

VOYAGES **AFRIQ**

ISSUE 015 | April 2021 Edition

Travel and Tourism Magazine

EXPLORING TOURISM'S BEST KEPT SECRET IN RWANDA: the land of a thousand hills



UNWTO Impressed with Morocco's Preparations for General Assembly

Personality Profile - Caroline Abel



ISSN 2550-3405
9 772550 340004



The Seychelles Islands...



© Michel Denousse

Visit to Discover :

- The Unique Diversity of 115 Islands
- Friendly people with various Ethnicities & Cultures
- A wide Range of Accommodation and Activities
- Land of Perpetual Summer
- A safe country with no Cyclone and Hurricanes

For more information : please visit : www.seychelles.travel



Escape.



GONDWANA
COLLECTION
NAMIBIA

www.gondwana-collection.com
info@gondwana-collection.com

NAMIBIA

IN THIS ISSUE



4 UNWTO Impressed with Morocco's preparations for 24th General Assembly



7 Zurab Pololikashvili receives overwhelming 2nd mandate to Lead UNWTO For Four More Years

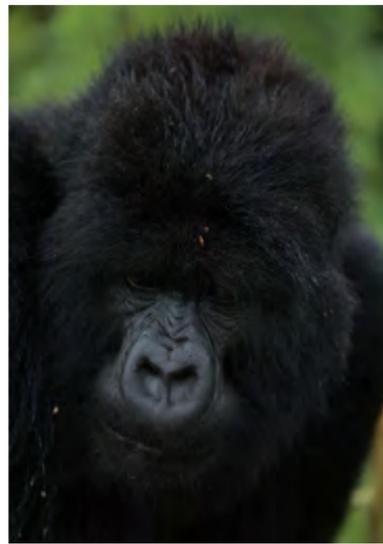
10 Ghana's Ambassador to Spain presents Credentials to UNWTO Scribe

12 UNWTO welcomes EU support and urges Europe to lead



16 Personality Profile - Ms Caroline Abel

19 How visitor attractions can respond to guests' needs during covid-19



20 Exploring Tourism's Best Kept Secret In Rwanda: The Land of a Thousand Hills



32 Ghana targets \$5 billion tourism revenue by 2022

34 Kigali Arena to host Inaugural Basketball Africa League



38 Siandou Fofana retained as Tourism Minister to lead Sublime Cote d'Ivoire agenda

39 African Group at UNESCO courts support for African World Heritage Fund

40 2021 and the 4th Africa Business and MICE Masterclass birth Action Group for Africa Meetings

44 Celebrating Sustainability Champions



47 Ethiopian Airlines Joins African Union to Launch Test and Vaccine Passport

49 AviaDev Africa 2021 goes virtual



49 Marriott International Appoints Anthony Capuano as New CEO And Stephanie Linnartz as President

56 "PEOPLE BEFORE PROFITS" is critical to the long-term Success of Hotels- Tim Cordon writes



59 Tour of African Gastronomy Talk Series

COVID-19: TOURISM MUST BE PART OF RECOVERY PLANS



VOYAGESAFRIQ

ISSUE 015 | April 2021 Edition | Travel and Tourism Magazine

EDITORIAL TEAM

Managing Editor
Kojo Bentum-Williams

Consulting Editor
Ben Ohene-Ayeh

Content Editor
Samuel Obeng Appah

Editor at Large
Ridwan Ibrahim Asante

Sustainability Editor
Mafalda Borea

Contributing Writers
Michael Sudarkasa
Franck Olivier Kra
Jason Amoo
Marian Ansah
Yasmine Fofana
Emmanuella Nana Akua Asare

Administration/Marketing
Jennifer Nyavor
Glaou Eddie Fortune
Symphorien Kouabile
Michel Kouassi

Creative Lead
Nana Yaw Ofosuhenne

Photo Credit
UNWTO
Gilbert Amankwah Ampofo
Rwanda Development Board
Prince Charles Affum
Reeves
Shane
Vanessa Lucas-STB
Alex Tackie
DUSHIME Gedeon Reeves
ASHIMWE Constantin

Publisher
 Voyages Afric Media Ltd.

Africa's leading Travel and Tourism Magazine

Dear Readers,

Let me use this opportunity to wish you a Happy New Year!

It's indeed been a tough 12 months with difficult times on the back of the enormous effects of the coronavirus virus on the tourism sector.

The new variant of the virus has further pummeled the sector, and Africa was not spared the devastating impacts. The reintroduction of restrictions inadvertently eroded the gains made to restart the tourism sector during the last quarter of 2020.

Once again, Africa's management of the pandemic is an enviable one. A decent level of stability has been seen across the region and has seen some resemblance of confidence coming back.

This issue which is our first one for the year 2021 is filled with significant updates and activities from the tourism sector in the first quarter. It gives a vivid account of how destinations in Africa are managing the situation amidst the important push for intra-Africa travels across board.

The cover feature of the 15th issue has the spotlight on Rwanda. The Land of a Thousand Hills continues to use tourism as a force for good and readers will be thrilled by the impressive developments in the East African country.

As has been a feature of VoyagesAfric, the personality profile column shines light on Ms. Caroline Abel, the Governor of the Central Bank of Seychelles. Ms Abel discusses how the island's central bank is balancing the management of the economy and helping to save the tourism sector. The indefatigable personality takes us on a tour of her life.

A visit by the Ghanaian trade and tourism delegation to Rwanda was a major step towards cooperation by African countries to give meaning to intra-Africa travels.

The silent talk of the tourism effects on the AfCFTA is worrying and gives credence to the perennial issues of tourism neglect by the highest office of the continent. This has inspired us to introduce the AfCFTA Tourism conversations with astute business executive Michael Sudarkasa as writer.





His maiden piece in the magazine gives an overview of what we may be missing by not highlighting the importance of the tourism and travel industry.

We also welcome a new member to our editorial team, Mafalda Borea who will be taking charge of our sustainable tourism section. She is the CEO of Sustainable First. We celebrate our continent's heroes already leading by example and creating a positive impact in the industry in our new feature "Celebrating Sustainability Champions". Judy Kepher Gona is our first guest!

The World Tourism Organization continues to lead a sector battered severely by Covid-19 to restart in a safe and responsible way. Its Secretary General Zurab Pololikashvili who received an overwhelming endorsement by members of the Executive Council to lead the Madrid-based UN Organization for another 4-year term is expected to harmonise travel and tourism protocols to accelerate

tourism recovery. Mr Pololikashvili has stated strongly that, it is when countries are engaging along with international partners that we can be able to restart tourism.

The Kingdom of Morocco's preparations for the 24th UNWTO General Assembly has been praised by the UN Tourism Organization after a technical visit by the team from Madrid. The Kingdom's Minister in an interview with VoyagesAfriq reiterated their commitment to hosting a world-class event.

This edition also has dedicated a page for the promotion of Africa's gastronomy which was brought to the spotlight by the launch of the Tour of the African Gastronomy by UNWTO.

This issue is filled with the latest information making waves in the tourism sector and we hope patrons will enjoy the read.



Your Most Credible Travel and Tourism News Source



Get Interactive & Connect with us on #VoyagesAfriq

www.voyagesafriq.com

Copyright subsists in all published in this magazine. Any reproduction or adaptation, in whole or in part, without written permission of the publishers is strictly prohibited and is an act of copyright infringement which may in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence. The paper used for this production is a recyclable and renewable product. It has been produced using wood sourced from sustainably managed forests and elemental or total chlorine free bleached pulp.

Correspondence:
Voyages Afriq Travel Magazine
Office Location

Accra Tourist Information Centre
Off Liberation Road, Accra – Ghana
Ghana Office line: +233 30 397 2764
Info@voyagesafriq.com

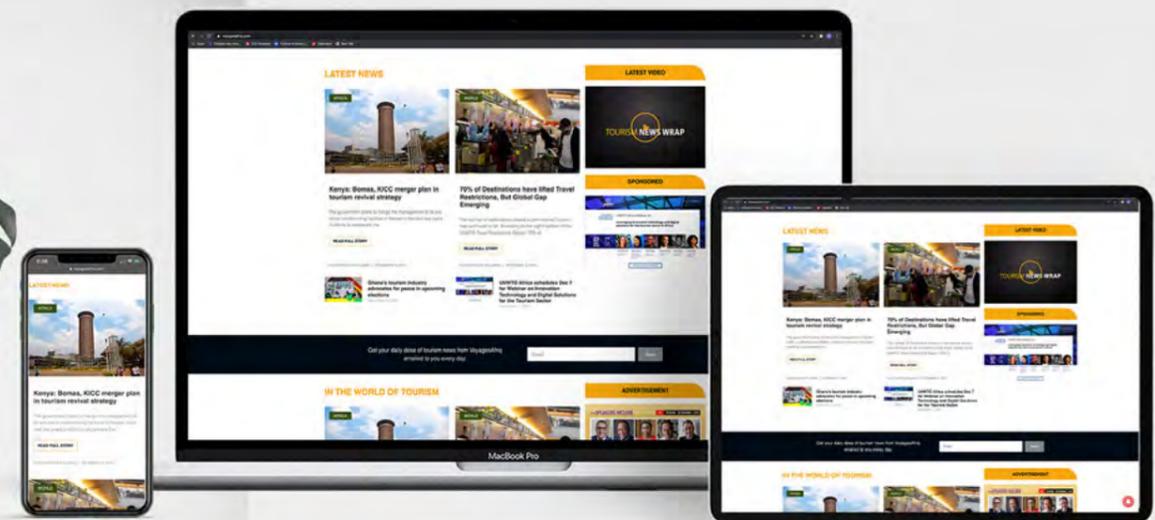
France Office

6 Impasse Robert Labarre 49300
Cholet - France
+33 753 082 350

UK Office line: +44 744 849 4933



e : info@voyagesafriq.com
w : www.voyagesafriq.com



Never miss travel updates on VA Tourism Podcast & Tourism News Wrap. We go beyond reporting to connect the Tourism Sector.

UNWTO Technical Visit to Morocco in Pictures



• Morocco's Minister of Tourism, Handicrafts, Air Transport, and Social Economy Nadia Fettah Alaoui and the UNWTO Secretary General Zurab Pololikashvili display copies of the agreement signed during the visit



• UNWTO Secretary General, Zurab Pololikashvili



• The Wali of the Marrakech Safi Karim Kassi-Lahlou



• The Visiting UNWTO Team being toured around the YVES Museum



• Nadia Fettah Alaoui, Morocco's Minister of Tourism, Handicrafts, Air Transport, and Social Economy

UNWTO Impressed with Morocco's preparations for 24TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Kingdom of Morocco met to advance the organization of the 24th UNWTO General Assembly in October 2021. It is the first global high-level United Nations event to be held since the beginning of the pandemic.

Led by the Secretary-General, Zurab Pololikashvili, a delegation from UNWTO has concluded an official visit to Morocco to discuss the programme, calendar and facilities to be prepared for this statutory meeting that will focus on Education and Youth, Rural Development and Digital Innovation.

The Minister of Tourism of Morocco, Nadia Fettah Alaoui, and her team accompanied the delegation during the three-day visit and expressed their commitment to organizing an "historic" General Assembly to showcase the importance of restarting international tourism in a safe and more sustainable way.

The Prime Minister of Morocco, Saadeddine Othmani and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nasser Bourita welcomed

the UNWTO Secretary-General in Rabat highlighting the importance of the celebration and the high-level support of the host country. The delegation was also received by the Governor of Marrakesh-Safi region, Karim Kassi Lahlou, and other local authorities and representatives of the private sector of the area that will be strongly involved in the preparations for the meeting.

Secretary-General Pololikashvili thanked the Prime Minister and his government for their "hard work" to ensure that the Assembly will be a success on the back of the unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. He said: "Tourism is adapting to the new reality and we face the future with optimism and with the backing of our Members."



• Zurab Pololikashvili and the Prime Minister of Morocco Saad-Eddine El Othmani in an elbow shake



• Zhanna Yakovleva, UNWTO's Chief of Cabinet



• Elcia Grandcourt - Director of Africa Department, UNWTO



• Meeting at the office of the Prime Minister

UNWTO Technical Visit to Morocco in Pictures



• The Visiting UNWTO Delegation had a tour of Medina of Marrakech



• Meeting with the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Kingdom of Morocco Mr. Nasser Bourita



• Tarik Sadik – Director of Strategy and Cooperation



• The Minister of Tourism and the UNWTO Secretary General at the Medina of Marrakech



• Group photo with tourism stakeholders after a meeting of UNWTO delegation and Wali of the Marrakech Safi Karim Kassi-Lahlou



• The Wali of the Marrakech Safi Karim Kassi-Lahlou and UNWTO Secretary General



• Members of the UNWTO delegation



• A snap at the Yves Saint Laurent Museum



ZURAB POLOLIKASHVILI RECEIVES OVERWHELMING 2ND MANDATE TO LEAD UNWTO FOR FOUR MORE YEARS

The Executive Council of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has expressed its continued support for Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili. Meeting in Madrid, its members nominated him to continue leading the United Nations specialized agency for four more years.

At the end of the 113th session of the Executive Council, held as a hybrid event in Madrid the Spanish capital, members voted in person and in secret for their choice of leader for 2022-2025. Incumbent Pololikashvili won 76% of the votes in a process where the Kingdom of Bahrain also put forward a candidate - Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa - for the position, Her Excellency congratulated Mr Pololikashvili on his win and the Government of Bahrain expressed its support for UNWTO.

Mr Pololikashvili had based his campaign for re-election both on the progressive institutional and policy reforms undertaken during his first term, and on his clear

leadership of global tourism throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Council's recommendations will be carried forward to the 24th Session of the UNWTO General Assembly, due to be held in Marrakesh, Morocco, towards the end of the year.

In Madrid, both the President of the Government of Spain, Pedro Sánchez, and His Majesty King Felipe VI expressed their support for UNWTO and its leadership. The Secretary-General has also laid the foundation for seizing the momentum of the rollout of vaccines to ensure a harmonized approach to the return to safe and seamless international travel.





• The Prime Minister of Spain Pedro Sanchez addressing the Executive Council



• Delegates at the 113th Executive Council Meeting in Madrid



• The Bahrain Delegation at the Council



• UNWTO Secretary General presenting his report at the council

UNWTO outdoors 'A Tour of African Gastronomy' to celebrate continent's diverse food culture

The 96 page document pays homage to the unique culinary experiences of several countries on the African continent.

It features background information of selected chefs from Algeria through to Zimbabwe who also take readers through recipes of at least one of their respective countries most savoury dishes.

"Through the history of humanity, food has always been an essential aspect of a community's life, where strangers, friends and family members gather, share stories, create memories and even make history," says Elcia Grandcourt, Director, Regional Department for Africa, UNWTO.

She adds: "But gastronomy is much more than food. It is the beautiful connection between culture, people and food. In particular, African gastronomy is made up of all the influences of its thousands of ethnicities, environment, traditions, ancient and modern history, reflecting countries' rich identities."

Grandcourt stated that more than ever before, African gastronomy is being recognized, such as the recent inscription of "couscous," a dish from Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

"I invite you to join me on this journey in discovering the bursting flavours of our colourful gastronomy," the Director beseeches.

Touching on the importance of Gastronomy to tourism, UNWTO Secretary General, Zurab Pololikashvili said in many parts of the world, gastronomy has grown to become an important part of the entire tourism value chain, not only supporting jobs and businesses but also promoting destinations and contributing to sustainable development.

"Enhancing the image of Africa as a diverse destination is among the main priorities of the UNWTO Agenda for Africa. The continent offers a wide range of unique experiences, including its rich array of local gastronomy. All of them deserve a place in the spotlight, to open new windows for people to discover Africa's tastes, cultures and people," he averred.

A simple act like sharing a meal with locals, he said, brings people together.

Pololikashvili adds that it is at the foundation of a new approach to building cultural bonds, empowering communities and contributing to the preservation of the culture and heritage of the world's oldest inhabited continent. The benefits go beyond tourism itself.

"Gastronomy tourism has an active role to play in rural development, education, the inclusion of vulnerable populations and poverty eradication, to name but a few examples of its potential contribution to Africa's future," the Secretary General postulated.

• Chef El Hadi of Morocco and UNWTO Secretary General Zurab Pololikashvili



Ghana's Ambassador to Spain presents Credentials to UNWTO Scribe



• The Ambassador presenting his credentials to the Secretary General, with them is the Director of Africa Department Elcia Grandcourt

Ghana's newly appointed envoy to Spain, H.E. Muhammed Adam has presented his Letters of Credence to the Secretary-General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Zurab Pololikashvili.

The Secretary-General on receiving the Ambassador said that "Ghana is determined to restart tourism around education, advancing coordination, empowering young people and promoting gastronomy tourism." "You have our full support!" he assured.

UNWTO's Regional Director for Africa, Elcia Grandcourt

commenting stated that this is a time where the organisation needs to remain connected with its members more than ever before to ensure better coordination and cooperation as they work towards the recovery of the tourism sector.

"It was a pleasure and refreshing to meet with H.E. Muhammad Adam, Ambassador of Ghana to Spain as he presented his credentials to the Secretary-General and also talk about the future of the sector. It was also an opportunity for him to share the initiatives that Ghana has been undertaking to restart their tourism sector," she added.

Namibia set to host UNWTO Brand Africa Confab in June

Namibia is set to hold Regional Conference on Tourism and Brand Africa in the second quarter of the year.

The Southern African country was initially pencilled to host the brand conference last year but was put on hold as a result of the Coronavirus.

The Country's capital of Windhoek will host Tourism Ministers, experts and stakeholders from 14-16 June 2021.

During his four-day state visit to Namibia in November 2020, the Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Zurab Pololikashvili said, they are committed to holding the event in Namibia next year and in consultation with the Namibian Government will fix a date for the event.

