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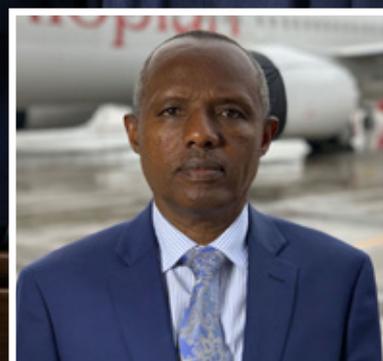
Travel and Tourism Magazine



Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari visits UNWTO Headquarters pg. 6

The Tourism shows are Back! pg. 12

South African Tourism inks deal with Emirates to boost arrivals pg. 36



Mesfin Tasew Bekele,
the new face of Ethiopian Airlines

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The Seychelles Islands

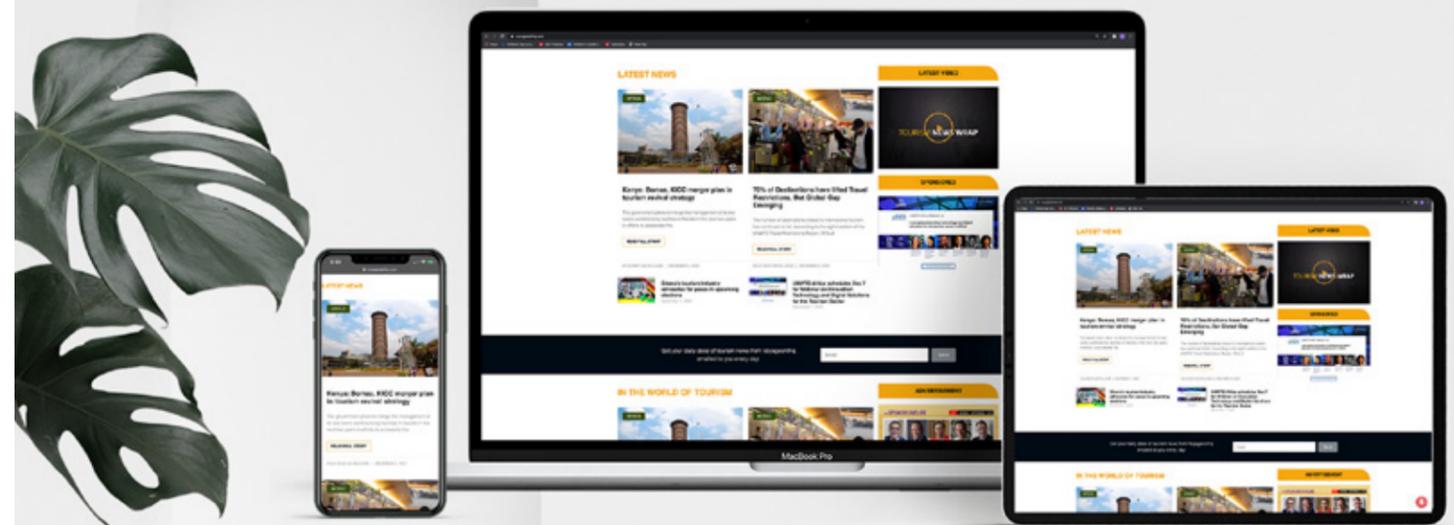


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IN THIS ISSUE



4 UNWTO Members Vote to Suspend Russia

5 Tourism takes centre stage at UN General Assembly



6 Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari visits UNWTO Headquarters

8 Tourism Recovery Gains Momentum as Restrictions Ease and Confidence Returns

10 Africa Day – We'll make tourism growth pillar for Africa

11 Turning Point for Tourism: UNWTO Executive Council Looks Beyond Recovery

12 The Tourism shows are Back!

14 Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism Surpasses 500 Signatories

15 Tourism Governance under the Spotlight in Jeddah



19 Let's make Tourism Flourish - Siandou Fofana

20 World Bank Supports Economic Recovery through Resilient Tourism and Blue Economy Investments in Cabo Verde

21 Seychelles remains a destination for all

22 New Malawi Tourism Masterplan provides an open door for investment Minister

24 Why Destination Marketing Organizations hold the key to the recovery of aviation in Africa

25 New CEO of Zimbabwe Tourism Authority promises close partnership with Media to promote destination



Mesfin Tasew Bekele, the new face of Ethiopian Airlines

31 Travel Trade will be front and Centre of SAA's plans-Newton-Smith

32 Ethiopian Airlines places order for Five B777 Freighters

Ethiopian Airlines is Outstanding Airline Brand of the Year

33 Cape Town Air Access celebrates increased air connectivity to Western Cape

34 Seychelles International Airport digital transformation boosts arrival processes

35 Karibu Kilifair bounces back after two-year Hiatus



36 South African Tourism and Emirates inks deal to boost arrivals

37 Ethiopian Airlines supports the establishment of African Aviation Renaissance in MRO Services

38 Asky Airlines connects Cabo Verde to the African Market

39 Growth From The Bottom

40 2022 Africa Travel Week came alive in Cape Town

42 Abidjan's ultra-modern Convention Centre takes shape

44 4th Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Challenge gathers momentum

45 Africa's Travel Indaba 2022 a boon for the tourism sector

57 Sonto Ndlovu is SA Tourism's New COO



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ISSUE 019 | July 2022 Edition Travel and Tourism Magazine

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Reader,

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to the second issue of the year which has beautifully coincided with an impressive upward and positive trajectory of the rebound of the tourism sector.

The last data released by the UNWTO had clearly indicated some encouraging signs of a sector rebound unfortunately the Russian invasion of Ukraine seem to be rolling back efforts to get tourism on track. The first half of the year has seen virtually return of live/in person meetings and exhibitions which were put on hold as a result of the covid-19 pandemic. From the small to the mega travel shows, Africa has indeed moved and event organisers and destinations deserve some great deal of commendation for taking bold decisions to ensure that some normalcy is beginning to return and heralding hope for millions whose lives depend on tourism.

Events such as Meetings Africa, Africa's Eden Travel Show, Africa Travel Week, Africa's Travel Indaba, We are Africa, Karibu Kilifair and a host of events have successfully been held and the industry is buoyant of an accelerated rebound.

It is imperative to highlight that, another first in the annals of the Tourism Sector which took centre stage at the UN General Assembly needed to be celebrated. At its first-ever dedicated session on tourism



• Kojo Bentum-Williams

and its key role in inclusive recovery and growth, the United Nations General Assembly sent a strong message to Member states on the importance of this crucial sector.

As the first-ever UNWTO Secretary-General to address the UN General Assembly, Zurab Pololikashvili espoused tourism's unique ability to build resilient and peaceful societies. "Tourism is a leading provider of opportunities because it is based on people, builds bridges and helps create a better future for people everywhere."

These are highlights worthy of mentioning as it adds to efforts by UNWTO and other stakeholders to invest and make the industry a real force for good. If for nothing at all, the pandemic has exposed how tourism hasn't received the investments it deserves to improve livelihoods of people everywhere.

The change of guard in the leadership of Africa's leading Airline Group is a defining moment for

Ethiopian Airlines and VoyagesAfric's exclusive interview with the new Group CEO Mesfin Tassew Bekele reveals a man who is confident in the structures of the airline to continue a growth path while paying glowing tribute to his predecessor.

Our cover story which highlights the visit by Nigerian President H.E Muhammad Buhari to the headquarters of UNWTO is a feather in the cap of Tourism and speaks volumes of the importance of the sector to Nigeria and Africa as well as the cordial relationships the UN Agency has developed with the highest office in member countries. Nigeria will be hosting the first global conference on Tourism and creative arts and the visit further places the importance of the Nigerian government on tourism.

The Jeddah Call to Action is exciting news for the tourism sector as it brings to the fore a critical area needed to spur the much-needed recovery that the industry needs.

Our Aviation Expert, Sean Mendis succinctly illustrates how Passenger growth in Africa will come from the bottom end of the market over the upcoming years, and the airlines who can find a way to tap into that demograph successfully have nearly infinite potential for success.

South African Airways and Kenya Airways' partnership is gaining some traction as the Commercial Director of SAA Simon Newton, announced, the partnership will take effect from June 2023.

This edition covers extensively major developments in the aviation sector. The Seychelles Island has become only the second country after UAE to install face technology to ease the processes at its airport and syndicating information in a one central database.



The Africa Youth in Tourism and Innovation summit is back this time around to be held in Namibia's Capital, Windhoek from 26-29 July 2022. The event in the last three years have committed to shaping talents and mentoring them for a positive impact on Africa's tourism sector.

In other developments, the exotic tourist haven of Cabo Verde has welcomed the new passenger service by Pan African carrier, Asky Airlines to Praia.

As you enjoy major developments as covered in this edition, it is important to make the point that, we are not out of the woods yet and as such stakeholders in the tourism industry need to continue and encourage all to adhere to the sanitary protocols laid out to protect us all for the greater good.

Have a pleasant read.

*Naturally distanced islands,
ensuring a safe haven*



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UNWTO Members Vote to Suspend Russia

The Russian Federation has been suspended from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), losing with immediate effect its rights and privileges as a member of the United Nations specialized agency.

Meeting for the first extraordinary UNWTO General Assembly, Members debated the suspension of Russia from the Organization, as decided by the UNWTO Executive Council at its emergency meeting last month. The Russian delegation at the meeting declined to step up and defend its position, and instead announced its withdrawal from UNWTO before the debate took place.

The Assembly voted in favor of suspension, far exceeding the two-third majority required. The decision is effective immediately, while voluntary withdrawal is only effective one year after a Member submits an official communication through the appropriate channels.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "UNWTO's Members have sent a clear message: Tourism is a pillar of peace and international friendship, and Members of UNWTO must uphold these values or face consequences, with no exceptions. This emergency General Assembly shows that Russia's actions against Ukraine are indefensible and contrary to the very principles of UNWTO and of international governance."

Loss of rights and privileges

In total, 99 countries were represented in Madrid. According to Article 3 of the Statutes, all Members commit to developing tourism with a "view to contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity, and universal prospect for, and observance of, human rights".

Effective immediately, the Russian Federation will not be able to exercise the rights or enjoy the privileges of UNWTO membership. This means it will not be able to receive services from the Organization, including Technical



• The Ukrainian representative



• UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili addressing the Emergency Session

Assistance, nor will the Russian Federation be able to participate in any UNWTO meetings or events, be permitted to put forward any candidates to serve on UNWTO's statutory bodies, or to vote in elections to UNWTO organs or to propose a candidate to serve as Secretary-General.

Fulfilling Members' requests

The first emergency session of the General Assembly was convened at the request of six Members and at the instance of the UNWTO Executive Council. The UNWTO Secretariat then provided a comprehensive report to the General Assembly for Member States to take an informed decision in relation to Russian Federation's suspension in accordance with the Organization's Statutes.

The UNWTO Statutes state that any Member State may be suspended if two-thirds of Members believe them to be persisting in a policy that is contrary to the fundamental aim of the Organization. A majority of two-thirds of Full Members present and voting at the General Assembly is required for a motion for suspension of membership to pass. Suspension is temporary and may be lifted, though only by the General Assembly and following the same procedure.



• The Russian representative

Tourism takes centre stage at UN General Assembly

The United Nations General Assembly has met for a first-ever dedicated session on tourism and its key role in inclusive recovery and growth.

