

VoyagesAfriq

ISSUE 028 | June 2024 Edition

Africa's Leading Travel and Tourism Magazine



Again, African youth push boundaries in tourism with their innovations

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Celebrating David Germain pg. 34



ISSN 2550-3405



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Namibia Tourism Board

Doing what matters drives our ambition for Namibia

The Namibia Tourism Board has been a driving force in positioning Namibia as the ultimate destination for over 21 years. Established under the Namibia Tourism Board Act (No. 21 of 2000), the board is responsible for overseeing the registration and grading of accommodation establishments, as well as the development of various sectors within the tourism industry.

By focusing on 'doing what truly matters,' such as preserving Namibia's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and promoting sustainable tourism practices, the Namibia Tourism Board aims to elevate the country's tourism sector, making it an attractive destination for travellers worldwide.

From the breathtaking landscapes of the Namib Desert to the diverse wildlife of Etosha National Park, Namibia offers a wealth of natural wonders and cultural experiences. The Namibia Tourism Board plays a crucial role in safeguarding, promoting, and ensuring these attractions are enjoyed by visitors while also benefiting local communities and the Namibian economy.

In summary, the Namibia Tourism Board is dedicated to establishing Namibia as the ultimate destination where travellers can immerse themselves in stunning scenery, encounter unique wildlife, and experience the warmth and hospitality of the Namibian people. Through its unwavering commitment and initiatives, the board continues to propel Namibia's tourism industry forward, solidifying its position as a top choice for adventurers seeking beauty, adventure, and unforgettable memories.

On that note, we are excited to share our new mission, vision, and values.

Mission

To promote tourism in collaboration with our stakeholders with the view to encouraging persons to travel to and within Namibia.

Vision

To become a preferred tourist destination in the world by 2029.

Values

Professionalism: We strive to create a positive work environment that builds customer trust and enhance our reputation.

Accountability: We are answerable for all our actions, behaviours, and performance.

Customer service: We prioritise our customer concerns, needs and provide exceptional customer experience.

Innovation: We exploit new ideas of doing business to gain a competitive advantage.

Safety: We are actively caring for our tourists and aim toward zero incidents.

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VoyagesAfric

Travel and Tourism Magazine

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Publisher
AfroViayes Media Services LTD

Dear Cherished Reader,

As we delve into the June 2024 edition of VoyagesAfric Travel and Tourism Magazine, we find ourselves amidst a plethora of extraordinary stories that illuminate the ever-evolving landscape of African tourism. This edition serves as a compass, guiding us through the progress and innovation that continue to shape the industry.

One of the most remarkable articles of this edition is on the resurgence of international tourism, which has risen to an impressive 97% of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2024. With over 285 million tourists embarking on journeys across borders, this surge not only signifies a remarkable recovery from the pandemic's impacts but also underscores the enduring appeal of travel and exploration.

At the core of this resurgence lies the vibrant tapestry of Africa, celebrated by none other than the Secretary General of UN Tourism during Africa AU Day. In an inspiring speech, the Secretary General highlights the continent's diverse beauty and boundless opportunities, elevating Africa's multifaceted splendour onto the global stage.

Moreover, the collaboration between ICCA and UN Tourism marks a pivotal moment for the meeting industry, recognizing its transformative potential in driving socio-economic progress worldwide. This partnership not only emphasizes the importance of sustainable development but also positions the business events industry as a catalyst for positive change.

Front and centre on our cover story is the resounding success of this year's Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Challenge and Summit, hosted in Namibia.



Kojo Bentum-Williams

This summit not only nurtured creativity among young minds but also fostered mentorship and idea-sharing, laying the foundation for a brighter future for African tourism.

Meanwhile, Zambia's Hospitality and Tourism Education Summit addressed the crucial need for skilled professionals in the industry, with a groundbreaking announcement of tourism's inclusion in high school curriculum—a testament to Zambia's dedication to nurturing talent and driving industry growth.

Namibia's Tourism Board continues to shine on the global stage, optimizing the destination's visibility at leading travel shows such as Indaba and WTM Africa 2024. Through deliberate efforts to showcase the country's wonders, Namibia invites travellers to embark on unforgettable adventures within its borders.

In Malawi, a surge in tourism investment, coupled with the successful hosting of the Malawi International Tourism Expo, paints a promising picture of growth and development. The government's 58% budget increase underscores its commitment to unlocking the country's vast tourism potential.

Also, we shine a spotlight on David Germain of Tourism Seychelles, whose unwavering dedication has elevated

Seychelles as a premier destination. In an exclusive interview, Germain shares insights into his remarkable journey, offering a glimpse into the passion and vision driving Seychelles' tourism success.

This edition continues the tradition of covering a wide range of topics, including aviation, hospitality, travel trade, lifestyle, culture & arts and gastronomy. The latest publication serves as a guide, helping us navigate the ever-changing world of progress and innovation that shape the industries we are passionate about and that define our experiences. Within these pages, you will find a comprehensive collection of the most important stories in aviation. The sky is full of new horizons and endless opportunities for exploration. From groundbreaking developments in air travel such as EasyJet's expansion to West Africa to the latest trends in hospitality and beyond, we provide insights that shed light on the future for industry professionals and enthusiasts alike.

As we navigate the currents of African tourism, let us be inspired by the stories within these pages. Together, let us chart a course towards a future where Africa's tourism industry continues to thrive, enriching lives and connecting cultures across the globe.

Have an enjoyable read!

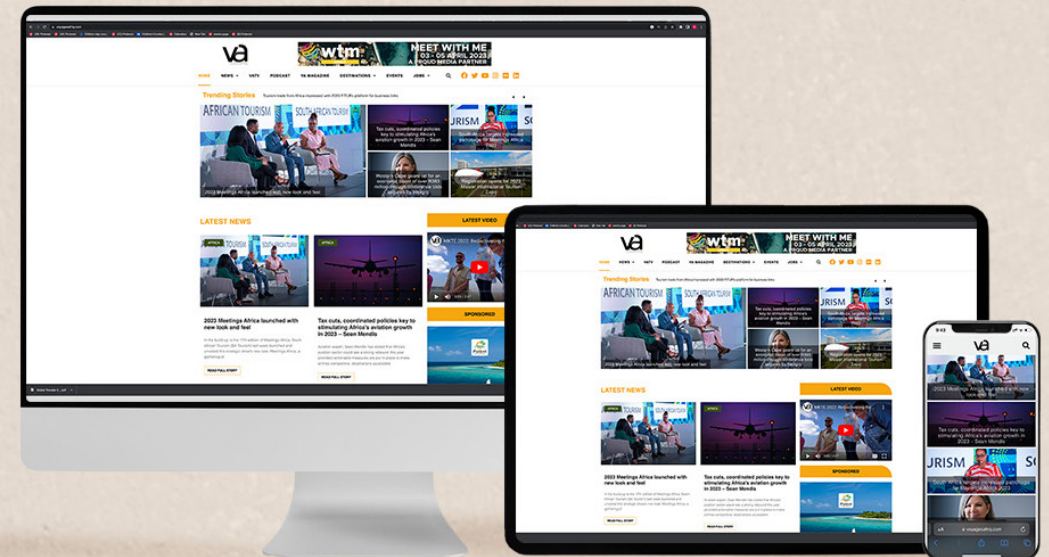


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NMC No.
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Africa's leading Travel and Tourism Magazine



UN Tourism Chief lauds Cabo Verde for “setting an example for others to follow”



José Maria Pereira Neves, President of Cabo Verde & Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General of UN Tourism

The Secretary General of UN Tourism has commended the island country of Cabo Verde for harnessing the power of tourism to transform its economy and improve livelihoods.

Zurab Pololikashvili said this when President of Cabo Verde, José Maria Pereira Neves visited the UN Tourism headquarters in Madrid on April 5, 2024. According to him, the West African country had shown the way in using tourism for growth and positively affecting lives.

“For small islands everywhere, tourism is a vital pillar of sustainable and inclusive growth. It creates countless jobs and supports businesses of all sizes as well as whole communities. Cabo Verde is setting an example for others to follow,” he emphasised.

Cape Verde recently undertook a rebranding of its tourism, a development which the Secretary General praised and

noted, had been done at the same time when the global tourism body was also rebranding.

Pololikashvili maintained: “With solid and clear leadership, you are growing tourism as a force for good. I congratulate you on your recent rebranding – launched around the same time of our own rebranding to UN Tourism!”

“Today, travellers are increasingly seeking authentic and unique experiences. The Islands of Cabo Verde From the Heart brand will allow them to enjoy the great diversity of your 10 islands and experience the nature, the people and the warm hospitality.”

The Secretary General also mentioned recent and ongoing developments in Cabo Verde’s tourism sector which have been spearheaded by the government. “Hand-in-hand with this, Cabo Verde is also prioritizing investments into tourism. This way, you are both building new infrastructure as well as restoring and protecting the unique cultural and natural heritage of the islands.”

As a member state of UN Tourism, Cabo Verde continues to play a pivotal role and forge closer relationship within the organisation having hosted in 2021, the Regional Commission for Africa meetings. The country also hosted the



landmark conference on air transport in Africa, organized by UN Tourism in partnership with ICAO in 2019.

On his part, the President José Maria Pereira Neves, expressed excitement and enthusiasm about an ongoing programme with UN Tourism where the organisation is developing guidelines for tourism investment in Cabo Verde, adding that he looks forward to harnessing the opportunities emanating from the investment guidelines.



UN Tourism SG Celebrates Africa AU Day, highlights continent's diverse offerings and boundless opportunities



UN Tourism Secretary General Zurab Pololikashvili speaking at the 2023 Kwita Zina

In a seminal address commemorating the 2024 African Union (AU) Day, the UN Secretary-General for Tourism delivers an insightful speech that brings attention to the continent's diverse beauty and wealth of opportunities, elevating Africa's multifaceted splendor and abundant prospects to the forefront of global consciousness.

With profound insights he reveals Africa's diverse offerings, shedding light upon its manifold wonders and limitless opportunities. Africa is shown as more than just a place; it is also a symbol of inspiration and hope, a lighthouse of human resourcefulness and resilience. In his speech, the Secretary-General challenges us to view Africa as more than just a continent, rather, as a true fount of opportunity that points humanity in

“As vital source of income for many people in Africa, tourism has enormous potential to promote inclusive development and economic progress”

the direction of a bright and promising future.

The Secretary General's AU Day Message

Africa embodies unparalleled potential for growth and wealth due to its diverse range of natural beauty, rich cultural legacy, and youngest population in the world. Moreover, Africa boasts some of the world's most captivating tourism destinations globally, creating a rich environment for innovation and business opportunities.

As vital source of income for many people in Africa, tourism has enormous potential to promote inclusive development and economic progress. But in order to realize this potential to its fullest, training and education must come first. By giving our young labor force the tools they need to succeed, we clear the path for long-term prosperity and progress.

With our new tagline “bringing the world closer” UN Tourism places people at the center of its work and reaffirms its position as the leading

worldwide authority promoting tourism for sustainable development.

In keeping with the African Union's priority and in being aligned to this year's celebration of Africa Day to educate its population and build resilient education systems, UN Tourism works closely with its member states and partners to invest in people for a better future and to commit to reinforcing education and training initiatives within the tourism sector. Fair employment opportunities, support for local businesses, and the encouragement of creative thinking are essential for revolutionizing the travel industry.

Through targeted investments and collaborative efforts, we can ensure that every individual has access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.

Together, let's build a future where human capital is valued and nurtured and where tourism serves as a catalyst for positive change.

Happy Africa Day!



UN General Assembly Hosts Tourism for Sustainable Development Event

The United Nations General Assembly has held a second thematic event focused on tourism and the sector's critical role in critical role of tourism in advancing sustainable development and resilience.

Organized by the President of the General Assembly in collaboration with UN Tourism, the event was held at the UN Headquarters within the framework of Sustainability Week. The presence of Member States, Observers, civil society organizations, and UN agencies reflected a growing collective commitment to harnessing the transformative power of tourism for inclusive and sustainable development.

Addressing the General Assembly, UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "The growing significance of the tourism sector for our societies and our economies brings with it extra responsibility. We cannot allow the lifeline of tourism to be cut again. Resilience in the tourism is not just a matter of planning or reacting to crises. It is also about proactively addressing the underlying factors of those crises. Unsustainable consumption is leading

to biodiversity loss, climate change and the emergence of pandemics. It's vital that we adopt policies that accelerate transformative change."

The President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Dennis Francis, said: "We need a global tourism sector that is sustainable – one with deep local value chains that expand demand for locally made products and services in ways that also directly and positively benefit local communities; a sector that serves as a positive force for biodiversity conservation, heritage protection and climate friendly livelihoods."

High-level platform for statistics-led strategy

The thematic event provided a platform for Member States to share best practices, strategies, and innovative approaches to promote sustainable and resilient tourism, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Key highlights included:

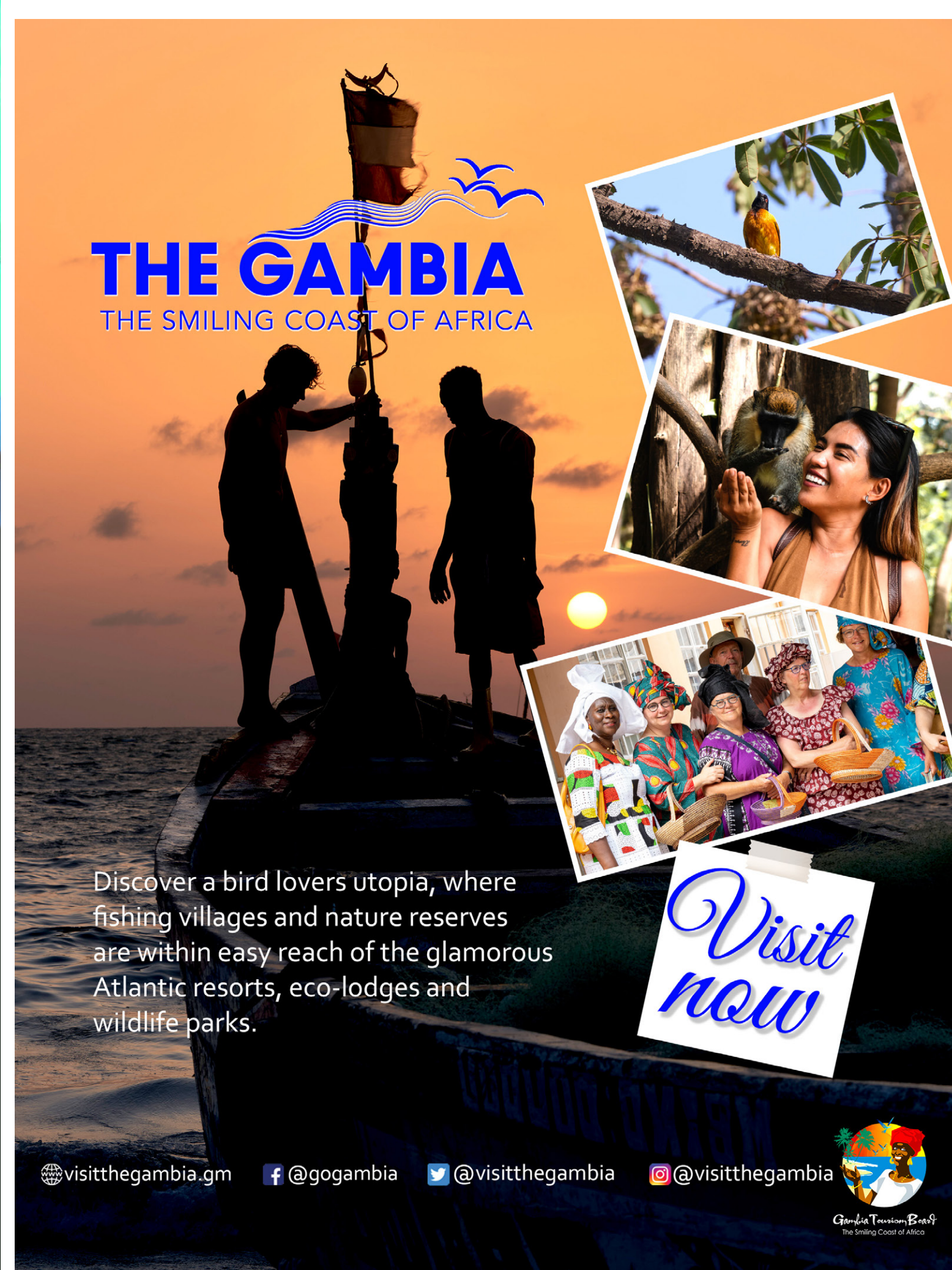
Fireside Chat: The Future of Tourism – Leaders from the tourism industry, academia, and civil society engaged in

a dynamic discussion on the future of tourism and the need for innovative solutions to address emerging challenges and opportunities.

Ministerial Roundtables: Discussions were held on the launch of the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism and strategies for fostering resilient tourism in the face of global challenges. Ministers and high-level officials shared insights and commitments to advance sustainable tourism practices and policies.

In closing, the President of the General Assembly reiterated the importance of collaboration and partnership to address the complex challenges facing the tourism sector and reaffirmed the UN's commitment to supporting sustainable tourism as a catalyst for positive change.

In February, the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution to declare 2027 as the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism. The resolution invites UN Tourism to work with Governments, UN agencies and international organizations to on the implementation of the themed year.



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International tourism reached 97% of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2024

International tourist arrivals reached 97% of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2024. According to UN Tourism, more than 285 million tourists travelled internationally in January-March, about 20% more than the first quarter of 2023, underscoring the sector's near-complete recovery from the impacts of the pandemic.

In 2023 international tourist arrivals recovered 89% of 2019 levels, while export revenues from tourism remained at 97% and direct tourism GDP reached the same levels as in 2019.

UN Tourism's projection for 2024 points to a full recovery of international tourism with arrivals growing 2% above 2019 levels. In line with this, the newest data released by the UN specialized agency for tourism show that:

The Middle East saw the strongest relative growth, with international arrivals exceeding by 36% pre-pandemic levels in Q1 2024, or 4% above Q1 2023. This follows an extraordinary performance in 2023, when the Middle East became the first world region to recover pre-pandemic numbers (+22%).

Europe, the world's largest destination region, exceeded pre-pandemic levels in a quarter for the first time (+1% from Q1 2019). The region recorded 120 million international tourists in the first three months of the year, backed by robust intra-regional demand.

Africa welcomed 5% more arrivals in the first quarter of 2024 than in Q1 2019, and 13% more than in Q1 2023.

The Americas practically recovered pre-pandemic numbers this first quarter, with arrivals reaching 99% of 2019 levels.

International tourism is experiencing a rapid recovery in Asia and the Pacific where arrivals reached 82% of pre-pandemic levels in Q1 2024, after recovering 65% in the year 2023.

UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "The recovery of the sector is very welcome news for our economies and the livelihoods of millions. Yet it also recalls the need to

ensure adequate tourism policies and destination management, aiming to advance sustainability and inclusion, while addressing the externalities and impact of the sector on resources and communities".

By subregions, North Africa saw the strongest performance in Q1 2024 with 23% more international arrivals than before the pandemic, followed by Central America (+8%), the Caribbean and Western Europe (both +7%). Southern Mediterranean Europe exceeded pre-pandemic levels by 1%, while South America virtually reached 2019 levels. Northern Europe recovered 98% of pre-pandemic levels, while Subsaharan Africa and North America both recovered 95%.

According to available data, many destinations across the world continued to achieve strong results in Q1 2024, including Qatar (+177% versus Q1 2019), Albania (+121%), Saudi Arabia (+98%), Tanzania (+53%), Curaçao (+45%), Serbia (+43%), Turks and Caicos (+42%), Guatemala (+41%) and Bulgaria (+38%).

The robust performance of international tourism can also be seen in the UN Tourism Confidence Index which reached 130 points (on a scale of 0 to 200) for the period January-April, above the expectations (122) expressed for this period in mid-January.

Receipts

International tourism receipts reached USD 1.5 trillion in 2023, meaning a complete recovery of pre-pandemic levels in nominal terms, but 97% in real terms, adjusting for inflation.

By regions, Europe generated the highest receipts in 2023, with destinations earning USD 660 billion, exceeding pre-pandemic levels by 7% in real terms. Receipts in the Middle East climbed 33% above 2019 levels. The Americas recovered 96% of its pre-pandemic earnings in 2023 and Africa 95%. Asia and the Pacific earned 78% of its pre-crisis receipts, a remarkable result when compared to its 65% recovery in arrivals last year.

Total export revenues from international tourism, including both receipts and passenger transport, reached USD 1.7 trillion in 2023, about 96% of pre-pandemic levels in real terms. Tourism direct GDP recovered pre-pandemic levels, reaching an estimated USD 3.3 trillion in 2023, equivalent to 3% of global GDP.

Several destinations achieved remarkable results in terms of receipts this quarter as compared to 2019 levels based on available data, including Serbia (+127%), Türkiye (+82%), Pakistan (+72%), Tanzania (+62%), Portugal (+61%), Romania (+57%), Japan (+53%), Mongolia (+50%), Mauritius (+46%) and Morocco (+44%).



Looking ahead to a full recovery globally in 2024

International tourism is expected to recover completely in 2024 backed by strong demand, enhanced air connectivity and the continued recovery of China and other major Asian markets.

