

## **MSC SINFONIA Kicks off SA's Cruise Season**

**[Durban, South Africa, 30 October 2017]** The South African 2017/18 cruise season kicked off this morning with the arrival of the first international cruise liner, MSC SINFONIA, at the Port of Durban.

Carrying 2300 European and South African passengers, the vessel arrived on a 23-day itinerary from Venice in Italy and was welcomed by a tug spray, marimba band and traditional dancers.

Transnet National Ports Authority's Port Manager for the Port of Durban, Moshe Motlohi, said the Port of Durban is scheduled to receive 13 cruise liners this season – up from eight which called at the port during the 2016/17 season.

"It gives us great pleasure to welcome MSC Cruises and MSC SINFONIA back to her South African home port each year. We are also delighted to welcome some new operators and vessels to the port this season. These 13 vessels represent 11 cruise line companies that have shown confidence in Durban as a route this season – up from seven in 2016/17," he added.

The global luxury cruise sector is one of the fastest growing segments in the tourism industry and has the potential to grow the economy and create jobs. Internationally the cruise market has grown from 5 million passengers to over 20 million passengers over the last 17 years.

Passenger numbers at the Port of Durban have grown from 171 510 in 2015 to 209 712 in 2016. The port witnessed an increase of 22% in year 2016 compared to year 2015.

Durban is a popular destination owing to its pleasant climate and beaches, close proximity to the two World Heritage Sites (Isimangaliso Wetland Park and Drakensberg), shore excursions, land programmes and promotion of wildlife experiences at nearby luxury game lodges.

Motlohi said TNPA was at the tail end of negotiations and would shortly finalise its Terminal Operator Agreement with Kwa Zulu Cruise Terminal Pty Ltd (KCT) – a Joint Venture between MSC Cruises SA (a subsidiary of MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company SA) and Africa Armada Consortium (a black empowerment partner) – which was announced as the preferred bidder for Design, Financing, Construction, Operation, Maintenance and Transfer of the new Cruise Terminal Facility for a 25 Year Concession Period in the Port of Durban.

Last year MSC Cruises Marketing Director, Alan Foggitt, said the cruise company would be replacing MSC SINFONIA in the 2018/19 season with the larger MSC MUSICA. MSC had also secured a new destination in Northern Mozambique to include in its regional cruise schedule.

The 13 passenger liners scheduled to call at the Port of Durban this season are: ALBATROS (Phoenix Reisen), BOUDICCA (Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines), CRYSTAL SYMPHONY (Crystal Cruises), Europa 2 (Hapag-Lloyd Cruises), INSIGNIA (Oceania Cruises), LE LYRIAL (Compagnie du Ponant), NAUTICA (Oceania Cruises), SEABOURN SOJOURN (Seabourn Cruise Line), SERENISSIMA (Noble Caledonia), SEVEN SEAS NAVIGATOR (Regent Seven Seas Cruises), SILVER Spirit (Silversea Cruises), MSC SINFONIA (MSC Cruises) and SEVEN SEAS VOYAGER (Regent Seven Seas Cruises). The South African cruise season typically runs from late October / early November to early May.

