

For immediate release

SATSA Media Statement on Mpox Outbreak in Africa

JOHANNESBURG, 15 August 2024 – SATSA, the voice of inbound tourism in South Africa, acknowledges the World Health Organisation's (WHO) recent declaration classifying the rise in Mpox cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

While SATSA fully supports efforts to combat the spread of Mpox and recognises the seriousness of this declaration, we are deeply concerned by the inaccurate and misleading reporting surrounding the outbreak.

" SATSA recognises the need for international cooperation to address the outbreak effectively. However, media narratives that generalise and stigmatise the entire continent do not contribute to resolving the crisis. It is critical to understand that Africa is not a country, but a vast continent – geographically larger than China, the United States, and Europe combined. Each of its 54 countries has unique environments and health contexts," states David Frost, CEO of SATSA. "Painting the entire continent as a high-risk zone due to a localised outbreak is not only factually wrong, it is damaging to crucial tourism economies across Africa."

SATSA wishes to address the following:

Southern Africa remains a safe and desirable travel destination. Tour operators in the region are committed to the highest safety standards and are working closely with local authorities to monitor the situation.

Unnecessary fearmongering is counterproductive. SATSA urges media outlets to provide accurate, contextualised and responsible reporting that avoids harmful generalisations.

The risk to travellers in unaffected areas remains low. While the WHO's declaration highlights the need for global vigilance, the risk to travellers in Southern Africa engaging in standard tourism activities is minimal. There is no need to cancel or alter travel plans to Southern Africa at this time.

SATSA supports WHO's efforts and remains committed to ensuring that travellers to Southern Africa have a safe and memorable experience. We advise staying informed through reliable sources such as the WHO and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC).

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ABOUT SATSA:



SATSA is the unified voice of the inbound tourism industry in Southern Africa and represents the private sector trade associations in five SADC countries. Our mission is to support the sustainable growth of travel and tourism to and within Southern Africa.

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