The latest UN Tourism Confidence Index shows positive prospects for the upcoming summer season, with a score of 130 for the period May-August 2024 (on a scale of 0 to 200), reflecting more upbeat sentiment than earlier this year. Some 62% of tourism experts participating in the Confidence survey expressed better (53%) or much better (9%) expectations for this 4-month period, covering the Northern Hemisphere summer season, while 31% foresee similar performance as in 2023.

Challenges remain

According to the UN Tourism Panel of Experts, economic and geopolitical headwinds continue to pose significant challenges to international tourism and confidence levels.

IMF's latest World Economic Outlook (April 2024) points to a steady but slow economic recovery, though mixed by region. At the same time, persisting inflation, high interest rates, volatile oil prices and disruptions to trade continue to translate into high transport and accommodation costs.

Tourists are expected to continue to seek value for money and travel closer to home in response to elevated prices and the overall economic challenges, while extreme temperatures and

other weather events could impact the destination choice of many travellers. This is increasingly mentioned by the UN Tourism Panel of Experts as a concern for the sector.

Uncertainty derived from the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the Hamas-Israel conflict and other mounting geopolitical tensions, are also important downside risks for international tourism.

As international tourism continues to recover and expand, fuelling economic growth and employment around the world, governments will need to continue adapting and enhancing their management of tourism at the national and local level to ensure communities and residents are at the center of this development.

Gambia's new Tourism Minister impresses on staff to work together to grow sector



Abdoulie Jobe, the Gambia's new Minister of Tourism and Culture has called on the staff of the Ministry to work together as a team to achieve the goals and mission of the institution.

Minister Jobe was speaking on Monday, 25th March 2024 during his first staff meeting held at the Ministry's conference in Banjul.

"Let us work as a team to achieve our goals. This Ministry is very important. Its contribution to the GDP is between 15 to 20 percent respectively.

My doors are open for the development of this Ministry and the country as a whole," he said.

Mr. Jobe also took the opportunity to call on the staff to take their work seriously and be punctual at work.

"If I give you an assignment make sure you do it and finish it on time. If you have any difficulties, come back and ask for solutions," he advised.

He went on to urge the staff for decorum and hard work, saying it is not fair being in the office the whole day

without doing anything.

The Minister then talked about the need for staff capacity building, describing it as something relevant to the development of the tourism sector.

In return, the members of staff pledged to work with the new Minister and assured him of their cooperation and readiness at all times.

Cordul L. Jabang-Senghore, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Culture chaired the meeting

Angolan Ambassador to Spain pledges enhanced diplomatic and economic engagement in the tourism sector

H.E Mr. Alfredo Dombe, the Ambassador of the Republic of Angola to the Kingdom of Spain and Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General, UN Tourism



In a significant diplomatic move aimed at enhancing Angola's engagement with the global tourism community, H.E Mr. Alfredo Dombe, the Ambassador of the Republic of Angola to the Kingdom of Spain, was officially accredited as Angola's Permanent Representative to the UN Tourism. The accreditation ceremony took place at the UN Tourism on May 9, 2024 at the headquarters in Madrid, where Ambassador Dombe presented his credentials to Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, the Secretary-General of the organization.

The ceremony marked a pivotal moment as Ambassador Dombe undertakes the responsibility of revitalizing diplomatic relations and economic cooperation in the tourism sector between Angola and the UN Tourism. With the copies of the letter of accreditation formalizing his mandate, Ambassador Dombe articulated the guidelines that will steer his diplomatic efforts within the organization. Notably, he expressed Angola's potential candidacy for the UN Tourism Executive Council in 2025, aiming to secure one of the available seats allocated to Africa.

Among the topics discussed during the meeting was the Executive approval

of Angola's Presidential Decree No. 189/23, which establishes a legal regime for the exemption and simplification of procedures for granting tourism visas to Angola. This move is expected to facilitate tourism inflow into the country. Additionally, the current state of tourism in Angola was deliberated, with a focus on PLANATUR, a plan aimed at developing the sector comprehensively.

Partnerships and collaborations with the the global tourism body to promote sustainable tourism and attract foreign investment for infrastructure development, including hotel units, were also explored. The promotion of professional training initiatives to enhance the quality of services and visitor experience in Angola's tourism sector was highlighted as a priority.

Angola's association with the global tourism community dates back to 1989 when it joined the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), now known as UN Tourism, during the 8th General Assembly held in Paris. Since then, Angola has been actively contributing to the objectives of the organization.

As Ambassador Dombe embarks on his mission, there is optimism about the

potential for strengthened collaboration between Angola and the UN Tourism fostering sustainable tourism growth and development in the country and beyond.

The Government of Angola has turned its attention to the country's tourism potentials and offerings to make the sector a major economic driver. The country in the last 12 months has announced ambitious plans to grow business and leisure travellers to the destination. The Southern African country is set to open its new gigantic and state of the art airport which will process 15 million passengers a year.



Save the date

2nd UN Tourism Conference on Brand Africa

Livingstone, Republic of Zambia
22 – 24 July 2024

unwto.org





UN Tourism and Croatia to Establish Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism

UN Tourism is to work with the Government of Croatia and the University of Zagreb to establish a research and development centre focused on sustainable tourism.

Croatia currently serves on UN Tourism's Committee on Tourism and Sustainability, having chaired it between 2019 and 2023. Alongside the Government's record of promoting responsible and sustainable tourism practices, this clear leadership and support for UN Tourism's core values make it the ideal location to host a collaborative platform to drive innovation and catalyse positive change in the tourism sector.

This landmark centre will engage stakeholders from the public and private sectors, academia, and civil society to will address some of the most critical challenges facing tourism.

Reducing the Environmental Impact of Tourism: The centre will prioritize initiatives to minimize waste generation and plastic usage, thereby mitigating the environmental footprint of tourism activities.

Increasing Usage of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency: By promoting the adoption of renewable energy sources and implementing energy-efficient practices, the centre aims to reduce carbon emissions associated with tourism operations.

Accelerating Adaptation to Climate Change: Recognizing the urgent need to address climate-related risks, the centre will support adaptation strategies to enhance the resilience of tourism destinations and communities.

Preserving Social Sustainability and Local Communities: The centre will work to safeguard the cultural heritage and livelihoods of local communities by promoting responsible tourism practices and equitable distribution of benefits.

Enhancing Evidence-Based Policy Making: Through rigorous research and data analysis, the centre will provide policymakers with the evidence needed to formulate effective policies that balance tourism development with environmental and social considerations.

Providing Relevant and Updated Research: The centre will serve as a hub for cutting-edge research and knowledge exchange, delivering timely insights and best practices for the sustainable development of tourism.

In Zagreb, the Minister of Tourism and Sport of Croatia Nikolina Brnjac and UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create the cutting-edge research institution.

Welcoming the collaboration, Secretary-General Pololikashvili

said: "Croatia leads by example in growing tourism in a sustainable manner. The new research centre in Zagreb will contribute to UN Tourism's commitment to data-driven policymaking at the regional, national and destination level, ensuring tourism grows responsibly and inclusively, for the benefit of communities everywhere."

Minister of Tourism and Sport of Croatia Nikolina Brnjac adds: "I am proud that UN Tourism, the most relevant tourism organization globally, has recognized our efforts in Croatian tourism management reform and our strong commitment to sustainable tourism and put forward the initiative to create the first UN Tourism Centre for sustainable tourism in Croatia together with the Ministry of Tourism and Sport of the Republic of Croatia. With the University of Zagreb as a partner in the establishment of this Centre, I am convinced that this Centre will be successful and provide very relevant research for future sustainable development of tourism."



Embarking on a journey through the heart of Africa promises an odyssey of unparalleled beauty, rich culture, and awe-inspiring encounters with nature's majestic creatures. Amidst this vastness lies a gem, African Adventure Specialists (AAS), the home of luxury and comfort in the realm of safari experiences.

In the vibrancy of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Zanzibar, AAS stands tall as the epitome of opulence, curating experiences that redefine the essence of adventure. At AAS, we understand that discerning travellers seek not just exploration, but immersion, comfort, and exclusivity.

Picture yourself on a luxurious safari, where every moment unfolds like a chapter in a captivating novel. With our meticulously crafted itineraries, AAS ensures that every element of your journey is steeped in elegance and sophistication. From a choice of indigenous or executive accommodations nestled amidst the wilderness to bespoke cultural encounters that unveil the essence of each destination, we redefine the boundaries of luxury travel.

Our safari packages span across East Africa, offering a harmonious blend of adventure and indulgence. Whether it's witnessing the Great Migration on the plains of the Serengeti or trekking through the misty forests to encounter mountain gorillas, every experience with AAS is crafted to leave an indelible mark on your soul.

But luxury with AAS transcends beyond the confines of safari. We specialize in corporate retreats and group wellness escapes, offering a sanctuary where productivity meets tranquillity amidst the backdrop of Africa's unparalleled beauty. Imagine strategizing under the vast African sky, rejuvenating your spirit with wellness retreats that nurture both mind and body.

What sets AAS apart is not just the destinations we explore, but the experiences we create. Our commitment to excellence extends to every aspect of your journey – from our expert local guides who share their intimate knowledge of the land to our sustainable practices that ensure our footprint remains gentle on the earth.

At AAS, we invite you to take your place at the front seat of adventure, where every moment is imbued with luxury, every encounter is infused with wonder, and every journey becomes an unforgettable chapter in your life's story.

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ICCA and UN Tourism Solidify Commitment to Meeting Industry Sustainable Development



“ ICCA and UN Tourism bring a wealth of expertise, resources, and a desire to collaborate to this exciting partnership. By establishing closer links – and enjoying greater access to each other’s professional networks, a new and distinctive narrative will be created around the potential of greater international collaboration. ”

This landmark partnership agreement sees ICCA recognised as the UN Tourism partner for business events across all UN Tourism platforms and initiatives. This collaboration recognises the influence and transformative potential of the business events industry and puts it on the map as a key driver for socio-economic progress across the world.

ICCA acknowledges it’s imperative to strengthen ties between the two organisations and has worked tirelessly as an organisation for many years with the goal of creating this partnership for the pivotal role business events play as a driver of economic growth, and legacy initiatives worldwide.

ICCA and UN Tourism bring a wealth of expertise, resources, and a desire to collaborate to this exciting partnership. By establishing closer links – and enjoying greater access to each other’s professional networks, a new and distinctive narrative will be created around the potential of greater international collaboration.

ICCA CEO Senthil Gopinath expressed enthusiasm, stating: “This collaboration with the UN Tourism has been a long-held strategy of ICCA. This is great news not just for our members but for the whole international associations meetings and events industry. We know how intrinsically linked the world of business events and tourism are, but this formal partnership gives us privileged access to each other’s communities.

There are many initiatives planned, which we will share in due course, including Hon Secretary General Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili opening our 63rd ICCA Congress in Abu Dhabi. The partnership agreement also signifies a closer alignment of our industry-leading programmes. We have much to share, and much to learn. May this announcement mark the beginning of something quite remarkable.”

UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili says: “The partnership between UN Tourism and ICCA recognises the growing economic importance of business events for our sector. ICCA has been a valued Affiliate

Member of UN Tourism since 2004, and our collaboration has yielded several joint publications and initiatives focused on advancing the Meetings Industry. With this new partnership, we look forward to shaping a more sustainable and resilient future for the business tourism sector.”

During a time of international uncertainty, ICCA’s appointment as the UN Tourism’s chosen partner in the promotion of international meetings reasserts the shared belief in the transformative potential of cross-border collaboration. Both ICCA and the UN Tourism invite industry stakeholders, governmental bodies, and the wider global community to join us on this exciting journey... where business, leisure, and education can bring opportunity, harmony, and hope.



Zambia holds 2nd Hospitality and Tourism Education Summit



Rodney Sikumba, Zambia's Minister of Tourism

Zambia hosted the 2024 Travel, Hospitality, and Tourism Education Summit bringing together a broad section of participants from academia, industry, both private and public stakeholders and international dignitaries to discuss the salience of hospitality and tourism education to the growth and development of the industry in Africa. The three-day event commenced on April 15 at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka and was organized by the Zambia Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Studies (ZITHS) under the Ministry of Tourism.

The summit's objective was to address the pressing need for skilled professionals in Africa's tourism industry while ensuring that education aligns with industry development within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

In his address, Rodney Sikumba, Minister of Tourism, emphasized Zambia's commitment to prioritizing tourism as a catalyst for economic transformation

and job creation, particularly among the youth. He outlined the government's vision to position Zambia as a preferred tourism destination, leveraging its natural resources, cultural heritage and creative industries.

The Minister stated, "Zambia has prioritized tourism as a key driver for economic transformation and job creation. Our vision is to make Zambia a preferred destination of choice with unique features thriving on well-conserved natural resources, cultural heritage, and creative industries."

Highlighting key initiatives, Sikumba announced plans for tourism infrastructure development, policy reforms, and enhanced marketing efforts. He also disclosed the government's intention to develop tourism sites such as Kasaba Bay, Liuwa National Park, and the Source of the Zambezi River, utilizing a USD 100 million concession loan from the World Bank. These endeavours align with Zambia's tourism master plan and the eighth National Development Plan (2022-2026).

In his speech, Douglas M. Syakalima, Minister of Education, commended the collaborative efforts between the Ministries of Tourism and Education in advancing the tourism education agenda. Syakalima highlighted the recent alignment of the curriculum to include tourism and hospitality, in line with President Hakainde Hichilema's directive to reform the curriculum to encompass artisanal skills.

“Zambia has prioritized tourism as a key driver for economic transformation and job creation. Our vision is to make Zambia a preferred destination of choice with unique features thriving on well-conserved natural resources, cultural heritage, and creative industries”

He emphasized, "Education bridges the gap between the demands of the tourism sector and the graduates being prepared for the sector. The introduction of travel and tourism as a subject at the secondary school level will significantly contribute to job creation and economic development."

The summit also featured a keynote speech by Elcia Grandcourt, Regional Director for Africa, UN Tourism, who praised Zambia's efforts in promoting tourism education and industry development. Grandcourt highlighted the importance of education in leveraging tourism for youth empowerment, job creation and socio-economic advancement across Africa.

Grandcourt commended Zambia's recovery in tourism, noting positive growth trends in visitor numbers and revenue. She emphasized Zambia's role as a leader in the region, citing effective visa policies, marketing strategies and digital platforms as key factors driving the country's tourism sector.



The Executive Director of ZITHS Anne Kaoma signs an MOU with AHLEI - American Hotels and Lodging Educational Institute (Ed Kastli)

Zambia adds Travel and Tourism to High School Curriculum

The Republic of Zambia has added Travel and Tourism to its High School Curriculum.

The commendable feat by the Southern African country was disclosed by Minister of Education, Hon. Douglas Syakalima in his speech at the opening of Travel, Hospitality and Tourism Education Summit at the Mulungushi Conference Centre on April 15, 2024.

"I stand here, proud to be part of this Education Summit and wish to inform you that Travel and Tourism is one of the new subjects that have been introduced under the Home Economics and Hospitality Pathway at secondary school level," Douglas Syakalima said.

According to the Minister, the new addition was in response to the call by president of Zambia, His Excellency Hakainde Hichelema, in his inaugural speech on September 10, 2021 for reform of the curriculum in order to include artisanal skills.

"Since then, my ministry has been working to ensure that the presidential directive is adhered to," the minister said.

"Today, as I speak to you, the curriculum has been aligned to the 8NDP and it includes tourism and hospitality."

The 8NDP, according to him, identifies Tourism and Hospitality as one of the four pillars of economic emancipation.



Hon. Douglas Syakalima, Zambia Minister of Education

Hence, the introduction of the new subject in the educational curriculum, he noted would contribute to job creation, economic development and the realisation of the Vision 2030, which will see Zambia as a middle-income country.

Syakalima also noted that the role of education in any sector, especially tourism cannot be overemphasized because it bridges the gap between the demands of the tourism sector and the graduates being prepared for the sector.

However, the new subject will require designing of the syllabus, development of textbook, training of teachers who will implement the subject and all these call

for human and financial resources, he noted.

The Minister of Education also commended teachers, lecturers, guidance and counselling officers and administrators present at the summit, while urging all universities and colleges of education to embrace the new subject and prepare teachers to implement it.

Making further case for tourism, the minister noted that Travel and Tourism as a subject is one of the educational cornerstones of national development because it lays foundation for the needed human capital in the industry.

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Historic leap for Sierra Leone Tourism as National Strategic Plan launches to ignite sector growth

In a historic moment for Sierra Leone, Vice President Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, on behalf of President Brig. Rtd. Dr. Julius Maada Bio, in collaboration with the World Bank Sierra Leone Economic Diversification Project (SLEDP), has launched the country's first-ever National Strategic Tourism Plan. The landmark event drew government officials, Parliamentarians, the Mayor, and international partners, underscoring the significance of the milestone.



Nabeela Tunis, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs



Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, Sierra Leone Vice President

Crafted by Journey and Keios Consultants, the National Strategic Tourism Plan signifies the government's unwavering commitment to providing a clear vision, developing strategies, and formulating a realistic roadmap for the tourism sector's development over the next decade, supported by a detailed five-year action plan.

The Vice President, Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, emphasized the importance of the plan, stating, "Since 2018, we have been making large investments in tourism. We have invested resources into infrastructure, such as our brand new airport, which is a gateway to easy travel. Also, we have ensured that the journey from Lungi Airport to the water transportation service are upgraded. We shall continue to improve the transition from Lungi to Freetown. Additionally, Sierra Leone is now a visa-free country with visa on arrival, and we shall continue to expand access. Furthermore, publicity on Sierra Leone as a tourist destination has heightened with published articles from leading international news outlets."

Dr. Jalloh also highlighted the future prospects of the tourism sector. He said,

"In the future, the tourism sector will generate money for the economy and create jobs nationwide. With His Excellency's drive for economic diversification, this plan constitutes a viable roadmap to unleash the potential of the tourism sector."

The Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Nabeela Tunis, further emphasized the significance of the National Tourism Plan.

"This 10-year National Tourism Plan, the first in the country's history, serves as a roadmap not only to overcome the sector's challenges but also to cultivate a profitable and sustainable industry that fosters economic growth and prosperity in Sierra Leone. It is the culmination of exhaustive research and extensive consultations. Embracing a people-centered approach to governance and development, as advocated by His Excellency the President, all key

“ *In the future, the tourism sector will generate money for the economy and create jobs nationwide. With His Excellency's drive for economic diversification, this plan constitutes a viable roadmap to unleash the potential of the tourism sector* ”

stakeholders in the tourism sector were afforded the opportunity to contribute their insights on the trajectory they envision for the industry over the next decade," she explained

During the launch event, Vice President Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh reiterated the government's commitment to tourism development.

"The tourism sector will generate money for the economy and create jobs nationwide. With His Excellency's drive for economic diversification, this plan constitutes a viable roadmap to unleash the potential of the tourism sector," he highlighted



In closing, the Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Nabeela Tunis, extended gratitude to President Dr. Julius Maada Bio for his unwavering support and to all stakeholders whose contributions shaped the strategic plan.

She concluded by saying, "The President of the Republic is now Sierra Leone's 'National Tourism Champion' for his excellence and distinguished leadership in recognizing and promoting tourism in Sierra Leone. Let us unite in harnessing tourism as a catalyst for Sierra Leone's sustainable development aspirations."

Seychelles Tourism's new focus:

Embracing sports, expanding markets and courting film industry



Mrs. Bernadette Willemijn, Director General for Destination Marketing at Tourism Seychelles



BEACH SOCCER WORLD CUP SEYCHELLES 2025

Against the backdrop of Africa's premier travel trade show, WTM Africa this year in Cape Town, Seychelles Tourism made an impressive showing as it showcased the island country's rich and exotic tourism products to the thousands who attended the travel trade show.

Mrs. Bernadette Willemijn, Director General for Destination Marketing at Tourism Seychelles, sat down with VoyagesAfric to shed light on some key initiatives discussed during the event.

Focus on sports tourism

One of the focal points of the discussions making up several of the meetings held during the Show revolved around leveraging sports as a catalyst for boosting tourism. Mrs. Willemijn

emphasised the potential of utilizing various sports activities to enhance the visibility of Seychelles as a prime destination.

She said the country is exploring the idea of hosting events that cater to different interests of sports stakeholders. "It could be professionals, amateurs or anybody who like certain particular sports who can come and participate in these events in Seychelles," she remarked. As a boost to this goal, Seychelles has been will host the 2025 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup.

From sea-related activities to inland adventures like triathlons, the Director General added they see tremendous opportunities to attract diverse visitors through sports tourism.

Highlighting the symbiotic relationship between sports and cultural immersion, Mrs. Willemijn noted, "The events might take only 25 to 30% of their time in Seychelles. The rest of their time, they will be visitors just like any other visitors in Seychelles. So, this is an opportunity to showcase our culture, give them the possibility of going out there and then do some cultural experiences and get to meet the people."

Africa as a vital market for Seychelles Tourism

Acknowledging the significance of Africa as a key market, Mrs. Willemijn underscored the strategic importance

of tapping into the continent's vast potential. While South Africa remains a cornerstone of Seychelles' African market, the Director General maintained that they are keenly aware of the untapped opportunities in other regions, particularly in Eastern Africa.

She explained: "We know that there is potential in the eastern part of Africa bearing in mind as well that Seychelles, we are being serviced today by two African carriers; Ethiopian and Kenyan Airlines. Talking about Ethiopian Airlines, there is potential to tap into the international community, the expat community in Ethiopia. So, definitely Africa is on our priority list and we really want to grow our market share from the continent."

