

# Tiny, isolated St Helena awaits tourism boom

**Rusana Philander**

SAINT Helena Island, which is located off the south west coast of Africa, will in a few years time be developed into a sought after tourist destination.

During an information session in Cape Town, Enterprise St Helena's South African commercial representative Adam Kossowski, said the island's existing tourism was small in scale. On a yearly basis it received 2100 visitors, he said.

Kossowski said that with the development of tourism they forecast it could attract 30 000 visitors by 2020.

"Presently, 49% of visitors are from South Africa, 33% from the UK, 13% from the Netherlands and 6% are people who are passing by on yachts," he said. "There is a market for

adventurers, travellers and a niche for tour operators and residential tourism. The island has an unspoilt natural environment and there are also plans to build the world's greenest luxury hotel," Kossowski said.

According to Stuart Planner, property director of Enterprise St Helena, "the island has enormous potential and it needs the right partnerships to support the idea of a green island in commercialising it into a sustainable economy".

"St Helena has only been accessible by ship since its discovery in 1502. But it will soon be accessible by air, enabling the island to be reached by the world and helping it to develop its tourism industry and wider economy.

"The airport is due for completion in early 2016. The island

is experiencing depopulation as many young people are leaving it to work in other countries," he said.

The island has a population

of only 4000 people and has comprehensive health and education. It is an overseas territory of the UK.

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**SCENIC: Jamestown, the capital and port of St Helena, a British territory.**