

PRESS RELEASE

ASATA Calls For Calm And Responsible Dissemination Of Coronavirus Information From Official Sources

JOHANNESBURG, 5 MARCH 2020 – ASATA has called on its members and the general public to remain calm following the announcement of the first case of Coronavirus in South Africa.

“We urge travellers to share only information that has been confirmed by an official source like the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD), World Health Organization (WHO) or ASATA, as there is a lot of fake news currently doing the rounds,” says **Otto de Vries**, CEO ASATA.

“For example, we have seen news circulating on social media and on WhatsApp about travel suppliers placing a blanket cancellation on their operations which simply isn’t true. Any travellers who are concerned that their travel plans will be impacted, should contact their ASATA-registered travel agent for informed travel advice.”

ASATA and the travel industry’s role is to provide a calming, coordinated and proactive response to the current alarm that exists as a result of the spread of Coronavirus. “Our members are working closely with travel suppliers to ascertain what proactive measures, if any, have been put in place to re-accommodate and assist travellers, where this is deemed necessary,” says de Vries.

The reality is that it remains safe to travel to most destinations provided you follow stringent hygiene guidelines as outlined by the World Health Organization. Destinations and travel suppliers are proactively putting in place travel restrictions when these are necessary. The WHO also confirms there is no need to put travel restrictions in place, except for the epicenter of the outbreak, China’s Wuhan province.



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"We believe that travellers should continue with their travel plans unless travel to their destination has been advised against by an official source such as the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD), World Health Organization (WHO) and individual governments of affected destinations.

"These entities, along with global travel suppliers, have the safety of travellers top of mind. They would simply never allow travel to continue if there were any concern whatsoever over the health and wellbeing of travellers. Any disinclination to travel on the part of the traveller beyond this advice is the decision of that traveller and may be subject to cancellation and penalties."

ASATA also advises travellers to purchase travel insurance prior to any international travel, and to ensure that they know what their insurance covers.

IATA has issued a comprehensive document detailing which destinations have put in place travel restrictions for citizens from certain countries. This can be accessed [here](#).

ENDS

To request an interview with ASATA CEO, Otto de Vries, please contact Natalia Rosa on 083 449 4334 or email natalia@bigambitions.co.za.

For more information about ASATA, please visit www.asata.co.za.

About ASATA

Established in 1956, the Association of Southern African Travel Agents is a representative forum registered as an Association of Persons, that promotes



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professional service in the travel industry for both members and their clients. Representing over 95% of the travel industry in terms of market share, ASATA's membership is voluntary and includes South African retail travel agents, travel management companies, wholesalers and suppliers of travel-related products and services.

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