



## **Tourism promotion in the region – Industry operators join together in a road show to win back the South African market**

The delegation that travelled to South Africa for a road show driven by the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) to win back this very important regional market agree that the mission was a success.

This week, the delegation representing the Mauritian tourism community met with almost 250 travel agents and tour operators in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town. The Mauritian operators poured their collective efforts to attract South Africans to our country into these discussions.

Representatives of the MTPA and tourism operators used all available channels to send a clear message that Mauritius is open and ready to give visitors an even better welcome than before the pandemic. The approach taken comprised interviews with national and regional South African media, including an appearance on a flagship programme of the South African Broadcasting Corporation News Channel, watched by millions of viewers.

Reflecting on the event, the participants in the road show share the unanimous belief that the South African tourist market, which accounted for a little over 10% of our total visitors before the pandemic, appears to have retained a keen interest for Mauritius. This is despite the fact that we temporarily closed our borders to this country when the new Omicron variant was detected there. Local tourism operators must also adapt to the new demands of the post-pandemic South African market.

“South Africa is our fifth largest source market in terms of tourist arrivals. We experienced continuous growth four years out of five from 2015 to 2019. This market has shown consistent resilience over the years. Fortunately, the operators that we met in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town have confirmed that the two-year interruption due to strict lockdown, health protocols and various restrictions will not affect the desire of South African visitors to visit Mauritius,” says the Director of the MTPA, Arvind Bundhun.

He adds that the market has changed. An analysis of the figures shows that South Africans are increasingly travelling in a family bubble. Three generations often go on holiday together. They are looking for hotels or residences with on-site leisure activities that meet the demands of various age groups.

Of course, it has also become essential to find a sanitary “bubble”. Many travel professionals actually asked the members of the Mauritian delegation about the measures taken by the country, but also by hotels and other tourist residences to protect the health of travellers.

These interactions gave the Mauritian operators the opportunity to share the details of the health situation in Mauritius, how the pandemic is managed and the ability of our health care services to respond to the situation.

Our counterparts reminded us that guests are more demanding than ever before in this post-pandemic recovery period. In addition to the idyllic setting, the new luxury for travellers is to be in a secure environment.

Flight connections between South Africa’s international airports and Plaisance airport were discussed during the talks. Representatives of the national airline took the opportunity to unveil their strategy for the South African market. Daily flights will resume from mid-March 2022 to O.R. Tambo Airport, Johannesburg. There will be a service to Cape Town in the near future. Air Mauritius representatives who attended the road show said that direct flights to Durban, a city of some four million inhabitants, may also be considered if there is a demand.

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