Lights, camera, Seychelles: The emergence of film tourism

Mrs. Willemijn also revealed that while the island nation has been a backdrop for occasional television productions, there's growing interest in positioning Seychelles as a sought-after filming location. The island country's natural beauty, she said, serves as an unparalleled canvas for cinematic storytelling.

"In fact, during the show (WTM Africa) we've had discussions and seen interest of certain companies who want to further discuss the possibility of staging films in the Seychelles," the Director General disclosed.



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Anne Kaoma

ZITHS' Executive Director

leading growth trajectory



ZITHS in terms of the below standard facility, limitations in tourism education offering, where only programs in tourism and hospitality studies are provided, when more programs such as MICE education can be included. We are also cognizant of the challenges of lack of the necessary equipment to enable us provide a high quality education we envisage to provide. To make up for the inadequacies, we collaborate with industry players, who provide us an opportunity to send our students on internships or to be attachments in the tourism establishments for industry exposure.

The involvement of the private sector remains key to the success of ZITHS and the organization is not lost on this as Kaoma explains further:

“Yes, we consistently engage with the private sector. For instance, we engage general managers from various hospitality establishments in Lusaka and across Zambia to share their expectations regarding the skill sets we are cultivating at ZITHS,” she said.

“By involving them in activities such as curriculum development, student internships, as well as having them deliver lectures at ZITHS, we gain invaluable insights. This collaboration

“ *ZITHS, as we passionately call it, is the Zambia Institute for Tourism and Hospitality Studies. It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Tourism that is mandated to provide tourism and hospitality education, training, as well as capacity development for the tourism sector, the tourism subsectors and the hospitality subsectors. The mandate does not end at ZITHS but cuts across the entire tourism and hospitality subsectors to develop human capita* ”

The 2024 Travel, Hospitality and Tourism Education Summit held in the Zambian capital Lusaka brought stakeholders in the country and beyond to cross-fertilize ideas.

It was hosted by the Zambia Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Studies (ZITHS) under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism.

The theme for the three-day event was: “Human Capital Gap in Africa’s Tourism Industry: Aligning Learning to Industry Development in the AfCFTA era.”

The summit provided a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and innovation in the dynamic field of tourism education.

From the Mulungushi International Conference Centre, VoyagesAfric Media spoke to Anne Kaoma, the newly appointed Executive Director of ZITHS.

She shared valuable insights into the institute’s mission, vision, and strategies aimed at advancing the tourism and hospitality sector in Zambia and beyond.

Kaoma said: “ZITHS, as we passionately call it, is the Zambia Institute for Tourism and Hospitality Studies. It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Tourism that is mandated to provide tourism and hospitality education, training, as well as capacity development for the tourism sector, the tourism subsectors and the hospitality subsectors. The mandate does not end at ZITHS but cuts across the entire tourism and hospitality subsectors to develop human capital”

ZITHS wants to address the knowledge and skills gaps affecting the development of tourism and its subsectors. They have to quickly adapt to modern trends to catch up.

She added: “So what we have done to combat limitations is to, of course, take our learners through the theoretical aspect of the learning and then take them out to industry, where they gather their industry work experience, as well as exposure in industry practice.”

“So because we have limitations at

at roundtables ensures that our training remains relevant to the industry needs, providing our students with firsthand knowledge from key players in the sector. Our engagement extends to actively collaborating on determining the training that aligns with industry demands.”

ZITHS’ Aspiration To Meet Global Benchmarks:

Kaoma said: “We want our students to be employable even on an international level and not lack in any aspect of tourism and hospitality skills and knowledge. So we envision to continue student and faculty exchange programs with other reputable institutions and universities. We want to see ZITHS represent Zambia on an international level and be the lead in tourism and hospitality educator in the region.”

“So, we are looking to really lift ZITHS to the international stage. So any student that graduates from Zambia Institute for Tourism and Hospitality Studies should be able to match and meet the international standards and be able to provide the relevant skills needed without any differences or gaps in skills compared to students from other universities. So that’s what we’re looking to do.”

Initiatives and partnerships, Kaoma highlighted ongoing programs such as student exchange programs and apprenticeships, aimed at providing students with exposure and hands-on experience.

“By sending them out there to places like the United States, it gives them a really great opportunity to learn what is out there. For example, ZITHS, in

partnership with Diageo introduced an apprenticeship program that allowed for 50 learners to undergo a mixology skills training and workplace training placement. Such partnerships, where our students can actually undergo training on the job and gain industry exposure, are what we’re looking to continue facilitating”

In conclusion, Kaoma expressed gratitude for the opportunity to lead ZITHS and outlined her vision for the institute’s future impact.

“It feels really great. It’s in line with my aspirations, career goals, so it feels really great. It’s a blessing. I am very excited about it and looking forward to having a positive imprint in the tourism sector and the entire tourism industry in Zambia and across the region,” she affirmed.

ATTA® launches its Action Awards to spotlight meaningful Impact in Tourism across Africa

Marking its 30th anniversary, the African Travel and Tourism Association (ATTA®) announced the launch of the ATTA® for Action Awards. This new programme aims to recognise and celebrate organisations and companies across Africa making significant strides in impactful tourism practices.

The launch of the ATTA® for Action Awards comes at a crucial time when the global spotlight on environmental conservation and eco-conscious practices in tourism has never been more intense.

Says Nigel Vere Nicoll, ATTA® President: “Conscious tourism is vital for Africa as it promotes environmental preservation, cultural respect, and economic growth that benefits local communities directly. By recognising excellence in this area, ATTA® aims to inspire a ripple effect of transformation across all facets of the tourism industry.”

By participating in the ATTA® for Action awards, tourism organisations affirm their role as a leader in responsible tourism, demonstrating to peers, partners, and customers their commitment to purposeful travel, Vere-Nicoll adds.

Participants can enter various award categories, each focusing on different aspects of meaningful impact in tourism:

- **Heart for heritage and community**

champion: Recognises those integrating cultural preservation and community benefits.

- **Ethical wildlife experience:** Honours commitments to animal welfare and conservation education.

- **Eco-innovation in hospitality:** Celebrates the adoption of sustainable technologies and practices in accommodations.

- **Earth-friendly cuisine:** Applauds culinary practices that prioritise local, seasonal produce and waste reduction.

- **Meaningful engagement champion:** Highlights initiatives that significantly enhance community wellbeing and eco-conscious practices.

- **Digital storytelling champion:** Awards compelling narratives promoting responsible travel.

- **Collaborative champions of climate and social justice:** Acknowledges efforts of multiple partners to address climate and social issues innovatively.

- **Traveller education and awareness champion:** Recognises educational programmes that promote responsible tourism behaviours.

Vere-Nicoll explains that for the inaugural ATTA® for Action Awards, a robust and transparent judging process



has been established, ensuring that the highest standards of excellence in eco-conscious tourism are recognised. The process is overseen by a panel of experts, each a leader in the field of responsible tourism.

Award winners will be celebrated at an exclusive awards ceremony on the evening of 1 July on the side lines of Experience Africa, the flagship event in ATTA®’s annual calendar, run by its events division, Experience Africa Events.

Organisations interested in participating are encouraged to visit ATTA® for Action for comprehensive details on entry guidelines, application processes, and important deadlines. The deadline for submissions is 7 June 2024.

For additional information about the ATTA® for Action Awards, please visit here and contact:

Melissa Foley – melissa@atta.travel



Namibia Tourism Board optimizes destination's visibility at African travel shows... showcases quality at Indaba and WTM Africa 2024



Bonnie Mbidzo, Acting CEO of Namibia Tourism Board

The vibrancy of Africa's Travel Indaba this year resonates with the spirit of progress and inclusivity, notably reflected in Namibia's robust participation. With a notable surge in exhibitors, the event stands as a testament to Namibia Tourism Board's (NTB) unwavering dedication to advancing the nation's tourism landscape.

Marking a significant milestone, as the curtains rise on this year's Indaba, the spotlight shines brightly on Namibia, where a remarkable surge in exhibitors sets the stage for an unforgettable showcase of global tourism excellence.

"Indaba was so different this year because of the number of the exhibitors overall, not only for Namibia, but for all other destinations who were there. For Namibia Tourism Board, it was a milestone because we had about 27 co-exhibitors," noted Bonnie Mbidzo, Acting CEO, Namibia Tourism Board noted in an interview with VoyagesAfric.

The Namibia Tourism Board has also made strides towards inclusivity in tourism at this year's Indaba. This initiative underscores Namibia's dedication to inclusivity, striving to create a tourism destination that embraces diversity and equality for all.

The Acting CEO said, "four of those

co-exhibitors were the previously disadvantaged persons who were fully sponsored by Namibia Tourism Board because we wanted these previously disadvantaged Namibians to come fully on board and make sure that Namibia becomes an inclusive tourism destination for everyone."

Plans to host AviaDev 2024

Highlighting upcoming initiatives, Mbidzo revealed Namibia's preparation to host AviaDev in June. With key decision-makers in attendance, the event seeks to mold Namibia's aviation sector and showcase its offerings.

He said, "The purpose of AviaDev is to make sure that we maintain and promote intra-travel in Africa. And it is going to bring about 37 airlines to the destination, and these airlines have confirmed their participation. These are decision-makers who are going to have a say into exactly what it is that Namibia is



going to offer."

In addition, Namibia's tourism prospects are set to soar with a series of upcoming events on the horizon.

"Namibia's tourism landscape diversifies with upcoming events, including a

hospitality conference alongside AviaDev. This platform will spotlight the contributions of hoteliers and emphasize Namibia's competitive advantages. Additionally, the rise of youth tourism in May complements Namibia's forward-looking strategies for the future."

Alongside its prominent presence at INDABA, the Namibian delegation actively pursued bilateral meetings with key stakeholders, such as the Zambia and Botswana tourism organizations. These engagements underscored Namibia's dedication to nurturing collaborative partnerships and furthering tourism interests throughout the region.

Africa's Travel Indaba is the leading travel trade show in Africa, owned by South African Tourism, with the specific

objective of creating market access for the vast array of African tourism products and businesses. The trade show exists to provide the ideal platform for African tourism exhibitors to showcase their offerings to international and local buyers, destination marketing companies and leisure tourism services partners. It is the most formidable platform on the continent for one to meet face-to-face with the most influential buyers in the world, and to gain access to Africa's excellence and its endless possibilities. These are the business opportunities and quality connections that will shape Africa's tomorrow.

The 2024 edition of Africa's Travel Indaba is taking place in Durban, KwaZulu Natal Province from 13th to 16th May 2024.

From startup to an enterprise – The paradigm of scaling a business

In my previous article, I shared my thoughts and opinions on the topic "The dilemma of tourism startups as they scale up". Having allowed readers ample time to ponder on some of the guidance and steer provided, I am hopeful that we are at this juncture today where we are over the dilemma and ready to grow exponentially. My thoughts today are mostly geared around the growth aspirations of a startup company and a critical path that a startup needs to reference when they are ready and eager to scale sustainably.

I may have used growth and scaling interchangeably in my opening remark, but I doubt majority of you picked up that growing a business and scaling a business are premised on two different fundamental principles. Growth may come about as a result of a massive capital injection where one can afford to deploy resources to acquire new business, new clients, new assets to name but a few. We more often than not attribute this to an accelerated growth and it is mostly akin to business success. Without a solid business foundation and plan, accelerated growth can become the biggest nemesis and pitfall to the success of a startup due to it not being sustainable.

Scaling is incremental and comes about with a steady increase in revenue, skill and intellectual capital, a comprehensive customer value proposition and a solid business plan. Scaling is a carefully crafted equilibrium between revenue and business growth. As your revenue grows, it creates sufficient liquidity to aggressively increase your client base and not vice versa. I have more often than not said that as one "prays" for a business growth, a "prayer" for the ability to manage and sustain it is equally important.

Scaling involves getting the fundamentals right. Putting in place processes, people and systems in order to establish a formidable business culture and brand identity is imperative. To this end, the foundation of scaling is as important as the team that realizes the dream and aspirations of the business. As you scale, you are transcending past employees to managing an end-to-end stakeholder matrix, embodying partners and other key parties that will accelerate your growth ambitions. A key component past employee is the customer and what solutions and innovative product range you can offer. I once invested in a property in a suburb where my occupancy rate was 45%. Why? Because



I had me in mind and not the needs of the customer. It is critical that when you develop a solution, you think of the market first and the gap that your product or solution aim to close before you move forward. According to a study by the Kauffman Foundation, only 1 in 10 businesses scale successfully. To ensure that one knows when to scale, you need to watch out for areas that are advantageous and have shown consistent growth. Triggers for scaling include revenue growth, customer acquisition and retention, gross margin, market share and the effectiveness of your management team. Horizon scanning such as competitive landscape, regulatory and the macroeconomic fundamentals are essential.

By Akwasi Obeng-Adjei

RTG and Grand Metropolitan Hotels lead capacity building for Hospitality Skills in Africa

Rainbow Tourism Group (RTG) and Grand Metropolitan Hotels (GMH), have announced its partnership with the renowned Swiss Hotel School, Schweizerische Hotelfachule Lucerne (Swiss Hotel School Lucerne). The two entities will together launch the Swiss African Academy of Hospitality and Management (SAAHM) which will be a world-class hotel school based in Harare, focused on catering to the growing demand for skilled professionals in the African hospitality industry.

The partnership between RTG and GMH joint venture and the Swiss Hotel School Lucerne stems from a shared vision of nurturing talent and promoting excellence in the hospitality sector. By leveraging their respective expertise, both organizations aim to bridge the skills gap in Africa and equip aspiring professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in the dynamic hospitality industry.



Through this partnership, RTG and Swiss Hotel School Lucerne will jointly develop and implement a comprehensive training programs tailored to the specific needs of the African hospitality sector. The programs will encompass various facets of hospitality management, including customer service, culinary arts, hotel operations, event management, and sustainable tourism practices.

RTG, with its extensive experience in the African tourism landscape, will provide valuable insights into the unique challenges and opportunities of the region. Swiss Hotel School Lucerne, well-known for its world-class hospitality education, will contribute its expertise in curriculum development and training methodologies.



"We are excited to partner with Swiss Hotel School Lucerne to spearhead the capacity building of hospitality skills in Africa," said Mr. Tendai Madziwanyika the Chief Executive of Rainbow Tourism Group. "By combining our local knowledge with Swiss Hotel School Lucerne's renowned hospitality expertise, we aim to empower individuals and elevate the standards of the African hospitality industry. This collaboration will not only benefit aspiring professionals, but also contribute to the sustainable growth of tourism in the region. We will be enrolling university graduates and capacitate them to the next level by giving them practical technical industry skills and leadership skills to make them job ready."

Malawi's tourism sector soars with 58% budget increase



Vera Kamtukule, Malawi Minister of Tourism

this sleeping giant has contributed to this remarkable budget increase," Kamtukule stated, addressing President Lazarus Chakwera who was in attendance. "This will enable us to conduct destination marketing initiatives, product development, and mobilize resources to implement the Tourism Investment Master plan that you launched in April 2022."

However, the tourism sector has not been without its challenges, as Kamtukule acknowledged. Rising water levels on Lake Malawi have damaged tourism properties and caused massive job and business losses. The minister assured that the government is working closely with other ministries and the financial sector to find an amicable solution to these climate-related issues.

In a major boost for Malawi's tourism industry, the country's Minister of Tourism, Vera Kamtukule, announced a staggering 58% increase in the ministry's budget for the 2024/2025 fiscal year.

The minister also praised the government's financial support, noting that the Minister of Finance had separately funded the budget line for the Tourism Expo, allowing for timely preparations and the impressive showcase seen at the event.

The 58% budget increase is a clear testament to the government's commitment to positioning Malawi as a premier tourist destination. With the additional resources, and other policy decisions such as the removal of visa requirements for citizens from 79 countries and the fixing of air connectivity issues, the tourism sector is well on its way to undergo a transformative period, driving economic growth and creating new opportunities for the people of Malawi.

This announcement was made during the opening ceremony of the 5th Malawi International Tourism Expo, attended by the country's president and thousands of exhibitors and buyers from 44 countries.

"It is on this basis that I hereby wish to express my profound gratitude to Your Excellency for having singled out Tourism as an integral sector for our economic transformation through Your ATM Strategy," Kamtukule said.

"Your vigilance in raising the profile of



DR Congo's Tourism Director discloses bold strategies for promoting country's rich offerings

From the mist-covered peaks of the Virunga Mountains to the winding waterways of the Congo River and abundance of rich cultural heritage, the Democratic Republic of Congo offers an unparalleled tapestry of beauty and adventure for intrepid travellers.

But for all of its vastness and splendour, the DRC's tourism for several years, remained unexploited and underpatronised. Thankfully, in the last past few years there has been efforts by the country's tourism marketing and promotion agency to put Congo DRC on the map as a competitive and must-visit destination.

In a recent exclusive interview with *VoyagesAfric*, the Director General of Office National du Tourisme en République Démocratique du Congo, Yombo Jolie Mukendi, delved into the country's burgeoning tourism sector, shedding light on the strategic vision and diverse offerings that define Destination DRC.

Promoting destination DRC: A multifaceted approach

Mukendi outlined a comprehensive strategy aimed at elevating the visibility of the DRC as a prime tourist destination. "Our strategy is simple," she asserted, "Make the DRC destination visible." Emphasizing digital communication as a cornerstone, Mukendi highlighted the utilization of various platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and LinkedIn to showcase the country's rich tourist offerings to both global and domestic audiences.

Additionally, she underscored the



Yombo Jolie Mukendi, Director General of Office National du Tourisme en République Démocratique du Congo

importance of organizing country-level events and active participation in international tourism fairs to consolidate the promotion of the DRC.

Discussing the array of tourism products offered by the DRC, Mukendi stressed the country's ecological wealth and cultural diversity. From the renowned Congo basin, home to endemic species like the bonobo and the okapi, to the vibrant tapestry of Congolese culture rooted in its 450 tribes, the DRC presents a treasure trove for eco-tourism and cultural exploration. Mukendi noted the development of other tourism products aimed at positioning the DRC as one of the world's premier destinations.

"The Congolese tourist product is first

and foremost ecological. Don't forget that the DRC is full of nature's diversity, from flora to fauna. The national parks, nine of which are recognized as world heritage sites, are just waiting for visitors to discover them. Ecotourism is therefore the first option offered," she maintained.

Vision for Congolese tourism: A thriving industry

Mukendi enunciated a bold vision for Congolese tourism, envisioning it as a robust industry with significant value chains. She highlighted the immense potential of the DRC's natural landscapes, ranging from pristine beaches in the west to the majestic Ruwenzori Massif in the east.



Beyond its natural wonders, Mukendi stressed the importance of tapping into historical sites, cultural heritage, and investment opportunities to further propel the tourism sector forward. For

her, "Our vision is to make Congolese tourism a real industry with real value chains. Tourism in the DRC has no choice but to grow, the tourism potential of the DRC is enormous."

FITUR International Tourism Fair: Showcasing the magic of DRC

Reflecting on the recent participation in the FITUR International Tourism Fair, Mukendi described the overwhelming interest garnered by the DRC stand. Visitors, she noted, were captivated by the country's unparalleled natural beauty and vibrant culture.

Many expressed keen interest in exploring the DR Congo destination and were impressed by the size and layout of the stand, as well as the captivating art objects on display. The gastronomic delights and "made in Congo" products showcased at the stand further enticed visitors, underscoring the transformative experience offered by the digital DRC.

"Some visitors expressed the wish to have a consistent stock of the art objects represented and also to provide them with USB keys with Rumba music as souvenirs," the Director General added.

June Chepkemei named CEO of Kenya Tourism Board



Her appointment is contained in a Gazette Notice number 3226 dated March 19.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 37(1) of the Tourism Act, 2011, the Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife appoints June Teclar Chepkemei to be the Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya Tourism Board," reads the notice in part.

Tourism Cabinet Secretary Alfred Mutua confirmed the appointment which has been done in line with the Tourism Act, cap. 83.

It is set to take effect beginning March 20 for three years.

The transition comes only a year after she was picked by then Trade Cabinet Secretary Moses Kuria to steer KenInvest replacing Olivia Rachier.

"The appointment, tasks June with the responsibility of spearheading strategies to attract and grow investments to the country from the current Sh62.3 billion to Sh1.2 trillion by the end of 2023," Kuria said then, in the statement.

Former Kenya Investment Authority (KenInvest) managing director June Chepkemei has landed a new role at the Kenya Tourism Board.

June has been appointed as the Board's chief executive officer taking over from John Chirchir who has been holding the position in an acting capacity since November 2022.

Before this, she worked as the head of Marketing and Communications at the Konza Technopolis Development Authority (KoTDA).

A former communications business partner at Safaricom, June previously worked with Kass Media International before joining the authority.

She has also served as a member of the task force on the Kenya Media Policy Guidelines.

KTB is a state corporation established and regulated under the Tourism Act 2011.

Its mandate is to develop, implement and coordinate a National Tourism marketing strategy to market Kenya at local, national, regional and international levels as a premier tourist destination.

The board also aims to identify tourism market needs and trends and advise tourism stakeholders accordingly; and

Perform any other functions that are ancillary to the object and purpose for which the Tourism Board is established.

