

Dedicated lanes at ports of entry for Afcon fans

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PRETORIA: Dedicated lanes will be created at South Africa's ports of entry to facilitate the swift movement of soccer fans and officials from the Confederation of African Football (CAF) who will be flocking to the country for the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) tournament.



"Dedicated lanes will be created at ports of entry to facilitate the swift movement of the CAF delegations and spectators," said Home Affairs Director General Mkuseli Apleni on Thursday, 6 December 2012.

The dedicated lanes will be created at Lanseria, OR Tambo, King Shaka and Cape Town International airports as well as the Beitbridge, Lebombo, Maseru Bridge, Ficksburg Bridge, Kopfontein and Oshoek border posts.

Apleni said a few days before the tournament kicks off on 19 January, the department would extend working hours at key ports of entry as well as increase the number of departmental officers working at these offices during the tournament period.

While CAF officials will be able to use an official CAF letter as a form of accreditation for entry and departure, football fans are required to apply for a visitor's visa in line with normal visa requirements.

Apleni said the department would grant visa waivers to the CAF delegation, including national teams and members of various football federations, as not all African countries were exempted from visa requirements to enter South Africa.

"We have also taken some steps to strengthen the department's operations through the Afcon period, including the deployment of additional Home Affairs staff to South African diplomatic missions in Ghana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria in order to assist in the swift issuance of visas and work permits," he said.

Apleni said the department's response units in Limpopo, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal would be strengthened in order to increase their capacity to manage illegal immigration as well as ensure swift responses to

emergencies involving illegal migrants.

"We will also increase and enhance the capacity for an effective and efficient 24-hour Operations Centre to support ports of entry, travelers, airlines, CAF delegation and other agencies seeking any information from the department," he said.

Apleni said the department was following the same approach used during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, but that the planning had been customised to meet the unique requirements of Afcon as contained in South Africa's guarantees as well as the commitment made to CAF and the Afcon Local Organising Committee.

"In this regard, we will rely on systems that are part of the legacy of the 2012 FIFA World Cup, such as the Movement Control System to assist us in meeting our objectives," he said.

The 2013 Afcon tournament, which will be played in South Africa, will kick-off on January 19, while the champions will be crowned on February 10.

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