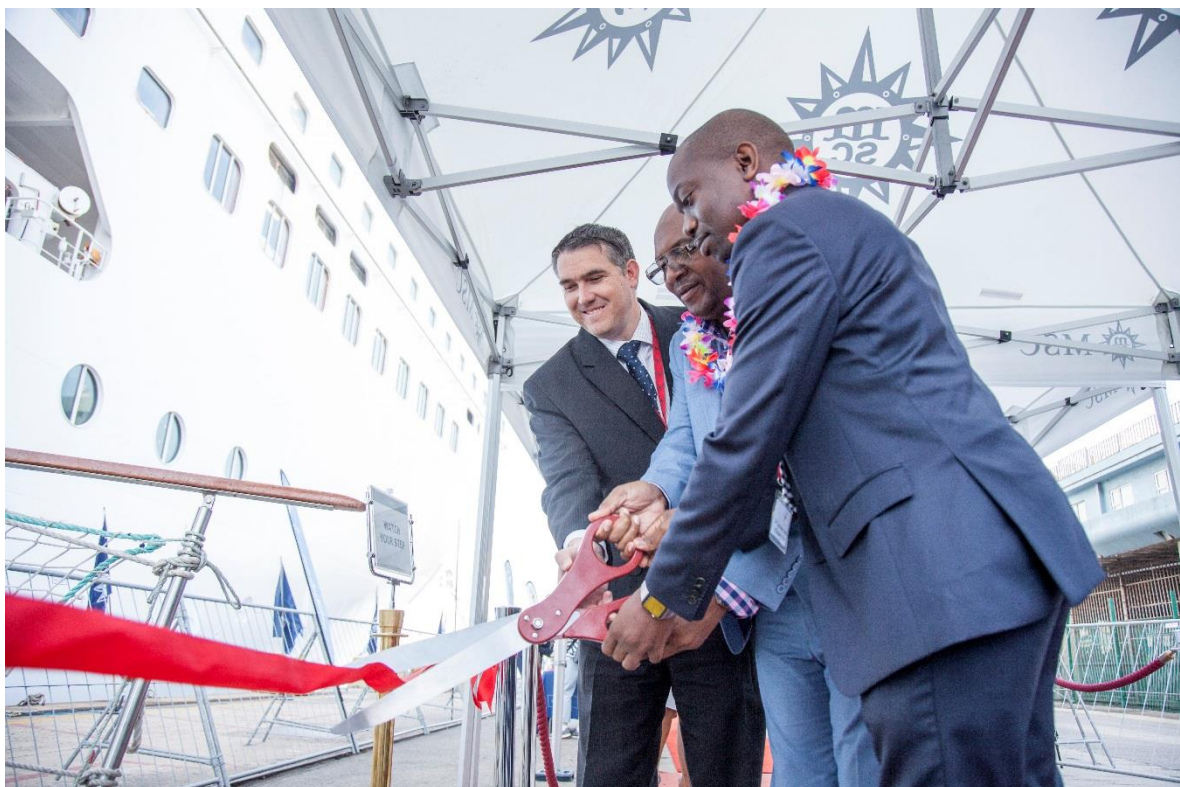
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**Image Gallery (4 photos):**

Below: MSC SINFONIA arrived in her home port of Durban on 30 October with approximately 2300 European and South African passengers. The vessel is the first international cruise liner to visit South African ports for the 2017/18



Below: Declaring the 2017/18 cruise season officially open with a ceremonial ribbon cutting were (left to right) Ross Volk, MD of MSC Cruises South Africa, Moshe Motlohi, Port Manager at the Port of Durban and Councillor Sqniseko Shezi, representing Her Worship the Mayor of eThekwin Municipality, Councillor Zandile Gumede.



Below: Carrying 2300 European and South African passengers, MSC SINFONIA arrived on a 23-day itinerary from Venice in Italy and was welcomed with a tug spray, marimba band and traditional dancers.



Below: (front left to right) Port of Durban Harbour Master Captain Alex Miya receives a gift from Captain Lauro Maresca of MSC Cruises, flanked by Durban Port Manager Moshe Motlohi and (back left to right) Ross Volk, MD of MSC Cruises South Africa and Councillor Sqniseko Shezi, representing Her Worship the Mayor of eThekweni Municipality, Councillor Zandile Gumede.



## About Transnet National Ports Authority

Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) is one of five operating divisions of Transnet SOC Ltd. The National Ports Authority is responsible for the safe, effective and efficient economic functioning of the national port system, which it manages in a landlord capacity. It provides port infrastructure and marine services at the eight commercial seaports in South Africa – Richards Bay, Durban, Saldanha, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Mossel Bay and Ngqura. It operates within a legislative and regulatory environment and is governed by the National Ports Act (Act No. 12 of 2005). For more information visit [www.transnetnationalportsauthority.net](http://www.transnetnationalportsauthority.net).

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### Issued by:

Zikhona Mzini  
Acting Corporate Affairs Manager  
Port of Durban  
Transnet National Ports Authority  
Tel: 031 361 8923  
083 791 3535  
[zikhona.mzini@transnet.net](mailto:zikhona.mzini@transnet.net)

### On behalf of:

Moshe Motlohi  
Port Manager  
Port of Durban  
Transnet National Ports Authority  
[moshe.motlohi@transnet.net](mailto:moshe.motlohi@transnet.net)