He added that, the conference will be an opportune

platform to look for new ways to make Africa a must visit destination and position it in the minds of travelers.

Speaking on National TV, the UNWTO Boss said, "it was possible to restart tourism in a responsible way which will help protect livelihoods."

On his impression of the country, he said Namibia is open for tourism and was impressed with the protocols put in place at the port of entry as well as at major tourism establishments.

The UNWTO Agenda for Africa identifies branding as a major area to help create a positive image of Africa as a tourism destination that supports the efforts of individual countries and companies, tells the many positive stories about Africa and make tourism a driver of development.

UN Agencies Partner for Guide to help Women in Tourism recover from Crisis



• Maasai Women in Amboseli, Kenya

As the sector enters the second year of an unprecedented crisis, the impact this has had on women in tourism has been made clear. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the pandemic, and the unprecedented drop in international tourist arrivals, risks rolling back progress made towards achieving gender equality and efforts to empower women and girls.

UNWTO is marking 'International Women's Day 2021' with the release of its Inclusive Recovery Guide for women in tourism, compiled in collaboration with UN Women.

UNWTO data shows that women make up the majority of the tourism workforce (54%). Women in tourism are also often concentrated in low-skilled or informal work. This means that they are feeling the economic shock caused by the crisis more acutely and quicker than their male counterparts. In many cases, they are cut off from the social and healthcare protections that are so vital in a global pandemic.

Crisis "has a woman's face"

The Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres says, "As the world marks International Women's Day in the midst of a global pandemic, one stark fact is clear: the COVID-19 crisis has a woman's face." UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili adds, "Tourism is a proven driver of equality and opportunity. This unprecedented crisis has hit our sector's women fast and hard, which is why gender equality and empowerment must be at centre

Tourism is a proven driver of equality and opportunity

stage as we work together to restart tourism and accelerate recovery."

Recommendations for inclusive recovery

Almost one year on since the pandemic was officially declared, the negative impact it is having on women and girls has become devastatingly clear. This increase in women's economic and social insecurity combined with the observed rise in unpaid care work and domestic violence means that women in tourism have been disproportionately affected by the devastating effects of the pandemic on the sector.

The Inclusive Recovery Guide provides recommendations to policymakers, businesses and civil society actors in tourism for designing gender-responsive measures in response to the ongoing pandemic.

UNWTO WELCOMES EU SUPPORT AND URGES EUROPE TO LEAD



• EU Vice President, Margaritis Schinas in conversation with Zurab Pololikashvili during the former's visit to Madrid

Only with strong and coordinated political action can Europe reopen to tourism in time for the peak summer season. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has again stressed the importance of collaboration as it welcomed European Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas to Madrid for a high-level meeting focused on the joined-up response to the ongoing crisis, and on advancing plans for tourism's vital restart.

As the latest data shows an 85% fall in tourist arrivals across Europe at the start of 2021, the UNWTO has noted Europe can set a global example by restarting the sector. Given tourism's huge socio-economic importance, the benefits that will accompany the return of tourism in time for the peak European season will be felt well outside of the sector itself. This heightened relevance of tourism reflected in the visit of the highest-level European Union delegation to UNWTO headquarters to date. Meeting with the Vice-President, UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili further emphasised the need for harmonized protocols and digital solutions to make safe international travel possible.

UNWTO has congratulated the European Commission for taking the lead and advancing plans to launch its Digital Green Pass, recognizing its potential to restart tourism in a number of destinations. At the same time, the UNWTO leadership also credited the Commission's intentions to support national recovery and resilience plans, as well as the recent launch of the 'Re-Open EU' website and mobile app, both of which effectively complement UNWTO's own global #RestartTourism campaign.

Tourism for economic and social wellbeing

Secretary-General Pololikashvili said: "Across Europe, millions of people and businesses are depending on the right decisions to be made so that tourism can restart. Today's visit of Vice-President Margaritis Schinas is testament to the importance of tourism to economic and

social wellbeing across the European Union. Now more than ever, tourism needs strong political support and joined-up action. Harmonized travel and health rules are essential to restore confidence and restart tourism."

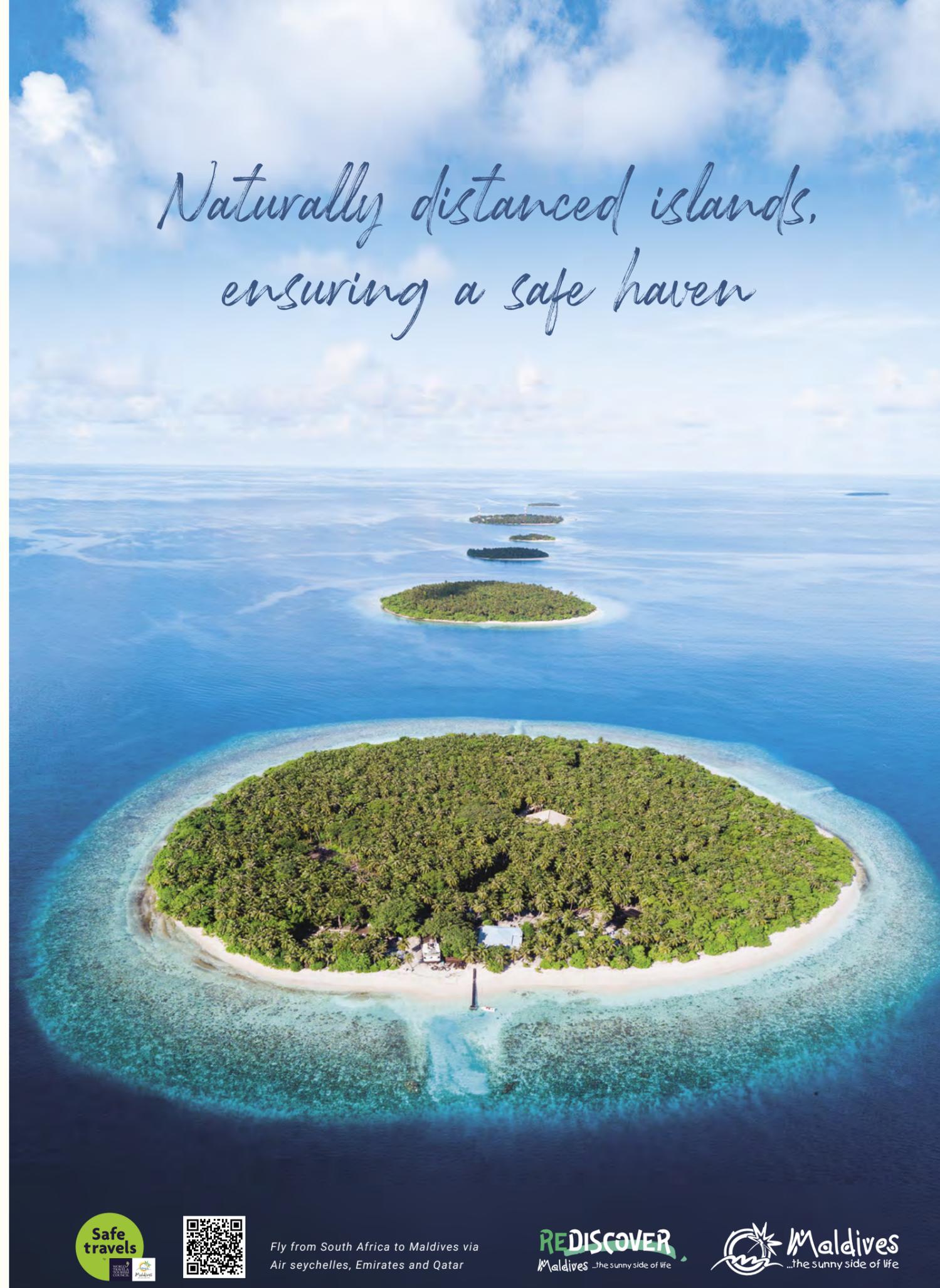
Vice-President Margaritis Schinas adds: "With vaccinations and better management of the crisis, there is no doubt this summer will be better than last. Reopening borders will have an impact beyond tourism. It will drive Europe's overall recovery. And Europe will not return on its own. Europe is part of the world and we are ready find a way that the European Green Pass works with solutions provided by countries or groups of countries from outside the EU."

Strong, ongoing collaboration

UNWTO has been working closely with the European institutions since the start of the pandemic. The UNWTO World Tourism Barometer and Travel Restrictions Report provide trusted data to guide the European Commission's response, as well as the policies of individual EU Member States. In Madrid, Vice-President Schinas was briefed on the progress UNWTO is making towards establishing a first International Code for the Protection of Tourists, a vital step towards restoring confidence in travel.

The Vice-President also signalled his availability to participate in the next meeting of UNWTO's Global Tourism Crisis Committee, a cross-sector body established at the start of the crisis and now focusing on resuming safe international travel, restoring confidence and ensuring tourism businesses the liquidity they need to survive and protect jobs. In recognition of his long-standing contributions to European tourism and his recognition of the importance of the sector to the European Way of Life, Secretary-General Pololikashvili presented Vice-President Schinas with a plaque to commemorate his visit to the UNWTO headquarters.

*Naturally distanced islands,
ensuring a safe haven*



Fly from South Africa to Maldives via
Air Seychelles, Emirates and Qatar

REDISCOVER
Maldives ...the sunny side of life

Maldives
...the sunny side of life

Clear Communications to Restore Trust

Communications has been at the forefront of the COVID-19 response. UNWTO set the tone with a clear, consistent, and unhurried communications strategy. This allowed for clear and effective messages, so critical in times of uncertainty and when even the tourism sector itself was faced with conflicting information.

UNWTO's communications successes combine to build trust, the foundation for tourism's return. Considered positioning, meaningful content, and prioritising data over opinion, provide reassurance amid uncertainty. How was this achieved?

Evidence-based and people-centered

UNWTO did not give in to pressure to make predictions on the pandemic's potential impact on the tourism economy - all of which proved to be wrong as they ignored the unprecedented nature of the challenge facing the world. Instead, the focus was on establishing a renewed 'tourism for development' narrative based on the sector's proven core development impact. The narrative was people-centred, with a strong visual focus.

This focus on relevant content was coupled with UNWTO's monitoring of global policy responses affecting tourism. The outcome was a communications product ready to be propelled into the mainstream by top-tier media. UNWTO's digital outreach matched the search for meaningful tourism content which followed the 2020 spike in worldwide awareness of the sector's social and cultural relevance - and not just its economic importance. All this helped position trusted single source of tourism intelligence like never before.

From #TravelTomorrow to #RestartTourism

Strategic Communications is an intrinsic part of the broader mission of UNWTO. This was reflected in UNWTO's call to stay home today to #TravelTomorrow, which early into the pandemic united the sector behind a message of solidarity and stressed the responsibilities of individual tourists. With a shift in narrative to #RestartTourism, UNWTO's communications address the cornerstones of the process of rethinking the sector to grow back better, structured around sustainability, inclusivity and innovation.

Further validating the timeliness and relevance of this communications approach, CNN International broadcast at no cost the #TravelTomorrow (May to July to 2020) and #RestartTourism (December 2020 to January 2021)



• Marcelo Risi, Chief of Communications, UNWTO

campaigns to hundreds of millions of households in Africa, Asia & Pacific, Europe, the Middle East and Latin America.

Part of the UN's response

UNWTO's communications are an active part of the wider United Nations' communications response to COVID-19, including the active promotion of the UN's 'Verified' initiative, aimed at delivering trusted information and fact-based advice.

UNWTO's analysis and messages were regularly amplified through UN communications channels. The landmark repeated recognition and support for both tourism and UNWTO by the leadership of the UN stands out. UN Secretary-General António Guterres also issued the 'Policy Brief: COVID-19 and Transforming Tourism' under his name, co-authored by UNWTO.

Data-based and human-centered-information are at the basis of guiding the tourism sector objectively, providing strong support to Member States and partners, while reassuring tourists and tourism businesses. Effective communications have made clear that the benefits of tourism's restart go beyond the economic impact and reach further than tourism. Due to the breadth and diversity of the sector's value chain, tourism has never been more relevant, as UNWTO's communications make clear.

Author: Marcelo Risi, Chief of Communications, UNWTO



As Ghana's first ISO certified hotel in West Africa, Accra city hotel guarantees nothing short of excellence. From exceptional dining experiences in its recently refurbished restaurant to productive times in its modern business conference rooms.

The establishment also boasts 196 splendidly furnished guest rooms; suites, designed to give guests a perfect restful night. In addition to its wellness centre is a tennis court and an open lawn area for weddings and other large events.

It is the
ultimate
hotel for your stay in Ghana all year round.

UNWTO's analysis and messages were regularly amplified through UN communications channels. The landmark repeated recognition and support for both tourism and UNWTO by the leadership of the UN stands out. UN Secretary-General António Guterres also issued the 'Policy Brief: COVID-19 and Transforming Tourism' under his name, co-authored by UNWTO.

Up-close with **MS CAROLINE ABEL** Governor, Central Bank of Seychelles

For nearly a decade, Ms Caroline Abel, has served as Governor of Central Bank of Seychelles, excelling in a field which is highly dominated by males. Even much more impressive is how she has been able to make the central bank relevant in these difficult times of Covid-19 pandemic which has hit hard at Seychelles with its tourism-dependent economy. In this exclusive conversation, Ms. Caroline opens up on what has accounted for her successes and the role the central bank is playing towards recovery.

Can you tell us briefly about yourself and your family?

I live on the main island of Mahé, in my home district since birth where I grew up in a close-knit family with my parents and younger sister. I would describe myself as compassionate, have a passion for helping others and attach great importance to hard work and education. These are all values I try to pass on to other people I come across in all walks of life.

Despite my responsibilities at the helm of the institution that has the crucial role of ensuring economic and financial stability, I also enjoy other things, such as going to church and reading, which the latter I firmly believe is important to keep abreast of the latest development. I also value my family, which I would describe as my pillar of support in all circumstances, and I try to spend as much time with them as possible.

What does it mean for you to be the first Seychellois woman to occupy this position?

The question does not fail to come up in every interview and it always presents an opportunity to highlight my firm belief that being a man or a woman makes no difference, as long as you are prepared to discharge your duties with zeal and confidence.

Since becoming Governor in March 2012, I have always focused on the role itself.

I have worked across all the different divisions and units of the Bank, which means I have received the technical training and exposure necessary to gain a holistic understanding of Central Banking. Over the years, I have also worked very closely with former governors of the Bank, which has inspired me to develop my full potential and allowed me to settle into the role of Governor.

As with every position of responsibility, particularly at the helm of an institution, you become acutely aware that you are now responsible and accountable for every decision, which can be an overwhelming thought at first. However, with time you learn to navigate and better manage the challenges and pressure of the role.

It has been an enriching experience as well as a learning curve. Most importantly, it has been and continues to be a pleasure to work with a supportive and dedicated team to collectively address any emerging challenges, take decisions and move forward to attain the objectives of this very important institution.

Tell us about your career path within the bank up to when you were appointed as Governor. How has it been like?

My Central Banking career stems from my passion for Mathematics, which I studied along with Economics and Geography at Advanced Level at the Seychelles Polytechnic's School of Humanities and Sciences. Adamant on gaining some work experience before undertaking further studies, I took up a junior position at the Social Security Fund in December 1993, although I had qualified for a government scholarship to pursue university studies abroad. My abilities did not go unnoticed, which led to my transfer to the Central Bank of Seychelles (CBS) in March 1994. I was formally appointed as Senior Bank Clerk in September 1994 after a six-month probationary period.

I eventually proceeded for university studies, graduating with a BA in Economics, with Distinction from the University of Leeds in 1999. I then returned to the Central Bank to work as a Research Officer in the Research and Statistics Division, progressing to become a Senior Research Officer in the same Division in 2001 and subsequently, Director of Research in 2002.

In 2004, I decided to pursue a Masters in Philosophy (MPhil) in Monetary Economics and Finance at the University of Glasgow, graduating with Distinction in 2005. Back to work in the Research and Statistics Division after my studies, a year later, I was promoted to Head of Research and Statistics, a post I held until I was appointed Deputy Governor in July 2010.

I was appointed First Deputy Governor in December 2011, following amendments to the Central Bank of Seychelles Act. My appointment as Governor came three months later, in March 2012, essentially becoming the first woman in Seychelles to hold the position. I was re-appointed to serve a second six-year term in March 2018.



• Ms Caroline Abel

How have you managed the perceptions and stereotypes in a financial sector which is largely male dominated?

While Central Banking has been traditionally male-dominated, things have evolved in recent years. Today, we have women who used to take up more nurturing roles, choosing challenging career paths and brushing shoulders with male colleagues, including in the financial sector.

As previously mentioned, I firmly believe that being a man or a woman should not make a difference in the workplace as long as the individual is prepared to work hard and deliver his or her duties with utmost confidence.

This stance is perfectly portrayed at the Central Bank of Seychelles, where in fact, the majority of our current workforce is mostly women and where inclusivity is greatly valued and there is much emphasis on initiatives that provide the entire workforce with the encouragement and opportunity to reach their full potential and advance in their careers, regardless of their gender.

As a small island with an economy largely dependent on tourism and having gone through a very stringent and economic reform only a few years back, what has been some of the challenges in balancing the country's reserve and the Seychelles tourism books in the wake of Covid-19?

Given its heavy reliance on imports, having an adequate level of international reserves is critical for Seychelles. With the country's main source of foreign exchange being tourism, and given that the tourism and travel trade was amongst the first economic sectors to be directly impacted by COVID-19, domestically, this translated into a significant reduction in foreign exchange inflows, which therefore also implies increased stress on the country's reserves.

