

1 April 2009

Dear Stakeholder,

### **BRITAINS FIRST GLOBAL VISA REVIEW – DATES OF NEW VISA REGIMES RESULTING FROM THE VISA WAIVER TEST**

In February 2009 we wrote to you to inform you of the results of the Visa Waiver Test and the UK Government's decision to introduce visitor visa regimes on Bolivia, Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland and Venezuela.

Today Phil Woolas announced the dates of the start of these regimes in Parliament. Visa regimes for Bolivian and Venezuelan nationals will begin on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2009. Venezuelan nationals holding valid biometric, machine readable passports will be exempt from the visa requirement. At the same time we will clarify how the visa exemption for Taiwan passport holders works - that it only applies to those with full residency rights in Taiwan.

The temporary visa exemption for South African visitors with a previous travel history to the UK which began on 3 March will cease at midnight on 30 June 2009. From Wednesday 1 July 2009 all South African visitors to the UK will require a visa, as will visitors from Lesotho and Swaziland.

The new visa requirements mean that nationals from these countries wishing to visit the UK for up to six months will need to obtain a visit visa, and provide their fingerprints, before they travel. Nationals of these countries seeking to travel via the UK *en route* to another country will also need a transit visa. This is in addition to the existing requirement for a visa in order to live, work, study or marry in the UK.

Detailed information will be added to our websites as each stage of these new visa regimes comes into force.

Best Regards,

*Mark Walmsley*

**Mark Walmsley**  
Stakeholder Engagement Manager