The High-Level Thematic Debate was convened by the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Abdulla Shahid, in collaboration with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). In the General Assembly Hall, government representatives joined public and private stakeholders in recognizing tourism's unique ability to drive positive change.

Tourism for hope and opportunity

As the first-ever UNWTO Secretary-General to address the UN General Assembly, Zurab Pololikashvili stressed that "now is the time to build resilient and peaceful societies and tourism can help make this happen! Tourism is a leading provider of opportunities because it is based on people, builds bridges and helps create a better tomorrow for people everywhere."

Joining Secretary-General Pololikashvili in opening the session were the President of the General Assembly and UN Deputy Secretary-General and UNSDG Chair Amina J. Mohammed, who noted "Every part of the United Nations system, including the World Tourism Organization as its specialized agency for the sector, can leverage tourism to help us achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, from inclusive growth to gender empowerment and biodiversity protection."

UN General Assembly President Abdulla Shahid also stressed the importance of tourism, particularly for small islands and developing states. He said: "We face a critical opportunity to not only reboot tourism, upon which so many are dependent for their jobs and livelihoods, but to



transform it to make it more resilient, more sustainable and more responsible."

Debating people, planet and prosperity

A Fireside Chat, chaired by CNN International anchor Richard Quest, reflected the challenges faced through tourism's recovery, addressing how best to reconcile potential trade-offs between the need for economic growth and creating jobs with advancing efforts for overall sustainability.

The high-level debate also featured a special roundtable discussion focused on tourism for people, with an emphasis on inclusivity. This was followed by a roundtable discussion on accelerating the climate-friendly transformation of tourism. The concluding third roundtable discussion focused on re-invigorating investments in tourism.

Placing tourism in the General Assembly

On the eve of the debate, UNWTO Secretary-General Pololikashvili had met with UN General Assembly President Abdulla Shahid for discussions on tourism's role in the wider work of the United Nations. President Shahid commended UNWTO's work in guiding tourism first through the biggest crisis in its history and now through the sector's restart and recovery. The high-level meeting also laid the foundations for the potential inclusion of tourism as a topic of annual debates or thematic sessions within the UN General Assembly.



• plenary of the session

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari visits UNWTO Headquarters



• President of Nigeria H.E. Muhammed Buhari and UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili

President of Nigeria H.E. Muhammed Buhari has paid a courtesy visit to the headquarters of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in Madrid, Spain.

His visit forms part of activities marking an official state visit to the Kingdom of Spain.

At a reception held in his honor at the UN Tourism Agency headquarters, the Secretary-General of UNWTO Zurab Pololikashvili said, it was a great honour to receive the Head of State of Africa's biggest economy.

"Nigeria is a key member state of UNWTO and a founding member of the organization since 1975. And I would like to commend you Mr. President for your remarkable support as the first member state in signing the Instrument of Ratification of the UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics 2020." Mr. Pololikashvili said.

Nigeria is also an economic giant and has been at the forefront of innovation, technology and development in Africa.

The UN Tourism scribe believes that Nigeria can fulfill its unique potential to be more competitive and a key destination in Africa and can reap fully the benefits of this sector.

He added that, Nigeria's commitment to the works and programs of UNWTO is highly appreciated and the first global event to link tourism, culture and creative arts to be held in Lagos in November is a

testimony of support the West African nation has shown towards the development of tourism in Africa.

Addressing the august gathering at the UNWTO Headquarters, President Muhammed Buhari said, "The hosting right that was recently granted to Nigeria for the first-ever Global Conference on Tourism, Culture and the Creative Industry is another affirmation of the great confidence reposed in our country by your Organization. The event provides yet another opportunity for Nigeria to market its tourism and creative industry assets to the international community."

The Head of state assured the leadership of UNWTO that "Nigeria is ready to host a world class conference this November, and we assure all participants from within and



• President of Nigeria H.E. Muhammed Buhari speaking at the UNWTO Headquarters



• Nigeria's Minister of Culture and Information Lai Mohammed addressing the reception

outside the country of a safe and secure environment as well as adequate facilities. We look forward to welcoming all participants to Nigeria."



• A plaque unveiled in honour of the Nigerian President, Muhammed Buhari at the UNWTO Headquarters in Madrid

"The global conference will also serve as an avenue to showcase Nigeria's famed hospitality and warmth, highlight the country's profile as a destination for leisure and business and identify investment opportunities, especially in the sector. The event will also strengthen the already cordial bilateral relations between Nigeria and the UNWTO.

President Buhari used the opportunity to thank the



• UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili addressing the reception

Organization for granting Nigeria 100 UNWTO Tourism Online Academy Scholarships for the award of certificate on the 'Introduction to Tourism-Industry Management'.

"I am reliably informed that the scholarship award was given in recognition of Nigeria's efforts to empower youths and boost quality education in tourism. There is no doubt that this award will help to address the dearth of manpower in our tourism sector. I look forward to a stronger and more mutually-rewarding relationship between Nigeria and the UNWTO in the years ahead."

A plaque was unveiled by the visiting Head of State at the headquarters.

Nigeria's Minister of Culture and Information Lai Mohammed who accompanied the president to Madrid said Nigeria plans to leverage the global conference to showcase the best of Nigeria.

"We plan to leverage on the conference to showcase what makes Nigeria tick in culture, tourism, music, film, gastronomy, fashion, photography, etc, and why Nigeria has become a global leader in music and film, especially.

"Today's visit of Mr. President to the UNWTO headquarters has given a great boost to our efforts to host a successful conference in November, and we thank Mr. President for taking time out to visit" he concluded.



• A family photo of the delegation at the headquarters

AFRICA DAY

– We'll make tourism growth pillar for Africa

The Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Zurab Pololikashvili has emphasized the commitment by the UN Tourism body to support the African continent and grow the sector as a pillar of opportunity for all.

In an open letter released to celebrate Africa Day, the Secretary General said "Through the UNWTO Agenda for Africa –Tourism for Inclusive Growth, we will continue to support the continent and grow the sector as a pillar of opportunity for all. And we will continue to support Africa tourism with major flagship events"

Below is the full text of the letter

Dear Friends,

I send my warmest wishes to all those celebrating Africa Day.

This is a chance for us to come together to recognize the richness of this diverse continent, its people and its destinations, while at the same time noting the challenges and opportunities we face. And this year we focus on food security and nutrition, one of the most pressing issues for so many people in Africa.

Africa is endowed with 70% of arable land and agriculture is one of the most important economic sectors in the continent. To be sure, there are many challenges to address to transform the sector, to make it more sustainable and to secure food access and distribution. But we have good reason to be optimistic about the future.

Africa is home to the fastest growing urban populations on Earth and its growth is being driven by a buoyant youth possessing incredible talent and ingenuity. Moreover, tourism is returning across Africa, and our sector has the power to deliver positive change and inspire transformation.

Right now, around one-third of all the money tourists spend globally goes on food. In Africa, this supports businesses and both local and national economies. It also supports jobs and provides opportunities, most notably for women, for youth and for many people living in rural areas. But this enormous potential is yet to be fully realized.

We need to invest in human capital as a main pillar of recovery, giving people capacity, skills development and the right tools for entrepreneurship. MSMEs that are the backbone of the sector must receive the necessary support from government to drive the sector and secure millions of jobs in Africa.



Africa is rich in immense natural and cultural resources and the diversification of the economy through tourism will be key to build resilience against external shocks and so build economic stability and greater food security.

Domestic and regional intra and inter tourism are valuable sources of income and can boost infrastructures. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) are paramount for advancing Africa's agenda on sustainable development.

Through the UNWTO Agenda for Africa –Tourism for Inclusive Growth, we will continue to support the continent and grow the sector as a pillar of opportunity for all. And we will continue to support Africa tourism with major flagship events:

In October, UNWTO will hold its 65th UNWTO Commission meeting for the region in Tanzania. And then in November, we will meet in Nigeria for the Global conference on Linking Tourism, Culture and Creative Industries, Pathways to Recovery and Inclusive Development.

And above all, we will continue to champion Africa, its people, its rich heritage and vibrant cities and its rich gastronomy.

On behalf of everyone at UNWTO, I wish you all a happy Africa Day.

Zurab Pololikashvili
Secretary General
World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

116TH UNWTO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL



Turning Point for Tourism:

UNWTO Executive Council Looks Beyond Recovery

The Executive Council of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has met to advance the recovery of tourism around shared goals and a common vision for the sector.

Held for the first time in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the 116th session was the largest meeting of the Executive Council since the start of the pandemic, with more than 200 participants and 32 countries represented. Members noted that the meeting came at a pivotal point for the sector as it learns from the lessons of the pandemic while at the same time looking ahead to a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient future.

Advancing priorities in challenging times

"We have faced up to a triple crisis: an ongoing pandemic, a climate emergency and now the return of war in Europe," UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said. He stressed that "tourism is united and determined like never before, and UNWTO is guiding it forward, with inclusivity and sustainability at the very heart of all our work".

In his report to Members on achievements since the previous Council meeting six months ago, the Secretary-General illustrated how UNWTO is seizing tourism's unprecedented relevance, including within the United Nations, in national recovery and growth plans and within the wider public and media conversation.

Tourism's restart

UNWTO laid out its plans to keep advancing the priorities around fostering sustainability, promoting tourism jobs and education, growing tourism investments and accelerating its digital transformation.

The Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia and host of the Executive Council, Ahmed Al Khateeb, said: "Tourism's restart in many countries around the world offers a unique chance to rethink tourism governance, communications

and beyond. We have an incredible opportunity to set a new way forward, to create a strong future for the global tourism sector, and we must embrace it."

The recognition of tourism's importance was further echoed by the Minister of Tourism and Leisure of Cote d'Ivoire, also serving as Executive Council Chair, Siandou Fofana, who noted that "tourism is united to face future challenges", while stressing the importance of cohesion in planning and policymaking as the sector recovers to drive wider social and economic recovery.

Members agreed to hold the 117th session of the UNWTO Executive Council in Morocco, in the second half of this year. With two countries offering to host the 118th session, Members voted in favour of the Dominican Republic holding the first Council of 2023.

Onto Riyadh, an emerging tourism hub

Members of the Executive Council were provided with an update on the work of the UNWTO Regional Office for the Middle East, opened in the capital of Saudi Arabia in May 2021. The office in Riyadh is set to emerge as both a regional and global hub for the sector, with a special focus on tourism education and tourism and rural development, exemplified by the first major project to come out of the office, Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO.



The Tourism shows are Back!

The Tourism sector's excitement following the easing of travel restrictions and return of tourism expos is a great impetus given to an industry which was at the receiving end of the ferocious coronavirus pandemic.

The start of the second quarter saw destinations especially in Africa making bold decisions to save the sector from total collapse. This is not to suggest in the least that the woes of the sector are over but the return to trade shows is a much-needed win which can spur and accelerate the restart.

Exercising caution in opening the sector, event organisers and countries who took the very unpopular yet bold step in the revival of the industry deserve some deal of commendation. It ought to be mentioned that, regardless of the magnitude of the events held in these difficult times, it has contributed immensely to setting the scene for the shows to return, knowing that, this discipline of tourism is crucial to the revival of the industry.

South Africa has become the epicenter of the MICE tourism restart as major events on Africa's Tourism calendar have occurred in the rainbow nation.