Considering the floating exchange rate regime in place, there were some adjustments in prices to reflect the new condition in the market and in the process, demand fell. However, the resulted reduction in demand was less than the decline in foreign exchange inflows (supply). To support the market, the Central Bank sold reserves to commercial banks through an auction process in addition to direct sales to two key government-owned importers to ensure the availability of essential goods, including fuel. Moreover, the country continued to meet all of its external payment obligations.

Amidst such environment, the management of the international reserves is being done with much emphasis being placed on ensuring that it can cover the country's payment obligations over the longest possible timeframe. To note, the return on the portfolio of reserves invested had reduced significantly in view of the low interest rate environment due to the accommodative monetary policy stance of most major Central Banks.

How supportive has the Central Bank been in financing or driving investments into Seychelles Tourism?

On a final note, it is equally important to have values and principles that should remain the standard that we live by, and personally, the motto which I always apply in all my undertakings and which I would like to be remembered for is to always say the truth, irrespective of who it might offend. This is what we call integrity.

As from the second quarter of 2020, the Central Bank lowered its policy rate by 100 basis points for the second quarter and a further 100 basis points for the third quarter to support domestic economic activity and reduce financial stability risks. The Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) was maintained at 3.0% for the remainder of 2020 and was kept at that level for the first and now for the second quarter of 2021.

To support critical operating expenditures of businesses impacted by COVID-19, the Board of the Central Bank also approved two credit line facilities under a Private Sector Relief Scheme being administered by various credit-granting institutions. The first amounting to SCR500 million is being made available to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), while the second facility is for a total sum of R750 million to provide support to larger businesses.

Any words of encouragement for young people especially women who are looking up to you and wish to be like you? What legacy would you like to be remembered with?

My advice to the youth is to seize every given opportunity, particularly to study, as education is key. In addition, one should never be afraid to follow his or her dreams when choosing a career and should be prepared to work hard and give their very best.

For women specifically, building a career may sometimes be more challenging given they also have to balance the responsibility of taking care of their families - including bearing and raising children. In spite of this, from my experience leading a workforce where the number of women stands at 65 per cent, I have seen their determination and tenacity as they go through life's experiences while also excelling in their studies and careers.

These attributes are very important not only for women but for every individual to have. Life may not always be easy, and there will be hardships and challenges along the way, but these tests and trials should be seen as opportunities to grow and develop one's potential.

On a final note, it is equally important to have values and principles that should remain the standard that we live by, and personally, the motto which I always apply in all my undertakings and which I would like to be remembered for is to always say the truth, irrespective of who it might offend. This is what we call integrity.

HOW VISITOR ATTRACTIONS CAN RESPOND TO GUESTS' NEEDS DURING COVID-19

Visitors to attractions are leaving home to have a real life experience, one that they can share with others, both on site and on social media.

The primary reason for visitors to leave home (whether domestic or international) for a day out of one's own four walls; an experience that delights all our senses and connects us with others - something that no virtual experience can produce no matter how fancy the offering.

If visitors are focussing on the experience offering more than ever - what can you do to improve your experience? Simple interventions can make a big difference.

1) Support the fun don't spoil the fun

The wearing of masks, sanitising and social distancing has become the norm and will be here to stay for the foreseeable future. This will be the new way of operating for the near to medium term, they should be part of standard operations. Invest in time and energy to understand how they can be achieved with minimal impact on the experience; perhaps even adding a fun element. Be creative.

2) Contactless transactions

Contactless transactions are also here to stay. Ensure your experience is physically distanced but not socially distanced. Save the (physically distanced) contact with guests for the parts of your experience that truly add value.

You will find that guests want to avoid cash and will have greater use of credit cards and other contact-less payments. Make sure you are ready.

3) Create fun

Guests have elected to leave their safe, Covid-free, homes for a less safe space (your attraction) because they want to have fun and socialise. The USA Toy Association released their top toy trends for the year in February 2021 and these trends speak to new ways of being more than just new ways of buying. What can visitor attractions learn from trends in toys?

- a) **Rediscovering play** - in these serious and scary times we want to play more. Play to stay connected, play to supplement the learning that we are missing from school and conferences and play just to rediscover fun!
- b) **Not just for Kids** - adults want to play too. The Toy Association has seen a massive increase in sales for games and toys for adults.
- c) **Mix in the Music** - Tiktok is the social media tool used by young adults - are you using this tool in your marketing mix?
- d) **Zen-sational Toys** - Toys, and a day out, can give us emotional support, enhance our wellbeing and help us navigate the stress of the world around us. How can your site help create moments of zen; relaxation and mindfulness?

4) Increase dwell time on site.

The costliest and most difficult part of your marketing is to translate the call to action to actual action to visit your



• Sabine Lehmann

attraction. Once they are on site you need to maximise their time on site. Dwell time on site leads to increased spend and increased perception of value for money and value for time. Your guests have invested time and money before they are even through the entrance gate. This upfront investment needs to be worth their while, and one way is to increase dwell time.

The African Association of Visitor Experience and Attractions' (AAVEA) mission is to represent the interests of visitor experiences and attractions, to raise awareness of the contribution they make to the broader tourism industry, to enhance discussion and co-ordination among visitor experience and attraction professionals, and to host an annual conference that provides education, valuable engagement with industry peers, and collaboration opportunities.

WWW.AAVEA.ORG.ZA
Sabine Lehmann
Twitter: @CityBowlKid
www.curiositas.co.za

Sabine Lehmann has first-hand insight into the challenges and opportunities facing the attractions industry - especially on the African continent. Having held leadership roles in some of South Africa's most iconic tourist attractions Sabine understands from the inside out how difficult it is to run a profitable and sustainable attraction in a world that is constantly changing.

Sabine is committed to building African attractions and is the founder and Chair of the African Association of Visitor Experiences and Attractions (AAVEA) and a government relations committee member of the IAPPA (The Global Association for the Attractions Industry).

She holds an MBA from University of Cape Town and an MPhil (Futures) from the Stellenbosch University.

Exploring tourism's best kept secret in Rwanda: THE LAND OF A THOUSAND HILLS

Rwanda is a modern nation with a fast-growing economy. It is ranked the third most competitive country in Africa by the World Economic Forum 2016 Competitiveness Report, and is rated one of the cleanest and safest countries in Africa.

Kigali is within easy reach of our rich offering of cultural and natural treasures. Take advantage of a range of experiences in discovering Rwanda – venture into our national parks to track the endangered mountain gorilla on the slopes of the Virunga Volcanoes, enjoy a 'Big 5' safari in Akagera, rated amongst the most scenic national parks in Africa, or learn about the rich biodiversity in Nyungwe, the largest protected mountain rainforest in Africa. The Cultural Heritage Corridor, community tours, tea and coffee plantations, adventure experiences and the shores of Lake Kivu await you.

The country's delicious local cuisine, unique culture and arts, combined with breathtaking natural beauty are waiting for you to come and experience a taste of Rwanda's warm hospitality and wonderful people. You will quickly learn what makes Rwanda remarkable, and why we are becoming one of Africa's most popular tourist destinations.



• Canopy walkway at the volcanoes national park



• Giraffes at the Akagera National Park



• Skulls displayed at the genocide museum in Kigali



• Trekkers and porters pose for a picture after conquering the volcanoes national park

Rwanda lies just south of the Equator, in the heart of Africa. In the space of a week, it's possible to experience an extraordinary range of wildlife and landscapes thanks to the country's relatively small size and biodiversity. Known as the land of a thousand hills, Rwanda's stunning scenery and warm, friendly people offer unique experiences in one of the most remarkable countries in the world. It is blessed with extraordinary biodiversity, with incredible wildlife living throughout its volcanoes, montane rainforest and sweeping plains.



• An aerial view of the city of Kigali

Gorilla Tracking

The unique opportunity to see gorillas in their natural habitat is unforgettable, some even say life changing. Encounters with gorillas as they go about their daily lives are carefully managed, with expert trackers and guides leading small groups of tourists up bamboo-covered slopes to spend a precious and awe-inspiring hour just a few feet away from the gentle creatures. The largest living primate, gorillas are spread across much of the equatorial African rainforest. Broadly speaking, the species is split into lowland gorillas and mountain gorillas.

The volcanic range which spans Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo is home to the endangered mountain gorilla. Tracking gorillas in Rwanda is safe and relatively accessible.

Out of approximately 1,000 mountain gorillas in the wild, 604 can be found in the Virunga Massif. There are twelve gorilla families living in the Volcanoes National Park, which are fully habituated, with a few others habituated solely for scientific research. The groups, or troops, consist of at least one silverback along with several females and youngsters.

Kigali Genocide Memorial

The people of Rwanda embrace peace and reconciliation.



• Visitors at the Genocide Museum

They are committed to fight the ideology of genocide. The memorials found throughout the country are moving testimonies in memory of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi and the people who lost their lives.

Inaugurated on the 10th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, the Kigali Genocide Memorial at Gisozi is where 250,000 victims have been buried.

The wall of names is dedicated to those who died and is work still in progress. Many of the victims' names have yet to be gathered and documented and many of the victims who rest in the graves are unknown.

The memorial gardens provide a place for quiet contemplation about the history of the Genocide against the Tutsi. They allow visitors to reflect on how we all have a personal responsibility to prevent discrimination and mass atrocity. The centre also provides support for survivors, in particular orphans and widows.



Akagera National Park

The relatively warm and low-lying plains of Akagera comprise savannah, woodland, wetland and a dozen lakes. In partnership with African Parks, we have reintroduced lions and rhinos, meaning once again visitors can hope to see the Big Five on safari drives.

Lake Kivu

Part of Africa's Great Rift Valley, Lake Kivu is dotted with islands and inlets along its shoreline, with charming beach resorts, spectacular vistas and plenty of opportunities for hiking and cycling.

Volcanoes National Park

Situated in the far northwest of Rwanda, Volcanoes National Park protects the steep slopes of this magnificent mountain range – home of the endangered mountain gorilla and a rich mosaic of montane ecosystems, which embrace evergreen and bamboo forest, open grassland, swamp and heath.

Volcanoes National Park is named after the chain of dormant volcanoes making up the Virunga Massif: Karisimbi – the highest at 4,507m, Bisoke with its verdant crater lake, Sabinyo, Gahinga and Muhabura.

Kigali

Ideally positioned in the centre of Rwanda, Kigali extends across several hills and valleys, with good road links to the rest of the country. The verdant capital city is pleasantly low key yet dynamic and progressive, with just over one million inhabitants.

First-time visitors to the bustling and colourful centre often remark how clean the streets are, a matter of pride across every community throughout the country.

Festivals and Events



• Performers at an event in Kigali

A celebration of Rwandan creativity and nature. Among events held each year includes the Kwita Izina Gorilla Naming Ceremony held at the Volcanoes National Park where new baby gorillas are named for purpose of conservation, the Kigali Up festival which brings together music from across the world to Kigali, and the Rwanda Film Festival that showcases films from Rwanda, Africa and Across the world.

Rwanda invites you to the land of a thousand hills and a million smiles.

• View of the Volcanoes National Park



Namibia Wildlife Resorts

Still conserving Namibia's natural heritage!



Namibia Wildlife Resorts has become part and parcel of the Namibian experience, even for those as far afield as America or China. As a state-owned enterprise, we manage resorts and camps in Namibia's vast and diverse protected areas – the only hospitality provider that can do so. This provides you with a chance to explore and relax at your own pace.

With more than 20 different destinations across Namibia, we have a smorgasbord of experiences for you, so whether you are a traveller that demands luxury at your fingertips or you are looking for an adventure, we have a spot where you can get your groove back.

From the world-renowned Etosha National Park where, by the way, you can enjoy camping to five-star luxury, all the way through to the magnificent horizons of the south, the humid forest-lined banks of the Okavango, or even a

castle... we show you Namibia as she is. Beautiful, natural, harsh, and unspoiled.

Your holiday, breakaway or business trip will also contribute to community development and the sustainable use of Namibia's natural resources. With your exclusive NamLeisure card, you are not only assured of great discounts for your Namibian adventure, but you also know that you are contributing to the Enviro-Kidz programme.

Whether you need a weekend or month away, or your team needs building, or, you have something to celebrate, Namibia Wildlife Resorts is your partner to discover Namibia and make memories to last a lifetime!

Log on to nwr.com.na and unlock your Namibian adventure... you have no idea what's waiting for you

BOOK ONLINE OR CONTACT US!

+264 61 285 7200
 @reservations@nwr.com.na
 www.nwr.com.na



Unveiling AUDA-NEPAD's Post Covid-19 African Tourism Recovery Strategy

The African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD) is continuing in its mandate to coordinate and execute priority regional and continental projects to promote regional integration towards an accelerated realization of Agenda 2063 and to strengthen capacity of African Union Member States and regional bodies. This is according to the Agency's Director of Programme Implementation, Planning and Innovation, Mrs. Estherine Fotobong who in an interview with VoyageAfriq, gave an insight on her outfit's Post Covid-19 African Tourism Recovery Strategy launched in the midst of the pandemic to support member states.

She said the pandemic has posed significant threats to their operations, disrupting their programme of activities. For her however, Covid-19 season can be looked through a positive lens as the pandemic has presented to the world an opportunity to rethink the innovation of development. She further explained that the pandemic has caused the reaffirmation of the significance in building socio-economic resilience post Covid-19 as it has also demonstrated the challenges Africa is facing in terms of economic inequality.

Mrs. Fotobong said that an analysis of the impact of the pandemic by AUDA-NEPAD highlighted issues relating to tourism and security and developed early warning systems and mechanisms to deal with other unforeseen crisis and future pandemics.

The objectives of the post Covid-19 African Tourism recovery strategy initiative include, creation of a reference system that presents good practices and response that look at what pertains to other regions, and what they have done as a tool to assist member states in their response and recovery processes to anticipate futuristic threats and risks.

Others comprise, coordinating the efforts of member states and partners to ensure minimized duplication to promote evidence-based public health practices in the tourism sector and to address key areas involving diversification of



• Mrs. Estherine Fotobong, AUDA NEPAD Director

markets, products and services. It also highlights the issue of investment in the various markets, intelligence systems and digital transformation of the sector.

Mrs. Fotobong stated that the Agency will maintain its strong relationship and partnership with United Nations World Tourism Organisation to advance recovery in the area and tourism and travel for Africa,

According to her, it is time for Africa to channel their focus on innovation in building a sustained and resilient tourism.

"We need the right kinds of investment, and we need to look at ways of building resilience and enhancing sustainability in the sector", she said.

In addition, Mrs. Fotobong emphasised that it is imperative to prioritise digitization, especially among Member States that are unable to access connectivity, to promote digital marketing; online advertisement, online shopping and other related digital fields.

64th Commission for Africa Meeting heads for Cabo Verde

The Republic of Cabo Verde is scheduled to host the 64th UNWTO Commission for Africa (CAF) Meeting.

The meeting is slated for 2-3rd September in Sal Island.

The Commission meeting will be followed by the 2nd Edition of the UNWTO Global Tourism Investment Forum in Africa.

The Commission of Africa Meetings are held every year as part of UNWTO's statutory events.

The UNWTO Regional Commission for Africa is the major institutional platform where ministries in charge of tourism discuss the latest trends of the sector at the continental and global level and the implementation of their program of work.



Limpopo Tourism Agency announces Ndavhe Ramakuella as Acting CEO

The Limpopo Tourism Agency (LTA) Board of Directors has announced changes to its executive management with Mr. Ndavhe Ramakuella as Acting CEO. This follows the end of term of Mr. Sello Maleka, who acted as CEO of the Provincial Tourism Authority for the last five months.

At a presser to announce the changes, LTA Board Chairperson Mr. Andrew Dipela, thanked Mr. Sello Maleka for steering the ship for the past five months. He will now move to his position as Chief Corporate Services Officer to lead a new and exciting program which requires his full attention. Pronouncements about this project will be made in due course when the Agency outlines its plans for the 2021/22 Financial Year.

"It would have been our intention to appoint a new and permanent CEO by now, however, there is a process of reconfiguration of State-Owned Entities in the Province led by the Office of the Premier. As a responsible entity, we would like to respect that process and await its completion before making any senior appointments," he disclosed.

Mr. Ndavhe Ramakuella, the Acting CEO, expressed his gratitude to the Board for the opportunity and was confident that the entity would do well as it had already seen better results since tourism re-opened after a hard lockdown last year.

"The international travel might still be closed as entire Europe and the Americas are experiencing a resurgence of Covid-19 in the form of a third wave, but this gives us an opportunity to focus on domestic tourism. Since Tourism Month last year, the entity has been working hard to implement the recovery plan.

We also conducted a successful Summer Campaign, which was also supported by South African Tourism



• Mr. Ndavhe Ramakuella, Acting CEO, Limpopo Tourism Agency

(SAT) to promote destination Limpopo. Just recently we conducted a successful brand awareness campaign called #UnlikeAnyOther, which sought to make Limpopo top-of-mind destination to travellers all over the world. We are positive that with the budget we received, we will still continue to market Limpopo with more vigour and enthusiasm to make it a must-visit destination in the country", said Ramakuella.