Celebrating DAVID GERMAIN



I have had nothing but positive memories working for Tourism Seychelles, Says David Germain, recently retired Regional Director for Africa & the Americas

David Germain has been a tourism professional par excellence, with an illustrious career to his credit.

He recently retired as Regional Director for Africa & the Americas, Tourism Seychelles, with base in Cape Town, South Africa, where he was responsible for the implementation of the department's marketing strategy, planning and promotional activities for the American and African tourism markets.

In this interview with *VoyagesAfriq*, he speaks about his illustrious career, work with Tourism Seychelles, as Honorary Consul in Cape Town, challenges, his post-retirement plans, among others.

Can you trail your journey in tourism?

I was born on Praslin Island and I joined the tourism industry in Seychelles in its initial stage, right after the opening of the international airport on Mahe Island in 1972.

During the year 1975, I was recruited and worked as a tourist guide on Praslin, for DMC-Travel Services Seychelles, commonly known as TSS, the only DMC in the Seychelles at that time. Later on, I was transferred to Mahe Island and worked in various senior positions in

the company during a working career of 20 years of service for the company, from 1975 to 1995. I attended the first tourism school of Seychelles as well at that time.

What are the highpoints of your career?

In 1995, our head office in Mauritius (IBL) offered me the opportunity to embark on my first overseas posting, in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, to work as the operations manager for our sister company in Africa, a local DMC (TSZ) Tourism Services Zimbabwe, based in Victoria Falls. The company provides various leisure activities and ground services to international visitors to Victoria Falls, with cross-border operations to the neighbouring countries of Namibia, Botswana and Zambia respectively.

I worked in Zimbabwe for six years, from 1996 to 2002, and gained a lot of experience, and appreciation of the African people. It was a wonderful experience altogether for me and my family.

Whilst in Victoria Falls, I was tasked with the opening of a new sister DMC for the company, Tourism Services Zambia, in the neighbouring city of Livingstone, Zambia, which turned out to be a very successful business venture for the company, which was added to my area of responsibility.

In 2002, I was asked by our head office to consider returning to Seychelles to take up the position of General Manager of TSS. I returned and worked for the company for one year, and thereafter, a decision was taken by head office to stop all its tourism operations in Africa & the Indian Oceans Islands, and TSS was merged with Creole Travel, which is nowadays known as DMC-Creole Travel Services.

I moved to Cape Town, South Africa, in 2003, a city that I had always wanted to discover, and ended up staying for 22 years there. At first, I set up and register a new DMC, Cape Holiday Services, based in Milnerton, offering ground services to international visitors to South Africa

“Ever since I started working for Tourism Seychelles, about 16 years ago, I have had nothing but positive memories all along. I appreciated very much the comradesries and opportunities availed to me at work. Promotion from Director to Regional Director Africa & the Americas allowed me to conduct working visits introducing Seychelles to the travel trade partners in 15 states in the USA, 13 countries in Africa, and Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay in South America”

and the region, including Seychelles. It is a well-established and full-fledged destination management company.

In 2007, Cape Holiday Services was appointed as representation company for Tourism Seychelles in South Africa, with responsibility for the promotional activities and marketing of Seychelles as a holiday destination for South Africans, this responsibility was later extended to include the whole of the African continent. I was the person undertaking this role on behalf of the company for Tourism Seychelles, and I participated in conferences, exhibited at exhibitions, conducted workshops, among other activities for Seychelles in many African countries, such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Namibia, Botswana and Angola.

In 2009, Minister Alain Ste Ange, who was then our Minister of Tourism, asked me to assist the department in developing the American tourism markets (North & South) as source markets for Seychelles. I undertook working missions to North and South America, which resulted in a representation office in Brazil, for South America, and I personally undertook the responsibility for the North American market, which today is among the top ten markets for Seychelles based on visitor arrivals to the country, something that I consider as one of my greatest achievement.



How was the experience as Seychelles Honorary Consul in Cape Town, South Africa?

In 2019, Seychelles former president, Danny Faure, appointed me as the Seychelles Honorary Consul in Cape Town. I worked closely with our embassy in Pretoria and introduced Seychelles to the diplomatic community and businesses in Cape Town. I also participated in many diplomatic events and attended sessions at the parliament in Cape Town. I served my country as Consul for 4 years in Cape Town, from 2019, until my retirement in December 2023.

What were the challenges you encountered in your career?

In the tourism industry, competition is usually the main challenge, our task is to provide potential visitors with meaningful reasons to visit Seychelles and commit to their desired experience and expectations locally.

In your views, how should Africa & Seychelles approach the North American market?

Most travellers from North and South America to Seychelles, are visitors who has been to an African or Middle East country for holiday, and thereafter to Seychelles as an extension of their holiday. Although, this is the most popular program, there are many travelers from the Americas who are travelling directly to Seychelles as well. Given the distance, and different

time zones, the Africa/Middle East & Seychelles combination package, provide a break in the journey and most importantly, offer a two-country holiday option with different cultural experiences. Air access is of paramount importance for this offer.

What is the next chapter for you?

Ever since I started working for Tourism Seychelles, about 16 years ago, I have had nothing but positive memories all along. I appreciated very much the comradesries and opportunities availed to me at work. Promotion from Director to Regional Director Africa & the Americas allowed me to conduct working visits introducing Seychelles to the travel trade partners in 15 states in the USA, 13 countries in Africa, and Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay in South America.

Working for my country (Seychelles) overseas has truly been an honour. The future is an exciting prospect for me, I remained connected with my friends worldwide, re-connecting with families and friends, and having rested for a while, I now intend to conduct tourism consultancy services in the future.

I wish nothing but the best to the management and all staff of the Tourism Department, and the travel trade partners in general, who are collectively doing a great job for our country.

It has been a very enriching and interesting journey, as a career.



Yaw Mamphey takes on new role as COO at Accra City Hotel



Yaw Mamphey, Accra City Hotel's Head of Sales and Marketing has been reassigned as the new Chief Operating Officer in a development that would see him take on a higher responsibility at the four-star facility.

Mamphey will supervise all aspect of the hotel's operations, collaborating with the pertinent departments to enhance top line revenue, guest happiness and employee engagement.

With over a decade of experience in the hospitality industry, Yaw Mamphey has established himself as a top-performing professional known for his strategic acumen and unwavering commitment to guest satisfaction. His expertise spans across sales, marketing, business development and operational management, consistently driving revenue growth and elevating the guest experience.

Mamphey's track record speaks volumes about his contributions to the industry.

Yaw led the successful rebranding of Novotel to Accra City Hotel, overseeing all aspects of sales, marketing, and strategic development. He has helped project the hotel's existing ISO certification through Green marketing which goes beyond certification but focuses on community impact.

As the Key Account Manager- Sales and Marketing, Mamphey played a vital role in establishing The Royal Senchi as a premier destination, driving corporate client growth and implementing innovative marketing strategies that significantly increased occupancy rates.

Mamphey's achievements have been duly recognized by the industry, with accolades such as "Most Admired Sales & Marketing Manager - Africa" and "Best

Marketing Director - Africa" underlining his outstanding contributions to the field.

In his own words, the new COO emphasizes his dedication to providing guests with unparalleled experiences, his prowess in team collaboration and his commitment to exceeding targets. He views these strengths as instrumental in achieving success within the hospitality sector.

Yaw Mamphey's appointment to his new role signifies a continuation of his illustrious career marked by innovation, excellence, and a relentless pursuit of guest satisfaction. With his proven track record and diverse skill set, he is expected to make much more significant contributions to his organization and the hospitality industry at large.

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Chasing Sunsets in the Warm Heart of Africa: A Malawi Experience



In the heart of Southern Africa lies a hidden gem, where the warmth of its people matches the glow of its sunsets. Welcome to Malawi, a land of unparalleled hospitality and breathtaking natural beauty. As you embark on a journey through this enchanting country, prepare to be captivated by its rich tapestry of cultures and the splendour of its wilderness.

Malawi's charm lies not only in its picturesque landscapes but also in the genuine friendliness of its citizens. Whether you're a tourist seeking adventure or a traveller in need of assistance, you'll find Malawians ready to welcome you with open arms and infectious smiles – a further attestation to the country's moniker as the "Warm Heart of Africa."

One of the crown jewels of Malawi's tourism offerings is Lake Malawi, a shimmering expanse of water that stretches as far as the eye can see. As the fourth largest freshwater lake in the world, Lake Malawi is a playground for aquatic enthusiasts and nature lovers alike. Its crystal-clear waters teem with over a thousand species of fish, including

the prized "Chambo," a delicacy unique to these shores.

But the allure of Malawi extends beyond its shores, beckoning travellers to explore its diverse landscapes and hidden treasures. Among its most coveted destinations are the pristine islands that dot the surface of Lake Malawi. Here, on islands like Mumbo and Nankoma, travellers can escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life and immerse themselves in luxury and tranquility.

Pumulani Lodge and Blue Zebra Island Lodge stand as testaments to Malawi's commitment to providing unforgettable experiences for its visitors. From exhilarating water sports to leisurely nature walks, these island retreats offer a perfect blend of adventure and relaxation. For birdwatchers, the islands are a paradise, with a diverse array of avian species waiting to be discovered amidst lush vegetation.

But the magic of Malawi doesn't end there. The Sunbird Waterfront Resort offers guests a front-row seat to the beauty of Lake Malawi. Nestled on

the shores of the lake, this resort provides unparalleled views of the sunset, whether you're relaxing on the patio of your room or dining in the vast restaurant overlooking the water.

As the sun dips below the horizon, casting a golden glow across the lake, you'll find yourself mesmerized by the breathtaking spectacle unfolding before you. It's a moment of pure magic, a reminder of the awe-inspiring beauty of nature and the joy of experiencing it firsthand.

As the sun begins its descent over the shimmering waters of Lake Malawi or the tranquil flow of the Shire River, a sense of anticipation fills the air. The sky transforms into a canvas of vibrant hues – a masterpiece in the making. But what sets apart the Malawian sunset experience from any other is not just the breathtaking beauty of the scenery, but the soul-stirring ambiance that accompanies it.

In Malawi, watching the sunset is more than just witnessing the sun dip below the horizon; it's a spiritual journey, a moment of reflection and gratitude. As

friendships are kindled against the backdrop of a Malawian sunset.

As the sun sinks even lower, painting the sky with hues of orange, pink, and gold, you can't help but feel a profound sense of gratitude – for the privilege of witnessing such splendour, for the camaraderie of newfound friends, and for the opportunity to experience the "Warm Heart of Africa" in all its glory.

In a world where time seems to move at an ever-increasing pace, the Malawian sunset serves as a poignant reminder to slow down, to savour the moment, and to appreciate the beauty that surrounds us. It's a memory that will stay with you long after you've bid farewell to Malawi, a testament to the enduring magic of this extraordinary destination.

This year's Malawi International Tourism Expo offered hosted buyers and international media a unique opportunity to experience these wonders of Malawi firsthand. As part of the post-familiarization tour, participants were treated to immersive experiences that showcased the country's rich cultural heritage and natural wonders. From exploring the lush landscapes of Majete and Liwonde National Parks to unwinding on the pristine beaches of Lake Malawi and boatrides on the

“But the allure of Malawi extends beyond its shores, beckoning travellers to explore its diverse landscapes and hidden treasures.

Among its most coveted destinations are the pristine islands that dot the surface of Lake Malawi. Here, on islands like Mumbo and Nankoma, travellers can escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life and immerse themselves in luxury and tranquility.”

sprawling Shire River, every moment was a testament to Malawi's status as a premier tourist destination.

For those fortunate enough to experience Malawi firsthand, the memories of its sunsets as experienced by the hosted buyers and media, will linger long after their journey has ended. In a world filled with wonders, few sights can rival the awe-inspiring splendour of a Malawian sunset. So, if you ever find yourself in the Warm Heart of Africa, don't miss the chance to chase the sunset – for in that fleeting moment, you'll find a lifetime of wonder.

the golden rays cast their warm embrace over the landscape, time seems to stand still, inviting you to pause and immerse yourself in the sheer magnificence of the moment.

The setting amplifies the experience. Whether you find yourself on the shores of Lake Malawi, with its vast expanse stretching as far as the eye can see, or aboard a boat gently gliding along the serene waters of the Shire River, every vantage point offers a unique perspective on nature's spectacle.

But perhaps what makes watching the sunset in Malawi truly exceptional is the sense of connection it fosters – not only with nature but also with the people around you. As you stand in awe of the beauty unfolding before you, you're joined by locals and fellow travellers alike, drawn together by a shared appreciation for the wonders of the natural world.

In this moment of collective reverence, cultural barriers fade away, and bonds are forged over a mutual love for the extraordinary. Conversations flow effortlessly, laughter rings out, and



Botswana Takes Spotlight at World Travel Market Africa: Acting CEO Maps Out Global Strategy for Growth

In a recent interview with Setlang Keitumetse, the Acting CEO of Botswana Tourism Organization (BTO), a clear vision emerged for the future of tourism in Botswana. Keitumetse outlined the organization's multifaceted approach, incorporating diversification, infrastructure development, and local empowerment to propel Botswana's tourism industry to new heights.

At the ongoing World Travel Market Africa, Keitumetse emphasized the importance of promoting Botswana as a tourism destination. She said,

"We are here, obviously, to sell packages to Botswana, targeting both the regional and international markets. Particularly, we're keen on the South African market, being closer to home and one we aim to enhance travel from into Botswana. Moreover, it's a market with a strong interest in events, making it an ideal platform for promoting Botswana's events and leisure travel opportunities."

According to Keitumetse, diversifying the tourism product is a key strategy for the BTO, with a particular focus on positioning Botswana as a MICE destination. She explained,

"We are all about MICE. We are going all out to position Botswana as a MICE destination. We're actively promoting Botswana as a MICE destination, and our MICE strategy is now underway after its recent conclusion. It's already out, and we've begun rolling it out and

implementing it. We're excited about hosting several high-profile events in Botswana, including the Forbes Under 30 event from May 5th to 8th, for the third time. Additionally, we're gearing up for the Khawa Dune Challenge in the first week of May, along with the Makgadikgadi Epic skydiving event."

In addition, the acting CEO highlighted infrastructure development is essential to support the organization's ambitious goals. Keitumetse stressed the government's commitment to facilitating infrastructure development. She said,

"Government is committed to facilitating MICE by ensuring infrastructure, including conferencing facilities and roads, is put in place. Yes, we have infrastructure that's good enough to host what we are able to host now, but the plan is to expand the infrastructure that we currently have and to tweak conferencing facilities to increase, reshape, and repurpose them. This ensures that we are able to host events that we are targeting to host this year and also grow our infrastructure going forward to ensure that we are able to host much bigger events."

Furthermore, Keitumetse added that local participation and empowerment are integral to the BTO's strategy.

"It's important to always have locals participating in tourism, not just in numbers but in terms of value as well. So what we are doing now is ensuring that we strike a balance between foreign direct investment and local citizen participation in tourism. We have been implementing the community-based natural resource management strategy, which recognizes and appreciates that we depend mainly as a country on natural resources and that people living side-by-side with these resources tend to contribute more to



conservation when they see the value they draw from them. The Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) policy, we are implementing in Botswana seeks to ensure that we get more participation and value from the locals."

Keitumetse stressed BTO aims to surpass tourism numbers from 2019 by 2025. She said,

"We are currently at 75% of the 2019 numbers, looking at extrapolated numbers. But the idea is to surpass 2019 by 2025; that is where the world is going, and we seem to be doing very well in terms of that. Our interest is to see us surpassing 2019 numbers, not just in terms of arrivals, but also in terms of tourism revenue and the increase in length of stay."

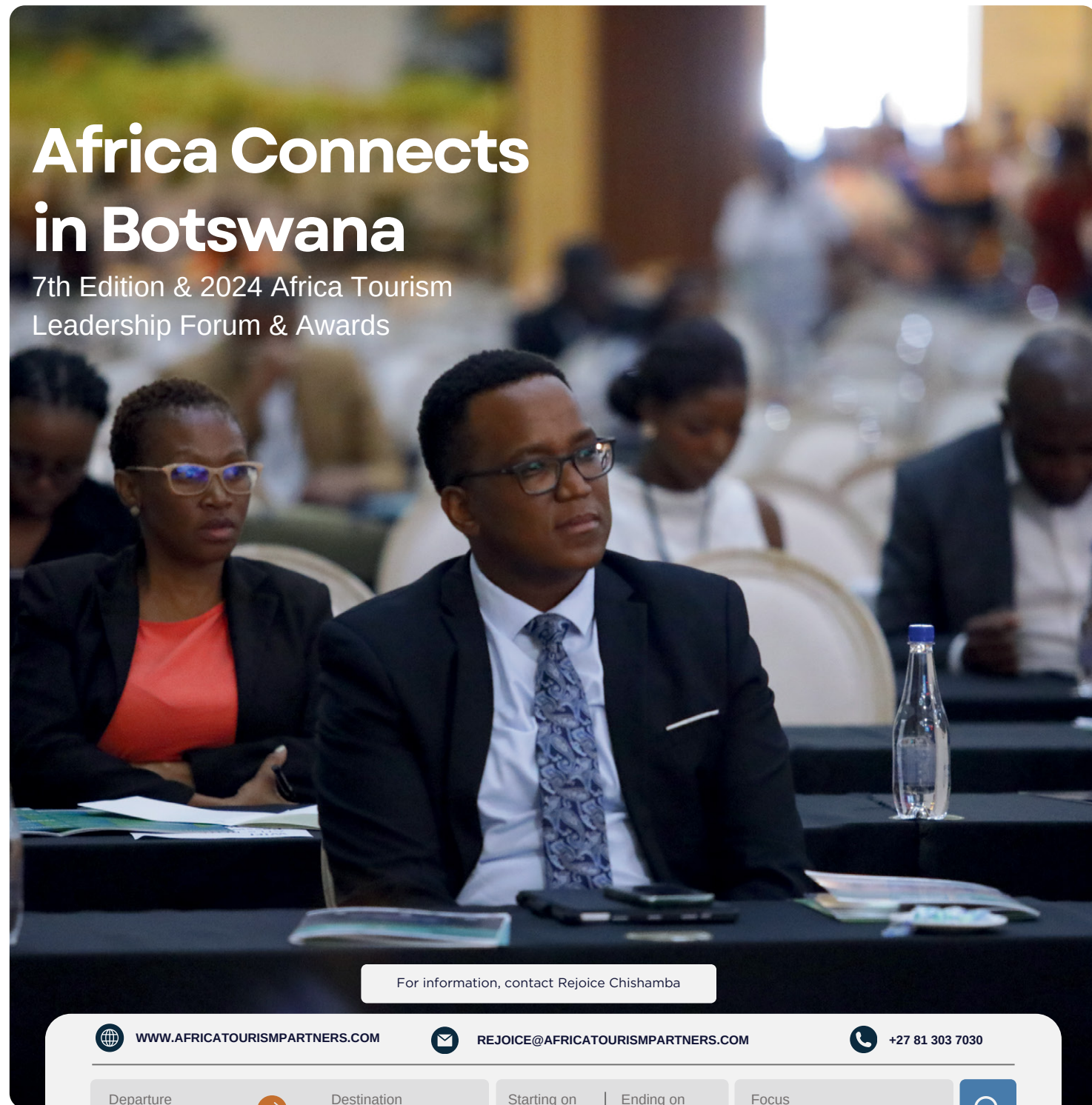
In her final words, Keitumetse gave a clarion call to all to come and experience Botswana for themselves and all it has to offer.

"Botswana is the destination to visit. Botswana is a destination compared to none, with attractions like the Okavango Delta, providing water activities, and the Chobe, home to the largest herd of elephants globally. The Tuli offers rocky terrain, while the Kalahari boasts sand sporting activities. The tranquil and experiential destination that Botswana offers is where the world should be going for relaxation," she said.



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Celebrating Growth and Innovation:

Sigelege Hotels sets the standard in Malawi's hospitality industry



Sigelege Hotels, a homegrown hospitality group in Malawi, has made waves in the industry with its trio of properties, each offering a unique experience tailored to the diverse needs of travellers. With a journey spanning nearly four years, the brand has navigated opportunities and challenges, evolving into a symbol of excellence in Malawi's hospitality landscape.

Speaking to VoyagesAfric in an interview at this year's Takulandirani Tourism Expo, the General Manager of Sigelege Resort, Farai Marara, highlighted the profound changes catalyzed by the Hotels' entrance into the hospitality industry in Malawi.

"I think coming in has also changed the landscape of the hospitality industry by offering more different products and services that both our domestic, regional, and international clients really appreciate. It's also increased the capacity and inventory for both Lilongwe and Salima, and I think we've been able to host quite a significant number of regional meetings and also

virtual partnerships and collaborations with other established hotels to be able to bring in more conferences and also host more events, so most definitely it's been quite a game changer for us," he remarked.

According to Marara, Sigelege is making significant strides to promote domestic tourism with special rates designed to nurture domestic tourism.

He expressed, "We have special rates for domestic markets, and I think in our quest to promote domestic tourism, we have the weekend special rates in all of our hotels that go as low as 25% discount from the rack rates. The feedback has been quite encouraging; they've always used our property because they find us very affordable and they also find value for money because I think at the end it's value for money that is key for retention.

"So, it's quite encouraging that we've got quite a loyal customer base that still finds our product relevant and still finds our services also affordable and enjoyable and all-inclusive because they accommodate all the diverse needs

whether you're there for business, you're there with your family, you're there on a personal solo trip, there's always everything for everyone at the end of the day."

