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Media Release

SADC launches regional tourism business platform to address tourism barriers

Following a consultative process that started over a year ago, tourism apex associations from SADC Member States convened at a workshop held 22-23 November 2022 in Johannesburg, South Africa to launch the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Tourism Business Platform (TBP).

The aim of the platform is to address tourism barriers and advance the sustainable development of the regional tourism industry. Representatives from the SADC 16 Member States - Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, were part of the consultative process to establish the structure.

The platform will provide the tourism private sector in the SADC region an opportunity to foster a collective and coordinated approach towards tourism development through influencing regional tourism policy direction, strengthening policy integration and regional collaboration, and increasing regional marketing and investment.

Among other tourism challenges the platform will focus on accelerating the implementation of the SADC Univisa system, harmonization of air access policies and removal of travel barriers to stimulate tourist movement, the promotion and marketing of the region as a single tourism destination and facilitating the improvement of immigration and border services and infrastructure.

To facilitate the work of the platform and get it off to a good start, an interim committee comprising a chairperson and two vice-chairs has been set up and mandated to drive the process forward. Mr Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa, CEO of Tourism Business Council South Africa, was elected as Interim Chair and Mr. Paul Matamisa, CEO of Tourism Business Council of Zimbabwe and Mr. Kenneth Kapitako, Vice-President of Federation of Namibian Tourism Associations were elected as Vice-Chairs. "Today marks an important milestone for tourism in our SADC region and I look forward to working diligently with my peers from all 16 SADC Member States towards the full establishment of the platform and its sub-committees that will be dealing with matters regarding policy, regional tourism policy, regional tourism development, tourism marketing and visitor experience," said Tshivhengwa.

The establishment of a SADC Tourism Platform, which will serve as the voice of the tourism private sector, is one of the strategic objectives of the SADC Tourism Programme 2020-2030 that was approved by the Joint Meeting of Ministers responsible for Environment, Natural Resources and Tourism in Arusha, Tanzania in 2019 with a view to fast-track sustainable growth of the tourism sector in the SADC Region.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), a sustainable tourism sector can support livelihoods and create opportunities for millions of people around the globe in the post-COVID-19 world, contributing towards the UN's global sustainability agenda. Therefore, it is important that the public and private sectors work together to drive the development of the regional tourism industry. From this standpoint, the platform welcomes the support and active involvement of the SADC Business Council, the SADC Secretariat, the



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German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through GIZ as well as the European Union and OACPS (Organisation of African Caribbean and Pacific States).

Speaking at the launch of the platform, Mr. Domingos Gove, the SADC Director: Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) commended the tourism business leaders for their role and dedication in the establishment of the platform. He emphasized the importance of private sector involvement in driving regional integration, and in the implementation of the SADC Tourism Programme 2020-2030.

The regional tourism business sector is encouraged to join and invest in the platform as their contribution is crucial to its success. Mr. Peter Varndell, Executive Secretary at the SADC Business Council, said “The formation of this partnership reflects our commitment to promote private sector interests and create an enabling and competitive business environment. I encourage regional tourism industry players to actively engage on this platform and advance SADC’s economic relationship with Africa for the benefit of all our citizens.”

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About SADC Business Council

The SADC Business Council (SADC BC) is a regional apex body for the SADC private sector. It represents national and regional apex business associations of the 16 SADC Member States. SADC BC is the prime public sector partner in forging SADC development and integration. The main role of the SADC BC is to involve the private sector (businesses and representatives) in:

- SADC decision making processes to drive the implementation of SADC plans and priority programmes
- Promoting knowledge and information sharing between SADC and private sector
- Bringing in the private sector expertise, experience, viewpoints, and perspectives in SADC policy making processes

For more information, visit: www.sadcbc.org

About SADC

SADC is an organisation of 16 Member States established in 1980 as the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) and later, in August 1992, transformed into the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The mission of SADC is to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through efficient, productive systems, deeper cooperation and integration, good governance and durable peace and security; so that the region emerges as a competitive and effective player in international relations and the world economy. Member States are Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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