

Minister reacts to dip in tourism arrivals

South Africa remains committed to reaching 21-million tourist arrivals by 2030, despite a dip in figures for the first nine months of 2019.



Mamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, minister of tourism

According to StatsSA, the total number of tourist arrivals (7,562,743) went down by -2.1% (-164,989) for the period January to September 2019 compared to the same period in 2018 (7,727,732). The decline was mostly influenced by a decrease in arrivals from Australasia and Europe with a decrease of 5% and 3.9% respectively.

Reacting to the numbers, Minister of Tourism, Mamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, said although international tourism numbers declined from January to September 2019, "we are pleased that tourist arrivals from Middle East went up by 4.2% followed by Asia (1.3%), Central and South America (0.3%) and North America (0.2%). It is a good indicator that more focused and aggressive marketing strategies in these regions will yield positive results".

The minister has led delegations to various markets such as China, Japan and currently visiting Ghana and Nigeria with the aim to increase the numbers of tourists arrivals. In addition, more work is being done at home to engage various stakeholders such as airlines to have joint marketing strategies to see better results. "The major impact on the numbers has been the concerns around safety and security of the tourist in our country. We will at the beginning of December jointly with our stakeholders announce our Tourism Safety Strategy and the implementation plans as a response to the concerns raised by our key markets.

"We are committed to reach the target of and we are working with all the stakeholders in the sector to make this a reality. We realise as we work towards this target, we might experience some fluctuations, but we will ensure that the overall trajectory remains positive," she said.

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