Marara further underscored the importance of enhancing destination competitiveness through improved accessibility and upskilling within the tourism sector.

"I think what's quite key is accessibility to any destination. I think when we look at accessibility, we still need to do a bit more in making the destination more accessible. I think the government has already made efforts in terms of waiving the visa, which is quite a positive development to the industry.

However, I think there's still more we need to do in terms of more airlift in terms of getting the fares down as well because it will make Malawi more competitive as a destination. I also feel that maybe as an industry as well we're still on a quest to upgrade our skills. Upskilling is quite key as well in terms of making sure that we are always competitive," he explained.

According to Marara, in response to the rapidly changing landscape of the hospitality industry, a collaborative effort has emerged among industry leaders and educational institutions in Malawi. This effort aims to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills, ensuring that graduates are equipped for the evolving demands of the field.

"We've seen the birth of the Tourism Hospitality Industry Professional Association last year, which enhances collaboration on skills development and training, alongside partnerships with tertiary institutes to provide internships and shape relevant curriculum," he said.

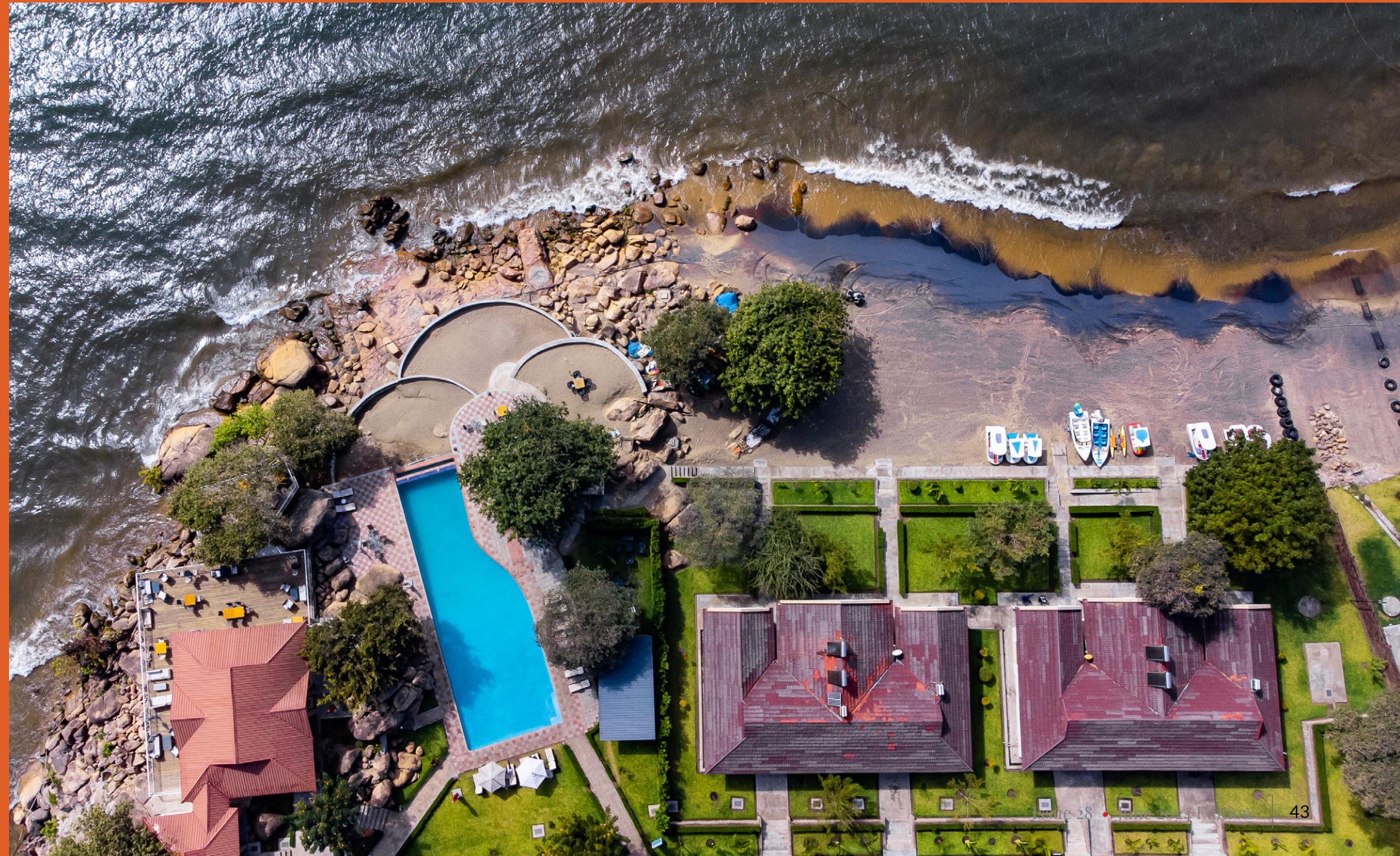
Marara highlighted that at the Malawi International Travel Expo, Sigelege Hotels seized the opportunity to showcase their unique offerings to a global audience. According to him, the expo served as a dynamic platform for forging collaborations and engaging in industry-wide dialogue.

He emphasized its significance, stating, "We saw it as a platform to really showcase to the world what Sigelege Hotels has to offer in terms of the

warmth heart of Africa."

Concluding, the General Manager underscored their strategic vision for expansion, "Our plans are always to grow but I think as a brand we are energized from where we've come from. I would say we didn't come this far to be this far, so as a brand, we're quite strategic in our quest for growth and also in our quest for always offering unique products and services.

"We are also looking at increasing our footprint in other cities where we don't have presence. We still feel that there is more and there is so much hunger for the brand in other locations within the country that we want to set our footprint in. So as a brand, we are quite energized and the sky cannot be our limit."



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Sunbird Unveils Ambitious Plans for State-of-the-Art Conference Center in Salima

Embarking on a transformative journey, Sunbird Tourism PLC, a stalwart of Malawi's hospitality sector, is poised to unveil its latest innovation: a cutting-edge Conference Centre set amidst the serene landscapes of Salima in the Central Region of the country.

Spearheaded by the visionary leadership of Samson Mwale, Chief Executive, this bold endeavour marks a significant milestone in Sunbird's legacy, promising to redefine the nation's event landscape.

At this 5th Malawi International Tourism Expo where he had a conversation with Voyages Afriq, Samson Mwale shed more light on the intricacies of this ground-breaking project and its profound implications for Malawi's tourism industry.

"Our focus on investment through product development and improvement remains a priority in our strategy with the objective of improving customer experience and ensuring that our brand remains the preferred hospitality provider. The conference centre presents a game changer in the customer experience for meetings and events in Salima, the modern and upscaled facilities that comes with the Conference centre will ensure value for money for delegates, as well as

"This is going to be ideal for meetings and even leisure events, be it weddings, entertainment and also for the incentive clients, and perfectly compliment business and leisure groups. The facility will ensure a more comprehensive product for the Salima destination"

Conference and Event Organizers," Said Mwale. He continued that, "The facility will further complement our previous product development initiatives, and is aligned with the blueprint set for our Salima properties, where our objective is to have in place a loaded leisure and conference product, targeting our key segments, with a promise of a unique leisure filled MICE experience on our incredibly stunning shores of the Lake of stars."

"The facility will have a 500-seater main conferencing arena equipped with modern and state of the art conference facilities with a total conference capacity of 840 including 6 break away rooms with capacities ranging from 20 to 100 delegates. The centre will also be home to a 200-seater restaurant, which will provide an enhanced dining experience.

"The Conference Centre is expected to be open and ready for business by December 2024. The Conference Centre aims to enhance customer experience for conference and event delegates, while keeping pace with global trends in the hospitality industry. The Conference Centre will further strategically position Sunbird Waterfront and Sunbird Livingstonia as the leading hospitality providers for large-scale conference and entertainment events in the lakeshore area of Salima district."

"This is going to be ideal for meetings and even leisure events, be it weddings, entertainment and also for the incentive clients, and perfectly compliment business and leisure groups. The facility will ensure a more comprehensive product for the Salima destination.

However, beyond the bricks and mortar, lies Sunbird's unwavering dedication to community upliftment and empowerment. Mwale shed light on their holistic approach to human resource development, emphasizing the recruitment and training of local talent.

"As a brand, our team composition is over 800 now. Before COVID, we were close to 1,000, which I believe we're going to reach very soon. In order to deliver the brand promise, Sunbird is continuously focused on development of our people so that they are highly motivated, driven



Samson Mwale, Chief Executive, Sunbird Tourism PLC

for excellence and well trained to meet and exceed the customer's expectations. Our team readiness and composition is well prepared to deliver personalised and quality service that the brand is known for at the new conference centre."

In addressing potential concerns about competition from established venues like the Bingu International Convention Center (BICC) in Lilongwe, Mwale exuded confidence in the symbiotic relationship between the two.

"Our aim is not to detract from existing offerings but to complement them, offering a distinct lakeside experience that resonates with our clientele," he asserted, highlighting the centre's role in bolstering Salima's economy and positioning it as a premier MICE destination.

Mwale also emphasized the proactive approach Sunbird Tourism PLC is taking to introduce their convention centre to the market. With participation in various expos, including recent local ones, and opening bookings for 2025, they are already forward-selling the facility with confidence in meeting timelines.

As they gear up for Travel Indaba, their focus remains on raising awareness through marketing, publications, and engagement with potential event hosts. This strategic push underscores their commitment to establishing the convention centre as a premier destination for events, ensuring its success and further enhancing Malawi's tourism appeal.



Again, African youth push boundaries in tourism with their innovations

... As Namibia ends AYTIS hosting in style

With 60 percent of its population under the age of 25, Africa is obviously the youngest continent in the world.

Considering that reality, Namibia's Deputy Minister of Sport, Youth and National Service, Emma Kantema-Gaomas, re-echoed that fact in this year's edition of the Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Summit (AYTIS) in Windhoek, insisting that investment in youth is both a moral imperative and an economic necessity. Backed by her government's support, the minister noted that tourism is a crucial sector for Africa, offering significant opportunities for economic growth, cultural exchange and sustainable development; hence the huge support for the summit, which aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on decent work and economic growth, as well as goals focused on innovation and infrastructure development.

The focus on youth leadership, according to her, reflects a growing recognition of the immense potential young Africans hold and by equipping them with the tools and resources they need to succeed, she believes that the summit can play a crucial role in shaping a more prosperous and sustainable future for African tourism.



"Let's all remember that our collective efforts today will shape the future we desire. Let's commit to taking bold steps and drive sustainable change. Our journey does not end here. It is only the beginning," Kantema-Gaomas urged.

This year marked the 6th edition of AYTIS, and the third consecutive year it has been hosted by Namibia.

For the six years, the AYTIS has consistently spurred healthy rivalry among African youth in tourism and the continent is good for it with the numbers telling the story better.

Of course, credit goes to Africa Tourism Partners (ATP), the convener and organiser of the summit, who through strategic partners such as UN Tourism, BTO, MILLVEST and AfCFTA, has delivered value on the continent's tourism value chain through the innovations of Africa's youth tourism entrepreneurs in the last six years.

This year's edition was unique, as ambitious African youth took their innovations in tourism a notch higher, offering the industry tech-driven



operations that have eased challenges they hitherto faced.

Also, this year, Namibia hosted the summit at Windhoek, its enthralling capital city, ending a three-year hosting right.

After a rigorous screening and pitching process, Top 5 finalists emerged at the Windhoek summit, who are unarguably, Africa's best in terms of innovative tourism entrepreneurship.



Emma Kantema-Gaomas, Namibia's Deputy Minister of Sport, Youth and National Service



They include: Itaagi Devin, CEO, Canine Safaris Ltd Uganda; Joseph Owiredo, CEO, Fihankra ComTech Ltd, Ghana; Ajena Jafar, founder/ CEO, Tour Plug, Uganda; Kedumetse Liphi, founder/ chief engineer, Ked-Liphi (Pty) Ltd, Botswana and Gerald Muema, co-founder and technical advisor, ReNewGen Tech Ltd, Kenya.



The five brought their A-game from the first day of the 2024 edition to the screening process and to the ultimate pitching sessions at the AYTIS on May 29 and were able to convince the judges with their innovations in tourism.

The summit has also helped Namibia, the host country, in discovering young

"Let's all remember that our collective efforts today will shape the future we desire. Let's commit to taking bold steps and drive sustainable change. Our journey does not end here. It is only the beginning"

tourism talents across the three years it hosted African youth entrepreneurs.

This year, Namibia's Rosalia Haufiku Laudika, a student of NUST, Namibia; Sarah Anghuwo, founder, Africikoatizay, Namibia and Sarome Hamata, also a student of NUST, emerged Top Finalists in the country's edition of the AYTIS Challenge.

As ATP, the organisers celebrate yet another successful summit, Africa awaits a winner from the Top Five at the annual Africa Tourism Leadership Forum (ATLF) and Award later this year.

Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General, UN Tourism, in his message at the summit, noted that Africa holds immense potential for tourism development and economic growth.



development of Africa's tourism sector.

"The AYTIS serves as a vital platform for spotlighting key priorities that are crucial for the advancement of the African region. From education and youth empowerment to digital transformation and attracting Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs), these are fundamental areas that resonate deeply with the vision of UN Tourism and the UN Tourism Agenda for Africa - Tourism for Inclusive Growth," Grandcourt said.

According to her, investing in and capacitating future generations is paramount for paving the way forward in the evolution of tourism.

"As the youngest continent in the world, Africa's youth will play a pivotal role in transforming the tourism sector and serving as ambassadors for Brand Africa. UN Tourism is fully committed to supporting these efforts," she concluded.

Pohamba Penomwenyo Shifeta, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibia, couldn't hide his excitement, while describing the African Youth Summit as a platform for young people to explore and develop actionable



"Through our various initiatives and partnerships, UN Tourism is dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism practices, fostering economic empowerment, and preserving Africa's rich cultural and natural heritage," the Secretary General said.

Expressing his excitement to be honoured at the 6th summit, Pololikashvili declared that, "This summit serves as a testament to the transformative power of youth engagement and innovation, both of which are integral to UN Tourism's vision for the future of tourism in Africa".

For Elcia Grandcourt, Director, Africa Department - UN Tourism, the summit exemplifies the commitment and vision of the organisers to foster growth and



Andrew Kofi Mercer, Ghana's Minister of Tourism

solutions that will shape the future of Africa's tourism sector.

"The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism under my leadership has successfully and proudly hosted the last three editions of this auspicious event, which aims to empower the African youth in tourism with the necessary skills as we move toward the 5th industrial revolution," the minister said.

He urged Namibian and African youth to take space in the tourism sector especially technological innovation and embrace the continental trade initiative.

Africa Tourism Partners (ATP), was grateful that its commitment and efforts over the years to push tourism to the forefront in Africa are yielding sustainable fruits, with more youth entrepreneurs in the tourism landscape.

In his message, Kwakye Donkor, CEO,

ATP, took count of what has been achieved since the inception of the summit in Durban.

"In line with this imperative, ATP is pleased to announce that in collaborations with its lead partners including UN Tourism, BTO, MILLVEST and AfCFTA, the summit has connected and brought together over 3000 youth, 500 professionals and policy makers, over 250 travel trade for intra-Africa travel and media exposure for host countries in over 60 countries including 55 African countries, physically or virtually, since inception in Durban, in 2019.

"Key to these was a very successful hosting of the Summit in 2022 in Windhoek, Namibia, by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism in collaboration with UN Tourism which attracted over 650 physical and 2000 virtual delegates," Donkor said.

He maintained that the goal of the summit has been consistently achieved since inception as ATP and its network of partners have developed the specialised youth in tourism marketplace to assist tourism start-ups, entrepreneurs, small businesses, and young people in tourism.

"Our one-on-one career advising and development clinic, led by experienced and renowned professionals, academics, policymakers, and experts, is critical to achieving this.

"This has also created several economic prospects for youngsters in tourism



Dr Linda Pereira

through innovation such as mentorship, coaching, the formation of value-based business partnerships, and government backing," the ATP boss said.

To further the goals, he noted further that ATP, UN Tourism, and the Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Environment have established the Africa Tourism Innovation Hub, which was launched during this year's summit.

"We need everyone on board to make this effort a success across the continent, and we want to encourage venture capitalists, investors, and more entrepreneurs to respond to our appeal. This is especially true in terms of knowledge, investment for young start-ups and small businesses, and redefining ourselves by contributing to the reduction of youth unemployment in Africa," he concluded.



Locked Out At Home: African Visa Woes



I set a new world record recently – an unwanted one, though. I got refused visas for three different African countries in a single day.

The morning started with a refusal from Namibia. I was supposed to attend a conference there, but the covering letter in my visa application was not properly addressed to the recently renamed "Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security." Of course, that offended someone sufficiently enough to reject the entire application. Strike One!

Later in the day, I got an email from South Africa's Department of Home Affairs. My eVisa application, submitted seven weeks earlier for a conference that had long since ended without my participation, had finally been processed. And it had been rejected because the dates of that conference had now passed. Chicken, meet egg. Strike Two!

Finally, the afternoon brought me my third rejection of the day. This one from Botswana. And the reason was a real doozy: "You must not be smiling in the photograph submitted. You can resubmit when you are not smiling." Well, no risk of smiles after the day I've just had. Strike Three!

Now, of course, this is not a typical day. Less tenacious people would have given up long before this. However, seemingly ridiculous and onerous visa policies remain a daily nuisance for those of us who live, work and travel in Africa.

It's not just regular guys like me who

"If Africa is to truly benefit from increased tourism and business travel, there needs to be a paradigm shift from a default "no" to a default "yes" when it comes to welcoming genuine visitors."

have this issue, though. Aliko Dangote, the continent's richest man, claims to require visas to enter 35 different African countries. This scenario is particularly striking when compared to his European counterparts, who can enter most of these countries visa-free. This discrepancy underscores the barriers that African businesspeople and tourists face within their own continent, which is in stark contrast to the seamless travel Europeans enjoy both at home, and relatively so even in Africa. This situation not only impedes business and tourism but also reflects a deeper issue of regional disintegration.

Even when African countries make the news with high-profile changes to ostensibly simplify visa policy, there is often a range of loopholes hidden in the fine print. Malawi recently announced a visa waiver for 79 countries amid much acclaim from tourism stakeholders. Yet, when you look at the list of countries that benefit from this waiver, you see that citizens of over half of its fellow African Union member states still need to apply for a visa in advance. This selective approach to visa waivers underscores the ongoing reluctance to fully embrace regional integration.

President Ruto of Kenya made headlines in December for "abolishing" all visas. In his own words, "it (will) no longer be necessary for any person from any corner of the globe to carry the burden of applying for a visa to come to Kenya." Wow, inspiring words. Except that instead of applying for a visa, you now had to fill out basically the same form you did before to apply for an "Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)." This included people like South Africans and Ghanaians who could previously just hop on a plane and fly to Kenya. No visa needed though, just this new "not a visa." No transformative policy after all, just a marketing and rebranding exercise. Terms and conditions apply.

Lesotho is another fascinating country. You might think that a tiny landlocked paradise would try to make it easier for visitors to come spend their money. You would be wrong. After experimenting with eVisas immediately before the COVID-19 pandemic, they have scrapped that system and now have a charmingly retro "email us and ask for a visa" system. I've visited over 80 countries all over the world, but this is the first one where I have to submit a doctor's note certifying that I am healthy enough to visit Lesotho as a tourist! One really has to question who came up with that requirement, what prompted it, and if it really helps encourage tourists to visit!

If Africa is to truly benefit from increased tourism and business travel, there needs to be a paradigm shift from a default "no" to a default "yes" when it comes to welcoming genuine visitors. You can't invest hundreds of thousands of dollars to attract a conference to your country, but then block people from attending that same conference because some low-level bureaucrat got their knickers in a twist over a perceived protocol snub.



Sean Mendis has two decades of experience in senior management roles within the aviation sector in Africa. He is presently based in Malawi, where he offers executive level consulting and intelligence to aviation stakeholders.

Business impact, market growth and young talent sums up IMEX Frankfurt 2024

The 2024 edition of IMEX Frankfurt marked a notable surge of confidence and business certainty in the global events industry this week. The growth across exhibitor markets and thousands of buyers bringing a steady, long-term pipeline of RFPs all pointed to an industry thriving on solid foundations once again.

IMEX Frankfurt, which took place May 14 – 16, welcomed 12,000 event professionals through the doors of Messe Frankfurt, of which over 4,000 were buyers. More than 60,000 meetings were pre-booked with thousands more taking place on the show floor.

Chairman Ray Bloom said: "I'm delighted to see the return of the Asian market. I've heard that one of our exhibitors, Japan, which had its largest ever representation, has used the show to communicate the business readiness of those areas affected by the recent earthquake." He also observed that Africa is experiencing growth and maturity within the sector with Uganda stating that tourism, of which business events is included, has now officially overtaken coffee as its dominant market.

Next generation – hot topic

Encouraging the next generation of event planners entering the sector was the focus of many conversations at the show, explained IMEX CEO Carina Bauer. During the show, ICCA announced a new partnership with universities to provide scholarships, mentorships and networking opportunities for students and young event planners. Carina added: "We've been really pleased with the number of young people attending our Rising Talent program for those with up to three years' experience. It was also great to see the launch of a complementary program – Young Stars – part of our broadest ever range of German language education and an integral part of the hugely successful MICE Impact Academy." In addition, the IMEX-MPI-MCI Future Leaders Forum marked its 22nd year.