Meetings Africa 2022 got the MICE events underway when it returned after 12 months in February and against what some pessimists referenced as a super spreader event. Thankfully, a significant number of African tourism players embraced it, and proved to be a blue-chip edition



• The Commercial Director of RX Africa (Formerly Reed Exhibition Africa) Papy Luzala



• Amanda Kotze-Nhlapo, Chief Convention Bureau Officer at South African Tourism

and which the stage for the return of live events on the continent.

The second major gathering of industry professionals was WTM Africa held in Cape Town from 11-13th April at the Cape Town International Convention Centre. The mixed (MICE and leisure) events offered hope for an industry which for 24 months has been disrupted negatively with remnants of it persisting.

The Commercial Director of RX Africa (Formerly Reed Exhibition Africa) Papy Luzala organisers of Africa Travel week said, in as much as virtual platforms offered alternative, person to person could never be substituted for the former.

"The World Travel Market (WTM Africa) 2022 edition that took place in April this year in Cape Town, South Africa, marked a significant turnaround moment for live events in the travel and tourism sector, particularly for the African continent. Indeed, the event gave back hope to travel professionals who participated from across Africa and beyond for post-pandemic recovery in the sector, and also demonstrated the important role of face-face meetings for concluding business deals." Papy observed.

The leadership of South African Tourism (organizer of Indaba) made the bold decision to go ahead with the continent's biggest leisure show Africa's Travel Indaba in spite of the devastating effects of the torrential floods in the Kwazulu Natal Province. The industry indeed showed solidarity to the wonderful people of KZN and turned up in style.

The Chief Convention Bureau Officer at South African Tourism, Amanda Kotze-Nhlapo at the recently held IMEX Frankfurt underscored the need for live events to return.

"Having been at IMEX for the past few days, the importance of business events globally was once again highlighted with a clear message that if we do not continue with physical meetings then we will not be injecting money into the economies of the various cities and countries. It was so



• The Executive Mayor of Cape Town cut the ribbon to open the Africa Travel Week 2022

encouraging to hear most of our partners talking positively about South Africa and affirming South Africa's business events strategy of focusing on key economic sectors."

The sheer numbers that congregated at the Durban ICC for the three-day travel and leisure exhibition is a further testament to how eager industry stakeholders are to make tourism work through networking facilitated by physical shows.

President of the National Association of Nigerian Travel Agents (NANTA), Mrs. Susan Akpoyiare who attended the event with over 30 members underscoring the significance of in-person events said,

"Can you have this feeling virtually?" She quizzed, adding, "Virtually, you can see but you need to experience it yourself because tourism is about experiences, and experiences are not built virtually. Virtually can give you an idea of what to expect but the real expectation is in the physical experience of it."

Jullian Blackbeard CEO of Africa's Eden Tourism Association said "In terms of shows, we believe that travel shows that are directed towards the trade are more important than ever in a recovery phase. They bring together the trade and the product after a long hiatus, often acting as a reminder of what people have forgotten and the new developments that have been happening. Saying that I think there is a changing trend in events, certainly for Africa, which is



• Botswana's stand at Africa's Travel Indaba

in-destination and is targeted at specific buyers/exhibitors. At Africa's Eden, our signature events are not free-flowing, expo-format but rather include structured education and site inspections, one on one meetings, and networking. We also award our exhibitors with the opportunity to invite their own buyers, and therefore the audience is by recommendation only and therefore more relevant and qualitative."

There is no denying the fact that the return of these shows will accelerate the recovery of the MICE sector and tourism business in general.

Other events which have since returned included Africa's Eden Show, (tourism), and the Karibu KiliFair Tourism Fair held in Arusha Tanzania. At the time of going to press, the Kenya



• Cultural Dance Group at this year's Africa Travel Indaba

Tourism Board had confirmed to the trade that, this year's Magical Kenya Travel Expo is also back in October 5-7 in Nairobi.

Zimbabwe's Sanganai Hlanganani World Tourism Expo is also set to make a return on October 13 – 15 this year with the continent's premier aviation business, AviaDev 2022 earmarked for June 11 to July 1 in Cape Town, South Africa.

It is important to highlight that the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) impressed on governments to be bold in order to return tourism on track and itself held several in-person meetings in the heat of the pandemic in a safe manner, sending reassuring messages of opening up in a responsible way.

Again, it is instructive to stress that the return of travel shows is a real confidence booster for an industry that has suffered so much in the past two years, as these shows not only provide avenues for the industry to gather and do real business but opens the host countries up for buyers and patrons to explore and sample their tourism offerings.

So while we revel and jubilate over the resumption of travel shows, the caution word still remains safety, as we are not out of the woods yet. Therefore, while we learn to live with it in the new normal, let's not forget to enforce and adhere to the necessary sanitary protocols whenever the need be.

Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism Surpasses 500 Signatories

The number of signatories to the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism has passed the 500-mark, just four months after the landmark initiative was launched at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26, November 2021). Today, and coinciding with International Mother Earth Day, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has announced that Expedia Group, Booking Holdings and Condé Nast have become the latest signatories, joining stakeholders of all sizes and from every part of the diverse sector.

The signatures of three of the sector's biggest names underscores tourism's determination to accelerating climate action at every level and reflects the shared commitment of both big businesses and small stakeholders to work towards a common goal. All signatories of the Glasgow Declaration commit to the decarbonization of tourism operations and to restore and protect ecosystems, helping visitors and host communities experience better balance with nature. "Rebalancing our relationship with nature is critical to regenerating both its ecological health and our personal, social and economic well-being", the Declaration states.

Cross-sector commitment

The 538 signatories of the Glasgow Declaration include all types of stakeholders, among them DRV German Travel Association, Tanzania Association of Tour Operators, the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, PATA and Hostelling International; tour operators as EXO Travel, and Europa Mundo Vacaciones; accommodation providers such as The Cayuga Collection; DMOs such as Turismo de Portugal, Turisme de Barcelona, West Sweden Tourist Board, London & Partners, Destination Québec Cité and many more. All adhere to the guiding principle of restoring nature as a "key to our sector's recovery from the pandemic, as well as its future prosperity and resilience".

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili says: "It is time to act. Tourism must prosper in harmony with nature, and the number and variety of businesses, destinations and other organizations signing up to the ambitious Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action shows our sector is committed to doing better. I am delighted to welcome Expedia Group, Booking Holdings and Condé Nast as the newest signatories."

Collaboration across stakeholders is key to ensure that the necessary skills, tools and knowledge are available

among service providers, host communities and tourists so that they can deliver change. Among the priorities of the Glasgow Declaration for 2022 is to deliver guidance on measurement of emissions and climate action planning with support from working groups.

"The need to address the damaging effects of climate change has become more urgent than ever before, which is why our Climate Action Plan includes ambitious targets, based on the latest scientific guidance, to achieve near-zero emissions for our own operations by 2030, and net-zero by 2040," said Glenn Fogel, Chief Executive Officer of Booking Holdings. "Committing to the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) and Net Zero Standard, and now signing the Glasgow Declaration, is critical to ensure that climate action is supporting science and the Paris Agreement to change the trajectory of the current crisis."

"We are proud to become a signatory of the Glasgow Declaration for Climate Action in Tourism as part of a concerted effort with our partners and peers to progress a more sustainable travel industry," said Peter Kern, CEO and Vice Chairman, Expedia Group. "As a travel company, we have the privilege of bringing people all around the world together every day. And as more people travel, we also have a responsibility to shift towards more sustainable operations to lessen our overall footprint and equip our travelers with sustainable options that match their values. We're enhancing the visibility travelers have into their impact and offering more responsible choices. The industry must work together to help safeguard the future of travel for generations to come."

About the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism The Glasgow Declaration was launched at the UN Climate Change Conference COP26. It is a voluntary commitment which requests organizations to support halving emissions by 2030 and achieving net zero by 2050 at the latest; to deliver climate action plans (or update existing plans) within 12 months from becoming signatories and implement them; to align their plans with five pathways, namely: measure, decarbonize, regenerate, collaborate and finance; to report publicly on progress made implementing those commitments; and to work on a collaborative spirit.

The Glasgow Declaration is led by UNWTO in collaboration with the Travel Foundation and within the framework of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme. A full list of Signatories can be found here.



Public and private leaders have been called on to unite behind the Jeddah Call to Action, a commitment to align with UNWTO's approach to rethink tourism governance at every level to keep adapting to the challenges faced by tourism as a global driver for recovery.

On the back of the 116th session of its Executive Council, held in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UNWTO set down a marker for the future of global tourism. With the pandemic having showed the systemic vulnerabilities of the sector, the United Nations specialized agency called for the construction of a new and reimagined system of governance and financing with the aim of building resilience against future shocks while also making tourism more sustainable.

Governance and visibility

In Jeddah, UNWTO continued with its tradition of complementing the important deliberations of its Executive Council with an open discussion on the biggest challenges and opportunities for the sector. The Forum "Tourism Futures – New Governance and Advocacy", featured two distinct sessions - "Towards a New Tourism Governance" and "Raising Tourism's Visibility" outside of the sector.

"Now is the time to think big", said the UNWTO Secretary-General welcoming delegates and speakers. Zurab Pololikashvili stressed the need to "realize tourism's unique potential to drive recovery, provide opportunity and build resilience, through better and stronger governance and focusing on jobs, training and education".

His Excellency Ahmed Al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, commented: "We cannot recover backwards. Now is the time to capitalize on this heightened recognition and to position tourism as an essential pillar of transformation, development and opportunity." The Minister also reiterated the Kingdom's plans to invest US\$100 million in training 100,000 young tourism workers.



• Ahmed bin Aqil Al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism Saudi Arabia

Diverse voices around a shared goal

Illustrating the diversity of UNWTO's Membership, the high-level Thematic Debate featured contributions from Ahmed bin Aqil Al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism Saudi Arabia, Siandou Fofana, Minister of Tourism and Recreation Côte d'Ivoire, Carlos Peguero, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Dominican Republic, Tomohiro Kaneko, Vice Commissioner of the Japanese Tourism Agency, Najib Balala, Minister of Tourism of Kenya, Sofia Zacharakis, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Greece, and Tonči Glavina, State Secretary at the Ministry of Tourism and Sport, Croatia.

Similarly highlighting the broadness of the sector and UNWTO's reach of influence, the Ministers were joined by high-level representatives from business, destinations, media and communications, namely from Euronews, PRM Global, Interbrand, Netcom, Amadeus and the Diriyah Gate Development Authority (DGGA). Referencing the shared desire to get tourism moving again, Jerry Inzerillo, CEO of the DGDA, noted, "We may not share the same ideology, we may not share the same theology, but we share the same biology", highlighting a universal desire to travel and connect with other cultures.



• UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili speaking at the forum

Providing the perspective from the media, Ruth Wright, Head of Tourism and Lifestyle Verticals at Euronews stressed that viewers still demand certainty as the “perception amongst travellers is definitely still that travel is difficult and stressful.” As a result, content focused on rules and regulations remains relevant, even as human-led tourism stories becomes more popular. “Travellers are yearning to get back to the day when travel was fun, carefree and full of unexpected surprises,” she added.

From Jeddah to the world

With the discussions emphasizing the importance of taking a whole-government approach to tourism policy, with finance and interior ministries also part of the sector’s

governance, Secretary-General Pololikashvili urged participants and all UNWTO Executive Council members advance this important agenda for positive change.

