

Mzembi is Africa's man for UNWTO Secretary General says South Africa

PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA, April 30, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "This is Africa's time, and Walter Mzembi is Africa's candidate to head the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)."

With these words, South African Minister of Tourism Ms. Thoko Xasa, reinforced the South African government's "strong and principled" support for Mzembi's African Union (AU)-endorsed bid for election to the post of UNWTO Secretary General.

Ms. Xasa was delivering the keynote address at a gala dinner hosted yesterday evening by her ministry for the AU-endorsed candidate at the plush Sheraton hotel in downtown Pretoria, South Africa's capital city.



Those invited to the dinner included Government Ministers, Ambassadors of all UNWTO Executive Council member states represented in South Africa, representatives of the South African tourism industry, and both local and foreign media houses.

“

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South Africa Minister of Tourism Ms. Thoko Xasa

Praising Dr. Mzembi for the strong leadership he has shown in formulating and driving Africa's evolving tourism development strategies, and for seeking to institutionalize tourism as a stand-alone sector within African Union administrative structures, she expressed her own and Africa's full confidence in his ability to provide equally effective leadership at the very apex of global tourism.

Retracing the selection processes at sub-regional and continental levels, by which Dr. Mzembi emerged, with the unanimous endorsement of all 15 SADC member countries

and all 55 member states of the African Union, Minister Xasa noted that she had worked alongside Mzembi for many years and could personally attest to the caliber and integrity of Africa's selected candidate for the UNWTO post.

“Hard-working, passionate, and deeply committed” is how Minister Xasa described her Zimbabwean counterpart. “I know he will bring these same qualities to the service of global tourism.”

Stressing again that “this is Africa’s time,” Minister Xasa appealed to African ambassadors present at the dinner for the continent to remain united and focused in its support for Dr. Mzembi, cautioning that “a divided Africa is a weaker Africa, open to exploitation and less able to resist the self-serving manipulations of others who would seek, themselves, to set Africa’s agenda.”

The minister noted that, notwithstanding its massive tourism potential and staggering natural-resource wealth, Africa’s share of global tourism arrivals and expenditures still hovered between 3 to 5 percent.

“Africa needs to work more closely together, as neighbors, as component parts of integrated regional structures, and as a continent of 55 nations, to ensure that African tourism grows and migrates towards more visible and more effective integration into global tourism flows.”

The minister said that although it was a global position he was seeking, Dr. Mzembi would strive to ensure that Africa’s tourism performance, along with that of other less well-performing regions, would be more fully accommodated into strategies to grow global tourism over the coming decade.

The election of a new Secretary General for the UNWTO takes place in Madrid, Spain, on May 12. The name of Secretary General-elect to emerge from that process will then be submitted by the Executive Council to a meeting of the UNWTO General Assembly, scheduled to convene in Chengdu, China, during the second week of September.

The new Secretary General will officially take office in early January 2018 with a mandate of 4 years, renewable once.

Should Dr. Mzembi succeed in his bid to head the UNWTO, it will be the first time in the 60-year history of the organization that an African has occupied the top office.

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