The new appointments are as follows:

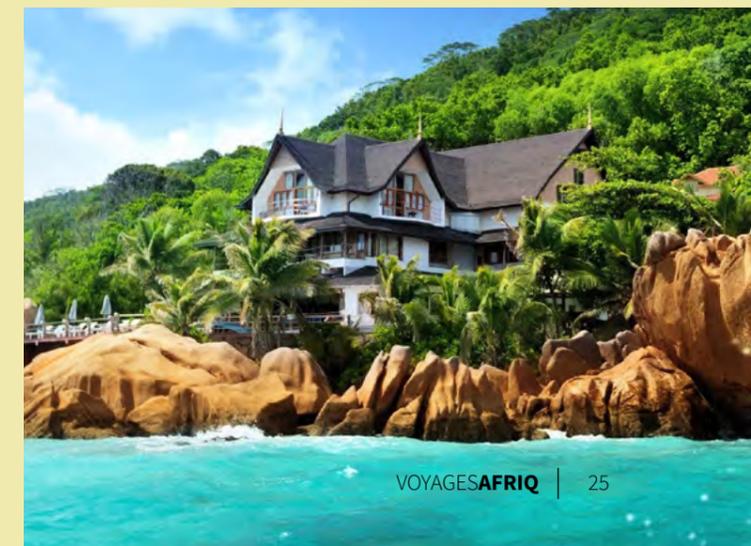
1. Mr. Ndavhe Ramakuella the Chief Marketing Officer of the entity was announced as the new Acting Chief Executive Officer for a term of six months.
2. Mr. Peter Maila, Financial Management Senior Manager's term as Acting Chief Financial Officer has been extended with an additional six months.
3. Dr Mavhungu Musitha, Senior Manager Information Services, has been appointed as the Acting Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) for a term of six months.

Seychelles Travel Update

Seychelles has reached a significant milestone in its national immunization campaign by becoming the world's first country to achieve herd immunity through vaccination. With more than 70 percent of the island nation's adult population now fully vaccinated against COVID-19, Seychelles has expanded its borders to welcome visitors from anywhere in the world regardless of their personal vaccination status. As of March 25, visitors only required to present a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours of departure to Seychelles and there will no longer be a quarantine requirement nor any restriction on movement upon entry to the destination.

Additionally, the minimum stay in establishments upon arrival will no longer be applicable. In light of reopening the country's borders to visitors by air, Seychelles has also re-examined its cruise ship season, which was temporarily shut-down last March in effort to protect the population from the threat of COVID-19. Beginning this

August, Seychelles expects to welcome cruises again with a maximum capacity of 300 passengers allowed. For the latest news and guidance on travel to Seychelles, please visit: <https://advisory.seychelles.travel/>.



Strong Interventions Pillar of Recovery and Sustainability Plans – Morocco's Tourism Minister

Morocco, like many other countries around the world, has not been spared from the crippling effect of the Coronavirus pandemic on hospitality and tourism. But right from the onset, the country introduced comprehensive and robust austerity interventions to support businesses and professionals in the sector.

This was revealed by Nadia Fettah Alaoui, Morocco's Minister of Tourism, Handicrafts, Air Transport, and Social Economy in an interview with VoyagesAfric.

"As you know, tourism is about people and mainly, very skilled people and expertise, so we made a huge effort to support corporates and businesses to keep as many jobs as possible. So the government has provided direct subsidies to the companies, to the employees and the deal with the corporates is to at least keep 80% of the jobs."

"It started at a very early stage, last year in March. Then we had a specific contract with the professionals in tourism that was launched in July until December and because of the second wave of the pandemic, we extended until coming 2021," she said.

The North African country also launched safety guidelines for its hospitality sector which have been adopted and received high-level compliance from industry players.

She said "we need people and businesses to be safe, it was our first priority and under the guidance of His Majesty

the King. So a big effort was made by the government and professionals to comply with all the guidelines regarding the safety of both employees and clients. So our first effort was to have a guideline for hospitality which was introduced in April. It has also been fully complied with by the hospitality industry. This allowed us to restart internal and local tourism last summer."

This the Minister added is important to be able to restart tourism with the right people and in the right sanitary conditions. Beyond this, the Minister averred that Morocco has also made crucial moves to ensure that it is recognized globally as a safe destination for travellers.

"To prepare for a proper restart, we have launched with Veritas, the international cooperative for security another brand name, "Welcome Safely." So it is a much more comprehensive guideline for safety within hotels and the hospitality industry and we are offering training and know-how expertise to all professionals in Morocco. Our objective is to have a majority of hotels and hospitality establishments to have this label and to be able to communicate why they have this label for Morocco," Alaoui stated.

She also disclosed that "we are making a huge effort around marketing and promoting the Moroccan brand and its regions so that we are well-positioned because we know that there will be strong competition when we restart tourism around the world but we think that we have a lot of abilities and capabilities so we are preparing plans and materials to be presented in major markets in the future."



• Nadia Fettah Alaoui, Morocco's Minister of Tourism, Handicrafts, Air Transport, and Social Economy

Cabo Verde aims at building a diverse and resilient Tourism Sector – Director General

The Director-General of Tourism and Transport in Cabo Verde Francisco Martins has revealed that the Cabo Verde Government is preparing the country for more diverse, resilient, quality-based tourism with an ultimate aim of improving conditions of life of Cabo Verdeans.

Francisco Martins, representing the Minister of Tourism and Transport, Carlos Santos, said this at the launch of the formative activities of "Response to the Covid-19 crisis and recovery of the Tourism sector in Cabo Verde" under the programme, Competitiveness Support in West African Cape Verde. The project is funded by the European Union at a cost of 4.930.000 Euros and implemented by the UNDP and the Government of Cabo Verde through the Ministry of Tourism and Transport.

The project adapted to provide the recovery of the tourism sector in Cabo Verde in the face of Coronavirus crisis takes account of the training of more than a thousand professionals linked to the Tourism sector, including tour guides, travel agency agents, taxi drivers, border police officers, airport staff and municipal guards and middle heads of small and medium-sized hotel units. It is also aimed at empowering key actors and increasing competitiveness of Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises through quality certification and supply chain integration.

With the advent of the pandemic, the government has launched support for businesses, jobs, and families that are most vulnerable.

According to the Director-General of Tourism and Transportation, the pandemic has affected Cape Verde, whose economy has 25 % of tourism-based GDP.

He stated, "the pandemic, never before experienced by our generation, was in our country and in our homes."

Francisco Martins added that there was no time to waste,



• Francisco Martins, Director General - Cabo Verde Tourism Sector

"so we needed to act fast, in the face of this one 'harsh reality', the Government's response was not kept waiting, and took all necessary steps and launched support for businesses, jobs and vulnerable families."

According to Francisco Martins, the Tourism Renaissance Plan of the Ministry of Tourism and Transport takes into account the valuation and training of more than two thousand five hundred professionals linked to the tourism sector covering all the areas of the country..

The Director-General further stressed that national companies in the sector, in particular travel and tourism agencies, tour operators, tourist entertaining companies, will be targeted by specific empowerment and resource enhancement programmes with more initiatives by the Ministry of Tourism and Transport. This is also aimed at making businesses from different sub-sectors downstream and upstream in tourism to take advantage of the new business opportunities that have emerged as a result of this crisis.

Francisco Martins took the opportunity to announce and reaffirm that the Government, through the Ministry of Tourism and Transport, in partnership with EHTCV, the IEFP, the Pro-Company, the Directorate-General for Employment, Vocational Training and Professional Internships, among others, will be launching the emergency empowerment and self-employment programme for tourism employees in the next few days.

It will cover about 5000 beneficiaries across the islands, with the aim of mitigating the negative effects generated by covid-19. Above all, supporting young people and their families and more inclusively resuming their activities and job creation linked to the tourism sector, subsectors and beyond.



DISCOVER WINDHOEK

with Avani

Stay in the heart of Namibia's capital city with access to all the action, culture and wildlife. Perfect for business or pleasure.



Avani Windhoek Hotel & Casino
Gustav Voigts Centre, 129 Independence Avenue, Windhoek, Namibia

Email: reservations.vwin@avanihotels.com
Telephone: +264 61 280 0000
Email: windhoek@avanihotels.com

AVANI
Windhoek
Hotel & Casino



Ghana to collaborate with Rwanda to Promote Intra-Africa Travel

A 30-member Ghanaian trade and tourism delegation have concluded a 7-day trade mission to Rwanda. The mission which was facilitated by the Rwandan High Commission in Accra with the support of the Rwanda Development Board was to help the team to explore the trade, tourism and investments opportunities in both countries.

The discussions centered on collaboration, information sharing and Investments. The team was composed of personnel from the Ghana Tourism Authority, Ghana Exports Promotion Council, Ghana Tourism Federation and selected members of the Ghanaian Media as well as leading tour and travel operators.

The team was welcomed in Kigali by Ghana's Honorary Consul in Rwanda Denis Karera, the Rwanda Development Board.

During the weeklong trip, the delegation toured various touristic and business areas in Rwanda and had meetings with a wide range of Rwandan leaders from the private and public sectors including a business-to-business networking session for tourism and hospitality.

Belise Kariza, Chief Tourism Officer at the Rwanda Development Board said "COVID-19 has taught us that Intra-Africa travel is key to sustaining tourism" expressing Rwanda's keenness on building the linkage with the private sector to grow the numbers for both countries.

On his part, Director for Product Development and Investment at the Ghana Tourism Authority Benjamin Anane-Nsiah emphasized the need for such partnerships and indicated that "Ghana is open to working with their Rwandan counterparts to develop a framework to facilitate this partnership and achieve the expected results".

Her Excellency Dr. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, Rwanda's High Commissioner to Ghana emphasized the bigger picture of the trip saying that it is was more than just a touristic visit.

"It is about creating and advancing relationships and partnerships needed to bolster intra-Africa tourism and trade".

The Ghanaian Contingent also had the opportunity of visiting the Volcanoes and Akagera national parks, site inspections of hospitality facilities and rounded up the visit with a luncheon with senior officials of the host agencies led by the Permanent Secretary of Rwanda's Ministry of Trade and Industry Mr. Michel Binega Sebera.

Having completed the tour of Rwanda, the Ghanaian team have committed to working with the High Commission and their Rwandan counterparts to facilitate a similar visit by the Rwandans to Ghana in the near future, to further bolster mutual interest and partnership towards increased tourism and business exchanges.



• Alisa Kirabo Kacyira, Rwanda's High Commissioner to Ghana

Ghana's Visit to Rwanda in Pictures



• Belise Kariza- Chief Tourism Officer at RDB addressing the delegation



• Bella Ahu- President of the Ghana Tourism Federation



• Frank Gisha- Head of Rwanda Chamber of Tourism



• Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Trade and Labour – Michel Sebera



• Ghana's Honorary Consul – Daniel Karera



• Site Guide, Fidel at the Volcanoes National Park
• Ben Anane Nsiah- Director of Investments and Product Developments, GTA



Dr. Afua Asabea Asare , CEO of Ghana Export Promotion Authority (GEPA)



• Ariella Kageruka, Head of Conservation & Tourism -RDB and Bella Ahu of GHATOF in an elbow shake



• The Ghanaian Team spent some time with the gorillas at Volcanoes National Park



Welcome to the Republic of Rwanda
La Corniche One Stop Border Post



• The Ghanaian Delegation lay wreaths at the genocide museum



• A visit to a flowering company



• Boat cruise for the visiting delegation at Akagera National Park



• The team on safari



• Bonita Mutoni- Chairperson of Rwanda Tours and Travel Association



• Site visit of the team at Epic hotel and suites



• Members of the Ghanaian Delegation pose for a photo at the reception area of the Volcanoes National Park



Ghana targets \$5 billion tourism revenue by 2022



• Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister, Dr. Ibrahim Mohammed Awal (left) receiving his scroll of office from Ghana's President Akufo-Addo earlier this year to lead the sector

The newly appointed Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Dr. Ibrahim Mohammed Awal has given the strongest indication of his readiness to make Ghana's tourism profitable thus deepening its relevance to the economy in terms of revenue generation.

To this end, Dr. Awal has expressed his desire to generate \$5 billion from the tourism industry by December, 2022. He disclosed this at a two-day retreat for heads and management of agencies under the Ministry on 25-26 March, 2021 in Akosombo.

He observed that the tourism industry was not doing well as expected and indicated his resolve to turn the economic fortunes of the sector by creating massive employment opportunities for the Ghanaian citizenry.

He intimated that on his assumption of office, President Akufo-Addo charged him to use his business acumen and entrepreneurial skills to change the face of Ghana's tourism industry.

In addition to this, the Minister said, he would also focus on a strategic policy direction to help the sector. He further expressed his commitment to make Ghana's tourism sector number one contributor to the country's GDP from its current third place ranking.

Ghana's tourism, until the advent of COVID-19 pandemic

had been projected to rise significantly for both arrivals and receipts following the huge success of the "Year of Return" initiative. Figures from the 2019 Tourism Report by the Ghana Tourism Authority indicated that the country earned over \$3,312 billion in tourism receipts.

With a goal of ensuring one million domestic tourists each year, the Minister hopes to get the country's tourism back on track while driving investments into the creative arts and culture sub-sectors.

Dr. Awal urged the agencies to work together and in tandem with the Ministry to help realize the overarching goal of making Ghana, West Africa's tourism hub.



We'll work with you to drive Domestic Tourism: Ghana's Tourism Minister assures Tour Operators



• Mrs. Alisa Osei Asamoah in a shot with Tourism Minister, Dr. Ibrahim Mohammed Awal

people what it is that the country has." "As a government, we will give you the framework within which you can work to drive domestic tourism so that we can increase the numbers. We want to have at least a million local tourists each year to complement the international arrivals," the Minister said.

On her part, President of TOUGHGA, Mrs. Alisa Osei Asamoah who led the delegation expressed hope that they would have fruitful partnership with the Minister and the Ministry as they work to grow Ghana's tourism. Thanking the Minister for granting them audience, Mrs. Osei Asamoah also assured him of their full support in his new portfolio and wished him well.

"We are happy you are here and it is refreshing to hear your willingness to work with us. We are convinced that you will live up to what you've assured us of and we are also ready to work with you to move our tourism forward," she said.

The Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Dr. Ibrahim Mohammed Awal has stated his readiness to work closely with the Tour Operators Union of Ghana (TOUGHGA) to drive and promote the domestic tourism agenda of the country.

Dr. Ibrahim Mohammed Awal gave the assurance when leadership and some members of TOUGHGA paid a courtesy call on him on March 25th, 2021 to welcome him to his new office as the sector's Minister. The visit was also to allow for TOUGHGA to formally introduce themselves to the Minister as key stakeholders of the country's tourism sector.

Dr. Awal said that the Ministry will frequently engage stakeholders, especially the private sector to deliberate on ways to strengthen Ghana's tourism as they seek to promote domestic tourism and make the country West Africa's tourism hub.

"We will have quarterly meetings with the private sector and stakeholders including Tour Operators for us to dialogue. We want to make Ghana the tourism hub in West Africa. We are very stable, we have good governance and beautiful attractions that can help us to achieve that. And to make Ghana the tourism hub, we need TOUGHGA because you tell



• TOUGHGA Executives with the Minister

Botswana Tourism Organization bids farewell to CEO

The founding CEO of the Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO), Myra Sekgororoane has departed the organization after two years since her return to the organisation.

Myra was reappointed to head BTO in 2019 after a brief hiatus earlier.

Myra left BTO on the 26th of February 2021 according to BTO Board Chairman, Boitumelo Sekwababe in a statement

"Ms. Sekgororoane's hard work has led to the organization receiving global accolades in recognition of its sterling

job in the promotion of Botswana as a tourist investment destination, and in the enhancement of service standards in the industry.

Myra has provided outstanding leadership and vision through very difficult and challenging times steering the organisation as it reconfigured and strategized for the future through this COVID-19 period," the statement added.

Circumstances surrounding what obviously might be her final departure from BTO are unclear.



• Myra Sekgororoane

KIGALI ARENA

TO HOST INAUGURAL BASKETBALL AFRICA LEAGUE

The Basketball Africa League (BAL) has announced that the league's historic inaugural season will tip off on Sunday, May 16, 2021 at the Kigali Arena in Kigali, Rwanda, with 12 teams from across Africa competing in the new professional league. The BAL, a partnership between the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) and the National Basketball Association (NBA), builds on the foundation of club competitions FIBA Regional Office Africa has organized on the continent and marks the NBA's first collaboration to operate a league outside of North America. The first BAL Finals will be held on Sunday, May 30.

The BAL has created robust health and safety protocols for the 12 teams and personnel traveling to Rwanda, based on guidance from the World Health Organization and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, with advice from public health officials and medical experts.

"We are thrilled that the inaugural Basketball Africa League season will take place at the world-class Kigali Arena," said BAL President Amadou Gallo Fall. "Through the BAL, we will provide a platform for elite players from across the continent to showcase their talent and inspire fans of all ages, use basketball as an economic growth engine across Africa and shine a light on Africa's vibrant sporting culture."

"We are extremely happy to finally launch the highly anticipated first season of the BAL," said FIBA Africa and BAL Board President Anibal Manave. "FIBA and the NBA have been working closely together to develop protocols to address the health and safety of all players, coaches, and officials. The experience of hosting the FIBA AfroBasket 2021 qualifiers in Rwanda late last year contributed to a safe and successful inaugural BAL season."



• Amadou Gallo, BAL President

The league also announced an adjusted competition format for the inaugural season, which will feature a total of 26 games at the Kigali Arena. The competition will tip off with an 18-game group phase with the 12 teams divided into three groups of four. During the group phase, each team will face the three other teams in its group once. The top eight teams from the group phase will qualify for the playoffs, which will be single elimination in all three rounds.

Below are the 12 teams from 12 African countries that will compete in the inaugural BAL season:

Champions from the national leagues in Angola, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia earned their participation in the inaugural season. The remaining six teams, which come from Algeria, Cameroon, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, and Rwanda, secured their participation through BAL qualifying tournaments conducted by FIBA Regional Office (Africa) in late 2019.

The BAL groups and additional details about the league will be announced at a latter date.



DRC Launches National Tourism Policy

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has launched its National Tourism Policy.

The policy document was unveiled by President Félix Antoine Tshisekedi who chaired the opening of the International Tourism Fair in the capital, Kinshasa.