The Jeddah Call to Action recognizes the vital need for more and better tourism governance, with targeted investments and a focus on building resilience, advancing sustainability and expanding education and training. It forms part of UNWTO’s wider work ensuring the recognition of tourism reflects the sector’s unique social and economic importance, including through making it a key part of the work of the United Nations and securing the cooperation of governments, international organizations and financial institutions.




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- Siandou Fofana, Chairman of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Executive Council



Let's make Tourism Flourish - Siandou Fofana

The Chairman of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Executive Council, Siandou Fofana has admonished all players in the tourism sector to unite to ensure that tourism is back since it provides hope and livelihoods for many.

Opening the 116th session of the Executive Council of UNWTO in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Minister of Tourism and Leisure of Côte d'Ivoire said it was in the interests of all to make sure the "people to people" sector survives.

"In an increasingly globalised world, tourism has been acknowledged as an essential factor for growth. It is therefore in the interests of all of us, and of all the UNWTO Member States, to make it survive so that it can continue to prosper for the good of mankind.

"There is no need to stress that, over the last few years, tourism has been severely affected by the COVID-19 crisis, with a negative impact on our respective countries. However, tourism has proved to be an economically sound and resilient activity as well as an important lever for the recovery of commercial transactions on a global scale" Mr Fofana said.

Rounding up his remarks at Tourism's important decision organ of the Madrid-based UN Tourism Agency, Mr. Fofana expressed appreciation to the UN Tourism Secretary-General Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili and his team for the remarkable commitments and efficiency shown in steering the affairs of the organization in the face of the dreadful covid-19 pandemic.

"I would like to thank the secretariat of the World Tourism Organisation and, more personally, its Secretary-General, Zurab Pololikashvili, for the energy shown and for

the innovation and efficiency with which their demanding functions are carried out, allowing UNWTO, an important organisation, to fulfill its considerable responsibilities."

The Ivorian Tourism Minister on behalf of the members of the executive thanked the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the excellent hospitality extended to delegations who participated.

"I would like to express my gratitude to His Majesty King Salman Ben Abdelaziz Al Saoud of Saudi Arabia, and his Government, for the warm welcome we have received and for the facilities offered to ensure that our meeting is a success."

I would also like to thank all the delegations for their remarkable dynamism and the splendid work of coordination that has taken place to ensure the success of my term as Chair.



• The Ivorien delegation to the 116th UNWTO Executive Council

World Bank Supports Economic Recovery through Resilient Tourism and Blue Economy Investments in Cabo Verde

The World Bank has approved an International Development Association credit in the amount of US\$30 million for the five-year Resilient Tourism and Blue Economy Development in Cabo Verde Project. Complementary co-financing of US\$5 million will be provided through a grant from the Global Program for the Blue Economy Multi-Donor Trust Fund.

Cabo Verde's tourism sector has seen exceptional growth in the last two decades and is a crucial driver of growth and job creation, reaching an estimated 25 percent of GDP. The Covid-19 pandemic represented a major setback with arrivals collapsing by 75 percent in 2020, affecting tourism and ancillary sectors particularly hard.

In addition to the unparalleled economic shock, the pandemic also highlighted structural challenges in the tourism sector, including overconcentration of arrivals in two islands and a single market segment, weak local supply chain linkages, and environmental sustainability issues—particularly in coastal areas.

As authorities pursue a “build back better” motto, there is a real opportunity to address these challenges. In this context, the proposed project supports the national vision and strategies -namely the Tourism Operational Program and the National Investment Plan for the Blue Economy – to promote sustainable tourism and conservation of natural resources with benefit to local communities.

The project will thus contribute to critical objectives, namely improving the diversity of the tourism sector's offerings across more islands and market segments (measured by an increase in average daily tourism spending and overnight stays in the targeted emerging destinations), as well as enabling greater participation and linkages of local communities in the positive economic spillovers brought about by tourism (measured by additional product and service supply contracts by local businesses in the hospitality value chain).



The selected integrated and cross-sectoral project interventions for this first phase will span destinations in four islands (Santiago, Santo Antão, São Vicente and Sal) and will include: i) the development of selected resilient tourism and blue economy infrastructure (upgrading of trekking trails, heritage sites, seafront promenades, fishing piers and market, and a critical access road), ii) support to the local SME sector and women-led enterprises to provide demand-driven and sustainable services and products to the tourism value chain, leveraging particularly the potential associated with the blue economy in Cabo Verde; and iii) support to the enabling environment (including international destination marketing, enhanced policy and territorial planning, improved statistics collection, enhanced sustainability and management of tourism sites and services, and support to gender-informed mainstreaming and policies).

“The World Bank is thrilled to support Cabo Verde's vision and strategy for economic recovery and diversification by unlocking the combined potential of tourism and blue economy activities. The targeted investments in resilient infrastructure as well as the complementary interventions aimed at strengthening SMEs are designed to catalyze increased economic spillover from tourism across islands and market segments, all the while enabling better and more sustainable linkages and value-added for local communities and businesses.” said Eneida Fernandes, Resident Representative for Cabo Verde.



• Dr. Carlos Jorge Duarte Santos,
Cabo Verde Minister of Tourism

SEYCHELLES REMAINS A DESTINATION FOR ALL

The Seychelles Islands have been trending lately following the infamous account of an African American influencer who visited the destination briefly not long ago and said she was mistreated as a visitor.

The influencer's article was posted at a time when she recounted her ‘bad experience’ over allegations of racism. She also said that her trip did not go as planned despite being a guest of Tourism Seychelles.

Reacting to the article, Tourism Seychelles said it can very proudly say that it works with different black influencers from all over the world and always treats all its guests respectfully.

The Director General for Destination Marketing at the Tourism Department, Mrs Bernadette Willemin, explained that there has never been any discrimination with regards to who they work with, and that besides hosting black press personalities, influencers, and bloggers, they also participate in marketing projects targeting the black communities or clients.

On the issue of Tourism Seychelles not honouring its part of the bargain with the influencer, Mrs Willemin said the influencer's account is not correct.

“This is quite unfortunate, considering the excellent reputation we enjoy with partners from all around the world. It is very important to note and put in perspective how far we can go when hosting our guests. Our overall spending for marketing activities is carefully budgeted for two main reasons: we are accountable to the government and taxpayers, and we must ensure that we spend wisely and even more important, we get the return on investment on every single project,” she explained.

She continued that the destination is only able to work according to its resources, and in that context, it cannot fully sponsor influencers' or press trips.

“Aside from our usual collaborations on media and educational trips, like most destinations, influencer promotion is part of our marketing mix to help boost Seychelles' visibility. The scope of our work is quite wide. We receive a high number of requests for collaborations every year. Our commitment to work with an influencer will be based on a strict vetting system where we not only assess his/her engagement or followings but also ensure that his/her focus align with ours as a destination and fit our marketing strategies.”

The Tourism DG further explained that since the beginning



• Mrs Bernadette Willemin
The Director General for Destination Marketing at the Tourism Department

of the year, Tourism Seychelles has received over 30 requests for collaboration per market, and that is from some 20 markets. When hosting an influencer, she noted, they often have to pay for the accommodation, meals, transfers, excursions, and tours as well as other ground logistics to ensure the guest has a memorable stay on our islands. And in return for this, they expect the commitment and coverage, or exposure promised as part of the agreement.

It is to be noted that there is always an agreement between the department and the guest to ensure that the sponsorship or hosting of the trip is clear for both partners.

Mrs Willemin concluded that every partnership with an influencer is carefully evaluated and weighed against its return on investment and there has always been good collaboration with the partners.

“Always in keeping with our strategies, whenever we are contacted by an influencer, we first see if they fit our criteria. If yes, we engage in further negotiation as to what we can offer or sponsor towards the trip. Same process was applied with Ms Akinyemi and our agreement was to collaborate with her by offering a few excursions. There was no commitment of any other services. To assist her with ground logistics, our team had put her in contact with other partners for her bookings and we did follow up with her on several occasions for her itinerary so that we could arrange her excursions according to her programme. We received no response from her,” she explained.

Mrs Willemin said it was regrettable to read such an article now as it not only attempts to paint a bad image of the destination but also disheartens the staff who work tirelessly to make sure they treat all guests respectfully, regardless of where they come from.

“We remain very proud ambassadors of our destination,” she said.

New Malawi Tourism Masterplan provides an open door for investment – Minister

Malawi's Minister of Tourism, Culture and Wildlife, Dr. Michael Usi has emphasized that the country's recently launched tourism master plan will give leeway for investments into the sector.

The southern African country's President, Dr. Lazarus Chakwera unveiled the audacious \$660 million plan last April with the ultimate aim of developing the needed infrastructure and plans to boost tourism.

In an interview for the VA Tourism Podcast during this year's Africa's Travel Indaba in Durban, South Africa, Dr. Usi mentioned that masterplan seeks to address challenges that are currently prohibitive to courting investments into the country's tourism.

"What this blueprint of the tourism masterplan will do is to inform the investors about the requirements for the investor to come to Malawi to invest. We are coming from a background where there are so many bottlenecks, and for an investor to come to Malawi, sometimes it takes two years for them to get license, to get accepted and we are removing all that. We want, when an investor comes, for example to get feedback within seven days, and in less than a year, may be six months at most, if the feasibility is done and everything is done, the investments should be on the ground.

"The masterplan will also illuminate the gaps and challenges in investing in the sector. We would want the investor to know the challenges we have had in the past for us to realise the full potential in the tourism dividends. We are also looking at a three-dimensional approach where all the stakeholders must come together and form a fabric that act as tourism marketing strategies and implementation," he stressed.

The all-encompassing plan has provision for the



• Malawi's Minister of Tourism, Culture and Wildlife, Dr. Michael Usi

development of aligned sectors such as wildlife, culture and hospitality. The strategy is to use tourism to precipitate a multiplier effect on other sectors of the economy, while decentralizing distribution of wealth and deepening the creation of it.

The Minister posited, "We are envisaging in the future, as a preferred future benefit, to develop because each of the 10 tourism nodes in the plan is going to support other projects which aligns with Malawi's Vision 2063 (MW2063).

In the meantime, marketing and promoting the country, Dr. Usi disclosed, is a key priority for getting the destination out there within the short term.

"The area in which we are putting much energy is marketing. We need the outside world to know what Malawi is offering; talk about Lake Malawi which is a beautiful lake but hasn't fully been explored for its tourism potential, talk about our game parks and culture. The cultural authenticity is what impregnates the beauty of it all.

"When you come to Malawi and you visit areas where our culture is being showcased, you'd see that you've never been anywhere like that. What we envisage in the near future is to have a domain where if somebody anywhere in the world is asked about a must-visit destination, if he or she doesn't mention Malawi, it's by choice not that he doesn't know because we made the loudest noise which is relevant," he emphasized.



• Malawi's Minister of Tourism, Culture and Wildlife, Dr. Michael Usi welcomed UNWTO Regional Director, Elcia Grandcourt during Africa Indaba

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Why Destination Marketing Organizations hold the key to the recovery of aviation in Africa

I have dedicated the last 10 years of my life to the world of route development, supporting organizations around the globe to improve their air connectivity with a particular passion and focus on Africa.

Whilst much of the connectivity that has been built over the last 25 years was eroded by the pandemic, the resurgence of air traffic since restrictions were lifted has been beyond expectations.

Whilst airlines have received most of the press coverage about how difficult their situation is, and are also those who have received the most financial support, airports have also been hugely impacted.

