

World tourism leaders attend IIPT Interactive World Symposium

Taleb Rifai, the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organisation of the United Nations (UNWTO), and David Scowsill, President and CEO of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), are attending the IIPT Interactive World Symposium, on bringing peace through tourism in Johannesburg. They are guests of the Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom.



The UNWTO is the specialised United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. As the leading international organisation in the field of tourism, UNWTO promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability.

WTTC is the global business forum for the travel and tourism industry. It includes the CEOs, chairmen and presidents of the world's leading tourism companies amongst its members, and represents the full travel and tourism value chain. The council supports governments to implement policies that grow tourism and manage the sector responsibly.

The visiting delegation will explore concepts of how tourism can promote peace and sustainability at the symposium being held by the International Institute for Peace through Tourism, IIPT.

Mandela to be honoured

"Our own icon of reconciliation, Tata Nelson Mandela, will also be honoured at the symposium for his role in creating unity from diversity," said Minister Hanekom. "We know that sustainable tourism and inclusive economic growth cannot be achieved without lasting peace.

"As the world becomes one interconnected global village, the tourism sector has a pivotal role to play in bringing people together, helping us to understand each other, and unifying us.

"This is a mutually beneficial process. Interacting with others through travel expands the cultural horizons of tourists and it

also stimulates the economic growth of the host countries through the revenue brought by tourists.

"Tourism in South Africa has been an outstanding success story in driving economic growth, community upliftment and job creation. We must focus on making this growth more inclusive as we build a sector that is sustainable from social, environmental and economic perspectives."

Rifai and Scowsill will visit some of South Africa's unique attractions which embody the deep significance of our rich cultural heritage.

These include a step back into the world's ancient history and the origins of humanity at the Cradle of Humankind at Maropeng, and a visit to Robben Island to experience the emotions of our recent political history.

Also on their itinerary are visits to Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, a symbol of how South Africa conserves its biodiversity as a tourist asset, and the Hotel Verde in Cape Town, which was among several local establishments that won global awards for responsible tourism recently.

The delegation will also visit the University of Johannesburg's School of Tourism and Hospitality to see how skills training is improving the quality of service and enhancing the overall experience of tourists to South Africa.

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