



### **Vaccine Rush Could Make Victoria Falls the World's Safest Tourist Destination**

More than 65 per cent of the eligible population in Victoria Falls have been vaccinated against Covid-19 in a week, and the initiative is ongoing, as Zimbabwe's top tourist city strives to become a safe destination.

Over 17,000 of Victoria Falls' 26,000 adults aged 18 to 80 had received the first dose of the Sinopharm vaccine by March 29, after the national vaccination programme against Covid-19 was rolled out in the holiday destination on March 22.

Africa Albida Tourism (AAT) chief executive Ross Kennedy said tourism is a resilient industry that continually needs to adapt to ever changing markets and trends, and the Covid-19 related travel cancellations have been the single greatest challenge that Victoria Falls has faced.

"Victoria Falls and the wider community in the destination, along with the Ministry of Health and Child Care and Government have faced the pandemic, come together incredibly well and it may well be the very first city in the world to have the majority of its residents vaccinated," Kennedy said.

More than 70 per cent of Victoria Falls Safari Lodge estate staff have so far been vaccinated, and this will continue to increase this week, he added. Operated by AAT, Victoria Falls Safari Lodge estate properties include Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, Victoria Falls Safari Club, Victoria Falls Safari Suites and Lokuthula Lodges.

"As one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World and a gateway to the iconic KAZA (Kavango–Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area) tourism region, this is a major campaign, and all authorities and private sector must be applauded for the success of the initiative thus far," he said.

"The powerful positive message that this sends to both the travel trade and potential tourists cannot be underestimated, and we are very proud to be part of this destination team."

In a statement, Minister of Health and Child Care Retired General Constantino Chiwenga said the campaign would afford all residents of the tourism capital a chance to get vaccinated, and pave the way for the resumption of unlimited tourism activities in the city which is a world attraction.

Overall, the government is targeting the vaccination of 60 per cent of the population to achieve herd immunity.

This comes at a time when airlines are flocking back to Victoria Falls, improving access to one of the Seven Wonders of the World from around the globe. Airlines either already flying into Victoria Falls, or about to resume flights, are Fastjet, Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, British Airways, Airlink and Air Zimbabwe.

In addition, Mack Air will operate daily scheduled flights between Kasane, Botswana, and Victoria Falls from May 1, linking two prime tourist destinations.

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***IMAGE CAPTION: Victoria Falls Safari Lodge estate general manager Anald Musonza and apprentice chef Varaidzo Nguwo with their vaccination certificates.***

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