In Africa, many airports do not have large enough operations to have diversified to create a decent revenue stream from non-passenger revenues. Therefore, they are dependent on revenues tied directly to aviation activities and passenger throughput. Understandably, across the continent, this revenue has declined massively since the onset of the pandemic, but airports remain vital pieces of a country's infrastructure and still need to find the funds to ensure a safe operating environment.

In summary, a huge amount of an airport's operating expense has remained whilst revenues have dwindled.

Added to this, many countries in Africa have not created a separate airport authority and operate with just a Civil Aviation Authority. This is an important point, as it is the airport authority that should have a commercial focus and proactively look for opportunities to increase its revenue through attracting new airlines and supporting existing ones to develop their operations, which is what we facilitate at AviaDev Africa.

Top of that list of activities should be to attract an airport's biggest customer, namely airlines as they not only deliver revenue for the airport but a much bigger impact on the destination they serve.

So where do the DMOs fit in?

According to the UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization), in 2017, 57% of all tourists globally arrived at their destination by air.

Therefore, it's not a quantum leap to suggest that a Destination Marketing Organization's most important customer is the airline as without them, the majority of tourists cannot visit the destination.

To continue this line of thought, it makes sense that tourism bodies should work closely alongside their airport authority to attract the airlines.

So why then, in my personal experience, do the vast majority of DMOs claim that dealing with airlines is the airport's job and they don't have a direct relationship?

If airlines bring over half of the tourists to your destination, as a DMO, do you not have an obligation to keep them happy and try to develop new airline relationships?



"AN AIRLINE FLIES TO A DESTINATION, NOT AN AIRPORT"

Over the last 10 years, we have delivered training courses for tourism authorities, provided free access to attend events alongside their airports but the uptake has been limited, perhaps due to the misconception that only airports should talk to airlines. I want to stress that this disconnect is not unique to Africa, but now is the time to change that.

So how do we bring this change? The answer is simple. Integrate strategies and collaborate.

We have already established that airports are under financial pressure and I would venture that it is likely that DMOs will receive financial support before the airports and will be charged with bringing back the tourists.

DMOs should be looking to support their airports to build a business case in the airline's source market and even support the new route with marketing support and even financial means (within the rules and where affordable).

If I haven't convinced you yet, ask any airline what they are looking for when they receive a proactive approach from an airport/destination.

Their answer will include a multiple stakeholder approach that engages multilaterally as CAA, Airport Authority and DMO to create a compelling argument to launch a new route and that illustrates how they will support its success.

The future will be competitive as all destinations look to rebuild and those that adopt a proactive and collaborative approach to route development will recover fastest.

If want more insight on the African aviation industry, check out the AviaDev Insight Africa podcast at or on all podcasting platforms



New CEO of Zimbabwe Tourism Authority promises close partnership with Media to promote destination

The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) has named seasoned tourism practitioner Winnie Muchanyuka as the substantive Chief Executive.

Ms. Muchanyuka replaces Dr. Karikoga Kaseke who resigned last year due to ill health.

She takes over from Mr. Givemore Chidzidzi who has been with ZTA for the longest and also in his acting capacity as CEO.

Announcing the appointment, ZTA board chairman Mr. Raynold Mawerera commended Mr. Chidzidzi for holding forte in the past months.

Mr Mawerera commended Mr Chidzidzi under whose leadership and guidance ZTA steered on a positive trajectory.

He mentioned the successful launch of the ZimBho domestic tourism campaign and the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) initiative as some of Mr. Chidzidzi's career highlights.

Environment, Climate, Tourism, and Hospitality Industry Minister Mangaliso Ndhlovu hailed the appointment of Muchanyuka as a step in the right direction.

"The appointment of Winnie Muchanyuka to the ZTA as CEO is apt in that she is not a stranger to the tourism industry.

The industry awaited the appointment with comfort. There are high hopes for tourism amid clear signs of recovery in the sector. Statistically, the first quarter of 2022 has been quite promising and there is a need to maintain that trajectory.

"Tourism inflows increased by 100 percent to register US\$214 million this quarter. As we are opening up the sector, the tourism industry should grow bigger and bigger. ZTA is the critical bridge between the private sector and policymaking.

"Despite the fact that tourism struggled under COVID-19, there is hope for it to grow bigger. The US\$5 billion tourism sector target is achievable if we work together collectively. We seek to review the targets only upwards. Tourism is the face of the country, the key voice of our country. The ZTA and the tourism sector should forge close ties with the media. To the ZTA CEO and entire management, I urge your dedication towards growing the industry and to embrace success as we march towards the 2025 target of a US\$5 billion tourism economy," Hon Ndhlovu said.

Ms Winnie as she is affectionately known in the industry, accepted the appointment with joy adding that she was happy to ride on the success of her predecessors.

"The ZTA Team has done and continues to do tremendous work towards growing the tourism industry. I pledge my support to the mandate given to me by the Principal, Honourable Mangaliso Ndhlovu, the tourism minister and the US\$5 billion tourism target he alluded to is not changing.

"In fact, we can surpass it. Zimbabwe needs to achieve a middle-income economy by 2030 and tourism plays a key role in achieving that goal. I am also looking forward to a close partnership with the media in telling the good story of this country. I am excited to be starting on this journey," Muchanyuka said.

Hon Barbra Rwdzi, the Deputy Minister of Environment, Climate, Tourism, and Hospitality Industry congratulated the new CEO of the ZTA and alluded to the full stakeholder representation at the announcement of her appointment as a clear sign of endorsement of her new role.

She encouraged stakeholders to open doors for ZTA through collaboration, and partnerships while working closely with the media as well. This, she said, should be done in the spirit of the 'Zimbabwe is open for business' mantra through tourism.

Muchanyuka brings a wealth of experience to the ZTA. She was on the board of the Tourism Business Council of Zimbabwe and the Chinhoyi University School of Tourism. She has vast experience in the aviation industry with a stint as an air hostess for Air Zimbabwe and Swiss Air. She also worked as an executive for the South African Airways.



• Winnie Muchanyuka, CEO of ZTA

Mesfin Tasew Bekele, the new face of Ethiopian Airlines

Africa's biggest and leading Airline Group has ushered in a new leadership after its illustrious and legendary former CEO Ato Tewolde called time on his stewardship to an end on health grounds. It was indeed a shocking news to the aviation sector and news world, the sudden announcement on his resignation. He paid his dues and his sterling leadership ensured the airline improved its profitability, grew its fleet, operations and above all bagged countless awards for the pan African airline.

With a robust and impressive succession plan for the Ethiopian carrier, the management and Board of the airline Group announced another veteran in the top echelons of the airline, Mr. Mesfin Tasew Bekele as the new Group CEO of the company.

Mr. Mesfin has 38 years of experience in airline management and operations in the areas of aircraft maintenance and engineering, procurement, information technology, flight operations, capability development, capacity building, development of corporate strategies, airline operation management, and corporate leadership. He earned a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) from Open University in the UK, an MSc degree in Electrical Engineering specializing in Communications Engineering from Addis Ababa University, and a BSc degree in Electrical Engineering from Addis Ababa University.

Aviation Juggernaut and Board Chairman of Ethiopian Airlines Mr. Girma Wake in congratulating Mr Bekele said he was confident in the capabilities of the new man and believes Mr. Mesfin will lead the airline to even greater success, keeping it on the right track that will see it grow through many generations to come. I urge the 17,000 employees of Ethiopian and the board members to stand with the new Group CEO to keep the airline fly high. We are also thankful for the remarkable contributions of the former Group CEO."

Mr. Mesfin Tassew on his part said, "I am honored and humbled to be appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of Ethiopian Airlines Group which I have been serving for nearly four decades in various positions. My new role gives me the opportunity to carry on with the fast and profitable growth of our beloved airline and take it to the next level. I call on all my colleagues at Ethiopian to join hands and forge ahead for further success."

In the different capacities he served during his 38

“
I am honored and humbled to be appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of Ethiopian Airlines Group which I have been serving for nearly four decades in various positions. My new role gives me the opportunity to carry on with the fast and profitable growth of our beloved airline and take it to the next level. I call on all my colleagues at Ethiopian to join hands and forge ahead for further success.

”
years of service, Mr. Mesfin has been a key player responsible for planning and execution of strategies that led the airline to shine in the African skies and beyond. He assumed responsibilities including but not limited to overall maintenance of Ethiopian fleet, capability and capacity development, leading the automation project of the Maintenance and Engineering Division, and managing projects related to aircraft acquisition.

Profile

Mr. Mesfin has been serving as a Chief Executive Officer of ASKY Airlines since 2021 and has led the airline with a profitable growth strategy until the time of his new appointment. He served as a Chief Operating Officer of Ethiopian Airlines from 2010 –2021 and successfully led the operation of the airline in an efficient and cost-effective way by optimizing processes and developing internal resources to cope with the airline's growth strategy.

Besides, he was Vice President of Maintenance and Engineering from 2006 –2010; Chief Information Officer from 1998 – 2006; Manager of Planning and Automation, Maintenance and Engineering Division from 1995 – 1997; and Avionics Engineer and Supervisor Avionics Engineering Group from 1984 – 1994.

He took part in numerous local and international seminars in the aviation industry and general leadership. He received training in leadership and airlines operations management, aviation regulations and aircraft maintenance among others.

In 1984, Mr. Mesfin was a gold medal award winner of Addis Ababa University Faculty of Technology as an Outstanding Graduate of the Year.

We sat down exclusively with the new man on the



• Mesfin Tasew Bekele



block to get to know more about his aspirations for Ethiopian Airlines. First, he is bent on continuing with the airline's growth strategies.

"If you see the history of Ethiopian Airlines, it is a long history of success, and one of the contributing factors to this success is; the leadership succession strategy. We pick people who have grown within the company, worked for a long period of time, gained experience with the airline, and replace those who leave at the top.

My appointment as CEO of Ethiopian Airlines was based on that succession strategy. As I mentioned to you earlier, I have been sitting in the executive management team at least for the last 17 years in different capacities. For instance, Head of IT , Head of Maintenance, Chief Operating Officer and now the CEO. So I participated actively in those critical decision making proceses such as in planning, and infrastructural development.

"I am not new to this position that's one. Secondly, all those leaders who have been leading the company, follow the company's long-term strategic road map and I will follow that. So we have the vision 2025 now and we have set vision 2035 and I am going to strictly follow the implementation of that strategy which is an expansion of infrastructure, continuous modernization of aircraft and human resource development. And adopting the strategy of the company with the continuously changing business environment around the world.

So our focus now here will be number one; developing internal capacity along five pillars so that when a storm comes we can sail through. When you have the internal structures, you will not be affected

significantly by external factors. Secondly, we would continue to improve our customer service. We will continue following these principles to provide world-class global standard services to our esteemed customers."

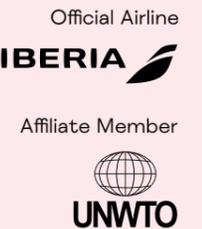
At the core of the airline's Vision 2035, Mr. Tasew said, is sustainability through a diversified business model.

"The basic elements of Vision 2025 are still valid in vision 2035. Just to mention some of them; our key guiding principle is fast, profitable, sustainable growth which has been our guiding principle in our vision 2025. In addition to that, as a group, we will follow a diversified business model. Now there will be eight, adding some more business units to it.

