tourism director for Domestic, Africa and Middle East, Phumi Ndlomo has disclosed.



Phumi Ndlomo

Addressing travel trade partners in Nairobi, Ndlomo said the Nairobi office will act as South African Tourism's liaison office for customer, business associates and consumers in its main markets of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, with a possibility of extending the mandate to the rest of the East African region.

"The large regional market potential suggests the need to establish presence in the markets rapidly," said Ndlomo, "We are in the process of establishing a fully-fledged office in Nairobi which will enable us to move more strongly into the east African market and effectively leverage the tourism potential of Tanzania, Uganda, and even Rwanda, Burundi and Southern Sudan, using Kenya as a key base in the region."

The new office will be used to monitor the markets across the region, disseminate information, liaise with local channel partners, and as regional strategy implementation centre.

Strategically sound

"Nairobi's reputation as an African commerce, trade and development hub has made it a strategically sound location for South African Tourism to establish its regional headquarters. We'll establish the new Nairobi office during 2013-2014 financial year as a gateway through which South African Tourism liaise with its existing customers across the East African region," he explained.

Kenya is one of South African Tourism's core markets in Africa, with Nigeria, Angola, Botswana, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo also major tourism markets. South African Tourism has also recorded remarkable growth in tourism arrivals from Tanzania and Uganda.

In 2011, 33 700 Kenyan visited South Africa up from 32 100, represented 4.9% in growth. Tanzania market recorded a 46.9% growth, with 32 100 Tanzanians visiting South Africa in 2011 up from 21 800 recorded in 2010. Uganda also recorded a positive growth of 9.1% growth over a similar period with 17 100 Ugandans visiting South Africa in 2011.

"We have seen consistent growth in the Kenyan, Ugandan and Tanzanian markets over the past decade and we believe this trend will continue. We are particularly impressed by the arrivals from the Tanzania market which has almost doubled in the last one year largely due to a growing positive perception of South Africa as a world class but fairly priced destination by Tanzanian travelers, improved connectivity and revised visa rules as Tanzanians no longer need visa to travel to South Africa," said Ndlomo.

Solidify Africa's growth

The decision to establish a regional office in Nairobi is part of South African Tourism to solidify grip in the African market which has hugely contributed to the growth of South African tourism. According to 2010 SAT statistics, Africa accounts for the largest share of inbound arrivals to South Africa and it was also the fastest growing tourism market for South Africa.

"Rest of Africa delivers more than 70% of all arrivals every year and this increased from 68.1% in 2003 to 77% in 2010 showing a growth of 10.3% increase annually within this period. The 2011 arrivals from Africa reached 8.78 million visitors arrivals out of the 11.4 million visitors," Ndlomo said.

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