

A tested leader: No stopping for Mzembi

PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA, May 1, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "Africa's time is now!" This is the message that South Africa's Tourism Minister Tokozile Xasa is trying to get across, while endorsing her counterpart - Zimbabwe's Minister of Tourism Walter Mzembi - as the right candidate for the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Secretary General position.

Dr. Mzembi will face five other contenders — Georgia's Zurab Pololikashvili, Colombia's Jaime Alberto Cabal Sanclemente, South Korea's Young-shim Dho, Brazil's Márcio Favilla, and Alain St. Ange from Seychelles to lead UNWTO from 2018 to 2021.



The winning candidate will replace Jordanian, Taleb Rifai, who has been at the helm of the global tourism body for eight years.

Minister Xasa hosted a dinner for Dr. Mzembi in Pretoria on Friday, where she said that he was a tested leader who has been endorsed by Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and African Union.

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*South Africa Tourism Minister
Tokozile Xasa*

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“Should we succeed in that, we really would give a proper agenda to the world by taking our center stage because Africa's time is now.”

Xasa said her country was standing behind Mzembi as he had been endorsed by SADC and the African Union.

She said Mzembi's work and “ambassadorship that you have done through your campaign will result in us being a strong, united and influential global player and partner”.

In his speech at the dinner, Mzembi said his mandate as Tourism minister of Zimbabwe bears testimony to the tough training and preparation “I have had to go through to reposition Zimbabwe after a decade of disagreement with some sections of the international community.

“Whereas Zimbabwe was once a ‘to-be-avoided’ destination, it is now very much a ‘must-see’ destination as confirmed by the 2015 New York Times in its 52 Must Visit Report. Earlier this year, the prestigious Conte Naste Traveller Magazine placed only two African countries in its global top 17 destinations — Zimbabwe at number 13 and Rwanda at number 14,” he said.

Mzembi said the highlight of that repositioning process and endorsement of brand Zimbabwe, was the hosting, in 2013, of the 20th UNWTO General Assembly in Victoria Falls and Livingstone.

Mzembi has been traversing the world to garner support of the 33 members of the executive council which will vote for Rifai’s successor on May 12 in Madrid, Spain.

The Zimbabwean Tourism minister enters the polls with backing of the African Union, which endorsed him for the post at a heads of States and governments meeting in Rwanda last July.

Current Secretary-General of the United Nations’ World Tourism Organization Taleb Rifai has also praised Dr. Mzembi for his professionalism and efforts to improve Zimbabwe’s brand.

“Whatever happens in May (the month in which the UNWTO election will take place), for me you are already a winner, you have already won,” Rifai said at a gala dinner organized for Dr. Mzembi by the Zimbabwean embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia two weeks ago.

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