Carina also explained that many senior leaders had remarked on the variety of content on offer this year, with several appreciating having the time and space to go deeper into important workplace topics such as burnout and mental health. Equally, at the planner level, there was a positive response to sessions covering topics in a highly practical way, such as sustainability and especially AI (Artificial Intelligence). "It's clear that this blend of strategic leadership sessions and practicality is giving everyone the choice they want and the personalization they need," she said.

She also explained that Monday's specialist education programs received widespread credit, with many participants valuing the new program design that offered more time for breakout conversations and for networking.

Impact Talking Point makes an impact

Impact, IMEX's Talking Point for the next two years, was embraced by partners and exhibitors with Sarawak's vibrant, multi-sensory activations at the show entrances striking a friendly, welcoming note and others such as Singapore,

Houston and Glasgow all launching different impact projects during the week.

New this year and a notable success was the dedicated Impact Zone in Hall 9, led by MICE Impact, a co-creative area that united planners, suppliers, and partners with a range of workshops, panels, and stakeholder discussions.

The Google Xi CoLaboratory made a popular return to IMEX while others offering both tailored education and a variety of activations included Maritz, Encore and industry associations.

Finally, as part of its drive towards net zero, for the first time all IMEX attendees had the chance to make a personal and positive climate contribution by 'balancing' their travel to and from Frankfurt thanks to a new partnership with Cloverly.

Next year's IMEX Frankfurt will take place May 20 – 22, 2025.

Link for quick access to 'IMEX in 100 photos' gallery.

IMEX America will take place October 8 – 10, 2024 at Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas.

Essence of Africa announces new dates for the continent's Foremost International Buyer Forum



Africa's newest meetings-driven event uniting serious international buyers and exhibitors from across the continent has announced a change in dates addressing the coinciding dates of Essence of Africa and Magical Kenya Travel Expo (MKTE).

Essence of Africa will now take place from 2-4 December 2024 at the Sarit Centre in Nairobi, Kenya.

The decision to secure new dates in December comes after careful consideration and consultation with the event's advisory board comprising prominent figures in the African tourism industry, says Nigel Vere Nicoll, President of ATTA®. This plays a crucial role in ensuring that the interests of exhibitors and buyers remain at the forefront of the decision-making process, he adds.

"By leveraging the collective expertise and insights of our advisory board members, along with the global reach and experience of On Show Solutions and Experience Africa Events, we are confident that the new dates will provide an optimal platform for meaningful connections and sustainable growth within the African tourism sector," Vere Nicoll concludes.

As Africa's International Buyer Forum, Essence of Africa offers a unique platform for pre-qualified buyers to connect with leading African tourism suppliers through curated meetings and up to 36 pre-scheduled appointments.

Essence of Africa has already garnered significant interest from the industry,



new December dates reflect this commitment. We are proud to partner with our committed international buyers and tourism suppliers across the continent to bring Essence of Africa to life, and we look forward to welcoming the African tourism community to Nairobi in December 2024," says Amanda Margison, Co-Owner of On Show Solutions.

For more information about Essence of Africa, including registration details and the latest updates, please visit www.essenceofafrica.travel or contact the event organisers at hello@eoat.travel.

About Experience Africa Events

Experience Africa Events by ATTA® is the foremost platform for connecting African suppliers with top international buyers at a variety of shows. Promoting an expansive range of travel products and unique experiences from across Africa, Experience Africa Events hosts B2B events that are not just a meeting ground but a catalyst for forging essential industry connections, making these #ThePlaceToConnect for the African tourism industry.

For more information about Experience Africa Events by ATTA®, please visit www.atta.travel.

About On Show Solutions

About On Show Solutions: On Show Solutions is a globally recognised organiser of exceptional roadshows and exhibitions, operating on six continents – Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America and North America. With a deep understanding of the travel industry and a commitment to delivering impactful results, On Show Solutions connects African tourism companies with the global travel trade through their flagship event Africa Showcase.

For more information about On Show Solutions and Africa Showcase, please visit <https://onshowsolutions.co.za/> and <https://africashowcase.travel/>

“By leveraging the collective expertise and insights of our advisory board members, along with the global reach and experience of On Show Solutions and Experience Africa Events, we are confident that the new dates will provide an optimal platform for meaningful connections and sustainable growth within the African tourism sector”

with early confirmations from leading names such as Abercrombie & Kent Kenya, Amazing Africa, Cheli & Peacock Safaris, Great Plains Conservation, Many Africa Tours, Safarilink Aviation Ltd, Tourplan, and Victoria Falls Safari Lodge.

This impressive line-up of exhibitors underscores the event's significance and its potential to drive growth in the African tourism sector.

Exhibitors at Essence of Africa can expect direct access to a targeted audience of international buyers, efficient pre-scheduled appointments, global networking opportunities, educational seminars, and exclusive familiarisation trips. The event's focus on facilitating meaningful connections and driving sustainable growth sets it apart from other trade shows in the industry.

"We are committed to delivering an exceptional experience for both exhibitors and buyers, and the

Record-breaking WTM Africa 2024 signals surging interest in African tourism



World Travel Market Africa (WTM Africa) wrapped up its 2024 edition with record-breaking numbers, demonstrating a significant surge in global interest towards African travel and tourism. This year saw a 40% jump in buyers compared to 2023, solidifying the event's status as the continent's leading travel trade show.

WTM Africa 2024 hosted 705 exhibitors and 5,752 industry professionals from 99 countries. The buyer attendance was notably diverse, featuring strong representation from emerging markets like Greece, Philippines, Switzerland, Singapore, Lithuania, New Zealand, Ghana, China, Japan, and Argentina. This influx of new buyers contributed to the impressive 10,505 pre-scheduled meetings conducted during the event. This expanded reach promises increased investment and awareness for African destinations worldwide.

"The enormous increase in buyers highlights the growing confidence and investment in Africa as a compelling travel destination," said Carol Weaving, Managing Director, RX Africa. "WTM Africa is a serious business event, and our goal is to facilitate connections that

lead to tangible growth for the African tourism sector. This year's success underscores that commitment, and we are thrilled to see such a positive response."

A highlight of WTM Africa 2024 was the inaugural African Media Awards, recognising exceptional reporting on tourism, travel, and hospitality in Africa. The awards celebrated the crucial role journalists play in promoting the continent's destinations and experiences.

The renowned Responsible Tourism Awards, sponsored by the V&A Waterfront, also returned, honouring businesses and initiatives that prioritise sustainable and ethical practices within the travel sector. These long-standing awards align with WTM Africa's commitment to driving positive change and promoting responsible tourism across the continent. The trophies for the Responsible Tourism winners were provided by Ngwenya Glass.

Additionally, WTM Africa 2024 featured the highly-anticipated Trends Report, providing invaluable insights into the latest industry developments.

The event's speaking programme was a resounding success and brought together the who's who of the African tourism industry including among others representatives from Cape Town Tourism, Weeva, Singita, the TBCSA and many more. The speaking programme was sponsored by LIFT, who provided flights for speakers and hosted buyers.

New this year was the Brain Box, offering interactive sessions and hands-on learning opportunities for attendees. This innovative addition allowed industry professionals to engage with material in a more immersive and practical manner.

"We are incredibly proud to have launched the African Journalism Awards and introduced exciting new elements like the Brain Box," added Weaving. "These initiatives, combined with our established programmes, demonstrate our commitment to driving innovation and elevating the African travel industry."

As WTM Africa looks ahead to 2025, the event remains steadfast in its mission to facilitate business opportunities, foster meaningful connections, and showcase the diverse and captivating travel experiences that Africa has to offer.

WTM Africa 2024 in Pictures



South Africa, Rwanda & Kenya lead ICCA's 2023 African Country Ranking

The International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) has released its much-anticipated Country and City Rankings for 2023, showcasing the resilience and growth of the meetings industry worldwide. Notably, South Africa, Rwanda, and Kenya have emerged as the top three leaders on the African continent, reflecting their significant contributions to the global meetings landscape.

In his official statement, ICCA's Chief Executive Officer, Senthil Gopinath, emphasized the resilience and recovery of the meetings industry post-pandemic. He explained that the 2023 report includes more than 10,000 meetings that took place during the calendar year. Gopinath underscored the robust recovery and growth of the industry.

"We're heartened to see that the world of meetings and events has continued to grow and thrive in the face of ongoing challenges and a rapidly changing landscape, including digital and real-life threats, international conflicts, and unfolding geopolitical events," he said.

The rankings reveal a broad distribution of meetings across various countries and regions globally. The United States leads with 690 in-person meetings, followed by Italy with 553, Spain with 505, and France with 472. Notably, Japan and the Republic of Korea are among the top contenders, reflecting the growing prominence of the Asia Pacific region in the global meetings landscape. Gopinath notes,

"The research team's findings included the welcome addition of an Asia Pacific destination into the year's top five spots. This highlights the positive ways in which the region has made strides to return to a sense of normalcy in the years following the pandemic."

According to Gopinath, the success of meetings in 2023 is attributed to strategic planning initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Because association meetings are planned over the long term, preparations for congresses and conventions occur many months and years ahead of the

selected date of the event," Gopinath explains. This long-term perspective has been crucial in navigating the uncertainties and complexities brought about by the pandemic.

The report indicates a positive trajectory for the industry, with expectations for continued growth and improvement.

"With the continuing improvement of these statistics in the region — and an overall positive movement for the meetings and events space in a post-Covid world — we are confident the trend will continue to follow an upward trajectory," Gopinath highlighted.

In a significant update, ICCA has expanded its Business Intelligence database to include profiles dedicated to venues and vendors focusing on sporting events. This enhancement aims to improve the usability of the database for members.

"The Business Intelligence database offers a simplified way of submitting information throughout the year, making the process of data collection for our members much easier," Gopinath states.

ICCA remains committed to promoting the positive impacts of international meetings and events worldwide. Gopinath expresses gratitude to all contributors:

"We'd like to thank everyone who contributed to this year's ICCA Country and City Rankings and look forward to another year of productive, informative, and fulfilling meetings and events around the world," he concluded.

The detailed rankings reflect a resilient and adaptive industry poised for continued growth, driven by strategic long-term planning and a commitment to innovation and excellence.

ICCA Africa Chapter Rankings

The ICCA says while geographical divisions serve administrative purposes, they may not always align with the



collective interests and potential of regions. Therefore, in an effort to foster collaboration and enhance the visibility of certain regions on the international stage, ICCA has introduced an alternative ranking system that distinguishes geographical regions from our ICCA Chapter Regions. This strategic move aims to streamline efforts, leverage collective strengths, and present a unified front in the global bidding and hosting processes.

The Top 10 Africa Chapter Rankings for 2023 are as follows:

1. South Africa- 98 meetings
2. Rwanda - 32 meetings
3. Kenya- 29 meetings
4. Ghana- 20 meetings
5. Uganda- 19 meetings
6. Tanzania- 13 meetings
7. Zambia- 9 meetings
8. Zimbabwe- 8 meetings
9. Ethiopia - 3 meetings
10. Mozambique - 3 meetings
11. Niger -2 meetings

These rankings highlight the growing importance and capability of African countries in hosting international meetings and events, showcasing their readiness to contribute significantly to the global meetings industry.



As the world of tourism converged in Cape Town for WTM Africa, Madagascar was among other African nations present at this year's edition, poised to showcase its unique offerings to the global stage.

VoyagesAfric had an interview with Madam Lovanirina Rakotonantoandro, the Research and Development Director of the Madagascar National

Madagascar promoting destination as a new frontier in Africa's Tourism

Tourism Board who highlighted the reason for the country's participation at this year's travel trade show, stating, "We are attending the WTM Africa because we want to promote Madagascar, as a tourism destination to the professionals in tourism from Africa.

"We also want to achieve visibility, to make the destination known by the companies, first the tour operators, the TMCs, who can sell the destination for their customers. And I know that the companies who are here today have customers from all over the world, so it's important for us to be there."

Madam Rakotonantoandro emphasised Madagascar as a fresh frontier in tourism garnering interest and attention. According to her, it is the best choice for travellers seeking to explore new horizons.

"I was really impressed by the interest of the TMCs, the tour operators, to the destination, because Madagascar is

not a very known destination first, and tourists nowadays are looking for new destinations. Yes, and Madagascar is a new destination for most travellers, so it's very important for us," she said.

According to her, the journey doesn't end at WTM Africa. The Madagascar National Tourism Board has bold plans in store, including a series of fam trips designed to immerse industry professionals in the wonders of the island.

"So, the fam trips we are organising this year is in four sessions. The first one will be in May, the second one in June, around our International Tourism Fair in Madagascar, the next one in September, and the last one in November. So, it will be a great opportunity for the tour operators and TMCs from our source markets to discover the island, the big island, because Madagascar is also called the big island. This is to give them the opportunity to discover and experience Madagascar," she disclosed.





Travel for everyone:

Stakeholders advocate inclusive travel at Indaba 2024

At Africa's Travel Indaba 2024, the conversation around inclusivity in the tourism industry gained significant momentum with an insightful panel discussion. In the illuminating panel discussion, the discussants delved into the intricate landscape of accessible tourism, its economic ramifications, and the integration of AI technology to enhance Universal Access Auditing processes.

The esteemed panellists brought a diverse array of expertise, shedding light on both challenges and innovative solutions within this burgeoning sector.

In a conversation with VoyagesAfriq, three of the panelists engaged in a compelling discussion, sharing their insights on the importance of accessible travel and the necessary steps to ensure that everyone, regardless of ability can enjoy the wonders of exploration.

Ellie Suvrang, co-owner of Shimur Lodge, emphasized the significance of accessibility in travel experiences and highlighted the vital role that businesses play in setting new standards for accessibility.

"We always feel that being the first Safari Lodge that is accessible in Southern Africa, we can only hope for more businesses to take our ideas on and that we also have more areas in the country accessible, not just for safaris," stated Suvrang.

Lois Strachan, a disability consultant, best-selling author and podcaster, addressed a critical oversight in the tourism industry: the failure to recognize people with disabilities as legitimate consumers.

"I think historically people have seen persons with disabilities as not being consumers, and that's where a lot of the problem stems from. We are seen as just a group that is not included, not catered for, not needing to be catered for because we are someone else's problem," Lois bemoaned.

She emphasized that the first step towards change is acknowledging that people with disabilities love to travel and that their diverse and unique travel needs must be embraced.

"The tourism industry particularly needs to understand that we are people who travel, and that's the first part that needs to cause the paradigm shift: to understand that we do travel, we love to travel, we may travel in a different way, but we do still travel."

Lois further maintained that strategic decisions are more impactful than policies alone, arguing for the need for strategic inclusivity in policy.

"There has to be a decision to become more inclusive and understand that this is a problem not just for people living with permanent disabilities but also for

those who are temporarily disabled," she elaborated.

According to her, the idea is to create environments that cater to a wide range of needs, ensuring that accessibility is integrated into the fabric of travel infrastructure.

In addition, Taryn, an advocate working closely with the tourism industry, stressed the importance of advocacy and awareness and underscored the importance of raising awareness and challenging unconscious biases.

"As Lois said, we are paying customers, and as paying customers, we deserve to have the best experience just like everybody else," Taryn posited. She highlighted the dual approach needed to foster inclusivity: changing both physical structures and societal attitudes.

"It's not just the physical structures that need to be changed; it's the mentality of the general population that needs to be changed."

The conversation also touched on the necessity of collaboration between advocates and the tourism industry.

"We are here to help bring more of that clientele here, so utilize our service, let us work together, and let's change the physical structures so that we can just make places inclusive for all," noted Taryn.

Africa Travel Indaba 2024 in pictures



AviaDev Africa 2024: Elevating Aviation and Tourism

Between 19th and 21st June 2024, Namibia is set to host AviaDev Africa 2024, the premier aviation conference for African air route development, marking a significant milestone for the country's burgeoning aviation and tourism industries.

2024 will be the 8th edition of the event, that began life in Kigali and has since been hosted in Cape Town and Nairobi. It is a business centric forum, connecting airports, airlines, tourism boards through formal pre-arranged meetings, quality conference sessions and informal networking opportunities.

Over 40 airlines, represented by 85 registered senior delegates will be present. These airlines range from start-up to some of the globe's largest airlines. What they all have in common is that they want to develop connectivity to, from, or within Africa.

AviaDev was not designed as an event to debate or create policy. It is a platform that looks pragmatically at what can be done in the existing environment in terms of developing connectivity. The aim is to support the industry to develop, which may drive policy change from the ground up?

Namibia: A Strategic Choice

Namibia's selection as the host for AviaDev Africa 2024 is both strategic and symbolic. Known for its stunning landscapes, diverse wildlife, and rich cultural heritage, Namibia is increasingly recognized as a top tourist destination. The country's commitment to sustainable tourism and its modern aviation infrastructure make it an ideal host country.

Windhoek, the capital city, serves as the hub of Namibia's aviation sector, housing Hosea Kutako International Airport, which has seen significant upgrades in recent years. These improvements aim to enhance capacity and efficiency, aligning with the country's vision of becoming a central aviation hub in Southern Africa.

The Role of Tourism Authorities

Tourism authorities in Africa play a pivotal role in supporting new air route developments. I have consistently argued in previous articles that airlines are a destination's most important customer, and that destinations should support their airport teams and airline partners to launch, expand and maintain services.

To underline this, an air route development masterclass is being offered for all attending tourism delegates. The masterclass will feature a variety of experts from airlines, airports, tourism authorities and more that will practically explore strategies for creating strong partnerships between airlines and DMOs to open new air routes, data sharing, digital marketing and overcoming administrative hurdles.

The Masterclass is hosted in partnership with the SADC Business Council Tourism Alliance, led by Natalia Rosa, who represent the interests of SADC's private sector

The masterclass will feature the following industry heavyweights:

Tim Harris, former CEO of WESGRO, the official tourism, trade and investment promotion agency for Cape Town and the Western Cape. Tim was the architect

of the Cape Town Air Access project, which has proved itself to be a world leader in stakeholder collaboration that has attracted airlines to serve the destination.

Sylvain Bosc, who has worked for both South African Airways and Fastjet as Chief Commercial Officer. Sylvain has dealt with many tourism agencies over the years as he has developed route networks.

Gavin Eccles is Consulting Partner at AirlinePros International and has decades of experience advising airlines, airports and destinations on their route development strategies.

Jillian Blackbeard is the Chief Executive Officer of Africa's Eden, who is working with private sector to drive responsible travel and tourism to the KAZA region (Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe)

Last but not least, we have Kojo Bentum-Williams, African tourism advocate and someone who has been visionary and has supported AviaDev to drive the partnership between tourism and aviation

Strengthening Partnerships:

AviaDev Africa provides a platform for networking and establishing partnerships, both between tourism authorities and their existing airline partners, but also stakeholder partnerships with local partners. It is only when a destination is aligned with its aviation stakeholders that we can deliver active route development, attracting much-needed tourists and the associated economic benefits.

Tourism authorities attending AviaDev in Namibia have a unique opportunity to capitalize on this event, propelling Africa towards a brighter and more connected future.

AviaDev Africa 2024 will take place in Windhoek, Namibia 19-21 June 2024.

Find out more at www.aviadev.com

BIO

Jon Howell, is the CEO and Founder of AviaDev, a division of The Bench.

Jon has dedicated the last 12 years to supporting the development of air connectivity to, from, and within the African continent by delivering live and virtual events and providing year-round content and insight into the industry.

The annual AviaDev Africa event was established in 2016 and is now regarded as the premier platform dedicated to supporting African Aviation development, having delivered 7 editions.

Jon established AviaDev Insight Africa, the only podcast dedicated to African aviation in 2018. To date, the podcast has over 100,000 listeners in 185 countries globally and over 290 episodes to its name.

Jon is passionate about empowering the next generation of aviators. He became a Visiting Professor at Coventry University in March 2022 and regularly delivers lectures to Undergraduate and postgraduate aviation management students.



Jon was also appointed a Global Ambassador for Gorilla Conservation for his fundraising efforts which include climbing the three largest mountains in the UK in a single weekend wearing a gorilla suit.

West Africa Ecotourism Network proposes sustainable tourism guidelines for the region

At the recently concluded WAEN Annual Summit 2024, the West Africa Ecotourism Network (WAEN) unveiled comprehensive tourism guidelines aimed at fostering sustainable and responsible tourism practices across the region.

These guidelines, meticulously crafted through collaboration with key stakeholders and drawing upon existing global standards, set forth a roadmap for governments, tourism enterprises, attractions and accommodations to embrace ecotourism principles in their operations.

Under the theme of environmental, social and cultural responsibility, the guidelines emphasize the importance of conserving and protecting natural and cultural resources, engaging local communities in decision-making processes, and promoting sustainability throughout all facets of tourism activities. With a focus on fostering collaboration and partnerships, the guidelines underscore the need for collective action among stakeholders to achieve the dual objectives of environmental conservation and socio-economic development.

For government tourism agencies, the guidelines advocate for the adoption of policies and initiatives that prioritize conservation, community engagement, and sustainable practices. By integrating

ecotourism principles into tourism planning and management, governments can ensure that tourism development aligns with environmental protection and local community empowerment.