In vision 2025 we didn't have the Airports as one business unit but now we have added that with the expansion strategy in Ethiopia. So we will still continue following the diversified business model. And in Vision 2025 we had four pillars of growth infrastructure development, fleet renewal and expansion, human resource development, and systems development. We were focusing on these.

"In Vision 2035, we added one more pillar which is sustainability. Our business strategy and our business model must survive by themselves. In the past, in Vision 2025 we basically followed our motto of being a four-star airline with five-star service delivery that has African hospitality.

In Vision 2035, we also incorporated this. So, it is an extension of the current strategy but scaled up with a bigger portfolio. So we will be expanding our network throughout the world and our service will be a global standard service with African hospitality," he emphasized.



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Travel Trade will be front and Centre of SAA's plans- Newton-Smith

Africa's travel and tourism trade will be key to South African Airways' strategy in connecting the continent. The Airline's Commercial Director Simon Newton-Smith has said.

The Airline in a breakfast meeting with trade partners and stakeholders on the sidelines of Africa's Travel Indaba revealed several initiatives the carrier has embarked on since its return to the skies on September 23, 2021.

Addressing the issues at the breakfast engagement, Simon Newton-Smith said, it's been tough 2 years for every business and SAA was happy to have relaunched to bring competitive services to the travel market.

"The travel and tourism trade will be front and Centre of SAA's plans and by so doing the airline will be able to incorporate some services the market demands.

"Our primary focus is building our network in Africa and that will also mean doing the simple things right.

"It's our job as African airlines to connect the continent; thus, the collaboration and partnership will be essential ingredients in making travel seamless in the region."

Touching on the recently announced partnership deal with Kenya Airways, Mr. Newton-Smith said plans are far advanced and barring any unforeseen eventuality by June 2023, SAA and KQ would have harmonized network pricing which will guarantee far better connectivity than we have now.

The partnership with Kenya Airways is one of the many initiatives the SA flag carrier is looking at in Africa to reach the length and breadth of the continent.

The Commercial Director of SAA also paid glowing tribute to Former CEO Thomas Kgokolo for his sterling leadership



• Simon Newton-Smith

and professionalism in overseeing the restart of South African Airways.

The Airline currently operates international flights from Johannesburg to (JNB) to six African capitals: Accra (ACC) in Ghana, Lagos (LOS) in Nigeria Kinshasa (FIH) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Harare (HRE) in Zimbabwe, Lusaka (LUN) in Zambia and Port Louis (MRU) in Mauritius.



• President of National Association of Nigerian Travel Agents Mrs. Susan Akpoyi speaking at the breakfast meeting



Ethiopian Airlines places order for Five B777 Freighters

Ethiopian Airlines, the largest and leading aviation group in Africa, and its longstanding partner, Boeing Inc. have announced the carrier is further expanding its all-Boeing freighter fleet with an order for five 777 Freighters (current freighters).

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Mesfin Tasew said "The addition of these five B777 Freighters into our cargo fleet will enable us to meet the growing demand in our cargo operation. While cementing our partnership with the Boeing Company with new orders, the growth of our freighter fleet takes the capacity and efficiency of our shipping service to the next level. We always strive to serve our customers with the latest technology aircraft the aviation industry could offer. Our Africa's largest cargo terminal coupled with fuel-efficient freighters and well-trained cargo handling professionals will enable our customers get the best quality shipment service. Customers can rely on Ethiopian for wide-ranging cargo services across five continents."

Boeing's market-leading 777 Freighter is the world's largest, longest-range, and most capable twin-engine freighter currently flying with 17% lower fuel use and emissions compared to prior airplanes. Ethiopian Airlines currently operates a fleet of nine 777 freighters, utilizing a range of 4,970 nautical miles (9,200 km) and a maximum structural payload of 107 tonnes (235,900 lb) to connect Africa with 66 dedicated cargo centers throughout Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas. Ethiopian Cargo and Logistics Services cover 127 international destinations around the world with both belly hold capacity and dedicated freighter services.

"We value the trust that Ethiopian Airlines places in the 777 Freighter to support their cargo ambitions which will provide them with increased capability and flexibility to their operations," said Hssane Mounir, Boeing's senior vice president of Commercial Sales and Marketing. "Additional 777 Freighters will enable Ethiopian to capitalize on near-term cargo demand while positioning the airline for further expansion in the future."

In early March 2022, Boeing and Ethiopian Airlines also announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the intent to purchase five 777-8 Freighters, the industry's newest, most capable and most fuel-efficient twin-engine freighter.

Ethiopian Airlines also operates three 737-800 converted freighters, as well as a combined passenger fleet of more than 80 Boeing jets including 737s, 767s, 787s and 777s.

Ethiopian Airlines (Ethiopian) is the fastest growing Airline in Africa. In its seventy-five years of operation, Ethiopian has become one of the continent's leading carriers, unrivalled in efficiency and operational success. Ethiopian commands the lion's share of the Pan-African passenger and cargo network, operating the youngest and most modern fleet to more than 130 international passenger and cargo destinations across five continents. Ethiopian fleet includes ultra-modern and environmentally friendly aircraft such as Airbus A350, Boeing 787-8, Boeing 787-9, Boeing 777-300ER, Boeing 777-200LR, Boeing 777-200 Freighter, Bombardier Q-400 double cabin with an average fleet age of seven years. Ethiopia is the first airline in Africa to own and operate these aircraft.

Ethiopian Airlines is Outstanding Airline Brand of the Year

The largest airline in Africa that flies to over 124 countries from Ghana via its hub in Addis Ababa, was recognised for its consistent performance during the difficult period in 2021 and for its dedication to the Ghanaian and West African market in general.

"We are happy to have been recognised for our work and we will work to do more in the years ahead," Yemesrach Alemayehu, Area Manager of Ethiopian Airlines said.

In Ghana, Ethiopian Airlines and Asky Airlines are all set to start Accra-Washington Flights via Lomé on June 1.

The new service is expected to provide more travelling options to Ghanaian passengers and lead to competitive pricing on the route.

"ET is pleased to introduce this direct service from Lomé to Washington giving additional connective between West Africa and USA in connection with ASKY.

The Washington service is added to the daily flight we currently have to New York giving better travel alternative to USA," Yemesrach Alemayehu, Area Manager of Ethiopian Airlines said.



Cape Town Air Access celebrates increased air connectivity to Western Cape



Intercontinental flights to Cape Town are also at the forefront of more sustainable long-distance flights with almost 75% of carriers opting to operate new generation Airbus A350 or Boeing 787 Dreamliner's into the destination.

Opening the session, Wrenelle Stander, CEO of Wesgro and the Official Spokesperson for Cape Town Air Access, commented: "Going into 2021 we understood that we were competing in the global race for routes against major destinations around the world. The reestablishment of 23 international routes signifies our position as a competitive and attractive destination. Cape Town Air Access, along with partners, remains commitment to air route network recovery

and contributing to economic recovery – which has been critical to the achievements we are seeing today. We are excited about the prospects of the coming year and the significance of greater air connectivity for the Western Cape's global competitiveness".

Cape Town Air Access – the award-winning air-route development project responsible for establishing direct flights that connect Cape Town and the Western Cape with the rest of the world – held their Annual Review Showcase. The celebratory event was well-attended by key government partners, business stakeholders and airline professionals.

The team used the opportunity to highlight its achievements over the last year, in the face of adversity caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic, and also prompted an important discussion about what it must do to do to ensure it builds on these successes in the future.

Forming the focal point for proactive air route development in Cape Town and the Western Cape, the team assisted in re-launching flights to Cape Town International Airport from 23 international destinations, served by 18 international airlines during 2021. Domestically, connections to all 13 pre-pandemic destinations have been re-established for Cape Town International Airport, served by seven local airlines. Four airlines are also operating out of George Airport to three domestic destinations.

Highlights for the past year included:

Flights to 11 out of 13 pre-pandemic African destinations have been re-established for Cape Town International Airport.

The announcement that the AviaDev Africa route development conference 2022 will return to Cape Town for the third time from 29 June to 1 July, hosted by Cape Town Air Access, which will welcome 250 route development, representatives from 60 countries, including representatives from 40 airlines.

Deputy Director-General: Economic Development and Tourism, Western Cape Government, and Cape Town Air Access Co-Chair, Rashid Toefy, said: "The recovery of the Western Cape economy has been the key focus since the beginning of the pandemic, and securing non-stop direct flights to a set of strategic destinations across the world has been one of our main focus areas. Collaborative efforts such as Cape Town Air Access are an important aspect of the future growth of the Western Cape economy. The reconnection of air connectivity and the steady recovery of travel is a testament of the impact of collaborative effort."

Cape Town Air Access is an award-winning air-route development project, responsible for establishing direct flights that connect Cape Town and the Western Cape with the rest of the world.

The project is housed within Wesgro – the official tourism, trade and investment promotion agency for Cape Town and the Western Cape and is an impressive collaboration between six government entities – the Western Cape Government, City of Cape Town, Cape Town Tourism, South African Tourism, Airports Company South Africa and Wesgro – as well as selected private sector partners including Investec, DHL Global Forwarding and the V&A Waterfront.

Seychelles International Airport digital transformation boosts arrival processes



Travizory Border Security Platform used for digital immigration screening as part of ongoing modernisation agenda

Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority (SCAA) recorded its fastest ever screening times for arrival passengers in March this year - with all necessary checks such as Health, Immigration, Customs and baggage claim completed in just 35 minutes per 100 passengers.

Health screening alone has dropped from 55 minutes to just 8 minutes per 100 passengers, while the time to process 100 passengers for Immigration has dropped 50% from 41 minutes to 20 minutes in the same timeframe.

Crucially, this sees the SCAA well on-track to reach the ICAO standard for overall passenger processing of 45 minutes with 61% of flights processed within this target.

This success follows the digitization of the Immigration processing system and the integration of the blue disembarkation card into the Seychelles Islands Travel Authorization platform, powered by Travizory Border Security.

As of 21st February, passengers at Seychelles Airport no longer have to present paper forms to Immigration or Customs Officers on arrival. Instead, a simple scan of their passport will arm Officers with the information needed to effectively profile and process passengers.

As a result, travelers do not have to complete or present any additional paperwork to Seychelles Authorities once their Travel Authorization has been approved.

As international travel picks up again, this will give greater confidence to passengers by guaranteeing a contactless travel experience, thus minimizing health risks by limiting interactions on arrival.

Mr. Colin Chang-Tave, the General Manager for Airport Management at the Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority, said:

“For the first time since the resumption of commercial flights in August 2020, the average overall processing time for arriving passengers was below the 45 minutes target set by ICAO. Currently, 61% of flights are processed within this target - firmly above the 21 % of flights that met this standard in August 2020.”

Renaud Irminger, CEO Travizory Border Security said:

“Travizory’s mission is to facilitate secure digital border crossings for travelers and governments - and the digitisation of the arrival experience at Seychelles Airport illustrates that a pleasant travel experience and robust security can go hand-in-hand.”

Karibu Kilifair bounces back after two-year Hiatus



Karibu Kilifair made a triumphant comeback after a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19 disruption. The International tourism & industry fair brought together exhibitors from different countries across the world at this year’s fair in Arusha, Tanzania from May 3-5, 2022.

This year’s event had over 500 exhibitors from 15 different countries, over 600 international Buyers from 45 countries, 8000 trade Visitors, 35.000 sqm Exhibition area, B2B Events, seminars, appointments, Entertainment, and Fashion Shows.

