**African Christian Democratic Party**

 **19 May 2022

ACDP Parliament
Budget Vote 38: Tourism
Speech by ACDP Deputy President, Wayne Thring MP**

 **ACDP calls on Department of Tourism to desist calling for mandatory vaccines and vaccine passports**

“Honourable House Chairperson,

From the position of the ACDP, there can be no doubt that the last two years has seen havoc wreaked on the tourism industry. According to the UNWTO, international tourist arrivals fell by 72% in January-October 2020. The decline represents 900 million fewer international tourist arrivals compared to the same period in 2019, translating into a loss of US$935 billion in export revenues, more than 10 times the loss in 2009 under the impact of the global economic crisis.

Like many other countries, SA was not spared. Against the advice of the ACDP, South Africa had one of the harshest lockdowns, resulting in all tourism activities ceasing. The sector was hard hit, with thousands of jobs lost and many businesses permanently closing its doors.

The ACDP notes that the Department’s 2020/21 budget was reduced by over R1 billion. The end of 2020 saw the number of domestic holiday trips decreased to 2 million trips, from 7.1 million in 2019. Clearly, the many unwarranted health policy decisions contributed to our high unemployment rate, a constrained economy, and a decrease in disposable income, which will further impact domestic travel in the years ahead.

With the tourism sector stakeholders calling for a standardised set of protocols and travel rules, the ACDP calls on the Department to desist from calling for mandatory vaccines in the workplace as well as to desist from calling for the use of vaccine passports. South Africans were told to trust the science, and science now shows that both the jabbed and unjabbed can contract Covid, so why discriminate against the unjabbed?

Sadly, in SA today, many of our government departments could be labelled, “The Department of Corrupt Affairs”. AGSA noted that there has been a regression in the last two years in performance reporting of NDT and SAT. Shockingly, there was a lack of department oversight in allocating the Covid-19 Tourism Relief Fund (TRF) and the Tour Guide Relief Fund (TGF). The Committee noted a lamentable misappropriation of funds and a lack of robust measures resulting in money being unaccounted for, allowing state employed persons and others to benefit unduly from these relief funds. This is morally reprehensible and orange overalls should be the only reward given to those who have stolen from the poor, honest, hard-working citizens, and business owners in the tourism sector.

I thank you.”