Similarly, tourism enterprises and attractions are urged to embrace environmental sustainability, community engagement, and responsible tourism practices. From reducing waste and conserving resources to promoting local businesses and cultural exchange, tourism operators are encouraged to prioritize the well-being of both the environment and local communities.

Ecolodges and visitor accommodations, as custodians of the region's natural heritage, are called upon to minimize their ecological footprint and contribute to biodiversity conservation. Through site selection, energy and water conservation, waste management and community engagement, ecolodges can play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable tourism while preserving the region's unique biodiversity and cultural heritage.

In an interview with VoyagesAfric, Ola Wright, the President of WAEN, explained that as a dynamic document evolving through collaboration and expert input, these guidelines aim to provide a foundational framework rather than a definitive solution.



Iterated through multiple revisions and discussions with industry experts, they serve as a starting point.

She said, "This is a work in progress. In fact, we believe that finalizing guidelines may be an ongoing process. This document has undergone several iterations, with editing and feedback from multiple experts in the field. We even convened a round table with industry experts to discuss its contents. Therefore, we cannot consider it concluded. We have labelled it as 'basic guidelines' to provide a starting point for adherence. It's just the initial step, as we continue to engage with various organizations. This guideline represents progress in the right direction."

Overall, the unveiling of these guidelines marks a significant milestone in West Africa's journey towards sustainable tourism development. By embracing ecotourism principles and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, the region has the opportunity to unlock the full potential of its tourism sector while safeguarding its natural and cultural treasures for future generations.



Emirates' Rebound in Southern Africa Nearing Pre-Pandemic Numbers

In the dynamic global aviation landscape, Emirates Airline has distinguished itself for its resilience and adaptability, particularly in the Southern African region.

With a strategic approach that balances consolidation, growth, and a deep understanding of local preferences, Emirates has navigated the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic while positioning itself for continued success in the post-pandemic era, according to a representative of the airline giant at the ongoing Africa's Travel Indaba.

Emirates' operations in Southern Africa have undergone significant changes from pre-pandemic to post-pandemic times. Prior to the pandemic, the airline operated 49 weekly flights, offering over 100,000 seats per month to South Africa. Additionally, Emirates served online points like Zimbabwe and Zambia, supporting its South African operations with independent flights to these countries. However, in the post-pandemic period, Emirates has shifted its priorities.

In an interview, the Regional Manager for Southern Africa of Emirates, Afzal Parambil, explained, "Pre-pandemic, our focus was on expansion, but post-pandemic, our priority changed. It wasn't about growing new destinations; instead, it was about consolidating and bringing back our original network, which was critical for us."

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic prompted Emirates, like many other airlines, to reassess its priorities. Faced with travel restrictions, reduced demand, and operational challenges, the airline shifted its focus from expansion to consolidation. Facing shortages of aircraft and logistical hurdles, Emirates prioritized rebuilding its original network, striving to restore its pre-pandemic operations globally and in Southern Africa.

Despite the challenges, Emirates has made significant strides in its post-pandemic recovery efforts. While not fully restoring its pre-COVID operations,



Afzal Parambil, Regional Manager for Southern Africa of Emirates

the airline has almost reached its previous capacity, a representative noted.

"In the South African context, we are currently operating 42 weekly flights, just one flight short of our pre-pandemic frequency. Our aim is not only to meet but also to surpass the pre-COVID capacity and frequencies, with new aircraft joining our global fleet starting from August, such as the A350," Afzal Parambil said.

Emirates' regional ambitions extend beyond South Africa, encompassing countries like Mozambique, Botswana, and Namibia. Through strategic partnerships, Emirates connects these countries to its global network, recognizing their potential as both source markets and tourist destinations. With Africa hailed as a growth region with untapped potential, Emirates is poised to capitalize on emerging opportunities while addressing the unique needs of diverse markets.

Speaking about these partnerships, the Regional Manager for Southern Africa stated, "Our interline and codeshare partnerships with the likes of South Africa Airlines, FlySafair, Cemair and Airlink enables us to connect passengers from regional African points to the rest of the Emirates network. Africa, in general, is a growth region, and we believe in exploring destinations beyond traditional routes through partnerships."

At the heart of Emirates' success in Southern Africa lies its deep understanding of local preferences and cultures.

You can only be a preferred airline if you understand the local culture and preferences. When flying with Emirates, passengers experience the flavours of the destination even before reaching it, with local produce sourced for onboard service. Emirates sources ingredients from local suppliers, including Rooibos tea, local artisan cheeses, tasty ostrich meat, lamb, beef, and hake. The wine list features an assortment of South

African wines, such as Ken Forrester, Porseleinberg, Klein Constantia, Waterkloof, and Boekenhoutskloof, among others.

Regionally inspired menus include Durban classic Lamb Bunny Chow with traditional garnishes, hearty Bobotie, and decadent Malva pudding. We have crew members from over 170 nationalities working for Emirates, so if you are flying on the South African route, you are most likely to be welcomed by a South African crew member. This enables passengers to experience South African culture before they even touch down at their destination, Afzal Parambil emphasized.

According to Afzal Parambil, participating in events like Indaba is crucial for Emirates to engage

with stakeholders across the travel ecosystem, gather insights, and adapt strategies for growth.

"Indaba is critical for us to interact with stakeholders, including hoteliers, tour operators, media, and other industry partners. These interactions provide valuable insights that shape our strategies for the region."

Emirates' strategic approach in Southern Africa underscores its commitment to adaptability, resilience, and understanding of local markets, positioning the airline for sustained success in the evolving aviation landscape.

Africa's Travel Indaba is the leading travel trade show in Africa, owned by South African Tourism, with the specific objective of creating market access

for the vast array of African tourism products and businesses.

The trade show exists to provide the ideal platform for African tourism exhibitors to showcase their offerings to international and local buyers, destination marketing companies, and leisure tourism services partners. It is the most formidable platform on the continent for you to meet face-to-face with the most influential buyers in the world, and to gain access to Africa's excellence and its endless possibilities. These are the business opportunities and quality connections that will shape Africa's tomorrow.

The 2024 edition of Africa's Travel Indaba took place in Durban, KwaZulu Natal Province from 13th to 16th May 2024.

EasyJet Expands to West Africa with Low-Cost Flights to Cabo Verde

EasyJet will introduce its first low-cost flights from Portugal to Cabo Verde, marking a notable expansion into West Africa starting October 29th.

The inaugural flight will connect Lisbon to the island of Sal, followed by a Porto-Sal route the next day.

This strategic move demonstrates EasyJet's growth and forward planning by extending new air routes between Europe and Africa.

EasyJet will initially offer 50,000 tickets for the winter season, later adding another 50,000 for the summer.

Lisbon will host four weekly flights to Sal on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, while Porto will have two weekly flights on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

By addressing the growing demand between these destinations, the airline provides affordable options and improves travel access for passengers exploring new regions at a lower cost.

These new routes represent a crucial step for EasyJet, offering travelers efficient connections between Portugal and Cabo Verde.

The region's rich culture and natural beauty make it an enticing destination. Increased access promises to stimulate tourism and business while positively impacting international travel dynamics.

Cabo Verde itself remains a unique destination. Besides the island of Sal's beautiful beaches and surfing spots, its strategic position off the West African coast is advantageous.

It allows Sal to draw visitors from across Europe, Africa, and beyond.

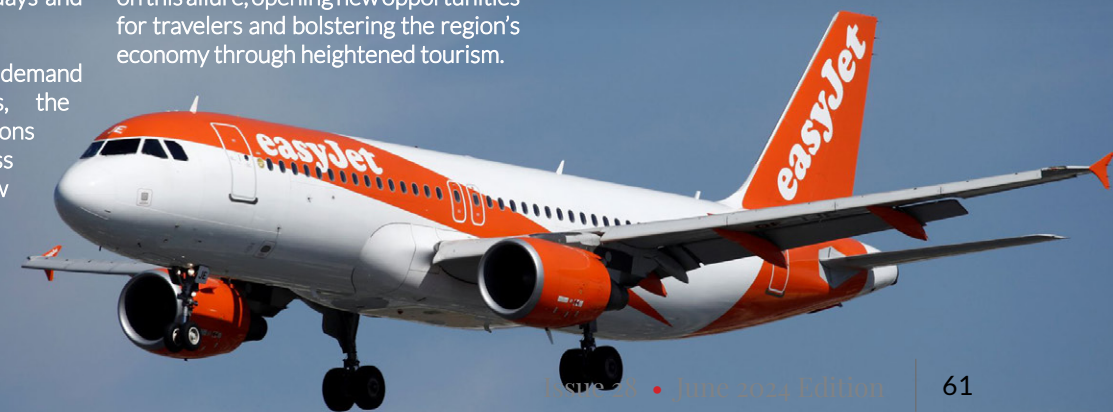
EasyJet's low-cost initiative capitalizes on this allure, opening new opportunities for travelers and bolstering the region's economy through heightened tourism.

The streamlined air travel experience aims to redefine connectivity across the continent, simplifying European-African travel and providing unparalleled value.

By effectively using these new routes, EasyJet leverages the potential for growth in this dynamic region.

The Prime Minister said "... With the operation of EasyJet, a desire and expectation is realized that we hope will have a positive impact on strengthening Cape Verde's position in the tourist market and diversifying the offer for Cape Verde citizens in the country and in the diaspora through low cost flights.

Source: RioTimesOnline.com





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Apollo launches trips and direct flights to Gambia

For tourists desirous of frolicking on sandy beaches that stretch as far as the eye can see, who also want to enjoy unique nature experiences and an incredibly hospitable local population, such deals are possible this winter as Apollo, an European tour company, offers direct flights from Copenhagen The Gambia, Africa's gentlest coast.

Apollo will be facilitating the winter experience and direct flight with the best charter plane of the time, the SAS Airbus A321neo LR (long range).

The Gambia trip launch rides on the fact that as the Danes' appetite for adventure grows, so does Apollo's portfolio of trips.

The Gambia, the latest addition to the tribe, will be the tour operator's third destination in Africa.

"Here on the other side of the pandemic, we have seen a clear increase in demand for new travel destinations – especially in the winter months. More and more people want to experience new places, get to know new cultures, try new flavors and expand their horizons – and all those holiday needs can be met in Gambia," says Glenn Bisgaard, sales manager at Apollo.

Though The Gambia is one of Africa's smallest country, its captivating range of great experiences and activity opportunities belies the country's small size.

The Gambia's kilometer-long sandy beaches are, of course, an attraction in themselves. But there is also the opportunity to go kayaking in the moonlight, explore national and cultural parks, learn to cook local food, go treasure hunting in colorful markets and treat yourself to a day on board a boat on the famous Gambia River.

"In The Gambia, the pace is relaxed, but the opportunities are many. There is plenty of opportunity to relax in good hotels, if that's what you're up for. But you can also fill up your holiday with experiences, awaken your senses in a new way and experience flavors you won't soon forget. The variety and the relatively short journey make The Gambia an excellent travel destination for everyone – from families with children and groups of friends to well-off adults and active travellers," explains Glenn Bisgaard.

A unique aircraft product

Of course, getting to The Gambia with Apollo should not be boring or difficult. The direct flight from Copenhagen to Banjul therefore takes place with a SAS A321neo LR, which is the same aircraft type that SAS uses on long-haul flights to, for example, New York. This means, among other things, that Apollo's travelers have a total of three different classes to choose from when they travel to The Gambia: SAS Charter Standard,

SAS Charter Plus and SAS Charter Business.

"There is, no doubt, that this will be one of the world's best charter flights. Here we are talking about a unique and first-class flight experience from start to finish, which no other charter flight comes close to being able to match in the Scandinavian market," adds Glenn Bisgaard.

Apollo's first flight from Copenhagen to The Gambia will depart on November 5, 2024, with the last departure on April 1, 2025. In total, the tour operator will offer 10 hotels in different categories, distributed in different areas along the entire coast, including; Kololi, Kotu and Bakau (Cape Point)

Flight details

On Apollo's new direct route from Copenhagen to Banjul, travelers can choose between three different flight classes: SAS Charter Standard, SAS Charter Plus and SAS Charter Business. All classes have two meals per route, individual HD screens with built-in entertainment, and hand luggage included. If you choose to upgrade to SAS Charter Business or SAS Charter Plus, the above is also included.

We want destinations with tourism potential to be able to attract investments in their value chains

- Miller Matola



Miller Matola, CEO, Millvest Advisory

Right from its first edition, Tourism Investments Forum Africa (TIFA), has lived up to the expectations of continent-wide stakeholders.

In this exclusive interview, Miller Matola, CEO of Millvest Investments and organiser of TIFA, shares with VoyagesAfric, the offerings, impact so far, wins and inroads, efforts at helping destinations to attract investments and more.

How did the 2nd edition of TIFA went, especially on the side-lines of WTM Africa?

It was overall well with good spread of projects and speaker lineup. We had new destinations; Mauritania, Zanzibar and St. Helena, with the relevant and on point content. We also had challenges regarding delegate management and retention given colocations. There were also challenges due to Eid falling on 10th, the first day of event, which resulted in number of delegations pulling out, Zanzibar, Mauritania, Millat, and other participants from Middle East.

Why did you offer lesser-known destinations opportunity to showcase their bankable projects?

We were looking at demand creation to also enable us promote intra Africa investment. On the supply side of product development, it is meant to



“ There were some strong leads generated for some of the destinations which participated; and those that presented their investment projects are making inroads in terms of being seen as market place for tourism investment opportunities; platforms for sharing and exchange of insights on global and continental tourism investment trends and developments; platform for profiling and promoting destinations’ investment climate, potentials and opportunities and platform for capital raising ”

ensure that those destinations with tourism potentials are able to attract the necessary investment into the supply side of their tourism value chains, to be able to promote and position themselves successfully as tourism destinations.

We did that to also profile them as destinations for MICE. In the case of Cape Town lesser so, it was the marketplace to which destinations could



showcase their tourism investment potentials, while at the same time profiling and promoting themselves as tourism destinations.

So far, what are the wins and inroads TIFA is making in driving investments to destinations, particularly with a tourism focus?

First, TIFA multi sectoral focus saw more than 50 projects being presented by more than 13 countries and regions. Secondly, TIFA's strong focus on tourism projects saw more than 60 projects being presented and the quality of submissions and projects being submitted for funding is getting better.

There were some strong leads generated for some of the destinations which participated; and those that presented their investment projects are making inroads in terms of being seen as market place for tourism investment opportunities; platforms for sharing and exchange of insights on global and continental tourism investment trends and developments; platform for profiling and promoting destinations’ investment



climate, potentials and opportunities and platform for capital raising.

What is TIFA's short to medium-term plan to help destinations harness their full potential?

Investment promotion and mobilisation is not one shot process; it takes concerted time and effort, and necessary

support such as incentives from public sector and policy makers. For the short term, we need awareness, profiling and positioning, while the medium term requires assistance in project promotion and investment mobilisation.

However, the long term needs platform for capital raising.

Kriol Jazz Festival 2024

Celebrates Cultural Fusion and Economic Growth in Cabo Verde



Salif Keita

The Kriol Jazz Festival, a vibrant celebration of cultural diversity and musical excellence, recently concluded its latest edition in Cabo Verde. Organized by Djo Da Silva, the festival showcased the rich tapestry of Creole identity through music, bringing together artists from eight countries across the globe.

In an interview with VoyagesAfriq, the organizer of the show, Djo Da Silva, highlighted the importance of the festival and its essence to portray a dynamic blend of cultures and nations.

"Kriol Jazz is a festival where we

promote creolity. Creolity? What does it mean? It's a mix of cultures, a blend of nations. In the festival, we have representatives from eight countries spanning different continents, all coming together to make music. Our goal is to celebrate cultural diversity. We want to showcase various cultures because we believe the world is embracing Creolity," he explained.

According to Djo Silva, beyond its cultural significance, the Kriol Jazz Festival has emerged as a key driver of economic growth in Cabo Verde. He said,

"Kriol Jazz promotes not only local musicians but also artists from across the continent and around the world. This festival has a significant positive impact on the country's economy, particularly in terms of cultural tourism. We offer something unique, something truly exceptional in Africa. Our goal is to attract a large audience to the festival, thereby boosting the economy of the city. We see a substantial influx of tourists, with hotels fully booked and a significant flow of revenue into restaurants and other local businesses. What's particularly beneficial is that attendees don't just visit Praia;



Jenifer Solidade

they also explore other islands and contribute to their economies. Overall, the festival is highly beneficial for the country."

Despite its success, the festival faces challenges in terms of financial sustainability and accessibility. Djo Silva explained,

"I want the government and the city to grasp the festival's significance and increase their financial support. With more funding, we could lower ticket prices, allowing more people, especially locals with limited incomes, to attend. Currently, the cost of admission, such as 100 euros for a couple over two days, is beyond the means of many,

given their average monthly salary of around 300 euros. This financial barrier is a challenge we're actively addressing. Moreover, with financial stability, we could expand our promotional efforts beyond the country's borders and into the continent. I firmly believe that effective promotion across the continent could attract a significant number of attendees. This type of cultural event is rare in many countries on our continent, making it a unique and appealing opportunity for music enthusiasts."

Speaking on his highlights of the event and how this year stood out from last year and the previous years' he said,

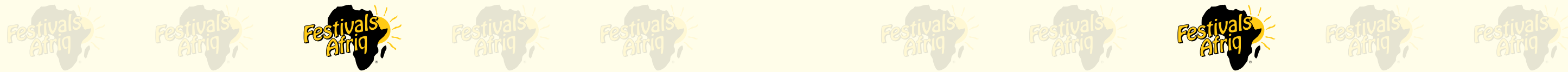
"For me, this year was remarkable as we hosted two great music legends, Salif Keita and Hermeto Pascoal, known widely in Latin America and beyond. It's quite extraordinary to have such renowned artists perform in Cabo Verde at the same festival. Their presence here exceeded expectations, as few would have imagined they'd grace our festival lineup."



Tibau Tavares

Looking ahead, Djo Silva revealed plans to continue growing the festival, potentially exploring larger venues while preserving the unique ambiance of its current location. Efforts are already underway to secure funding for next year's event, with government officials, including the Prime Minister, showing support for this cultural landmark.





The Seychelles Fashion Week: A Key Driver for Tourism

LATER this year, from November 28th to 30th, another edition of one of the most sought-after events along the Indian Ocean Islands trail, the Seychelles Fashion Week, will take place Mahe, an Island on the Archipelago Republic.

It will be the seventh edition of the event that combines fashion, music and Creole culture to drive tourism for the Island Republic of Seychelles. The Seychelles Fashion Week (SFW) is a prestigious platform that brings together both international and local fashionistas, tourists and culture-centric people from the world of fashion and creativity including designers, models, and creatives.

Birthered in 2018, the Seychelles Fashion week has been covered by International Media, Bloggers, and attended by buyers as it creates a wonderful opportunity for fashion and tourism trade on the back of

the offshoot Seychelles Fashion Trade Exhibition.

Terry Carola, Founder of Seychelles Fashion Week told Festivals Afric that what he and his team have created and have executed over the past seven years has been catalyst and a helpful tool to promote Seychelles as favourite tourism destination for lovers of fashion and culture.

“By featuring local designers and traditional attire, SFW can highlight the unique cultural aspects of the Seychelles, enticing tourists interested in authentic cultural experiences,” Carola noted. He believes it is the overriding reason the Ministry of Tourism has partnered him to organize this event over the years.

The event also has the potential to encourage local artisans to produce more and thereby provide employment and pull revenue for the economy. “Engaging local businesses, artisans, and hospitality services, SFW can stimulate the local economy and provide tourists with a more immersive and comprehensive experience of Seychelles’ offerings,” he said.

He believes, however, that a lot more needs to be done in the area of marketing for the country to gain the needed benefit from Seychelles Fashion Week. “Joint marketing campaigns with the Ministry of Tourism can utilize the glamour of the fashion week to promote Seychelles as a stylish and luxurious destination. This can involve social media campaigns, advertisements, and promotions highlighting both the event and the scenic beauty of the islands.”

In 2021, while delivering a short speech at the launch of the event, the Principal Secretary for Tourism, Mrs. Sherin Francis, expressed the industry’s excitement over the SFW. “Seychelles has the potential to become a popular fashion destination, with our pristine



Adrian

paradise serving as an inspiration for other designers and influencers,” said Mrs. Francis. She added that the event opens the door for the destination to host large-scale events that will increase its visibility and boost Fashion Tourism.

Seychelles Fashion Week creates a global platform for local designers and artisans to showcase and promote their craft, as well as the Creole culture on the global stage, increasing international recognition for the destination and its treasures.

Seychelles has been known as a haven for adventure seekers, as the destination offers top-notch sailing, scuba diving, snorkeling, and gourmet picnics on private beaches plus hiking trails to mountaintops, surfing, island hopping on inter-atoll ferries, horse riding through azure shallows, spotting the world’s biggest nut :coco de mer), strolling among giant-sized tortoises, and



Erza

indulging in the flavorful, spice-infused Creole cuisine.

Festivals Afric encourages you to take advantage of the coming Seychelles Fashion Week in November to have the best of both worlds of fashion and adventure. FA

Festivals Afric spoke to some of the models for Seychelles Fashion Week and they had this to say:



David

Born and raised in Seychelles, my name is David Boniface. Just completed my university studies i indulge my

time exploring the beautiful island of Seychelles before entering world of employment. I’m an athlete, model and actor. I’ve represented my country Seychelles internationally on both my modeling and athlete platforms. With my modeling agency I got to walk in front of millions during the Dubai expo 2020 in various collections from South Africa to Seychelles. Locally I’ve participated in Seychelles Fashion Week three years consecutively. Through online platform exposure I got the opportunity to photograph in some international clothing brand such HimAlife based in New Zealand.