"Investment and the promotion of tourism in the DRC" is the theme chosen for the show.

The policy was a collaboration between the DRC's Ministry of Tourism and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) where the latter offered its expertise to develop it to boost tourism development in the country.

Speaking at the launch, the Minister of Tourism Dr. Yves Bunkulu said the Ministry has led efforts to ensure that the vision of the president in making tourism one of the pillars of development is realized.



• Dr. Yves Bunkulu, Minister of Tourism

He added that the National Tourism Policy for the development of tourism in DRC has an ambitious goal of making the country one of the 10 best destinations in Africa by 2030.

The Deputy Director of the Africa Department at UNWTO Jaime Mayaki said "I am convinced that the National Tourism Policy presented here today which is the result of a consulting process between public and private sector tourism stakeholders, will help the Government reach its objective of becoming a major tourism player by 2030 and rely on its tourism sector as a key tool of economic transformation and job creation for the youth."

"The most important part now is its implementation" he added.

The UNWTO International Expert in tourism planning and investment, Toufik Souli was also at the launch to present the content of the Tourism Policy to the provincial tourism Ministers and other key tourism stakeholders.

"The presence of the Head of State the day before at the opening ceremony sends an important message. "It gives a clear signal of the role of the tourism sector in the inclusive and sustainable growth of your country," he said.

DRC also became the first African Member State to join the UNWTO Silk Road initiative.



• Jaime Mayaki, Deputy Director of the Africa Department at UNWTO

Gondwana's 25 years of impeccable hospitality service to Namibia's Tourism Industry

For 25 years Gondwana Collection Namibia has been at the fore of hospitality and tourism excellence, providing bespoke and unforgettable experiences to clients and guests. But at the core of this, is a brand that puts people first and remains a stickler for enduring values and culture.

A true testament of this is shown in the company's continuous retention of its staff strength in the midst of the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic layoffs have become rife.

"One thing we are extremely proud of is that during this pandemic we have not retrenched a single person. We have almost 1,100 Namibians in our employees and we are very much rural-based. We are based in the villages out there and we understand our impact and responsibility, so we are really proud that we could have our people and culture intact and obviously our company intact throughout this pandemic," said Managing Director, Gys Joubert who took his turn on the VA Tourism Podcast with Kojo Bentum-Williams, Editor-in-chief VoyagesAfriq Magazine.

He revealed that the pandemic has presented the biggest challenge to their operations which necessitated austerity measures such as salary cuts with members of the Executive Management taking the biggest cut.

Added to that, Joubert said, "We feel our role and responsibility in this nation is more than just a company in terms of business and profit-driven. We have a responsibility as a responsible corporate citizen to our fellow Namibians and to have an impact whenever we can. And I think our key trust speaks a lot to that, we have so many projects in terms of providing meals to the least fortunate people and many other projects."

He said that the hospitality brand could not be prouder of their Namibian roots and identity. "We are very proud of who we are, as a proud Namibian company; Namibian born and Namibian raised. So that to us is very important; our positioning and responsibility as a Namibian corporate citizen. Yes, 25 years with humble beginnings in the far south and we've grown organically over the years and especially the brand and what the brand stands for, and I think that is always important, and the values and the culture," the MD emphasized.

The Gondwana Collection Namibia combines its hospitality

business with nature conservation and social commitment in a sustainable manner all over the Sothern African country. Beyond that, however, Joubert said they have plans and dreams to expand.

"We have a whole lot of ambitions both in terms of further expansion in Namibia. We have plans also in terms of digital expansion and digital offerings that we want to bring to the world. Again we have regional expansion further in the value chain to make sure that we can be a complete one-stop shop in tourism services that people can feel a part of.

"We own a property in Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe and we had plans to start developing that last year. But because of the pandemic we had to put everything on ice. The rest is more of exploration but since digital has made the world a small place we will bring quite a few things to the market in the next six months on that track," he disclosed.

Properties within the Collection have all been given Covid safety certifications and this Joubert explains is a testament to the seriousness with which they are committed to ensuring the safety of guests

"We just received certification of one of our hotels where we scored 100%. So we are very proficient in terms of our Covid protocols. We also bring to hospitality the Gondwana warmness and kindness so we are definitely providing a safe environment for our guests."

Namibia, he said, has wide open spaces with natural social distancing "so, in terms of what the future is for tourists, especially in the short and medium term what they look for; solitude and safety. I think Gondwana is perfectly positioned to provide a breakaway. Come and see the African experience in Namibia; people and our wildlife. But you can do that in the comfort of your own vehicle, self-drive on safe roads with vast distances and it's not a crowded destination."

In addition to this, Joubert expects the Gondwana brand to bring true and holistic humanity to the corporate world in Namibia and beyond it.



• Gys Joubert, Managing Director



SOUTH AFRICA

WELCOME TO JO'BURG

Starting November 19th, ASKY offers you daily nonstop flight Lomé-Jo'burg.

Check your specific travel conditions at the following address: www.flyasky.com

Siandou Fofana retained as Tourism Minister to lead Sublime Cote d'Ivoire agenda



President Alassane Ouattara has reappointed Siandou Fofana as Cote d'Ivoire's Minister of Tourism. His retention is seen as an expression of confidence by the President in the Minister who has already set the West African country's tourism on a transformation course.

Some of the key undertakings of Fofana during his first term as Minister include, the launch of the flagship 'Sublime Cote d'Ivoire' project, which seeks to overhaul the country's tourism landscape through ambitious projects and initiatives.

“Our community of destinations requires that our sense of collective responsibility begins with individual responsibility. Our current vision of tourism must be more in line improving the sanitary and hygienic standards without altering the attractiveness of the Ivorian destination in the eyes of investors. This is the challenge of post-Covid tourism in our country. **”**

Fofana also led Cote d'Ivoire to be admitted to UNWTO's Executive Council as a member. Under his tenure, the

country hosted the first-ever Global Tourism Investment Forum in Africa organised by the UNWTO. In order to drive investments into Cote d'Ivoire's tourism, Fofana led a series of fund raising activities in Dubai in 2019.

He's also helped to establish closer ties with UNWTO and Cote d'Ivoire will be the global host of this year's World Tourism Day on September 27th.

Fofana says he would work to get Cote d'Ivoire's tourism going in these pandemic times when tourists are not expected to throng into the country en masse.

“Tourism as a whole will undoubtedly undergo an evolution, even a mutation. We are working with our teams to anticipate the tourism of tomorrow, which will take into account two major criteria.

Firstly, the potential disappearance of mass tourism as practiced before the crisis, followed by the development of a more socially and medically responsible form of tourism.

“Our community of destinations requires that our sense of collective responsibility begins with individual responsibility. Our current vision of tourism must be more in line improving the sanitary and hygienic standards without altering the attractiveness of the Ivorian destination in the eyes of investors. This is the challenge of post-Covid tourism in our country.”

African Group at UNESCO courts support for African World Heritage Fund



• Ambassador Albertus Aochamub, Chair of the Africa Group at UNESCO

The African Group at UNESCO is working to secure more funding for the African World Heritage Fund which is dedicated to listing more heritage sites on the continent for protection and conservation.

Albertus Aochamub, Chair of the Africa Group at UNESCO made this known during an interview with VoyagesAfric in Namibia.

Annually, the African member states of UNESCO elect, from their peers, a chair and Namibia was bestowed the honour for 2021. The Group is divided into sub-groups such as the Southern, Central and West Africa with their own chairpersons. Together with those chairs, they constitute the Bureau of the Africa Group under Namibian leadership.

The Group principally work to try and reach consensus on key issues that concern Africa within UNESCO's fields of competence. These could be about the return of stolen artefacts to Africa, mitigating the impact of Covid 19 on Education, AI, Ethics and so forth.

Overall, they ensure that one of the two (2) key tenets of UNESCO, namely, Priority Africa and Gender Equity are fully funded and implemented across all programmes of UNESCO.

According to Ambassador Aochamub, “We have two key strategies which are to build the technical capacity of

member states to inscribe more sites on the global register and adequately fund initiatives aimed at protection and conservation of sites in danger of delisting.”

“Our main job, in that context as the African Group at UNESCO, is to lobby partners across the world to support the work of the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF).” he added.

The AWHF was established in 2006 as a Trust under South African law as the host country on behalf of the continent and was granted UNESCO category II status in 2009. The institution is tasked to reverse a situation where African sites on the global list only represent a mere 12.22% of total inscriptions. Of the total African sites that are inscribed on the Global list, 16% are in danger.

“It is, therefore, our collective vehicle to drive all technical efforts aimed at inscription of more African sites on the global register. So, we have work to do as a continent in increasing the number of sites on the global list and address the issues facing the sites in danger. We at the Africa Group at UNESCO are committed to playing our part in lobbying and raising awareness,” Ambassador Aochamub posited.

2021 and the 4th Africa Business and MICE Masterclass birth Action Group for Africa Meetings



• Group photo of participants at the Masterclass

responsibilities for the Action Group.

The CEO of Africa Tourism Partners, Kwakye Donkor who initiated the process believes this is the right time to consolidate the gains the sector has chalked in the region. "If there is anything we can take away from the pandemic, it is collaboration, partnership and mobilizing together to rotate events in the region and also attract mega and legacy events to the region. We can no longer work in silos and the MICE sector can be the bedrock to accelerated tourism recovery if well-coordinated."

Sharing in-depth analysis and data following the dreadful effects of coronavirus on the sector at the Masterclass, speakers affirmed the need to make hybrid an intrinsic part of various MICE models across Africa.

Nearly half a dozen of Africa's leading convention bureaus has committed to pushing for an action group whose aims are targeted at building a resilient and vibrant business event sector.



The idea which was first conceived at the inaugural Africa Business Tourism and MICE Masterclass in 2018 gathered momentum during the 4th edition and 2021 two-day Africa Business and MICE hybrid Masterclass hosted by South African Tourism and Gauteng Convention and Events Bureau on 24 and 25 March 2021.

Senior Government officials from South Africa, Ghana, Rwanda, Seychelles and Tanzania made a strong case for the collaborative group which they believe will help coordinate, lobby and collectively pitch for events for the Africa region.

The Action Group is expected to identify and prioritize agenda points to guide the coalition's activities and operations.

Among other things the group will undertake is to conduct high-level research on existing coalitions and groupings to identify the preferred format, constitution, roles and

Designed as the first hybrid Africa MICE Masterclass since



• Amanda Kotze speaking at the Masterclass

its inception in 2018, this year's Masterclass assembled a limited number of pre-selected 50 in-person attendees and 250 virtual delegates from over 20 countries in Africa and the rest of the world. It was organized by the Africa Tourism Partners in partnership with BDO and hosted by South Africa National Convention Bureau and Gauteng Convention and Events Bureau.



• Kwakye Donkor presenting certificates to participants

Rwanda Gears up for Commonwealth Heads of Government Annual Meeting

Rwanda is preparing feverishly to host the 44th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

With the Covid-19 vaccination program going well according to plan, the hospitality and tourism sector is well prepared to showcase what will become the first major in person high level meeting.

Advance team of delegations have been visiting Kigali to familiarize themselves with the preparations in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

With hotels and accommodation establishments ensuring that safety and health protocols are enforced to the letter, the Rwanda Convention Bureau has been guiding and supporting stakeholders.



Leaders from all 53 Commonwealth countries are expected to attend.

President Paul Kagame and Secretary-General Patricia Scotland earlier last year announced that CHOGM 2020 will be held at the Kigali Convention Centre during the week starting 22 June.

The theme for the meeting is 'Delivering A Common Future: Connecting, Innovating, Transforming'. Five sub-themes have been identified for discussion: Governance and Rule of Law, ICT and Innovation, Youth, Environment, and Trade.

Building on progress since CHOGM 2018 in London, leaders are expected to discuss ways the contemporary Commonwealth can transform societies, in accordance with Commonwealth Charter values of democracy, multilateralism, sustainable development, and empowerment of women and youth.

President Kagame said: "It will be a great pleasure to welcome leaders of the Commonwealth when they gather in Kigali. We

will work hard to make everybody feel Rwanda is an extension of their home.

"The distinctive aspect of CHOGM 2020 will be connectivity including what young people can do with technology to create vibrant societies and develop our economies."

Secretary-General Scotland stated: "I think the youth demographic we have now is a real opportunity. It's going to be a very exciting chance for us to enable our young people to develop and deploy the skills they need so they can fulfil their potential.

"By connecting, innovating and transforming, the Commonwealth opens up scope for mobilising the talent of people of all ages and backgrounds."

Apart from the meeting of Heads of Government, the week will include a meeting of foreign ministers and fora to engage young people, civil society, women and the business community.

DATE FOR SWAHILI INTERNATIONAL TOURISM EXPO ANNOUNCED

The Tanzania Tourist Board has announced October 8-10 2021 as the date for the 6th Swahili International Tourism Expo (SITE).

In a brief media advisory, the TTB said, this year's edition of SITE will be held at Mlinani city, Dar es Salaam from 8-10 October 2021.

The last edition of SITE (2019) hosted over 200 exhibitors and 300 plus hosted buyers from more than fifty-seven countries.

SITE aims to bring together exhibitors from Africa as well as buyers from all over the world to showcase Africa's tourism offerings. The expo connects tourism operators in Tanzania and neighboring countries with major tourist markets through the hosted buyer programme.



AfCFTA-Tourism Conversations

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS TOURISM:

The Foundational Pillars of AfCFTA

By Michael Sudarkasa



• Michael Sudarkasa

The continent of Africa has a land area of 11.7 million square miles (30.37 million square kilometres), which is large enough to fit India, China, the US, Mexico, Japan, and many European nations, combined. With 55 countries and a population of 1.2 billion people (which is expected to double over the next 3 decades to 2.4 billion in 2050), Africa is an exceptionally large geographic territory.

In January 2021, the African Union launched the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) an ambitious initiative to promote the development of made in African goods and services and to facilitate duty free trade amongst the nations of Africa. Meant to integrate the five contiguous regions of Africa – Central, Eastern, Northern, Southern and Western Africa – and create one single trade bloc, one of the first aspects of AfCFTA that any business interested in taking advantage of the agreement must come to terms with is the enormity, complexity (national languages include Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and a number of widely spoken indigenous African languages also influence the language of commerce), and ethnic and ecological diversity of the continent. Despite the single market aspiration, homogenous is something that Africa is not!

While digital exploration of the continent is possible today in ways never before possible with the rapid expansion of internet access and mobile telephony on the continent, there remains a dearth of information, particularly economic and business information about many countries, industries and markets across Africa. Furthermore, given the unfamiliarity with the concept of doing business virtually with persons one has never met as a business cultural norm in Africa, and add in the unreliability of many of the electricity networks on the continent, and one finds that online communication is not always seen as an

adequate substitute for face-to-face meetings, particularly at the beginning of a business relationship.

Furthermore, it is also important to recognize that the colonial ties that bind Africa to Europe, and the global natural resource linkages that have created strong economic linkages between the US and certain countries in Africa and China with certain countries in Africa have facilitated greater familiarity of African based enterprises with the mores of doing business in Europe, the US and China, than familiarity with how one pursues business across the continent, particularly intra-regionally.

Thus, to envision increased intra-African trade, one must envision increased intra-African travel. As a prerequisite of greater regional trade, there will be a rise in increased participation in conferences and exhibitions and more general trade and investment learning journeys in the coming months and years to facilitate greater understanding of Africa's diverse markets by African based enterprises seeking partnerships and opportunities across the continent.

Travel and business tourism will thus both be the catalysts of greater intra-African trade. Those African nations that seek to improve the experience of business travellers (with efficient, comfortable, and secure airports, easy to access transport, and clean, convenient, and affordable accommodation) will significantly advance their trade opportunities their attractiveness as a business locale where it is easier to do business will be increased. Thus, the 1000-mile journey toward AfCFTA begins with the first step of building back Africa's travel and tourism structures to make it easier for continental businesses to explore first-hand the continent's growing business opportunities.



• Source: www.west-africa-brief.org/content/en/six-regions-african-union



Dare to Discover GHANA



BUY TOUR PACKAGE

DIRECTLY FROM OUR WEBSITE

www.kayatours.com



T&Cs Apply

FOR BOOKINGS & RESERVATIONS, PLEASE CONTACT

+233 246 726 626 | +233 302 794 442 | +233 549 187 616

kayatoursghana@gmail.com | www.kayatours.com

CELEBRATING SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPIONS

Judy Kepher-Gona gives us an insight into her life as she talks to Mafalda Borea about growing up in the Rift Valley, and how she found purpose to become one of Africa's top ecotourism experts.

1. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Nakuru, Kenya's Rift Valley. It's the country's fourth largest city after Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu.

2. How did a sense of environmental sustainability come into your life?

We lived close to Lake Nakuru National Park. The edge of the Park was surrounded by many kale farms walking distance from where we lived. Every so often, we heard of hippo invasions and the crop damage they made. We would also hear of buffalo and other animals scaring the farmers.

I learnt later on, in the early days of my career, that this was "crop predation", a form of human wildlife conflict.

Despite growing up next to the Park, I never had a chance to visit it until I graduated from college and joined the Kenya Wildlife Service. Back then we all knew that the park was for "Mzungus" - white foreigners.

A sense of sustainability, in general, came into my life when I joined Kenya Wildlife. It was there that I was exposed to the first real complaints from communities regarding the human/wildlife conflict. I also became more aware of issues of access, benefits and rights of communities living adjacent to National Parks.

While at Kenya Wildlife Service, I had a chance to be part of a team that organized the first ecotourism conference in Africa. This conference was hosted by Kenya Wildlife Service in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1998, in collaboration with The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) and Ecotourism Kenya. I was part of the team that put together the program, invited speakers and managed the actual conference.

