

MSC Cruises meets Mozambicans for growth talks

MSC Cruises SA hosted various Mozambican dignitaries from Maputo Council, Mozambique Tourism and Inhaca Administration, who met top management of MSC Cruises SA on board the MSC Opera as part of discussions to drive sustainable long-term growth in the country.



"The discussions had the key purpose to discuss how MSC Cruises can work further with relevant Mozambique departments to grow the country as a sought-after tourist destination," said Allan Foggitt, Marketing and Sales Director of MSC Cruises SA. "The focus is on contributions to the local economy as well as tackling important ecological issues."

MSC Cruises SA has been cruising up to Mozambique through Starlight Cruises as the local operator and, since 1992, as MSC. Carrying in excess of 1.5 million passengers annually, MSC has in the last year brought over 200,000 foreign tourists to Mozambique's shores, and having invested around \$2 million in capital expenditure on tourism-linked infrastructure.

MSC's present season is five months and included 46 cruises along the Mozambique coast in 2013/14, 27 in 2014/15 and 34 in 2015/16, with the focus on Portuguese Island, Inhaca and Maputo.

Local trade is also boosted

Investment into Mozambique on behalf of MSC includes advertising of the destination worldwide through various mediums. The selling of shore excursions at relevant destinations with over \$250,000 generated in the current season alone and paid to local suppliers, continues to play a major role. Local trade is also boosted through passenger spend at destinations, the creation of local markets and the establishment of the Boat Association. MSC Cruises has also invested heavily into skills-based training and job creation. MSC spends on average \$150,000 on labour in Mozambique.

An important area for discussion was how MSC is currently preserving the ecological environment on Portuguese Island and Inhaca. MSC continues to work in conjunction with the university to ensure that the environmental aspect of the island is maintained. Bulk services supplying the island have been designed to ensure they have the minimum impact on the island. Sewer systems utilise bio degradation systems and sea water is used in tanks as a water source. Solar power has been installed to drive energy resources, and waste is collected, stored and removed on each trip.

MSC Cruises SA has committed to increase activity on Portuguese Island by at least 50% within the next 15 months, making Africa's east coast the preferred cruise holiday destination. MSC would also like to further play a part in social upliftment on Inhaca Island by contributing towards a CSI project.

"The event was successful and a good understanding of MSC's role in the territory was attained, along with valuable partnerships forged in order to achieve mutual beneficial long term goals," concluded Foggitt.

For more information, go to www.msccruises.co.za

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