

NEWS RELEASE

ZIMBABWE ANNOUNCES INCENTIVES FOR TOURISM INVESTORS AT AFRICAN INVESTMENT CONFERENCE

Duty free imports, automatic work permits, permanent residence and tax holidays for tourism investors were announced by Dr Sylvester Mauganidze, Permanent Secretary of the Zimbabwe Tourism and Hospitality Department at the Hospitality Investment Conference Africa (HICA) in Johannesburg today.

Speaking at a discussion titled 'Straight talk Zimbabwe', Mauganidze said people investing US\$500 000 would receive permanent residence, while those investing US\$100 000 would automatically receive a work permit. All tourism related imports would be duty free while all investments would be tax free for the first five years.

"All such investments are protected by law," he said, "and we invite the international hotel investment community to consider their options in Zimbabwe. We are also working closely with our partners in the Southern African Development Community to establish a single visa for the region, which will result in a one-stop border entry. Such initiatives will increase tourist flow across borders in the region. What is more, Zimbabwe is a multi-currency country."

Shingi Munyeza, Group CEO of African Sun Hotels said the establishment of Zimbabwe's government of national unity in February 2009 brought stability to the country, with more foreign visitors and hotel occupancies rising to an average of 68 percent, with top hotels, particularly in the Victoria Falls area, currently fully booked. "The ultimate injection that our tourism industry could receive, however, would be undisputed national elections."

Currently there are some 6 266 hotel rooms in Zimbabwe, although no additional rooms have been added in the last 11 years. In 1996 there were 45 air carriers flying into Zimbabwe from 100 international destinations. Today there are 11 carriers flying from fewer than 10 destinations. 95 percent of tourists entering Zimbabwe travel from South Africa.

Zimbabwe supplies 16 percent of all hotel rooms in the region, second to South Africa only.

Emmanuel Fundira, Chairman of the Zimbabwe Council of Tourism said various initiatives are in place to improve the tourism experience in Zimbabwe. "These include the upgrading of road and rail infrastructure and the establishment of a new airport in Harare."

According to Mauganidze Zimbabwe has a relatively high level of education, which has a positive influence on the hospitality industry. "Even in rural areas tourists will encounter people who are fluent in English, hospitable and willing to serve them."

“However, to enhance tourism in the region, it is essential that visitors experience the same service levels from the Victoria Falls all the way down to Cape Town. This will also make the investment environment in the region far less complicated,” he said.

HICA is arranged annually by the Tourism Business Council of South Africa in conjunction with the National Department of Tourism and attracts hotel industry leaders and investors from across the world. The conference closed in Johannesburg this afternoon.

HICA 2011 will be held in Casablanca, Morocco on 26 and 27 September.

(Ends)

Released by:	Ben Rootman Junxion Communications Tel 082 551 4853
On behalf of:	Kagiso Mosue Tourism Business Council of South Africa Tel 082 716 8292
Date:	2 November 2010
