



### **Leading Zimbabwean Tourism Operator Hopes for a Buoyant 2022 As Travel Restrictions Are Eased**

Leading Victoria Falls-based hospitality group Africa Albida Tourism welcomes the easing of Covid-19 related travel restrictions, including mandatory quarantine, by the Zimbabwean government, hailing it a “lifesaver” for tourism.

The government announced on January 28 that quarantine had been lifted for fully vaccinated visitors to Zimbabwe, although a negative Covid-19 test taken within 48-hours of departure for Zimbabwe is still required for entry.

Africa Albida Tourism (AAT) chief executive Ross Kennedy said he hoped the move would herald the start of a buoyant 2022 for tourism, and operators were looking forward to once again welcoming visitors from around the globe to the destination.

“The announcement by the Government of Zimbabwe in respect of the easing of restrictions relating to Covid-19 is so important as to be viewed as a lifesaver for tourism,” Kennedy said.

“The pent-up demand for Zimbabwe and the region can now be unlocked, and the impact should be incredibly positive for all in the travel, tourism and hospitality sector,” he said.

The easing of travel restrictions in source markets, such as the UK, also provided a major boost to potential arrivals from April, with bookings across Victoria Falls Safari Lodge estate’s 98 rooms already at 52 per cent for that month, as well as longer-term forward bookings for 2023, he added.

“The activity and forward planning for the region as witnessed by the Africa’s Eden travel show next week in Victoria Falls, coupled with new airline access and support is immense, making now an incredible time to plan your next trip and travel.

“Tourism is the fourth pillar of our economy, a significant employer and foreign currency earner, so the easing of these regulations will have further positive impacts on communities, conservation and downstream benefits for the economy.”

In addition, access to Victoria Falls and the region has been boosted with a number of airlines resuming flights following a suspension when the Omicron variant of Covid-19 was identified by South African scientists in late November.

Airlines currently flying into Victoria Falls are Fastjet, Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, British Airways (operated by Comair), Airlink, Air Zimbabwe and Mack Air, as well as charter airlines, while Emirates has resumed flights to Harare.

The Lufthansa Group's new leisure airline Eurowings Discover will start flying into Victoria Falls from March 30, increasing Frankfurt to Windhoek flights to a daily service, with a Windhoek-Victoria Falls-Windhoek tag flight three times a week.

In addition, on June 30 Fastjet will introduce four flights a week between Victoria Falls and Maun, gateway to Botswana's Okavango Delta, as well as flights between Victoria Falls and Nelspruit, near South Africa's Kruger National Park, from March 16, linking the region's prime tourist destinations.

Altogether 99 per cent of staff currently working at Victoria Falls Safari Lodge estate staff have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19, and, according to latest available official figures, 86 per cent of Victoria Falls' adult population.

AAT operates a portfolio of properties in Victoria Falls, namely Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, Victoria Falls Safari Club, Victoria Falls Safari Suites, Lokuthula Lodges and The Boma – Dinner & Drum Show.

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***IMAGE CAPTION: Victoria Falls, one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World***

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***Media Release by Africa Albida Tourism***

***February 2, 2022***

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