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### MEDIA RELEASE

**‘TBCSA ACKNOWLEDGES STEPS TAKEN - BUT WE STILL HAVE A VERY LONG WAY TO GO ON EASING IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS’**

**PRETORIA, 25 SEPTEMBER 2018** – Interim CEO of The Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA), Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa has acknowledged steps taken by government to address the highly prohibitive immigration regulations. “We, as the industry, are and have been ready to come to the table to grow the economy, to create jobs and to assist with transformation, but we need the government to allow us the space to do that. Therefore, we welcome the progress in visa wavers for selected countries, but we need this to happen quickly with the holiday season fast approaching.” Said Tshivhengwa

However, the issue of unabridged birth certificate for minors travelling is still a huge concern for the industry. “We raised this issue four years ago and we have engaged with government on the negative impact of these regulations, we further asked the department of Home Affairs to share with us the statistics on child trafficking through international airports, which never happened. We have said from the very beginning that unabridged birth certificates have created a large barrier for tourism in and out of South Africa. The announcement today doesn’t change anything, Home Affairs is once again circling around this issue. We want this regulation to be completely removed to re-encourage the movement of people into South Africa if we are serious about creating jobs”, commented Mr. Tshivhengwa.

President Ramaphosa, through his stimulus package, recognized tourism as one of the key sectors in stimulating the economy and creating jobs. What was announced today by the Minister of Home Affairs is still the same policy that will not grow tourism. We need bold moves to fully remove regulatory barriers not endless discussion” added Mr. Tshivhengwa.

Off the back of the President’s announcement of pending amendments to these regulations, many have come out to strongly criticize the lack of action in this regard. The Association of Southern African Travel Agents (ASATA) have also been left frustrated and disappointed by the President’s failure to directly address the known issues at hand.

ASATA CEO, Otto De Vries, familiar with the challenges also said: “The controversial requirement for travelling families has stifled outbound tourism, as it is making it difficult for local families to travel internationally. Why would you continue to apply a policy that will hamper and frustrate them?” De Vries sums up his statement by saying “South Africa’s government needs to remove the requirement for travel with an unabridged birth certificate for all passport holders.”

Tshivhengwa has echoed these sentiments, who too has questioned the lack of urgent and genuine action by the South African government. He has been stern in stating what the country



needs to bolster the economy from a tourism point of view. Tshivhengwa expressed that tourism is ready to and can play a key role in boosting the country's economy if the correct measures are put in place.

CEO of Southern African Tourism Services Association (SATSA), David Frost has also expressed his frustrated outcry with the Minister's announcement. SATSA have long been at the forefront of one of the pioneering campaigns to abolish the need to carry unabridged birth certificates since its inception in 2015.

South Africa is faced with difficult economic condition with declining economic growth, tourism arrival declining, and tourism business confidence at its lowest for years. "Removing these immigration barriers will go a long way in increasing tourist arrivals, increase employment, and contribute positively in economy" said Tshivhengwa. As the TBCSA, we remain open to having a robust discussion to move this economy forward.

***For media enquiries contact:***

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***Mr. Kyle van Heerden***    ***Email: [pr@tbcsa.travel](mailto:pr@tbcsa.travel)***    ***Tel: (012) 664 0120/072 597 5844***

**Editors Notes:**

*Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) is the umbrella organisation for business in the travel and tourism industry. We are a non-profit, member-centric organisation representing the unified voice of business. We serve to unite and influence the diverse travel and tourism industry to contribute to a competitive, responsible and inclusive travel and tourism (and South African) economy.*