The discussions, the insights and meeting visionary ecotourism champions changed my perspective of tourism, conservation and the plight of host communities in tourism forever. I found purpose. I made a resolution to champion ecotourism. Soon after this conference, I joined Ecotourism Kenya as CEO and like they say, the rest is history.

Over the years, my perspectives of environmental sustainability have been shaped by new and emerging knowledge on this ever evolving theme.

3. Which long standing sustainability practice or habit has significantly improved your life?

Sustainable consumption. I am very aware of wasteful consumption in all forms. Whether it's about creating unnecessary waste from packaging and wrapping material, or choosing between baths/showers and time taken. I don't pick printed promotional material distributed in tourism events, I would rather buy a book instead.

4. Is there a new one you are cultivating now?

Yes. Carbon miles. Considering carbon footprint of things that I consume. From food in restaurants to gifts I share.

5. Which environment or nature oriented podcast would you recommend and why?



• Judy Kepher-Gona

The only podcast I follow, the Voyages Afric Tourism Podcast.

6. Which book(s) would you recommend to people who want to be more environmentally conscious and "become the change they want to see in the world" (Ghandi)?

There are many great books on environmental consciousness, one needs to constantly update our libraries. For me it is not just about one book, it is more about the practices in general. There is a great book on Environmental impacts of ecotourism by Ralf Buckley that has everything you need to understand footprints of different travel adventures.

7. Whose environmental or conservation work do you most admire?

The late Nobel Laurette Professor Wangari Mathai. She said "you don't need a diploma to plant a tree", she also said, "Money is good, very. But if we look for it through killing our trees and poisoning our rivers, only then will we realize that we cannot eat money!". She looked at environmental management as key to addressing poverty. I believe this is true for Kenya and many other destinies around the globe.

8. Which internet resource would you recommend that you find consistently helpful and beneficial?

SKIFT.com for news, research, and marketing services for the travel industry.

9. Is there anything you try to keep in mind each day with regard to environmental sustainability?

That there are 7 billion of us in one planet. That natural resources are finite and there is no planet B, so we must consume and produce responsibly.

10. Which environmental change would you most like the next generation to experience?

Reversed global warming.

11. What is the best advice you ever had on sustainability or the environment, and who gave it to you?

Standing up for environment and sustainability is not a job. It is a calling and happens when you find purpose. Choosing sustainability and environment is to go against the wind. It can be lonely and tough, you need commitment and passion. These are all great lessons from the life and times of late Prof Wangari Mathai.

12. What is the best way to captivate the next generation on the topic of sustainability?

Engage them in current affairs by creating safe spaces for them to have a voice, engage and act.

13. Which current sustainability stories give you the most hope?

Stories of community assets, both cultural and natural, that are available for tourism. Knowing that they are being

valued and that those same communities are entering the tourism supply chain not just as beneficiaries but also as suppliers.

14. Which aspect of nature, or which animal, gives you the greatest sense of awe?

Giraffes in bushes in the savannah. They are graceful. In my world, they communicate tranquillity and beauty of nature.

15. What was the most impactful, transformative or enriching travel experience of your life so far, and why?

In Madagascar, Tsara Komba, an investor, helped a community that had lived as squatters on the land he was offered for investment. He helped them to get rights and title to that same land and helped them rebuild dignified lives on the island giving them access to paths, graveyards and banana plantations. I have had many travel experiences, been an assessor for sustainability in top end destinations and lodges in Eastern & Southern Africa, but nothing beats the experience of seeing people whose dignity was restored by a tourism project.

16. Where will you be going next on your travels?

Masai Mara. Because there are happy people projects that I care for in Mara and I have not been there since the beginning of the pandemic

17. What are your favourite two 'Sustainable Development Goals' and why?

SDG 1: To end poverty in all its forms, everywhere. When people are economically empowered we can achieve respect for the environment and other human rights, we can have equal and meaningful partnerships and reduce dependency on land.

SDG 12: To ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. Because it is the foundation of all the environment SDGs.

Judy Kepher-Gona, is the founder of Sustainable Travel and Tourism Agenda (STTA), a Pan African organisation shaping a sustainable future for Africa's tourism.



Mafalda Borea is Voyages Afric's Sustainability Editor and the CEO of Sustainable First.

AIR NAMIBIA

Ceases Operations

Namibia's flag carrier, Air Namibia rounded up its operations as at 11 February, 2021 following cabinet decision to file for voluntary liquidation. Air Namibia in a short media advisory confirmed the latest development and has directed all affected passengers to contact agents for a refund.



"Air Namibia wishes to update the flying public, trade and all stakeholders on the status of the national airline operations; 1, effective Thursday 11 February 2021, all flight operations will be cancelled, with all aircraft returning to base. 2. The reservation system for taking new bookings is also suspended," the advisory read. Over 600 staff are expected to lose their jobs in this move.

In a statement released to the media, the Minister of Finance Ipumbu Shiimi said "This difficult decision was taken after a careful consideration of the various options to save the national airline. All options assessed point to the fact that the national airline is not profitable and it has not been profitable since its inception. The net economic costs of Air Namibia's operations far outstrip the net gains and it is thus

unsustainable. It is estimated that so far government has spent more than N\$8 billion on Air Namibia. At this stage, the country's economy, can no longer afford to perpetually provide financial support to Air Namibia at the expense of supporting economic growth and critical social services."

RwandAir is the first African airline to vaccinate all staff against Covid-19

RwandAir is the first African airline to vaccinate all staff against Covid-19, a situation which will position the carrier as one of the safest on the continent.

The airline began its vaccination rollout programme earlier in April targeting all staff and crew who received their first shot.

Non-airline staff at Kigali International Airport, the airline's hub, have been vaccinated as well to ensure a safe and secure environment for all passengers.

The drive comes just after RwandAir announced it will be the first carrier in Africa to start trialling the IATA Travel Pass in April 2021 to enable the safe resumption of international travel.

Yvonne Manzi Makolo, CEO of RwandAir, said: "Rwanda's rapid roll-out of the first consignment of vaccines to arrive in the country prioritized all frontline workers, including RwandAir's staff and crew. The vaccination programme has been designed to ensure we provide a safe and secure environment for travellers, both in the air and on the ground."

"We have carefully considered every customer touchpoint at Kigali International Airport and on board our aircraft, as

the world resumes travelling in the post-Covid era."

"We look forward to welcoming our customers back to RwandAir. As an airline, the health and safety of our customers and staff is our number one priority and we have been working hard to restore our customers' confidence to fly."

In addition to RwandAir staff and crew, the staff of other airlines operating at the Kigali International Airport also received their Covid-19 vaccinations at the same time.



Ethiopian Airlines Joins African Union to Launch Test and Vaccine Passport

Ethiopian Airlines has partnered with the African Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) for the implementation of the African Union Trusted Travel Pass to make continental travel easier and safer amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Africa CDC has mobilised a broad multi-stakeholder public-private partnership with the help of its strategic partners, the PanaBIOS Consortium and Econet. The partnership has the objective of addressing current challenges posed by citizens' and institutions' difficulty in accessing accurate health information, high costs and inconvenience in cross border travel and poor data for health policy and biosecurity planning.

The Trusted Travel Pass program will ensure country regulations regarding COVID-19 travel requirements are met with minimal room for error and hassle to the travelling public.

Ethiopian Airlines' customers will now enjoy hassle-free travel experience with their travel pass helping them verify whether their medical information meets various COVID 19 regulations of their destination.

Ethiopian Airlines has been the pioneer in introducing new technologies to make travel contactless and convenient in an effort to curb the spread of the pandemic and restore passengers' confidence in air travel. This latest partnership considerably deepens this longstanding tradition by boosting the safety of passengers and nations alike; and reaffirms Ethiopian's strong commitment to being a major part of the African pandemic recovery effort.

Commenting on the implementation of travel pass, Mr.

Getinet Tadesse, Chief Information Officer at Ethiopian Airlines Said, "We are offering new digital opportunities to our passengers so as to fully and safely restore air travel. We are pleased to have introduced a digital platform that will be pivotal in increasing the number of passengers while making air travel safer. The solution is capable of addressing passengers' travel needs during the COVID-19 pandemic as it helps them validate their test and vaccination documents before departure. As a safety first airline, we are striving to make travel safe and seamless especially with regard to the implementation of COVID 19 prevention strategies."

The trusted travel pass solution will help to validate test and vaccination certificates and verify that they are sufficient for their route and share testing or vaccination certificates with airlines and authorities to facilitate travel. The solution will also avoid fraudulent documentation and make air travel more convenient.

Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of the Africa CDC, in welcoming Ethiopian's pioneering spirit, also underscored how such partnerships are critical in the present context: "The scale of the challenge presented by Covid-19 demands an unprecedented level of both innovation and cooperation, which is why Ethiopian's laudable decision to come on board Trusted Travel marks a watershed in the continent's ongoing fightback against this pandemic's quest to suppress Africa's development ambitions."



Russian Carrier Aeroflot makes a return to Seychelles after nearly two decades

An Aeroflot Boeing 777 has touched down at the Seychelles International Airport, marking the first scheduled direct service between Moscow and the Mahé Island.

The inaugural eight-hour 35 minutes flight was hailed as the 'great come-back' as Aeroflot is returning to the islands after 17 years.

The flight was greeted on arrival by the Seychelles' Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism, Sylvestre Radegonde, Minister of Civil Aviation, Ports and Marine, Anthony Derjacques and other officials from the tourism and aviation fields.

A total of 402 passengers disembarked to a typical Creole ambience as local musicians and dancers provided lively entertainment, after the plane had gone through the symbolic water canon salute.

The landmark flight opens the way to twice-weekly flights between the two countries, and Russian travellers will now be able to fly non-stop to the island destination.

Following the official cutting of ribbons, Minister Radegonde expressed his delight at Aeroflot for coming back and re-establishing air links between the two countries.

He saluted the airline for this great show of confidence in the destination during a time that had seen innumerable route cuts in the industry.

"The resumption of direct flights from Moscow to Victoria testifies to the confidence of the Russian national carrier in our tourism industry. Seychelles is a much sought-after destination in Russia and in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

The Russian market has always been a profitable one for Seychelles, featuring in the top seven destinations every year. It is a high-yield market, with an average stay of 9 to 13 nights. But visitor arrivals have been impeded by the lack of direct flights from Moscow," he said.

Minister Radegonde described the touching down of the aircraft as a beautiful and joyous moment for the country, adding the return of the flight will help in the recovery of the Seychelles tourism industry.



Minister Radegonde noted that the Russian market was a profitable one and said the direct flight will help to accelerate and grow it further.

"With the introduction of twice-weekly flights by Aeroflot, I am hopeful that we can not only reclaim, but increase, our share of the Russian and the CIS market. It is within our ability to do so. We can do it if we all work together as a team – government and the private sector together."

Aeroflot now joins four other airlines, which have resumed flights to Seychelles, whereas six others are expected back between April and October 2021.

Aeroflot also expressed their joy to be back on the Seychelles' route.

"We are very proud to be the very first European airline to come back to Seychelles in 2021 with a regular service between Moscow and Mahé, which is undoubtedly one of the most picturesque and authentic travel destinations across the globe," said the airline's Marketing Director, Anton Myagkov.

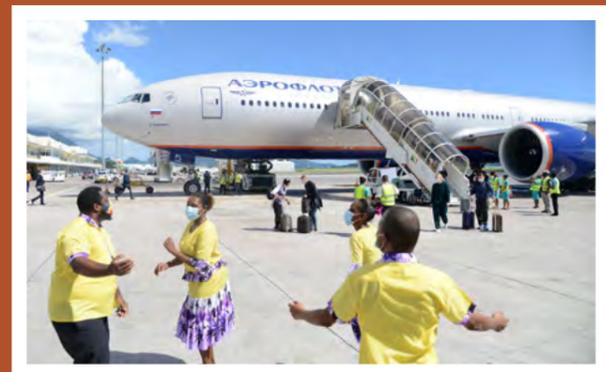
"The new Seychelles' service truly highlights Aeroflot's extensive route network. As a global full-service airline, we perfectly match our premium onboard product and in-flight service with the exclusive touristic product of the Seychelles islands."

Mr Myagkov added that the current passengers' demand for this service already exceeds all their expectations, causing a sellout of the first flight in just a few days. "This has enabled Aeroflot to increase the operating frequency to two flights per week starting from Sunday 9th April, 2021," he said.

Commenting on the new flight, the Chief Executive of the Seychelles Tourism Board, Sherin Francis, also said the news of the return of Aeroflot has been met with much enthusiasm by the Seychelles trade.

"We are pleased to welcome back this new service to our shores. Russia is one of our top originating markets and we expect this new route and direct link to expand our reach in the market of that region," she said.

She added that the increased seat capacity is significant and underlines the airline's confidence in Seychelles', which is a highly sought-after destination.



AviaDev Africa 2021 goes virtual

The continued Worldwide Covid-19 pandemic has caused massive disruptions to the global aviation ecosystem. Given the scale of the pandemic, the decision has now been made to hold a virtual version of AviaDev Africa 2021, the leading air service development conference for Africa.

The new format of the event took place over three consecutive mornings from 9th to 11th June 2021. This fifth edition is expected to bring together the African aeronautical community with a programme of conferences on different themes and pre-organized meetings between the players. It will bring together the African aeronautical community for maximum knowledge sharing and collaboration. The face-to-face conference will take place at the end of the first half of 2022. Madagascar will therefore be the host country for two consecutive years.

The Ministry of Transport, Tourism and Meteorology of Madagascar is the sponsor of the event which showcased, through the platform, the potential of Madagascar, a foretaste of what the audience will see live in 2022.

Patrick Collard, CEO of Ravinala Airports, host of the event, commented, "Whilst we wish everyone could be here in person to experience the unique Malagasy hospitality, the safety of our visitors is of paramount importance. We look forward to giving you a virtual taste of our brand new

terminal and infrastructure alongside the amazing touristic attractions Madagascar has to offer during AviaDev Africa 2021."

AviaDev's Founder and CEO, Jon Howell said "The disruption to the African aviation industry is unparalleled. At AviaDev, we have continued our commitment to serving the African aviation community by delivering multiple virtual events, content and experiences over the past 12 months. We feel it is vital that we have a forum where we can all come together to share best practices and start the discussions that will shape the future connectivity of Africa. We have invested time and resources in curating our digital platform so we can continue to bring you the most important route development event in Africa. Our conference programme will be free to attend for all participants with our premium one-to-one meetings supporting this offering"

2021 marks the fifth edition of AviaDev Africa and now more than ever it is important to face the headwinds and engage in proactive discussions that will enhance air connectivity to, from and within the continent. With many aviation stakeholders facing uncertainty, this will be a chance for the African aviation community to come together to forge new collaborations and partnerships to ensure that Africa remains connected regionally and internationally.

AIR SENEGAL

target US route in Q3

Air Senegal has reignited a long-standing ambition to start flying to the US and hopes to launch its first route later this year.

The airline has applied to the US Department of Transportation (DOT) for exemption authority and a foreign air carrier permit so it can begin scheduled flights.

The application requests permission to “engage in scheduled and charter air transportation of persons, property and mail from any point or points behind Senegal, via any point or points in Senegal and intermediate points, to any point or points in the US and beyond.”

However, Air Senegal does not intend to serve the US on its own aircraft. Instead, the carrier is in discussions with US and foreign carriers relating to codeshare, interline and wet lease arrangements.

Should all the necessary approvals be received, the airline expects to commence US services on a wet lease basis on or around Sept. 1, 2021.

The latest application to the DOT is not the first time Air Senegal has expressed the desire to launch flights to the US.

In September 2019, it emerged that the carrier planned to open a nonstop route from its hub at Dakar’s Blaise Diagne International Airport (DSS) to Washington Dulles (IAD) after



South African Airways cut its fifth freedom route between the destinations earlier in the year.

At the time, Senegal’s Minister of Tourism and Air Transport Alioune Sarr announced flights could start “within six months.” However, the route failed to materialize as the pandemic took hold.

The exit of South African Airways from the Senegal-US market in 2019 left Delta Air Lines as the only operator of direct flights between the two countries.

According to preliminary schedules, Delta intends to increase frequencies to 6X-weekly from the beginning of March, before restoring pre-pandemic levels of daily flights from April. However, the flight plan is subject to change.

O&D traffic between Senegal and the US totaled 86,111 two-way passengers in 2019, Sabre Market Intelligence figures show, representing a drop of 6.4% compared with the previous 12 months. Preliminary data for 2020 suggest traffic was about 44,900 passengers.

New South African airline, Lift starts flying

South Africa’s new domestic airline Lift has started flights. It aims to carve out space in an industry that has been ravaged by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The low-cost carrier will offer two routes as part of its initial offering – Johannesburg to Cape Town, and Johannesburg to George.

The airline is owned by Johannesburg-based leasing company Global Airways and will operate three Airbus SE A320 jets on the routes mentioned.

Co-founder Gidon Novick told Bloomberg that the airline is looking to take advantage of plunging startup costs due to an oversupply of planes due to the collapse in demand and low oil prices.

“The opportunity is here now to go into the consumer airline space — especially given the current environment,” he said. “The current cost structures are about 40% lower than what it would have cost to start an airline before the coronavirus.”

The new airline’s staff are kitted out by the online fashion retailer Superbalist and travellers are treated to coffee from Vida e Caffè on morning flights.

Afternoon flights feature wine tasting from a selection of South Africa’s top wineries, which Novick said will give valuable exposure to South Africa’s top wine farms.

Ticket prices start at R525, but Novick said he expects these prices to increase as demand for flights grows. “Prices will go up. There is currently an oversupply in the market which drives prices down. That will change over time,” he said.

