

Asata calls for SA travel industry to be part of Covid solution

Asata is encouraging every travel and tourism worker to get their #jab4tourism and become part of the solution rather than remain part of the problem. This is in response to the President's appeal to South Africans to get vaccinated as a matter of urgency. "Vaccinations are the only basis upon which we can rebuild our industry and save jobs. For the travel and tourism industry the Covid vaccine is quite literally the only lifeline to recover from the Covid pandemic," says O de Vries, CEO Asata.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

De Vries highlights a United Nations report that shows that successful vaccine roll-outs have helped tourism in the European Union recover faster from the coronavirus pandemic than elsewhere in the world in the third quarter of 2021.

International tourist arrivals rose 58% around the world between July and September compared to the same period in 2020, the U.N. World Tourism Organisation barometer said, though this was 64% below the same pre-pandemic period in 2019. "The uplift in demand was driven by increased traveller confidence amid rapid progress on vaccinations and the easing of entry restrictions in many destinations," the report said.

"Vaccines have been proven to inspire the most confidence in potential travellers. Research conducted by PWC shows that vaccines are at least two-thirds more influential than any other factor when it comes to restoring traveller confidence," adds de Vries.

Curbing the emergence of new variants

Where confidence is returning, so are traveller bookings – and, according to the Centre for Aviation (Capa) such confidence seems highly correlated to areas that have a combination of an effective vaccine rollout and low restrictions or barriers to travel. Similarly, governments' willingness to reopen borders has a close connection with national levels of vaccination.

Although questions have been raised whether the current vaccine will be effective against the Omicron

variant, the reality is that the vaccine will help curb the emergence of new variants. If the majority of people remain unvaccinated, new coronavirus variants will continue to emerge with no end of the pandemic in sight.

De Vries concludes: "The President mentioned that currently only 35.6% of adult South Africans are fully vaccinated against Covid-19. This is simply not good enough. It is time for the travel and tourism industry to take the call for vaccinations seriously and get vaccinated immediately to limit the impact on our sector and our economy as a whole."

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