Ryan Nibourette

My name is Ryan Nibourette and I’ve been a male model with Telly’s Modeling Agency for 3 years. My passion for being a model started when I was in my teenage years. I used to attend local modeling shows just to admire the models walking up and down the runway wearing amazing designer’s clothes, and for me that felt amazing.

Fashion has always been something that I loved and I still do until now. Being a model is not only about walking down the runway, photo shooting and being on magazine’s, it also helps you build your confidence and you surely become a role model for a lot of people and especially the young generations who are inspired to be a model. My first achievement was getting selected as a model to walk the runway wearing both



Rania Tamboo

local and international designers clothes in Seychelles fashion week in 2020 and surely that felt exciting as it is one of the biggest fashion events in the Seychelles.

In the near future I would like to be a modeling/ mentor coach and make others dreams come true. My message to the people who are inspired to be a model is. “ Step up! make the first move and fulfill your dreams”.

My name is Yannick Vincent Freminot and I’m from the beautiful islands of the Seychelles.

Born last in a family of four, I grew up studied and spent of my childhood in the place I still reside in until today, the district of Anse Royale. I am 21 years of age and currently working as a cabin crew with our local airline Air Seychelles. I completed my studies at the Seychelles Tourism Academy with an advance certificate level in Tourism studies and Tour Guiding. In my spare time I dedicate my time to my pet dog Coco and together we spend some afternoons on the beach from time to time, if not I usually use it to go over some aviation videos just to feel safe and well knowledge in my field of work.



Ghanaian Journalist and Media Executive, Francis Doku Has Been Appointed Supervising Editor of ‘Festivals Afriq’

Francis Doku, a former General Manager of TV3, Ghana's leading television channel, and a renowned media executive, content creator, and travel writer, celebrated for his significant contributions to the African media landscape, has been appointed as the Supervising Editor of *Festivals Afriq*.

Francis brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the publication. Among others, he has almost three decades of experience in the media industry. During this period, he has held such roles as General Manager – Radio, General Manager – Digital, General Manager – Carat Ghana, and various other influential roles, driving innovation and excellence in content creation and distribution.

Known for his creative prowess, Francis has developed and produced a wide range of compelling content, from television programmes to radio shows to digital media, captivating audiences across Africa and beyond. As the host of the popular “Africa Rising” travel podcast, Francis has explored and shared the beauty of African destinations, offering listeners unique insights and inspiring them to discover the continent's hidden gems.

For over two and half decades Francis wrote a critical column on radio and television named “Listening and Watching” in Ghana's Graphic Showbiz while also covering arts, tourism, and entertainment for the paper and others in the stable of the Graphic Communications Group Limited. He has successfully led numerous media projects, demonstrating exceptional leadership and vision. His strategic approach has consistently resulted in increased audience engagement and growth.

Francis has become a cultural ambassador through his work,



passionately promoting African culture and heritage to a global audience.

With his extensive experience and deep understanding of African culture, Francis is poised to lead the magazine to new heights, ensuring it becomes the definitive source for festival news and stories across Africa.

Festivals Afriq, an exciting new magazine dedicated to celebrating the rich and diverse festivals across Africa, is set to launch in December 2024. This unique publication will be available both online (www.festivalsafriq) and in hardcopy, offering readers a vibrant and immersive look into the cultural tapestry of the continent. In addition to covering festivals, *Festivals Afriq* will also explore their links to trade, tourism, and investment opportunities within Africa.

The magazine will delve into the heart of Africa's festivals, bringing to light the traditions, music, dance, and vibrant celebrations that define the continent. Each issue will feature in-depth articles, stunning photography, and insightful commentary, making it a must-read for anyone interested in Africa's cultural heritage.

Under Francis Doku's editorial

leadership, *Festivals Afriq* aims to become the premier magazine for African festivals, offering readers a rich and engaging experience. The magazine will not only celebrate the diversity and vibrancy of African festivals but also highlight their significant roles in promoting trade, tourism, and investment across the continent. This comprehensive approach will foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of Africa's cultural and economic landscape.

In summary, *Festivals Afriq* is a premier magazine dedicated to exploring and celebrating the diverse festivals of Africa. Through captivating stories, breathtaking photography, and insightful commentary, the magazine aims to highlight the rich cultural heritage of the continent. Additionally, *Festivals Afriq* will explore the critical links between festivals and economic drivers such as trade, tourism, and investment, offering readers an unparalleled journey into the heart of African traditions and their modern-day impacts in Francis Doku, the magazine had the right person to lead and grow it to the levels envisioned.

Follow us on Social Media at xxxxx for the latest updates and exclusive content from *Festivals Afriq*. FA

Why Festival Lovers Should Visit Ghana for “December in Gh”

Ghana, the vibrant heart of Africa, has become the ultimate destination for festival enthusiasts, particularly during the festive season. Dubbed “December in Gh,” this period transforms Ghana into a cultural and entertainment hub, attracting several hundreds of Ghanaians, Africans, and the African diaspora from the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe, and across the world.

There are many compelling reasons why festival lovers should make Ghana their destination this December this year and, in the future, but we share only five with you below.

Unmatched Festival Atmosphere: Ghana's festive season is unlike any other. The atmosphere is electrifying, with the entire country buzzing with excitement and anticipation. From Accra to Kumasi, to Cape Coast to Takoradi, to Tamale to Bolgatanga, every city and town comes alive with vibrant decorations, music, and an infectious festive spirit. The streets are filled with people celebrating, dancing, and enjoying the holiday season. This unique ambiance creates a sense of community and joy that festival lovers will find irresistible.

A Celebration of African Culture through Afro Future: One of the highlights of “December in Gh” is the production of big events such as Afro Future. Previously known as Afrochella, this is a festival that showcases the best of African culture, music, and art. Held annually in Accra, Afrochella brings together top African musicians, artists, and creatives for a day of spectacular performances, art installations, and cultural showcases. Festival-goers can immerse themselves in the rich tapestry of African heritage, enjoy delicious local cuisine and beverages, and connect with people from all over the world. It's a celebration of Africa's vibrant culture and creativity, making it a must-attend event.

A Diverse Range of Events and Activities: Besides Afro Future, “December in Gh” is packed with a diverse array of events and activities that cater to all interests and pockets. From high-energy music concerts and beach parties to traditional cultural festivals and art exhibitions, there is something for everyone. Major events like Little Havana, Full Circle, Detty Rave, and Rapperholic attract international artists and huge crowds, offering unforgettable experiences. Additionally, visitors can explore Ghana's rich history and heritage through tours of landmarks like the Cape Coast and Elmina Castles and the bustling markets of Accra and Kumasi.

A Warm and Welcoming Culture: Ghanaians are known for their warmth and hospitality, making visitors feel right at home. The friendly locals are always ready to share their culture and traditions with guests, ensuring a memorable

experience. During “December in Gh,” this hospitality is on full display, with locals eagerly inviting festival-goers to join in their celebrations. Whether it's sharing a meal, participating in traditional dances, or simply exchanging stories, the people of Ghana make every visitor feel like part of the family.

Connecting with the African Diaspora: “December in Gh” is more than just a series of festivals; it's a homecoming for the African diaspora. Thousands of people from the Caribbean, America, Europe, and beyond travel to Ghana to reconnect with their roots and celebrate their shared heritage. This creates a unique opportunity for cultural exchange and networking, as people from different backgrounds come together to celebrate their African identity. The sense of unity and belonging is palpable, making it an enriching experience for everyone involved.

Ghana's “December in Gh” offers an unparalleled festival experience, combining vibrant cultural celebrations, world-class events, and the warmth of Ghanaian hospitality. For festival lovers looking for an unforgettable holiday season, Ghana is the place to be. From the electrifying atmosphere and diverse range of activities to the rich cultural heritage and sense of community, “December in Gh” promises to be a highlight of the festive calendar. Pack your bags and get ready to immerse yourself in the magic of Ghana this December – you won't want to miss it!

Festivals Afriq is committed to bringing you the best of African festivals and cultural celebrations. Stay tuned for more exciting features and updates on the vibrant festival scenes across the continent. And for those who cannot be in Ghana for “December in Gh” we shall bring you all the festival juice in the next publication.



AfroBeach Festival

to thrill patrons with music, culture and arts in December

The maiden edition of the AfroBeach Festival, slated for December this year, promises lots of excitement after details were announced during a launch in Accra.

The celebration, to be hosted at the Laboma Beach Resort in Accra, is described as “a celebration of African music, culture, and entertainment,” which will attract an overwhelming number of guests from home and abroad.

There would be musical performances from renowned artistes, a culture and arts exhibition, fashion and design, and plenty of African food delights during the festival.

Part one of the show, according to the organisers, will take place from December 27-29, 2024, after which there will be an extension from December 31, 2024, to January 1, 2025.

In addition to a line-up of packed activities, the event aims to raise awareness about “environmental sustainability” and the importance of preserving aquatic life and livelihoods along the coast.

The celebration will spice up the variety of end-of-year carnivals in December and provide opportunities for local and international brands.

It will again promote the country’s rich cultural diversity, “unite communities

through music and art, and advocate for sustainable practices to address the challenge of climate change.”

Speaking at the launch on Saturday, Gilbert Abeiku Aggrey Santana, one of Ghana’s top tourism and hospitality entrepreneur, said that the show aimed to become “the biggest” beach and tourism event in Ghana and beyond.

Highlighting the importance of promoting tourism destinations, he said the rich history and cultural attractions along the country’s coasts “are worth celebrating” with events such as the AfroBeach Festival.

He noted that marine life was threatened by human activities and climate change, hence the effort by the organisers of the show to form stronger partnerships and create “sustainable projects” in line with Goal 13 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“Life along the coast coupled with sustainable practices are worth bringing to the limelight to show their potential for investment and ultimate development through tourism-led initiatives. We all have a role to play in the promotion and further development of the coastal areas of Ghana, Africa and the world.

“Through the AfroBeach Foundation, we will create and embark on sustainable



projects to adapt and sustain lives across the coastal lines of Ghana and Africa,” Santana said.

The tourism ambassador described Laboma Beach as one of the “safest places” to visit, adding that the AfroBeach Festival would provide “a Christmas and New Year experience” for participants.

Abeiku Santana further stated that the event is open for engagements for further partnerships, sponsorships, vendor registrations and collaborations in ensuring safer coastlines in line with the goals of the Global SDGs.

Madam Rita Naa Odoley Sowah, Member of Parliament for La Dade Kotopon Constituency, who was one of the Special Guest for the launch, pledged support for the festival and urged individuals and businesses to come on board.

Emmanuel Odonkor Baah, chief superintendent, Kpeshie Divisional Police Commander, also said the police and other security agencies would adopt the best strategies to protect merrymakers at the festival.



Travel & Tourism Blitz

Bongalo & Ojimah announce strategic partnership to boost tourism and empower African travelers



Bongalo and Ojimah have entered a first-of-its-kind partnership to boost tourism in Africa and elevate travel experiences. Both companies are leveraging technology to develop and enhance travel services, including unique travel products, providing simplicity and convenience to African travelers.

The collaboration marks a significant milestone in the African travel sector as it aims to elevate the tourism industry through a multifaceted approach. This includes helping to plan trips, offering accurate and up-to-date travel information, providing convenient and cost-effective booking services for travel activities, as well as other services that enhance convenience and safety during travel.

Mr. Mike Tavares, Ojimah's Chief Executive Officer, intimated "Ojimah is embarking on an exciting journey of innovation, introducing new solutions to meet the dynamic needs of today's travelers and contribute to the development of a robust travel ecosystem. It is our strategic move to be an integral part to support the African travel ecosystem. Recognizing a surge in tourism demand, shifting spending behaviors, and emerging trends, our partnership with Bongalo will create synergies and strengthen our commitment to support the ecosystem."

Zambia Travel Expo 2024 rescheduled for next year



The Zambia Tourism Agency has announced the postponement of the highly anticipated Zambia Travel Expo (ZATEX) scheduled for June 13th to 15th, 2024. The event, which was set to take place at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka, Zambia, will now be rescheduled for 2025.

In a statement released by the agency, the decision to postpone the expo was attributed to unforeseen circumstances. While specifics regarding the nature of these circumstances were not disclosed, the agency expressed regret for any inconvenience caused by the rescheduling.

"We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience arising from this decision," the statement read.

The agency assured stakeholders that the Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka would remain the venue for ZATEX in 2025. However, exact dates for the event will be communicated following consultations with all stakeholders involved.

"We look forward to your cooperation and continued partnership as we embark on pre-event preparations for ZATEX to be held next year," the statement continued.

For further inquiries regarding the postponement, stakeholders have been advised to contact Betty Chabala at betty.chabala@zambia.travel, zatex@zambia.travel, or theoffice@africastzambia.org.

JW Marriott Unveils a Mindful Haven with the Opening of JW Marriott Hotel Nairobi



JW Marriott part of Marriott Bonvoy's portfolio of over 30 extraordinary hotel brands, today unveils its second property in Kenya with the opening of JW Marriott Hotel Nairobi. Standing as the tallest hotel in the country with 35 stories in the Westlands commercial district, JW Marriott Hotel Nairobi captures the essence of Kenya's natural beauty and heritage, offering travellers a peaceful escape for the mind, body, and soul.

"As JW Marriott expands its presence in Africa, the brand enriches the region with a legacy of luxurious hospitality, seamlessly weaving together its dedication to holistic well-being and fostering meaningful connections throughout the continent," said Helen Leighton, Vice President, Luxury Brands & Communications, Marriott International, Europe, Middle East & Africa. "JW Marriott Hotel Nairobi perfectly embodies the city's contemporary yet mindful urban lifestyle. The property combines the warmth of African hospitality with serene spaces where guests can disconnect from distraction, focus on the present moment, and reconnect with what matters most to them."

The hotel features 315 sophisticated guestrooms, five internationally-inspired dining destinations, a luxury Spa by JW, swimming pool, fitness center, and eight exceptional event spaces for gatherings and celebrations. An additional 51 spacious serviced apartments and a sky bar & lounge are slated to open later in the year.

Centenary Bank & Ministry of Tourism partner to boost Malawi's economy



In a move aimed at growing and promoting the tourism industry in Malawi and beyond, the Ministry of Tourism and Centenary Bank Limited have entered into an agreement to work together through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

A signing ceremony took place in Lilongwe on 4th April, 2024.

The partnership aligns with the government's "ATM" strategy which focuses on creating jobs and wealth creation through Agriculture, Tourism and Mining.

Speaking during the signing ceremony of the MoU, Chief Commercial Officer for Centenary Bank, Bernard Mkandawire said, "We are excited to enter into this agreement with the Ministry of Tourism as it aligns with our bank's goals of providing inclusive financial services to transform people's lives. This deal allows us to support tourism businesses, workers and local communities to achieve economic growth."

As part of the agreement, Centenary Bank will offer tailor-made products in accounts, loans and insurance plans to help tourism enterprises and their employees. The bank said that through its bureaus, it will provide foreign currency exchange services for tourists visiting Malawi to make their travel experiences smoother.

In his remarks, the Principal Secretary for Tourism, Chauncy Simwaka thanked the bank for creating special products for the tourism sector, which will also fast track the recovery of the country's economy. He further, encouraged both teams to be open to new ideas as they work together on the activities outlined in the agreement.

OnShow Solutions appointed as Africa partner for ITB Asia



OnShow Solutions, renowned global organisers of roadshows and exhibitions, have been announced as the Africa representative for Messe-Berlin Singapore, a pivotal move in fortifying African presence in the global tourism arena.

Having supported ITB Asia since its inception in 2008, OnShow Solutions will work closely with African tourism boards, private-sector products and tour operators to forge a unified African presence at the forthcoming event scheduled for October.

The company's newly acquired status as a representative of ITB Asia heralds significant prospects for businesses seeking to expand their footprint beyond Asia. ITB Asia 2024 is slated to grace the iconic Marina Bay Sands, Singapore from Wednesday, 23 October to Friday, 25 October 2024.

Namibia's First Hilton Garden Inn Opens in Windhoek



Hilton has announced the opening of Hilton Garden Inn Windhoek, marking the debut of the global hospitality company's upscale and affordable Hilton Garden Inn brand in Namibia.

Conveniently located close to the central business district, the 174-guest room hotel sits within 500 metres of the Independence Museum and the Craft Market and is just one kilometre away from the National Art Gallery of Namibia. Overlooking scenic city views, Hilton Garden Inn Windhoek boasts contemporary accommodations featuring rooms and suites reflective of the city's local and indigenous art.

Amos Mworia, general manager, Hilton Garden Inn Windhoek, Hilton said, "We are thrilled to open Hilton Garden Inn Windhoek - marking the brand's debut in Namibia. Windhoek, Namibia's capital city, is known as the social, economic, and cultural hub of the country, making it an ideal location to grow our Africa presence. We look forward to providing reliable and friendly hospitality to domestic and international travellers looking for an upscale yet affordable stay in Namibia."



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AHIF 2023 Featured

500+ attendees	72% International delegates	40+ countries represented	16% Investors	90+ leading industry speakers	3 Days of business - critical networking	30+ sponsoring companies
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AHIF 2024 will offer participants exclusive access to inspection trips showcasing top-notch investment projects and tourist attractions in Namibia. These experiences are exceptionally valuable, as they set the pace for multiple days of networking opportunities with local and international senior level executives.



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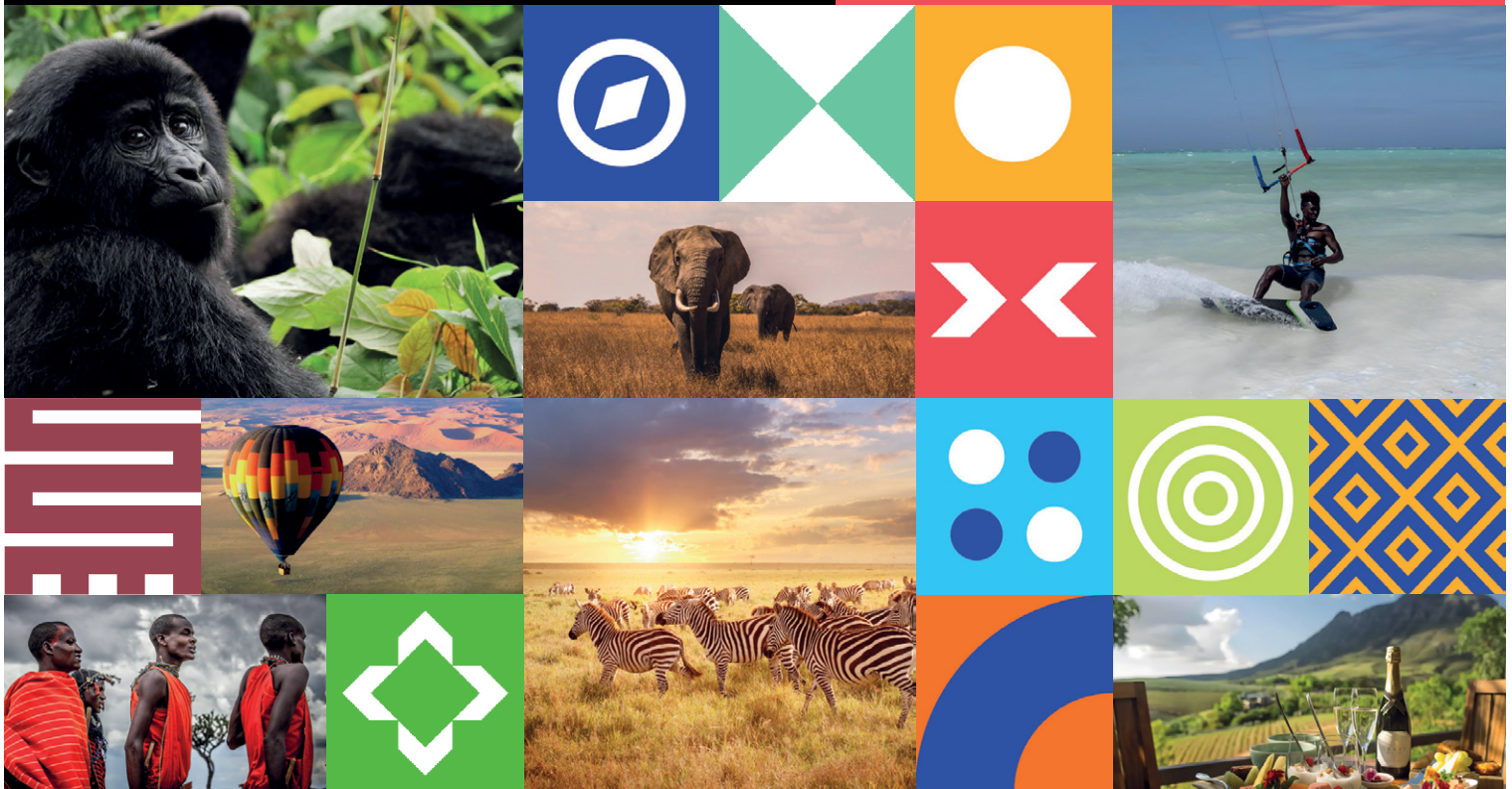
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