Dominic Shoo, Director, Killifair Co. Ltd, expressed gratitude to the Tanzania Ministry of Natural resources & Tourism, calling for continued investment in the fair as part of efforts to market the country.

“Karibu Killifair is a big investment which has a multiplying effect not only on the economy of Arusha but on the whole country of Tanzania and East Africa at large. We ask the ministry to continue supporting us financially so we can continue to Market Tanzania and make Karibu Killifair the best platform for business networking worldwide. We and the world to come to Tanzania and become the Karibu Killifair of Tanzania. We also that you continue supporting familiarization tours as the number of participants continues to grow and to make sure travel agents visiting this fair become the best ambassadors of our attractions in Tanzania. This way we will meet our target of 5 million tourists per year”.

Delivering his keynote address at the opening ceremony, Hon. Mashimba Ndaki, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries said “Tanzania is endowed with many tourist attractions which appeal to a significant number of tourists from many countries of the world. It goes without saying that through this kind of event, the tourism industry will quickly recover from the impact of COVID-19”.

He explained that due to COVID-19, the number of international tourists to Tanzania decreased by 59% and revenue generated from tourist activities decreased by 72%. In response to this, the Tanzanian Government has taken several steps towards recovery including enhancement

of destination marketing through different platforms within and outside the country. In view of that, Karibu Killifair came at the right time and is aligned with the government’s effort toward the development of the tourism industry in Tanzania. As a government, we will continue supporting this fair financially and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism will make sure that it is fully engaged”.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Secretary-General of the East Africa Community (EAC), Hon. Christopher Bazivamo also acknowledged the role of events such as Karibu Killifair towards the wholistic improvement of tourism across the region and aligns with the EAC’s main interest is to ensure that East Africa is marketed as one destination to benefit the

region at at-large.

“ We are at the point of bringing in South Sudan and they are here as well, the next block is the Republic of Congo to ensure that we have a higher piece of the bar to share within the region. Conservation cannot be done in one country; it must be done across the region and must share the same standard within that region”.

The fair was also an opportunity for exhibitors and buyer to have the opportunity to visit some of Tanzania’s tourism hotspots and other social activities lined up for the fair.

This year’s edition of the fair was supported by the Ministry of Natural resources & Tourism, GIZ, Tanzania Association of Tour Operators, NMB Bank, Ethiopian Airlines, Air Tanzania, Coca-Cola, DPO Group, Voyages Afric and several other entities.



South African Tourism and Emirates inks deal to boost arrivals



Emirates and South African Tourism have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly promote tourism and boost visitor arrivals and inbound traffic to South Africa from key markets across the Emirates network.

The MoU was signed on the side-lines of Arabian Travel Market by Badr Abbas, Emirates' Senior Vice President Commercial Operations for Africa, and South African Tourism's Acting CEO Mr. Themba Khumalo. Also present at the signing ceremony was Adnan Kazim, Emirates Chief Commercial Officer, Minister of Tourism in South Africa, Lindiwe Sisulu and a senior government delegation from the South African Consulate in Dubai, His Excellency, Consul General David Magabe and members of the South African Tourism Board.

Adnan Kazim, Emirates' Chief Commercial Officer said: "For more than 25 years we have invested in, and grown our operations to, South Africa. We're working hard to restore our services to pre-pandemic levels to help generate more opportunities for travelers from around the world to experience South Africa's unique natural experiences, world-renowned cuisine, and local culture. Emirates is well-placed to support the recovery of South Africa's tourism sector and help raise the profile of the destination again, offering convenient connections from over 130 destinations, and providing even more links for travelers who want to explore beyond our three South African gateways through our four airline partners."

Minister of Tourism in South Africa, Lindiwe Sisulu welcomed the signing of this MoU, citing the benefits it will yield for travel between South Africa and the Middle East. "We want to continue ensuring ease

of access into South Africa for Middle Eastern travelers and this collaboration will assist us in elevating our trade efforts; in terms of packaging the destination. We look forward to welcoming more travelers from the Middle East, to experience the various quality assured products and experiences that cater for this market, including; family friendly accommodation establishments and activities, a diverse offering of cuisine as well as wildlife and safari," says South African Minister of Tourism, Lindiwe Sisulu.

"The Middle East is a critical market for South Africa so this partnership will be very instrumental in ensuring ease of access to and from South Africa for travelers from this region. This will increase direct airlift, making room for more travelers, and as our tourism sector recovers we look forward to welcoming more visitors from the Middle East.," says South African Tourism Acting CEO, Themba Khumalo.

Both parties will also explore opportunities to collaborate on joint advertising and marketing campaigns, as well as familiarisation programmes to South Africa for travel trade and media representatives, among other initiatives.

Emirates has been serving South Africa for 27 years, proudly connecting close to 20 million travellers to and from South Africa and Dubai and beyond to its global network, firmly establishing the airline as a long-term partner of South African aviation, tourism, and trade. Today, the airline currently serves South Africa with 26 weekly flights, including double daily services to Johannesburg, daily services to Cape Town and five weekly flights to Durban. Customers can also access popular regional destinations across South Africa via the airline's codeshare agreements with South African Airways and Airlink, and interline agreements with FlySafair and Cemair.



• South African Tourism Acting CEO Themba Khumalo (left) and Badr Abbas, Emirates' Senior Vice President Commercial Operations for Africa

Ethiopian Airlines supports the establishment of African Aviation Renaissance in MRO Services

Ethiopian Airlines MRO, UTD Aviation Solutions and the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) have signed a tripartite MoU to work together on Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) services in pursuance of The Brown Condor Initiative (BCI).

The signing ceremony took place at Ethiopian Airlines headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Brown Condor Initiative (BCI) is a joint initiative which was conceptualized in 2020 and officially launched by UTD Aviation Solutions and AFRAA in May 2021. The BCI project is aimed at providing a platform for AFRAA members with Maintenance Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facilities to relieve the USA MRO workforce crunch in terms of both facilities and manpower constraints, as well as support other airlines from USA in MRO services and aircraft spares.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Mr. Abdérahmane Berthé, AFRAA Secretary-General stated: "This signing ceremony with Ethiopian Airlines is a significant milestone in the Brown Condor project. We express our appreciation to Ethiopian Airlines as the first African airline to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that will operationalize the objectives of this robust Project."

"For 2 years, as part of the industry recovery measures at AFRAA, we have been working with partners to bring solutions to our members to reduce costs or increase revenues. We look forward to onboarding other AFRAA airlines with EASA or FAA Certified MRO capabilities onto this project. Our joint efforts reflect a paradigm shift in the MRO industry," Mr. Berthé added.

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Mesfin Tassew on his part, said: Ethiopian MRO Services, as the largest MRO service provider in Africa, is continuously increasing its capacity

and expanding its reach to customers in the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas. We are pleased to sign this MoU with UTD and AFRAA as it is in line with our plan to increase our market reach and build our presence in North America and tap into the big potential market in the region."

"The pandemic has exposed how delicate the aviation pipeline truly is. OEMs and MROs have a consistent demand for airframe checks and engine shop visits, and relatively predictable demand for new repaired and used spares. Without a major Paradigm Shift, we will never find a solution. The African Aviation Renaissance is the Paradigm Shift needed for the solution to this Crisis.

This Tripartite Agreement will correct the trajectory of the Aviation come back. "said Dahir Mohammed, President and CEO of UTD Aviation Solutions.

The MoU will forge collaboration between AFRAA member Airlines' associated MROs with US Airlines, MROs, OEMs, Distributors and other US civil aviation organizations companies. The management of the Airline's MRO excess of spare parts inventory both locally and from the USA shall be coordinated through a virtual consignments platform.

The Brown Condor Initiative is code-named after Colonel John C. Robinson the first African American aviator who also participated in the Ethiopian victorious war against Italy. Colonel John C. Robinson was enlisted by the then Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie as a fighter pilot. He immediately began training young Ethiopians in the technical complexities of aviation, especially pilots in preparation for war. For his daring service amid Ethiopian skies, Robinson earned international renown as the "Brown Condor of Ethiopia." Through this unique joint initiative, UTD Aviation and AFRAA seek to re-establish the African aviation renaissance in MRO services and aircraft spares.



Asky Airlines connects Cabo Verde to the African Market



Financial Director of Asky Airlines Wondwosen Tadasse speaking at the arrival of Asky in Praia

The capital of Cabo Verde, Praia has welcomed Pan African carrier Asky Airlines to its shores following the launch of passenger service to the archipelago island on June 2.

Flying through Senegal's Diagne (DSS) the three times a week flight will be on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays (Lome—Dss-Praia) and Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays (Praia-Dss-Lome) on the return leg.

The flights will be operated using a Boeing 737-800 New Generation (NG) aircraft.

The archipelago island, considered one of the continent's exotic tourist hotbeds has been difficult for Africans to travel to unless in most cases flying through Lisbon which demands a traveller to have a Schengen transit visa to even think of embarking on a voyage.

This exciting news means African travellers have been given travel freedom to reduce hours of the journey yet being able to fly from many destinations courtesy of Asky's network partnership with the continent's biggest airline group Ethiopian Airlines.

With over 34 destinations and counting, Ethiopian airlines also will welcome one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in Africa to its already rich pool of destinations.

The Municipality of Praia in the first week of May

participated in Africa's biggest leisure travel show, the Travel Indaba in Durban, South Africa. The resource person at the municipality in charge of tourism in an interview with VoyagesAfric said, the impending flight is a great opportunity and offers access for Africans to come and experience and enjoy the country.

The Commercial Director of ASKY, Mr. Nowel Ngala in a statement says, "adding the beautiful Island of Praia - Cape Verde has always been the airline's wish to connect more cities to its big network in order to facilitate movements, promote tourism and economic growth amongst African cities."

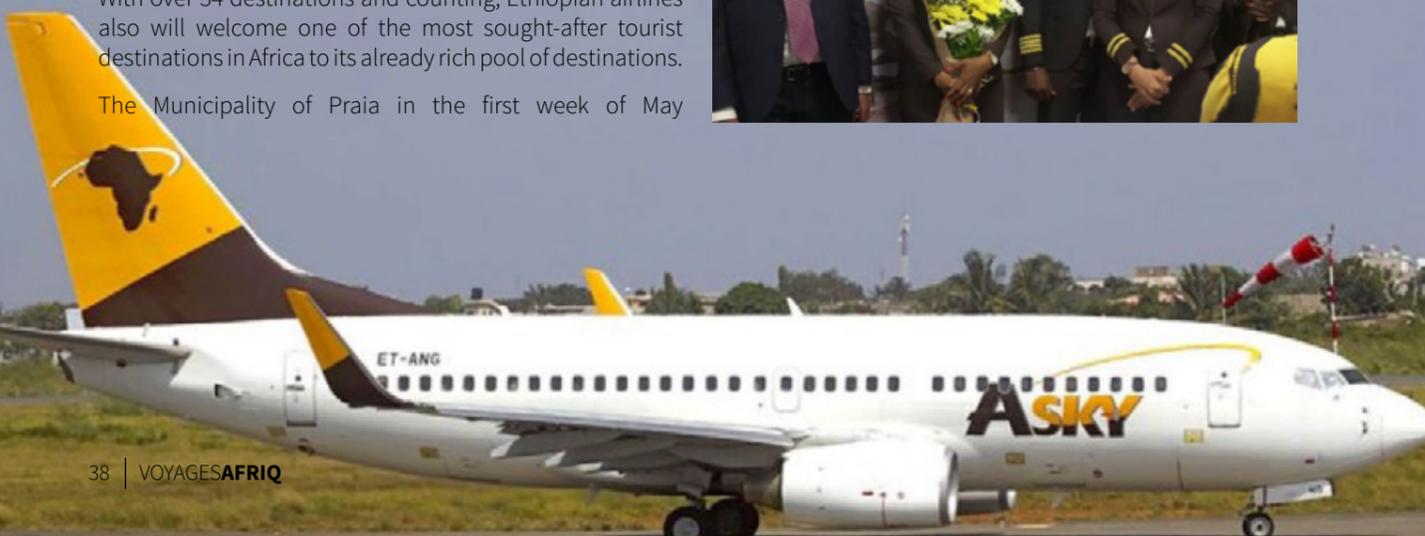
ASKY, The Pan-African Airline, is a 100% privately owned airline created by regional banking institutions in Africa that includes The ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID), The West African Development Bank (BOAD), and ECOBANK Group (ETI) in partnership with Ethiopian Airlines.

