



TBCSA fights DHA delays

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THE TBCSA has devised a contingency plan to alleviate the lengthy delays caused by DHA staff shortages at major airports across the country. The implementation now relies on Home Affairs.

The TBCSA put forward a multi-action proposal during a meeting on November 4 between the Minister of Tourism, captains of the tourism industry and National Treasury. DHA wasn't present. Ceo of the TBCSA, **Mmatšatši Ramawela** says The Department of Tourism is meeting with the DHA and other government departments on an unknown date to

see that the initiatives in the proposal are taken forward.

In the short to medium term the TBCSA has suggested that all immigration counters remain staffed by bringing in SAPS officials to man the stations on the departures side of the airports. "This was done in 2010 and there were no issues of congestion despite the fact that we were welcoming a lot of people in one go," says Mmatšatši.

She says the biggest requirement for officials on the departures side is security clearance, which SAPS officials already have, so all they would need would be a one or two-day course in

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order to qualify for the task.

Mmatšatši says ushers are also needed to direct travellers entering arrivals. "At the moment all they see is three queues: one for South Africans, one for travellers who require visas and one for those that don't." She says this is a problem for non-English speakers who may join the wrong queue.

The third measure is to

improve the experience of travellers standing in queues by providing them with water and things to nibble on.

However, she says these measures are subject to the approval of the DHA, NDT and other parties within and outside of government.

Spokesperson for the DHA, **Mayihlome Tshwete**, was unable to confirm whether it would be introducing any of these measures and says

only that the Department is working with stakeholders to ensure more efficient facilitation of travellers at ports of entry.

For the long term the parties will have to find a solution to the 'austerity' employment procedures in government, which mean that the DHA cannot replace someone without a procedure verifying the job needs to be filled, says Mmatšatši. ■