



---

Remarks by H.E. Sibongiseni Dlamini Mntambo,

At the occasion to bid farewell to a travelling delegation from Cornwall to South African  
and to the Nav Centre school of aviation

August 2017

Acting Mayor, Carilyne Herbet

Mr Gee Lawzon, MP - House of Commons

Rory Maclennan , President of the Cornwall & Area Chamber of Commerce,

Ms Kim Kho-Turner, Manager of the Nav Centre

Travellers to South Africa;

Special Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

*Bonne après-midi, Sanibonani, Good Afternoon*

I am truly honoured that you have invited me here this afternoon to talk to you about my beautiful country South Africa.

From the onset I would like to hasten and say congratulations for choosing to satiate you adventurous side. Congratulations for selecting a country endowed with natural wonders, a playground with all the features travellers and investors look for in a country, including the weather, the breath-taking terrain, wild animals, the warm friendly people and the first world infrastructure.

A country we sometimes affectionately refer to as: Mzansi (South). South Africa, alive with possibilities! This is a country which offers tourists from around the world stunning holiday experiences and world-class hospitality.

Between January and December 2016 South Africa had about nine million tourists, with leading overseas countries like the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Germany, Netherlands and given the sharp increase in the past few years, Canada will soon be amongst these countries.

In 2016, The World Tourism Council ranked South Africa amongst the top ten countries in respect to Tourism growth

### **Some Facts about South Africa**

Perhaps before I get into details about South Africa let me give you a little bit of history and some facts about this country:

- South Africa is at the tip of Africa flanked on the west by the cold Atlantic Ocean and on the east by the warmer Indian Ocean, whose waters meet at the country's – and Africa's – most southern tip, Cape Agulhas in Cape Town.
- The country has nine spectacular provinces to explore and I am informed that your visit covers three (Gauteng; Western Cape and Mpumalanga). A brilliant choice indeed!
- South Africa's population is about 55million (80% Majority Africans; 8.8 Coloureds (mixed race); 8% whites; and 2.5 % Indian/ Asian population).
- South Africa has 11 Official languages, but English is widely understood
- The country has three capitals viz.
  - Pretoria, located in the Gauteng Province, is the administrative capital and the seat of the President of the Cabinet that is the executive branch. Pretoria is often considered the de facto national capital, and was the capital of Apartheid South Africa.
  - Cape Town (South Africa's legislative capital, and the seat of the nation's Parliament); and
  - Bloemfontein serves as the judicial capital, the seat of the Supreme Court of Appeal. Bloemfontein is also the capital of its province, the Free State, and is centrally located within South Africa.
- Honourable Jacob Zuma is the country's president and the ruling party is the African National Congress
- South Africa has a well-developed infrastructure (rail; road and airport network).

Ladies and gentlemen, because of my limited time I would now like to talk to you about the specific provinces that I have been informed you will be visiting. I do hope though that you will invite me pretty soon to talk about the next three you will soon visiting.

## Johannesburg

Ladies and gentlemen, Your point of entry will be the OR Tambo International airport in Johannesburg. Named after Oliver Reginald Tambo (affectionately known as OR), a South African anti-apartheid politician and revolutionary who served as President of the African National Congress (ANC) from 1967 to 1991. He was in exile for more than 30 years and the OR Tambo International airport is named in his honour.

In 2016 OR Tambo was ranked the 2<sup>nd</sup> best International Airport in Africa after the Cape Town International airport and was ranked 31<sup>st</sup> in the world.

Day 1 of your visit is in Gauteng, which is home to South Africa's largest city, Johannesburg.

Johannesburg is the commercial heart of the country. The energy and vibrancy of the region came with the mass exodus of people after the discovery of gold and the area now has a diverse population of over 10 million. However this is not to say the area was unoccupied before the discovery of Gold. Mrs Ples, the oldest humanoid fossil was found in Sterkfontein just outside Johannesburg, and is estimated to be about 2, 05 million years.

Soweto, (a township just outside the city of Johannesburg) came to the world's attention on 16 June 1976 with the Soweto Uprising. It was on this day that mass protests erupted over the government's policy to enforce education in Afrikaans. When police opened fire on school children, Hector Pieteron, was one of the children shot on that day.

It is my understanding that you will be visiting The **Hector Pieteron Museum** in Soweto, which is two blocks away from where Hector Pieteron was shot and killed. The museum is named in his honour. Nearby in Vilakazi street is the former home of Nelson Mandela and his family. The home has been run as a museum since 1997. Vilakazi Street is the only street in the world to house two nobel peace prize winners, Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu.

I hope you will get time to taste African food in Soweto before you leave for your next destination.

When you drive pass Pretoria, the administrative arm of government on your way to Mpumalanga, you might notice that Pretoria offers a more laid-back alternative to the hustling and bustling city of Johannesburg. Pretoria is affectionately known as the Jacaranda City for all the purple blossom trees that adorn its streets. This is where you will find many foreign embassies, including that of your country, Canada.