Novick has said that the new airline is not planning to engage in a price war with other domestic airlines like Kulula and FlySafair. “Cutting prices is not a sustainable strategy. It is easy to do, but everyone will then lose money.”

He said that customers’ payments will be kept in a separate structure until after the flights are flown — to avoid them losing money in the event the airline goes bust. This is a departure from industry norms globally, he said.

“It’s our basic belief that customers should not fund airlines and neither should governments,” he said. “No rational argument has been put forward that gives anybody confidence that it is necessary to put money into SAA that should have been invested in social projects and health care.”



Connect. Collaborate. Convert.

AFRICA TOURISM ASSOCIATION

africatourismassociation.org

Promoting tourism to and within Africa.

Magical Kenya Signature Experiences Unveiled



• Cabinet Secretary Najib Balala presenting a plaque to a tourism service provider

Kenya's Tourism and Wildlife Cabinet Secretary Najib Balala has urged tourism providers to expand their products offering to deliver unique, authentic Kenyan travel experiences to travellers.

He said this during the award ceremony of the second phase of the Magical Kenya Signature Experiences (MKSE) held to recognise outstanding tourism offerings among Kenyan travel industry players.

Through the MKSE Program, which commenced in 2019, facilities and organizations are required to provide value addition to their offerings through exceptional travel experiences to the traveller.

In 2019, fifteen inaugural MKSE facilities that met the required criteria of a Kenya signature experience were recognised. The awards marked the beginning of a journey to deliver diverse tourism experiences in Kenya.

The second phase recognised 29 experiences with CS Balala noting that the program is aimed at meeting the expectation of the current discerning traveller who is keener on immersive travel experiences than ever before.

"We are glad to award twenty-nine (29) new experiences to add to the Signature Collection. When we began this journey in 2018, our goal was to grow and diversify our products to ensure that we are a cut above other destinations and to also have products that offer an outstanding experience to suit today's demanding traveller. I congratulate all the winners for participating in the Program and adding an extra layer of Magic to what Kenya has to offer Kenyans and the world," said CS Balala.

To be part of the Program, facilities are required to fill out a pre-qualification Quiz, which has a set of ten questions. The next stage involves filling out an application form followed by a desk and on-site

audits. Those that meet the requirements are then enlisted into the Magical Kenya Signature

Experiences (MKSE) Collection

CS Balala added that the MKSE program is one of the key milestones of Kenya's tourism transformation noting that despite the challenges of Covid-19, the industry was ready for kick-off once travel resumes fully. "Last year was difficult for tourism due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic which has had a devastating effect on the industry. That said, a lot has been ongoing behind the scenes to ensure that Kenya comes back stronger. "MKSE is part of our strategy to revive tourism in Kenya through a partnership with the private sector which is a key component of tourism," he added.

Commenting on the awards, Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) CEO Dr. Betty Radier noted that the newly recognised facilities would have their products and experiences marketed for the local and international traveller through FAM trips, exhibitions, collaborative initiatives, events, and training to provide extra visibility while driving conversion for the respective companies.

"Kenya has carved her niche as a competitive destination with rich and diverse experiences across the country, available throughout the year and fit for different travel segments. Through this Collection we are able to show the world that Kenya has a lot more to offer beyond the iconic wildlife safari and the pristine sandy beaches for both the repeat and first time visitors" she said.

She added that operators within the sector will need to be aware of the emerging trends and incorporate them in their business strategies. "Some of these trends include the search for authentic & immersive local travel experiences, slow travel, outdoor experiences to connect with nature, and the need to leave a positive impact in the destinations where they visit. I encourage businesses and individuals who are in the tourism space to participate in the subsequent Magical Kenya Signature Experience recruitment drive," she added.



• The Cabinet Secretary with members of the team at the Ministry

SA Tourism and NETFLIX SA forms a collaboration with South Africa as the Star



• Sisa Ntshona

In a partnership that can best be described as aiming for the stars, South African Tourism (SA Tourism) and Netflix, the world's leading streaming service have agreed to explore joint opportunities that will benefit both organizations to showcase stories made in South Africa, and watched by the world.

The agreement will allow for exploration and collaboration on projects both in South Africa and in key source markets that drive international arrivals to the country.

Since Netflix's launch in South Africa in 2016, the company has dedicated itself to investing in productions (original and licensed content) that are made in South Africa and bringing these unique and diverse stories to the world. Currently, the service is available to 204 million members in 190 countries around the world and continues to showcase South African culture, fashion, music, art, scenery and languages through stories made in South Africa by local and international creators.

Netflix stories provide a global platform to showcase South Africa to the world through content made in South Africa, to be watched by the world. To date, the streaming service has released a diverse slate of content from South Africa across different genres including; Netflix original series like *Queen Sono*, *Blood & Water*, *How To Ruin Christmas: The Wedding*, *Kings of Joburg*; films like *Seriously Single*, *Catching Feelings*, *Santana*, *Baby Mamas*, *Keeping up with the Kandasamys* and most recently; the Oscar-nominated nature documentary *My Octopus Teacher* and Netflix's first original stand-up show, *Loyiso Gola's Unlearning* (which premiered this week on 23 March).

Netflix has also brought stories from other parts of the world that were filmed in South Africa, like the films *Holiday in the Wild* and *Last Days of American Crime* as well as global Netflix series, *Sacred Games*, *The Crown*, *Black Mirror* and *Kissing Booth (1 & 2)*. Through these stories that transcend beyond Mzansi borders, the local creative industry has benefitted, on and off screen, from the opportunity to showcase their art and talent on the global stage. Each production resulted in the support for local businesses and entrepreneurs - the full supply chain of creating a show includes local stylists, make-up artists, etc - which ultimately leads to a positive economic impact in the country.

"As we continue to lure the world to our beautiful country in these trying times, we have to look at non-traditional tourism partnerships as a source of driving arrivals," explains Sisa Ntshona, CEO of SA Tourism.

"Netflix reaches millions of eyeballs globally, and by working closely with Netflix, we are able to latch onto a massive opportunity to influence the audience to think more closely about South Africa and thus convincing them to visit our country," she said.

The partnership will also see SA Tourism working closely with Netflix in promoting the country's must-visit sights through its locally-produced series into international markets.

"We have 11 global country offices and there will always be opportunities for our international offices in key source markets to latch onto opportunities to showcase South Africa through the title Netflix launch," adds Ntshona.

"This past year, when entertainment mattered more than ever, our 204 million members around the world connected with new worlds, and most importantly with each other, through stories from South Africa and across the globe," says Ben Amadasun, Netflix Director of Content in Africa.

"Storytelling is a powerful tool that can foster connection and understanding while creating greater affinity towards a culture or place. That's a big responsibility and at Netflix, we don't take that lightly. It's why we value this important collaboration with SA Tourism as it will help us create more opportunities to support local creatives as they showcase the beauty of South Africa through their stories delivered to millions of entertainment fans around the world on Netflix," adds Amadasun.

Going forward, the partnership will explore various opportunities and initiatives that will go towards showcasing South Africa, not only to South African audiences but also to global members of Netflix. More on these initiatives will be revealed at a latter date.

Marriott International Appoints Anthony Capuano as New CEO And Stephanie Linnartz as President

Marriott International's Board of Directors has announced that Anthony "Tony" Capuano has been appointed Chief Executive Officer and has joined the company's Board of Directors, with immediate effective. He was previously Group President, Global Development, Design and Operations Services. The Board of Directors also announced that Stephanie Linnartz, previously Group President, Consumer Operations, Technology and Emerging Businesses, has been appointed President, also with immediate effective. Mr. Capuano's and Ms. Linnartz's appointments follow the unexpected passing of Marriott President and CEO Arne Sorenson on February 15, 2021.

"Tony has played a critical role in Marriott's growth over the last decade," said J.W. "Bill" Marriott, Jr., Executive Chairman and Chairman of the Board, Marriott International. "He will be a terrific leader as we continue to advance our growth strategy while also navigating the market dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic. He works thoughtfully and pragmatically with our owner and franchisee community and has been steadfast in ensuring Marriott delivers operational excellence and elevated customer experiences at our properties. Tony has a deep appreciation for Marriott's thousands of associates who ultimately deliver on our customer and brand promise and I know he will be a superb steward of our culture. Together with Stephanie in the role of President, and the rest of our exceptional leadership team, Marriott could not be in better hands," Mr. Marriott said.

"I am honored to be appointed to take the helm of Marriott, but it is a bittersweet moment," said Mr. Capuano. "Arne was a mentor, a champion and a friend to each member of his close-knit leadership team. It is because of Arne's efforts that we are prepared to move forward with this transition. Together, we will advance the strategy we have in place, which is laser-focused on recovery, expansion, providing opportunities for our associates, maintaining constructive relationships with our owners and franchisees, delivering safe and innovative experiences for our guests and customers, and building value for our shareholders."

Prior to this appointment, Mr. Capuano, 55, was Group President, Global Development, Design and Operations Services. In this role, he was responsible for leading global development and design efforts and overseeing the company's Global Operations discipline. During Mr. Capuano's tenure leading global development, the company grew its footprint from just over 3,200 properties in early 2009 to over 7,600 properties by year-end 2020. In addition,



Capuano Tony



Stephanie Linnartz

Mr. Capuano has overseen the tremendous growth and globalization of Marriott's development pipeline to 498,000 rooms as of December 31, 2020, with more than half of the pipeline representing projects outside of the U.S. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Capuano has led Marriott's work on its Commitment to Clean initiative, which was designed to enhance Marriott's already substantial cleaning protocols to provide additional peace of mind for travelers.

Stephanie Linnartz Takes on President Role

As President, Ms. Linnartz will be responsible for developing and executing all aspects of the company's global consumer strategy, including brand, marketing, sales, revenue management, customer engagement, digital, information technology, emerging businesses and loyalty strategies. In addition, Ms. Linnartz will oversee Marriott's global development organization, which is responsible for the strategic growth of the company's 30 lodging brands, as well as the global design and operations services functions. Ms. Linnartz will also spearhead the company's progress on issues including the intersection of technology and hospitality, the continued growth of the Marriott Bonvoy loyalty platform, the excellence of our brand portfolio, and environmental sustainability.

"Stephanie has a leadership track record and clear vision for how our core lodging business, travel platform initiatives and loyalty strategies can work together to accelerate growth," said Mr. Marriott. "Her deep experience across our business will enable her to work seamlessly with our owners and franchisees, innovate for our guests and customers, and champion new opportunities for our associates. Tony and Stephanie are exactly the CEO and President we need as we continue to push forward towards recovery and growth in the years ahead."



WELCOME TO GHANA



Accra City Tour, Adventure Tours, UNESCO Heritage Sites (Cape Coast & Elmina Castles), Kakum National Park, Kumasi City Tour, Crafts and Many More

Unforgettable Experiences

w: www.sunseekerstours.com
 e: info@sunseekerstours.com
 fb: [sunseekerstoursgh](https://www.facebook.com/sunseekerstoursgh)
 ig: [sunseekerstoursgh](https://www.instagram.com/sunseekerstoursgh)
 tw: [sunseekersgh](https://twitter.com/sunseekersgh)

memories of our tours are forever...

“PEOPLE BEFORE PROFITS”

is critical to the long-term Success of Hotels- Tim Cordon writes

Hotels that fought back against COVID-19 with an entrepreneurial approach in all facets will reap the rewards in the long run

When President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the easing of several restrictions on 1 February 2021, the South African hotel industry let out a cautious sigh of relief. Closures, furloughs and significantly decreased occupancy rates have all been part of the struggle, but with sales of alcohol now allowed, beaches and parks being reopened, and an extension of the curfew, many started relooking their balance sheets. They were hoping to reopen, possibly squeeze a bit of liquidity out of the coming weeks to counter looming insolvency and begin considering the possibility of a full staff complement once again.

At Radisson Hotel Group, however, we have actively avoided closing hotels and consistently tried to limit retrenchments at the first sign of trouble. Throughout the pandemic, during lockdowns and more open periods of trading, we have tried to keep our hotels operating and to do everything in our power to retain as many team members as possible, leveraging all our creative energies to expand and tailor our offerings and boost bookings. Also included were Radisson Hotels Safety Protocols to protect guests and staff, along with the introduction of Hybrid Meetings, Hybrid Rooms and Radisson Individuals. The latter was a pandemic-born hotel brand designed to assist smaller hotel brands to remain operational thanks to an association with the Radisson brand.

Uncharted territories led to new discoveries

Back in March 2020, we knew that it would be our reaction to the pandemic that would define us during the crisis – and also once we finally emerge on the other side. We could never be certain what the outcome of keeping our doors open would be. We were entering entirely uncharted territory, but one thing was certain: if we closed, our income would be zero. Once a hotel is closed, even temporarily, cash flow dries up entirely. But the building itself still requires maintenance and other basic services, which must be paid for. Our decision has proven correct. Hotels in Africa that have stayed open have done better, overall, than those that chose to close, and have seen a positive cash flow. This of course was the outcome we had hoped for and we certainly are very relieved about the success. But it was our entrepreneurial approach, rather than cash flow, that directed this decision to continue operating.

The focus of our motivation was always our team because underpinning our decision to continue operating our hotels is the acknowledgment that they're crucial to the success of any establishment. Simply put, the hotel business might be run in an exquisite and expensive building, but the people who make things work and breathe life into the



hotel – the team – make the experience for the guests. The unique selling points of a hotel no longer revolve around location only; the guest experience is equally, if not, more important. Literally, every moment matters, and we have to ensure our guests have the very best experience possible – which is impossible without our staff. We invest significant time in selecting and developing our team members, then empower them with the correct tools to get on with their jobs. If you don't have the team to deliver the experiences and create those unforgettable moments for your guests, you don't have a hotel – you only have a building. As such, we acknowledge the many difficult sacrifices that our team members across the spectrum were called on to make.

We believed instinctively that our long-term survival and the longevity of our brand depended on remaining open and how we approached the issue of staff retention during the worst of COVID-19. As a result, we have addressed those sacrifices our teams have made in a very personal – and personable – way, applied consistently across our worldwide operations. We have long espoused a brand ethos that prides itself on its culture and people-first approach, and it was important that we choose integrity, inculcating a genuine culture of “every person matters”, from the top down – especially at this time when the future of the industry is on a knife-edge.

Ethics, ethos and enduring businesses

Our experience over the past year has taught us that this is a time for hotels, like all brands, to stick to their ethical practices, stay true to their entrepreneurial nature, live their “people before profits” ethos in how they deal with inevitable adjustments in staffing requirements, and save as many jobs as possible – knowing that it is people who are at the centre of the very culture of such establishments.

This is also the time to drive innovation, consistently remain open-minded and pursue those uncharted territories to find and create those business opportunities that will keep our hotel doors open as we all navigate through this unpredictable time.

By Tim Cordon, Area Senior Vice President, Middle East & Africa, Radisson Hotel Group

Tim Cordon is the Area Senior Vice President for the Middle East and Africa of the Radisson Hotel Group. Based in

Dubai, Cordon is responsible for leading hotel operations and delivering growth and profit, with over 100 hotels in operation and over 80 hotel projects in the development pipeline. Cordon holds a degree from Nottingham Trent University in Mechanical Engineering and Design and Technology, including qualified teacher status. In 2006, he entered the British Hospitality Hall of Fame with the ‘Alpha Forum Prize – Young Manager’ award. For two consecutive years, he has secured a spot in the top 5 of Hotelier Middle East's Power 50 list.

Ethiopian Marks 75th Anniversary

Ethiopian Airline Group, the largest Pan-African aviation group, celebrates its 75th anniversary today, April 8, 2021. Ethiopian made its maiden international flight on April 8, 1946 to Cairo. Since then, the Airline overcame the ups and downs of the aviation industry and the challenges unique to Africa to become Africa's largest, most profitable and award-winning Aviation Group. Ethiopian kicks off a yearlong celebration under the theme “Celebrating 75 Years of Excellence”.

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Tewolde GebreMariam said, “As we celebrate 75 years of excellence, we take stock of our accomplishments over three quarters of a century. Among the many firsts introduced by Ethiopian are the first Jet aircraft in Africa, the first East Africa to West Africa scheduled flight, the first airline from the Western Hemisphere to fly to China, the first scheduled service between the capitals of the most populous nations in the world (from New Delhi to Beijing), the first airline in Africa to introduce the B767, B777-200LR, B787(the Dreamliner) and later on the A350 to Africa.

Today, our industry faces a serious challenge posed by COVID-19. The route we chose to overcome this challenge is to tighten our belts, change the way we do business and be agile. We remain the only commercial airline that hasn't sought a government bailout and didn't lay off a single employee. I would like to take this opportunity to cement our commitment to sustainable aviation and continue to work with all stakeholders to enhance Africa's air connectivity. While congratulating all Ethiopian families, I would like to thank our esteemed customers for their strong vote of confidence, their loyalty and support.”

Ethiopian attributes its success to the four pillars of its growth strategy. These pillars are human resource development, modern fleet, infrastructure development and technology. It will continue to focus on these pillars with renewed emphasis on sustainability. It will also continue partnering with other African airlines and governments to create a robust, competitive airline industry in Africa by sharing its technical and management expertise.



NAMIBIA'S AFROPRINT LINE AIMS AT MAKING ECO-FASHION A WAY OF LIFE



From add-ons in shirts made from fabric wastes to designs that give you a dashing bit of Namibia, fashion company, Afroprint Line is changing people's tastes towards eco-friendly fashion.

The company specialises in everything with prints and creating unique patterns on bags, clothing, accessories etc. with upcycled material off-cuts.

Founder, Ndeshi Fikameni says the journey to achieving their goal has been a great one so far since their inception in 2018.

