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MEDIA RELEASE

O. R. TAMBO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT MARKS START OF PEAK HOLIDAY SEASON WITH THE SWITCHING-ON OF ITS FESTIVE LIGHTS

KEMPTON PARK, 27 October 2017 – O. R. Tambo International Airport officially marked the start of the peak holiday season today as it officially switched on the airport’s festive lights display and simultaneously celebrated the 100th birthday of the icon whose name the airport has carried for 11 years.

O.R. Tambo International Airport’s management team hosted more than 30 children from the Sinethemba Day Care and Mpumi Day Care from Phola Park in Thokoza, which are both located in communities near the airport. The children gathered around the airport’s Christmas tree as the General Manager of the airport, Ms Bongwiwe Pityi, proceeded to officially switch on the Christmas tree lights which then officially marked the ushering in of the festive season at the airport.

“We are passionate about sharing this special occasion with children from within the local community. At the same time, it is important that we highlight to passengers and travellers that we are preparing ourselves for the busiest period of the year. Ensuring that children from nearby communities experienced this remained a key focus so that they too get to experience the airport in a special way,” says Leigh Gunkel-Keuler, spokesperson for O.R. Tambo International Airport.

Gunkel-Keuler noted that the summer holiday period remains the busiest time of the year for Africa’s largest airport which processed more than 3.5 million passengers last December and January alone.

“A tremendous amount of planning goes into ensuring that we, as part of the airport community, which consists of airlines, ground handlers and retailers, amongst others, are fully geared to cope with additional demands that come with higher volumes of passengers and airport users over this festive season,” says Gunkel-Keuler.

The airport is also running a major festive campaign over the month of October in conjunction with its retail stores. The *100For100* campaign will see one visitor to the airport win a R100 000 airport shopping spree. To enter, visitors to the airport simply need to spend R100 or more at participating airport stores and restaurants in one day and complete the entry form.

“Our retail footprint is similar in size to shopping malls and we wanted to join retailers in creating a holiday season buzz around their offerings, many of which are unique to the airport,” says Gunkel-Keuler.

Gunkel-Keuler hopes that travellers will also remember that the festive period is a particularly appropriate time to do something positive for those less fortunate and for companies to give back to communities where possible.

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O.R. Tambo International Airport, also has some special words of advice for passengers travelling over the festive season:

1. Put some planning into getting to the airport and what you will do with your vehicle if other transport is not feasible. The airport has long-term parking with shuttles to the departures and arrivals entrances.
2. Take special care to look into any service that offers to pick up your car at the drop-off point. These services are not part of the airport's offering and people using them do so at their own risk.
3. Get to the airport early. Give yourself and your family enough time to check in and relax a bit. There's no reason to start off a holiday stressed out over catching flights.
4. Set aside some time to view the recently unveiled statue of O. R. Tambo which greets visitors at the international arrivals hall.
5. Make sure you've checked your airline's terms and conditions. This applies especially to baggage restrictions.
6. Staff at security gates have been instructed to enforce airline rules on hand luggage, so do ensure that you adhere to the weight and height restrictions.
7. Remember that airlines warn passengers at the time of booking not to put any items of value in checked-in luggage.
8. Take care when using headphones while waiting for a flight to board as you could easily miss an announcement.
9. If you're uncertain of anything or need help, the airport has a number of information kiosks as well as staff members in uniform able to respond quickly.

ENDS

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