## **Mpumalanga**

Mpumalanga, 'the place where the sun rises'; the 'Paradise '. When you get to Mpumalanga, the words that would probable spring to your will most definitely be 'spectacular!' The region is dominated by the world's third deepest canyon, the Blyde River Canyon whose every turn will leave you breathless because of its impressive views of winding mountain passes, steep valleys, rivers, waterfalls, the rain forest, three rondavels and of course Gods Window. I have to pause here and let you know that being at Gods window is an experience beyond what words can describe. .... You have to be there, see and experience it and you will understand.

Mpumalanga is home to the famous Kruger National Park with unbelievable wild life experience where you can see the Big 5. Speaking to you now, I am reminded of a beautiful speech made by our former President Thabo Mbeki on behalf of the African National Congress at the adoption of our constitution in 1996 "I am an African", where he said <and I quote>

"At times, and in fear, I have wondered whether I should concede equal citizenship of our country to the leopard and the lion, the elephant and the springbok, the hyena, the black mamba and the pestilential mosquito." <end quote>

In my few months in this vast and beautiful Canada, I have quickly learned that you might have similar thoughts about bears and racoons.

## **The Western Cape (Cape Town)**

I mentioned earlier on that the Cape Town International airport was rated the best international airport in Africa according to the world airport award of 2012. This is where you will land for the last leg of your trip.

The Western Cape was named the top tourist destination in the world in the 2016 travellers' choice Destination award. It is one of the country's most beautiful, attracting the lion's share of foreign tourists. The Western Cape's natural beauty, famous hospitality, cultural diversity, excellent wine and rich cuisine make it one of the world's greatest tourist attractions. It is a region of majestic mountains, colourful patchworks of farmland set in lovely valleys and long beaches. (I have to mention that in 2013, 41 of South Africa's beaches were awarded Blue flags status, an international indicator of high environmental standards for recreational beaches.

Two oceans meet on the coast of the Western Cape: the cold Atlantic Ocean and the warmer Indian Ocean. Sites to see will include the table mountain, (which in 2012 was included in the new seven wonders of nature); the Robben Island (where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years); The Victoria & Alfred Waterfront (V&A) on the Atlantic shore; the vibrant district six; and you may want to taste a proudly South African braai, shisanyama (barbecue) at Mzoli's in Gugulethu before you take that wine route.

The majority of South Africa's stone fruit and top fruit is grown in the Western Cape. This area is one of the richest fruit growing regions in the country. It produces delicious peaches and nectarines, plums and apricots as well as apples, pears and citrus fruit.

### **South Africa's most treasures assets**

The country's most treasured assets are the diverse South Africans who are known for being amongst the most upbeat, welcoming and humorous people you can hope to encounter. The country's past may be one of separation and struggle but our future is filled with unity and possibility. Take time to engage with some of our communities in your travel areas. Feel our warmth, feel the spirit of Ubuntu, I am because you are!

South Africa is a destination where you can experience it all; from the unspoilt beaches along the Wild Coast to the vibrant nightlife of Cape Town; the deserts of the Kgalagadi to the lush, green forests of Tsitsikamma. One moment you can be cage-diving with Great White sharks, the next you are enjoying a traditional braai and a bottle of Pinotage along the Garden Route.

### **Open for Investment**

While you are taking in our country's magnificent scenery, remember that South Africa is an emerging economy, linked to our neighbours through the Southern African Development Community's Free Trade Area. We are also a member of the BRICS grouping of emerging economies – that's Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

This is the economic powerhouse of Africa with a favourable demographic profile and its rapidly expanding middle class has growing spending power. South Africa picked up second place in the Africa Competitiveness Report and the country's global ranking for 2016/17 improved by nine places - from 56 in the 2014/15 report to 47 out of 138 countries worldwide.

This is a country endowed with mineral resources; it has world-class infrastructure, innovation, research and development capabilities and an established manufacturing base. It is at the forefront of the development and rollout of new green technologies and industries, creating new and sustainable jobs in the process and reducing environmental impact. South Africa has a sophisticated financial, legal and telecommunications sectors, and a number of global business process outsourcing (BPO) operations are located in the country.

Think of us as a viable trading partner. We are not asking for aid but we want to trade with you as partners. Speak to us at the High Commission if you are interested in importing, or in investing in our country.

In conclusion, I want to suggest that your visit to South Africa will HAVE to have a sequel because your trip has overlooked my home province, KwaZulu -Natal. A province which boasts the Drakensberg mountains, the coastal (Greater St Lucia) Wetland Park also referred to as iSimangaliso – meaning beyond belief. Follow in the footsteps of legendary Zulu kings like uShaka, timeless Indian leaders like

Mahatma Gandhi and icons of democracy. Witness the unforgettable Sardine Run, see dolphins and whales and glimmering golden beaches with getaway coves. Enjoy the biggest music, sport and arts festivals in an even bigger city life - overlooking the picture-postcard seaport of Durban. Yes it is all true, a phenomenon, I was born there.

Outside of Pietermaritzburg, you will find Howick with its spectacular waterfalls. An impressive memorial marks the spot where Nelson Mandela was captured before eventually serving 27 years in prison.

Mesdames et Messieurs, merci encore pour votre temps. Je te souhaite un bon voyage

Merci, ngiyabonga