

# New measures for immigration regulations

PRETORIA: New measures have been introduced to address concerns raised by stakeholders in the tourism sector regarding the new visa regulations, says Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Jeff Radebe.



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An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Immigration has made several recommendations to deal with the security consideration and the unintended consequences of the regulations on various sectors, including tourism and investment.

Under the new immigration legislation amendments, which came into effect in June, South Africans and foreign nationals travelling to and from South Africa with children under the age of 18 are required to produce unabridged birth certificates.

The implementation of the new legislation is part of government's commitment to safeguard the best interests of children and prevent child trafficking.

"In respect of South African children (outbound travel), the IMC accepted the implementation of the current child-travel requirements, including the parental consent affidavits as these seek to protect children," Minister Radebe said.

Allowances which will be made as part of the new measure regarding children within the next three months to a year include details of the parents printed on the passports so that children whose particulars are printed would not be required to carry birth certificates.

In the next three months school principals will issue letters confirming permission for children to travel or school tours.

This authority will also be extended to include registered sports bodies.

"In respect of inbound travellers, the IMC took the position that where visas are required, provision of original birth certificates or certified copies of required documents should continue during the visa application process as this is in line with practise in many other countries," Minister Radebe said.

Travellers who are from visa exempt countries traveling with children will be strongly advised to bring along proof of the relation and consent from the absent parent/s or guardian/s.

Concessions that will take effect within the next three months include allowing countries where no South African missions exist to post their application to enter the country by post as they will be accepted by the Department of Home Affairs.

Minister Radebe said the Department of Home Affairs will implement the biometrics, including fingerprints and photos, at the pilot sites which will be at OR Tambo Airport, King Shaka Airport and Cape Town International Airport.

The department will also introduce an Accredited Tourism Company (ATC) Programme for China, India and Russia with possible extension to other visa requiring countries.

Within three months to a year the department will increase Visa Facilitation Centres (VFC) in China, India, United Kingdom, Nigeria Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Ghana, Kenya and Uganda.

The Department of Home Affairs will fast-track the opening of VFC in Zimbabwe, UAE and Botswana.

Measures which will be implemented beyond one year include the installing of systems for pre-flight checks at international airports.

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