Speaking to VoyagesAfric, she said, "So what we do is that we collect off-cuts from other tailors; when they make their garments, we take the small pieces and we use them to make add-ons on shirts and others. We also like to use eco-friendly fabrics made from things like jute plant to make bags, etc."

She added that tourists and locals really love their products not only because they are unique but also they are personalized with a touch of Namibian identity.

"So in a shirt for example, we can print it with names of local towns and places in Namibia. We also have a game that promotes fast-thinking and educating people about Namibia," she averred.

Ever mindful about giving back to the society in which they operate, Ms. Fikameni said collaborations with big clients have helped to make their initiative towards affordable housing possible.

"Africprint Line has collaborated with big corporates in Namibia. One of our big collaborations was with Standard Bank, and they've really supported us, they bought large number of T-shirts, shopper bags as part of 'Buy a Brick' campaign which is a campaign that helps subsidise housing in Namibia," she iterated.



• Ndeshi Fikameni, Founder of AfroPrint

Sony Music celebrates African Music Icon, Sibongile Khumalo

Celebrated jazz and opera singer, Sibongile Khumalo, passed away on Thursday, 28 January, after a lengthy period of illness.

Reflecting on his relationship with Ma Khumalo, Managing Director of Sony Music Entertainment Africa, Sean Watson, shared his thoughts on the late musician: "A more noble ambassador of music I have never met in my time. Sis' Sibongile was the consummate musician and her love of her art shone through her work and her person. She was professional at every turn and resolute in protecting her creative values. We will miss her gracious presence."

Dr. Lindelani Mkhize expressed his deep sadness at the passing of the jazz veteran, "This is very sad. Sibongile was one of the first artists that we signed to Sony Music and at that time she was an opera singer. I convinced her to do jazz, and jazz was not selling at that time. We were told at the time that we would never sell 5000 units, but her album, Ancient Evening, went on to sell Gold and was the very first Jazz album in SA to do so. She revived Jazz music in the market."

Sibongile's former manager, Lazarus Serobe shared his own recollection of the globally revered singer, "My memories of Sibongile start from 1995 when myself and Lindelani signed her to Sony Music. I have worked and travelled with her for many years and she was always a pleasure to work with, a consummate professional. She was a woman of principal and only did something if she felt it was right. Nelson Mandela called her the Nightingale of South Africa and was honoured whenever he was serenaded by her."

Born in 1957 in Soweto, Sibongile started her musical journey at the tender age of eight, she then became a music teacher who dreamt of becoming an opera singer. She rose to fame after winning the



Standard Bank Young Artist Award at the Grahamstown Arts Festival in 1993. She has performed on local and international stages including former President Nelson Mandela's 75th birthday and 1994 inauguration, "The 3 Faces of Sibongile Khumalo" performance in 1992, performances with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1994 and 1995, Handel's Messiah with Lord Yehudi Menuhin in 1995 as well as leading the South African and New Zealand national anthems during the World Cup Rugby Final in 1995.

The First Lady of Song, as termed by Nelson Mandela, holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in music from the University of Zululand, a BA Honours from the University of the Witwatersrand and honorary doctorates by the University of South Africa and the University of Zulu-Land.

Khumalo was awarded the Order of Ikhamanga in Silver by the presidency for her "excellent contribution to the development of SA art and culture in the musical fields of jazz and opera" by former President Thabo Mbeki.

Série de conversations sur la gastronomie africaine sur le Podcast de VA Tourism



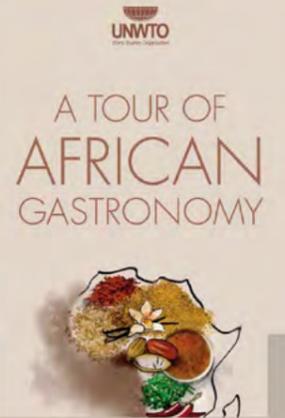
Franck



Yasmine



Kojo



Découvrez les diverses expériences culinaires de l'Afrique grâce à nos chefs!



• Chef Nicole Ansoni, Executive Chef and owner of Inka Steakhouse



• Chef Semira Ajayi, Nigeria



• Chef Georgiana Viou, Benin



• Chef Rabbah Ourrad, Algeria

'Tour of African Gastronomy' Talk Series

An extensive conversation on Africa's gastronomy is set to add another spice to the already launched Tour of African Gastronomy by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The Tour of African Gastronomy Talk series is an initiative of the Africa Department of UNWTO and VoyagesAfric to help the audience and readers appreciate African cuisines and food culture.

The series have so far unraveled the food, beverages, recipes and ingredients of Rwanda, Malawi, Morocco, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, Ghana, Comoros, Benin and Nigeria. Chefs from these countries have shed lights on their diverse culinary experiences.

The series is hosted in English and French on the VA Tourism Podcast. The featured chefs will be the guest of Kojo Bentum-Williams, host of the podcast and also Afrofoodie Founder and culinary enthusiast Yasmine Fofana. Spanish-based Ivorian Journalist, Franck Olivier Kra will complete the team to broadcast Africa's diverse culinary to the world.

Tourism is one of the pillars where Franck expresses his passion for Africa. Based in Spain, he is the editor-in-chief of a trilingual international newspaper that highlights the assets and opportunities of the cradle of humanity.

Yasmine Fofana is a pioneer when it comes to promoting the culinary scene of Côte d'Ivoire (West Africa). She did not only launch the 1st food blog of Côte d'Ivoire in 2012: "Journal d'une Foodie" now rebranded as "Afrofoodie", but she also launched the 1st Restaurant week of Côte d'Ivoire: "Abidjan Restaurant Week".

The Tour of African Gastronomy document pays homage to the unique culinary experiences of several countries on the African continent. It features background information of selected chefs from Algeria to Zimbabwe who also take readers through recipes of at least one of their respective country's most savoury dishes.

"Through the history of humanity, food has always been an essential aspect of a community's life, where strangers, friends, and family members gather, share stories, create memories and even make history," says Elcia Grandcourt, Director, Regional Department for Africa, UNWTO.

Touching on the importance of Gastronomy to tourism, UNWTO Secretary General, Zurab Pololikashvili said in many parts of the world, gastronomy has grown to become an important part of the entire tourism value chain, not only supporting jobs and businesses but also promoting destinations and contributing to sustainable development.

Tourism News Blitz

Seychelles welcomes STORY and L'Escale onto its shores

The Seychelles Islands luxury segment expands as the tropical island destination welcomes STORY (Seychelles) and L'Escale Resort Marina & Spa, two exclusive properties on Mahé.

Launched in January 2021, L'Escale Resort Marina & Spa lies off the North East coast of Mahe on the site of the previously Wharf Hotel close to Eden Island, inviting visitors to an elite stopover for lavish accommodation, yachting, culinary and wellness experiences.

Designed by London-based Winch Design studio, the new boutique resort offers an endless promise of barefoot luxury and ultimate comfort ready to be the perfect escape for travellers from all corners of the globe.

In addition to its 25 deluxe guest rooms and wellness spa, the resort hosts a marina, upgraded to accommodate visitors with docking requirements for Superyachts and sailboats.

Further up north on the edge of Beau Vallon beach, the former H Resort has rebranded to STORY (Seychelles) and added its neighbour, the beloved Le Méridien Fisherman's Cove, to its portfolio as of February 10, 2021.

True to its name, STORY (Seychelles) is about creating 'stories' for its guests – not only to relish but also to participate in- during their stay. Aspiring to offer its visitors a life-changing experience, the resort creates unique experiences for its guests, giving them a whole new perspective on travel.

STORY Hospitality will serve as the umbrella parent marque bringing a full suite of options to travellers and visitors with two different hotel brands: STORY Hotels and Resorts for a superior visitor experience, as well as CUE Hotels, a modern lifestyle brand.

Kempinski expands International portfolio with two Safari Lodges and a Luxurious Tented Camp in Tanzania



Serengeti National Park, Ngorongoro Crater, Lake Manyara, and Tarangire are only a few highlights attracting travellers to visit the African country of Tanzania, where more than a third of the landscape is under conservation protection. With its 22 national parks, this year-round destination guarantees wilderness seekers a stay in harmony with nature and the world's most diverse safari experiences. Amidst the well-known "Northern Circuit", Kempinski Hotels has now signed management contracts for three outstanding luxurious properties, two elegant lodges and a high-end tented camp, which will be open to wildlife lovers and guests as of 2023.

"We are delighted to be extending our international Kempinski portfolio in such an incredible country," said Bernold Schroeder, Chief Executive Officer ad interim and Chairman of the Executive Board of Kempinski Hotels at the signing of the management agreement with the owners. "In line with our brand promise of highest quality standards and to cater to our guests with outstanding destinations, we are continuing our selective expansion by adding high-class hotels in exciting parts of the world. While we are happy to be currently extending long-term contracts within Europe in partnership with our highly respected owners, we are at the same time moving forward with our expansion around the globe."

Hemingways names Ross Evans as new Group CEO



Hemingways Group has named Mr. Ross Evans as their new Chief Executive Officer. In his new role, Mr. Evans will be responsible for all management of the Hemingways Group which includes the Hemingways Collection luxury hotel division, Express Travel Group and Hemingways Expeditions.

Mr. Evans is set to take up this role from April 2021. He has previously served as Hemingways Group's Operations Director for over five years. This appointment is in line with Hemingways Group's succession plan developed for the past 5 years, as Mr. Alastair Addison will be stepping down as CEO and moving back to live in Scotland and be closer to his family.

"I am delighted to take up the new role and I am looking forward to continuing to develop and grow our business. I am extremely grateful to Alastair for his support and guidance over the last five years and I'm thrilled that we will continue working closely together to support our partners and our clients in providing memorable Hemingways experiences and to ensure the business continues to thrive well into the future", said Mr. Ross Evans on his appointment.

Mr. Evans joined the Hemingways Group in 2016 and combines industry expertise with ten years' experience in the financial industry in London and Singapore.

f t i @VoyagesAfric

Air Côte d'Ivoire receives its first A320neo



Air Côte d'Ivoire, Ivory Coast's flagship carrier based in Abidjan, has taken delivery of its first A320neo, becoming the first operator of the type in the West-African region. This latest generation aircraft will join Air Côte d'Ivoire's existing Airbus fleet of six aircrafts.

With improved levels of efficiency, this new aircraft will be deployed on Air Côte d'Ivoire's regional network to serve Senegal, Gabon and Cameroon. Destinations like South Africa will be added at a later stage, highlighting the operational flexibility of the A320neo. Powered by CFM Leap-1A engines, the aircraft is configured in a comfortable two-class layout with 16 seats in Business and 132 seats in Economy Class. Passengers will benefit from the widest cabin of any single-aisle aircraft, high-speed Internet connectivity and the latest generation in-flight entertainment system.

Air Cote d'Ivoire's first A320neo took off from Toulouse carrying 1 tonne of humanitarian goods including medical equipment and toys. In partnership with Aviation sans Frontières and the Airbus Foundation, the mission is part of Air Côte d'Ivoire's corporate social responsibility initiative. The transported goods will serve local NGOs in Abidjan, thus supporting the education and health sector in the country.

Air Cote d'Ivoire has a fleet of ten aircrafts, including three A319s and three A320s, serving 25 domestic and regional destinations in West and Central Africa.

Source: André Orban- www.aviation24.be

Africa Travel Week creates platform for thousands of meetings for delegates in 3 days

Africa Travel Week 2021 has wrapped up its first virtual trade show and content programme with over 5,000 successful 1-on-1 meetings, 4,000 views of content sessions and over 4,300 minutes of speed networking.

Held from 7 to 9 April, the virtual event included headline shows, World Travel Market Africa (WTM Africa) and International Luxury Travel Market Africa (ILTM Africa), where buyers and tourism destinations and products connected online to reignite tourism to the continent.

A content programme also featured over 40 panel discussions and presentations by 170 international and Africa speakers on tourism-related trends in Africa and beyond, from LGBTQ+ travel and responsible tourism to business tourism and travel technology.

"The feedback received from buyers, travel trade visitors, exhibitors and panellists has been overwhelmingly positive," says Megan Oberholzer, Reed Exhibitions South Africa Portfolio Director: Travel, Tourism & Sports.

"Recognising that face-to-face meetings remain important, but balancing this with the need for our industry to connect at this time, we took a blended approach starting with a virtual event in April and live meetings later on in the year," says Oberholzer.

"The organisation and format are great," said Christophe Bazille, Managing Director at Hospitality Web Services attending the show. "It's not replacing the face-to-face meetings happening during the travel fairs, but it's great to connect again and see the positiveness of all the people we can e-meet. Tourism in Africa will definitely be back soon with such spirit and amazing destinations."

Uganda Tourism Board opts for Virtual platform at POATE 2021



The Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) has launched the 6th Pearl of Africa Tourism Expo (POATE 2021), which for the first time-ever, will be held virtually.

The 3-day event is scheduled to take place on 23rd-25th April 2021 under the theme, "Restarting Tourism for Regional Economic Development."

Speaking at the launch event on March 10, CEO of UTB, Lilly Ajarova said, "Well aware that different players in the sector were affected variously, the key focus of POATE 2021, will be on 4 major sub-topics i.e. Recovery, Rebuilding, Reconnecting and Rebooting the sector."

"In the light of the current climate in which multiple travel restrictions especially in some of our key markets, as well as the need to ensure safety for all participants, POATE 2021 will exclusively be virtual."

"We have built, a specialised virtual meeting platforms that shall facilitate one-on-one meetings, virtual speed networking sessions as well as live conference sessions for domestic, regional and international tourism players."

Participants for POATE 2021, according to the CEO, will be vetted through a set of criteria that has been developed by the National Organizing Committee to ensure they are of the right calibre to showcase Destination Uganda's offering.

"In line with UTB's recovery marketing strategy, hosted buyers and exhibitors will be sourced from the existing core and emerging source markets within the East African Region (Kenya, Tanzania,

Rwanda), rest of Africa (Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa) and the international markets (North America, UK and Ireland, Germany speaking countries, Japan, Gulf states and China and the new markets of France, Belgium and Netherlands are also part of the arrangements."

POATE is a tourism exposition organized annually by the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB). It brings together, all of Uganda's tourism stakeholders for the greater purpose of individually showcasing their potential to the world on one hand, and jointly, to raise the profile of Uganda as a competitive and attractive destination for domestic, regional and international tourists.

Alice is new Director-General of Malawi Tourism Department



Malawi's Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Wildlife has announced Ms. Alice Magombo as the new Director of the Department of Tourism. She replaces Isaac Katopola. Alice has risen through the ranks in the Department and prior to her appointment, she served as Head of Licensing and Standards.

She is expected to lead the revival of the tourism sector.

Malawi receives WTTC Safe Travel Stamp

Malawi has been recognized by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) as a safe destination by travellers. The Southern African Country received WTTC's safe travels stamp in March 2021. This initiative allows travelers to recognise destinations and companies that have implemented protocols that are aligned with the Safe Travels Protocols designed by WTTC together with members, health experts among others.

Commenting on the acknowledgment by the London based organization, the Director of Tourism at Malawi's Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife Alice Magombo said, "The stamp is an endorsement of the guidelines that have been designed to rebuild confidence among consumers and also align the private sector behind common standards to ensure the safety of its workforce and travelers as the tourism sector shifts to a new normal."

Radisson Individuals makes its African debut with hotel signing in Ghana



Radisson Hotel Group has announced its first Radisson Individuals property in Africa, with the signing of Earl Heights Suites Hotel, a member of Radisson Individuals, Accra, Ghana. Due to open by the end of 2021, this new addition places the Group firmly on track to achieving its objective of reaching 150 hotels in operation and under development by 2025.

Located in Dzorwulu, the property is currently undergoing a full renovation and is on schedule to open within this year.

Due to its strategic geographical location, ease of access, and aviation facilities and connections, Accra has become a conference and aviation hub for West Africa. It is also dominated by local and international business activities, making the city one of the most attractive African cities to do business in.

The 58-serviced apartment property will comprise modern studios as well as spacious and elegant one- and two-bedroom suites.

French lawmakers approve a ban on short domestic flights



French lawmakers has voted to abolish domestic flights on routes that can be covered by train in under two-and-a-half hours, as the government seeks to lower carbon emissions even as the air travel industry reels from the global pandemic.

The measure is part of a broader climate bill that aims to cut French carbon emissions by 40% in 2030 from 1990 levels, though activists accuse President Emmanuel Macron of watering down earlier promises in the draft legislation.

The vote came days after the state said it would contribute to a 4 billion euro (\$4.76 billion) recapitalisation of Air France, more than doubling its stake in the flag carrier, to shore up its finances after over a year of COVID-19 travel curbs.

Industry Minister Agnes Pannier-Runacher dismissed criticism from the aviation industry that a pandemic recovery was not the time to ban some domestic flights, and said there was no contradiction between the bailout and the climate bill.

BUCK
A Tradition of Printing Excellence
BUCK PRESS LTD.

Experience
THE BUCK DIFFERENCE



WHAT WE DO:

- » Security Documents
- » Textbooks
- » Annual Reports
- » Calendars
- » Labels
- » Packaging Materials
- » Brochures
- » Magazines
- » Newsletters
- » Journals
- » Posters
- » Folders
- » Forms
- » Leaflets & Flyers
- » Manuals
- » Note Pads
- » Letter Heads
- » Invitation Cards
- » Note & Exercise Books
- » Receipt & Invoice Books
- » Requisition Books
- » Business Cards
- » Stickers & Others



Buck Press Building, Accra – Nsawam Highway, Ofankor
P. O. Box AN 12321, Accra – Ghana • Tel: +233 (0) 302 408061 / 421005-7
Fax: +233(0) 302 413642 • Email: buck@buckpress.com • Web: www.buckpress.com

