Greetings!

**Responsible travel during the festive season**

The festive season is already taking up space in our minds! Together with travel which is synonymous with festive season. Travel to most of us is a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience something different, leaving us with great memories. However, it has significant impacts on the environment from activities we undertake, and therefore it is important to ensure that we travel responsibly. The biggest question would be, how do we ensure responsible travel for example to wildlife conservation areas such as game parks, as well as tourist accommodation facilities? Therefore this week we have sampled a few tips to help in ensuring sustainable travel that will conserve our environment and natural resources, for our benefit and that of future generations.

**Reduce plastic waste generation**

Plastic waste in tourist destinations are mainly generated from plastic water bottles and plastic straws. This type of waste if not recycled but rather disposed into the environment photodegrade into finer toxins, that pollute surface water and ground water resources. This also has potential impacts on biodiversity, for example fish; which ingest them in the disguise that they are food, ending up filling their gut leading to death. Therefore a decision to avoid use of plastic will
significantly contribute to the protection of ecosystems, plant life and animal life. This can be achieved through the following measures:

1. **Use of refillable water bottles**

These are either steel or glass and have emerged not only as an effective way of reducing plastic waste generation from water packaging but also help you to quench your thirst. The figure below illustrates variety refillable water bottles that you can purchase in outlets and retails shops near you.

![Refillable Water Bottles](image)

2. **Paper straws**

Paper straws as an alternative to plastic straws is another effective way of reducing plastic waste generation because they biodegrade. The figure below illustrates a paper straw being used in one of the eco-rated facilities.
Sustainable consumption of food

Sustainable consumption of food can significantly reduce the amount of food waste generated. Energy and water are consumed in food production and generation of high amount of food waste translates to energy and water loss. Further to this, food waste is a vastly overlooked driver of climate change yet it has significant impact. When food waste is disposed in a dumpsite rather than a compost pit or being used in bio-digesters, it generates methane gas which contributes to the overall greenhouse gas emissions. We should therefore adopt sustainable consumption patterns that will reduce the amount of food waste generated.

Re-use of towels and linen

In eco-lodges, camps and hotels it’s common to find guests being encouraged to re-use their towels in an effort to conserve the environment and natural resources; through use of notices strategically placed in the bathrooms. Re-use of towels help in water and energy conservation and also reduces potential chemical pollution into the environment from use of laundry chemical detergents. It’s therefore important that you consider re-using your towel while staying in an
accommodation facility. The figure below illustrates a notice encouraging guests to re-use their towels in one of the eco-rated facilities.

These highlighted tips are just a few examples which you can apply to reduce your impact on the environment. In case you are planning to travel during the festive season, ensure you champion these sustainable practices as way of appreciating and adhering to responsible tourism!