

Gauteng Air Access Network take-off as more new flights land at OR Tambo

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More international and regional flights continue to prefer the OR Tambo International Airport as their gateway into South Africa and the rest of the African continent. This bodes well for the visitor economy in Gauteng and the centrality of air services and active route development in increasing tourism, trade, and investment flows into our ailing economy.

The good news for the golden province of Gauteng is that Air Cote d'Ivoire will from 29 June 2022 commence its maiden route into Johannesburg. Eswatini Airways will also debut in July 2022 with further announcement by Qantas of the Perth to Joburg route in November, Air Belgium in September and Condor scheduled for November all adding the much-needed airlift capacity to drive economic recovery and sector development especially from our key regional and international source markets.

"We are very much excited by these latest developments as Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) because this is in line with the city region's tourism growth, trade development and investment facilitation strategy and plan announced by Gauteng Premier David Makhura in his State of the Province address earlier this year. Despite the unfortunate loss of Comair recently, over 70% of flights that used OR Tambo International Airport pre Covid pandemic times are now back and oiling our growth plans," explained GTA chief executive Sthembiso Sthe Dlamini.

All this great work and exciting developments can be attributed to the collaborative nature of the role-players in the Gauteng Air Access Network who continue to work tirelessly to firstly reinstate the lost routes due to Covid restrictions, attract and retain new air routes and the building of a solid pipeline of potential routes covering cargo, passengers and special permits for film crews and charter market flights. The Gauteng Air Access Network consists of public and private sector stakeholders led by representatives of the Gauteng Tourism Authority, the Gauteng Growth & Development Agency (GGDA), Airports Company South Africa (ACSA), City of Ekurhuleni and private airport facilities.

Starting from 29 June to 1 July 2022, this team will be actively participating and presenting the case for destination Gauteng and its proximity and capacity to connect the African region at this year's AviaDev platform in Cape Town. AviaDev serves as the premier platform dedicated to growing connectivity to, from and within the African continent. It brings together airports, airlines, tourism authorities, governments, and industry suppliers and aviation media under one roof in pre-arrange meetings and learning experiences from industry peers and experts.

Air access committees in other parts of the world including the Western Cape have been hugely successful in getting private and public sector stakeholders to work together and get new air services off the ground. We are taking all these learnings and related challenges into consideration as we build from the ground up into the skies, a multi-sectoral network that appreciates the centrality of Africa and Gauteng in leading economic recovery efforts.

"Aviation plays a key role in enabling the economic growth of countries which rely on major hubs. While air connectivity benefits travelers by giving them access to a wider network as well as more frequent and better-connected services, but it can also strengthen a country's economy over long haul, boosting productivity through its positive impact on business," concluded Dlamini.

For more information on AviaDev showcase, interviews requests contact Nonhlanhla Mbethe at 0824351649, nonhlanhla@gauteng.net.

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