ASKY is a commercial company under private law and is managed by experienced African aviation professionals, with Ethiopian airlines as its strategic partner.

The airline currently operates a fleet of eleven aircrafts: Six (6) Boeing 737-800s and five (5) Boeing 737-700s, serving twenty-six (26) cities in twenty-three (23) countries within Africa.

ASKY's focus is to develop a strong intra-Africa network that fosters regional development, tourism, economic growth, and regional integration as a major economic catalyst within the continent with its long-term goal of a sustainable business focused on profitability.

The islands of Cape Verde have a pleasant climate during most of the year with 350 days of sunshine, and some of them offer impressive mountain scenery as well. Diving, windsurfing, sailing and trekking are available to tourists.



GROWTH FROM THE BOTTOM

Africa represents 20% of the global land mass and 12% of the global population, but only 3% of global air traffic. While some may assume that this implies African consumers have shunned travel by air, others view this as an excellent opportunity to introduce the vast majority of the continent's population to flight.

Africa lags the world in air transport volumes for numerous reasons, ranging from poor access to local capital to inflated costs for support logistics. However, the lack of a potential market is not one of these. The reality is that the vast distances of Africa, coupled with the absence of a strong road or rail based ground transport network, make the continent perfectly suited for air travel.



It costs airline companies a lot more to transport a passenger in Africa than elsewhere in the world, due to the need to import everything from fuel to spare parts, as well as airports that only support 24-hour operations in a few urban pockets of the continent. Unfortunately, air travel in Africa has historically been viewed by Governments as a luxury product for the elite, and therefore as an easy target for disproportionately high taxes (both direct and indirect) and user fees. This ends up creating a vicious circle where only the elite are therefore able to afford air transport. Taxes and fees artificially inflate the cost of a flight journey significantly, often doubling the actual ticket price. As a result, demand for air transport is drastically depressed.

Economically, Africa is entering the "magic zone" where demand for air travel should grow at a rate double that of GDP growth. Around 40 of the 54 African countries are now classified as "lower middle income", representing a per capita Gross National Income of roughly between \$1000 and \$4000. As consumers have increased amounts of disposable income, one of the first things they spend on is travel. As workers begin to value their time more, they are willing to spend more to travel faster. This is the value proposition that air travel brings to the new middle class in Africa.



Sean Mendis

A silver lining has been the growth of a new generation of consumers who should be ready to embrace the low cost carrier (LCC) model that has revolutionised flying in similar developing markets from Southeast Asia to Eastern Europe to Latin America over the last two decades. These consumers consist both of the newly economically empowered middle class, as well as millennials entering the workforce. They demonstrate more globalised consumer behaviour compared to existing flyers, and consequently do not have expectations of expensive legacy product attributes from airlines such as generous checked baggage allowances or free in-flight meals.

An airline looking to compete in the Africa market today can either choose to embrace a legacy model where they will compete primarily with state subsidised airlines for a slice of the existing pie, or they can choose to put together a new set of ingredients and bake their own larger pie that suits the tastes of the emerging customer base. Passenger growth in Africa will come from the bottom end of the market over the upcoming years, and the airlines who can find a way to tap into that demographic successfully have nearly infinite potential for success.

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



Africa Travel Week 2022 in Pictures



• Carol Weaving, Managing Director, RX Africa



• Executive Mayor of Cape Town, Geordin Hill-Lewis

2022 Africa Travel Week came alive in Cape Town

The 2022 Africa Travel Week headlined by WTM Africa and ILTM Africa has ended in Cape Town, South Africa with great enthusiasm, two years after the event was put on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The in-person event which took place from 11-13 April 2022 was preceded by a 2-day virtual event from 4-5 April 2022.

Opening the event, the Executive Mayor of Cape Town, Geordin Hill-Lewis, said “ It’s an absolute pleasure to welcome this event back to Cape Town. It’s been exactly three years since we last hosted this event. Nobody could have predicted what would happen

Despite resuming with COVID-19 restrictions in place, this year’s WTM Africa, had an increase in participation, indicating the relevance and demand for the event.

As Carol Weaving, Managing Director, RX Africa explained, a platform such as this is critical to reignite the economy. We had over 500 buyers, 400 exhibitors and 7000 meetings – which is more than in 2019.

“We have been craving this face-to-face interaction. We had new hosted buyers from Japan and Malaysia. 87% of buyers were new buyers. We hosted 20 countries here from Africa, 12 international countries including first-time participant, Korea. We showed that we are recovering.”

As part of the opening, the WTM Industry report was also presented by Kojo Bentum-Williams, Managing Editor, Voyages Afric, and Gillian Sanders-Travel and Tourism Consultant, highlighting key trends such as sustainability, wellness, flexcation, workation, bleisure, slow tourism intra-africa travel and diversity.



• Kojo Bentum-Williams, Managing Editor, Voyages Afric



Abidjan's ultra-modern Convention Centre takes shape



Construction works on Côte d'Ivoire's ultra-modern convention centre, Parc Des Expositions D'Abidjan is taking shape.

The 6,000-capacity venue will house a conference centre that can accommodate trade fairs, sporting events, and congresses. With an area of 60,000 m² and a perimeter of 100 hectares.

Pictures released by the state agency responsible for the construction, National Bureau of Technical Studies and Development (BNETD) show significant progress which is anticipated to be completed in a year's time.

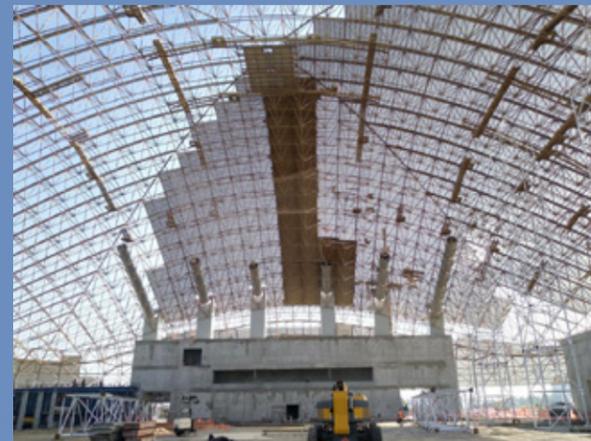
The post on Friday, 13th May read " This park is part of the

major new airport city project "Aérocité" with an economic vocation, planned over 3,700 ha. With this project, Côte d'Ivoire will be able to accommodate between 6,000 and 10,000 people in a covered and equipped space for commercial exhibitions, economic, cultural, public and sporting events."

This latest development further strengthens Côte d'Ivoire's strong business destination attributes and gives impetus to its mega sublime Côte d'Ivoire project aimed at making the country a top destination in Africa.

The cost is estimated at 81 million euros or 53 billion francs CFA, on behalf of the Ministry of Commerce of Abidjan with PFO Africa as contracting authority.

This park is made up of covered and air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned exhibition areas, and ancillary services (administrative, restaurants, cafeterias, bars, entertainment centres, parking areas, etc.)



SAVE THE DATE

UNWTO GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON LINKING TOURISM, CULTURE AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES: PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

14 - 16 NOVEMBER 2022. LAGOS, NIGERIA.



4th Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Challenge gathers momentum

The 2022 edition of the Africa Youth in tourism innovation challenge and summit is set to take place in Namibia's capital of Windhoek from 27-29 July.

Organised by the Africa Tourism Partners in collaboration with UNWTO, Namibia's Ministry of Environment, Forestry & Tourism, and BDO, the 4th edition is to be held under the theme "Developing youth and innovative entrepreneurship solutions for inclusive tourism recovery in Africa".

Since its inception in 2019, the event has gathered the continent's young innovative minds and offered ideas to help scale up tourism in Africa.

The 4th Innovation Challenge aims to empower African youth between the ages of 18 and 35 years by providing business partnerships, market access, networking mentorship Platforms, and funding solutions from the global marketplace including UNWTO, Namibia Business enterprises, private sector, social entrepreneurs, start-ups travel, fintech Entrepreneurs and ATP networks.

The summit also invites youth to participate in the challenge with the winner of the Africa Tourism Innovation Challenge will receive US\$1000.00 seed grant, whilst 1st and 2nd runners-up receive US\$500 among several benefits.

Speaking during the announcement of the 2022 4th Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Challenge, the Chairperson, Barry Clemens said:

"Entrepreneurship and innovation are what moves industries and economies. The youth do not get enough support to fully drive their great innovative ideas to fruition. As such these types of programs are essential to encourage and assist the development of ideas that have made it past the basic stage and ensure they come to a monetised stage

and drive job creation and increase the tax base of a country which in turn improves opportunities for Communities".

Ms. Natalia Bayona, Director of Innovation, Education and Investments at UNWTO stressed that empowering youth through entrepreneurship is one of the keys to creating more added value jobs and modernize the tourism model through innovation. "Only 5% of the worldwide unicorns are focused on tourism, so there is a strong opportunity to create new start-ups and grow in new niches such as gastronomy, wellness, events tourism and hospitality industries".

One of the Innovation Challenge judges, Professor Keolebogile Motaung said, "Entrepreneurs change the world by solving big and small problems and creating jobs and skills development. They also contribute to the socioeconomic of the country. Hence having this program is very important."

The entry criteria of the Challenge include the vision, uniqueness, authenticity and rationale, evidence of innovation in travel and tourism or related industry challenges being solved in Africa, sustainability of the impact of the project on travel and tourism, local communities and/or related industries, timelines for the project, the kind of support required and provision of a demo/Minimum Viable Product (MVP).

Selected top 5 candidates will be required to present five minute demo to the judges for selection of the winner, first and second runner up at the Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Summit and Challenge scheduled for 27-29 July 2022 in Namibia. The Finals of the Innovation Challenge will be held in Botswana on the margins of the annual Africa Tourism Leadership Forum (ATLF) and Awards to be held in November 2022.



Africa's Travel Indaba 2022 a boon for the tourism sector

Africa's Travel Indaba 2022 was a boon for the continent's tourism sector as well as the host city of Durban, province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). Hundreds of buyers and exhibitors from 55 countries descended on Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (ICC) from 2-5 May to trade on the continent's best tourism products and experiences. Of the 55 countries, 19 were from the African continent, including South Africa.

Acting CEO of South African Tourism, Themba Khumalo said that owning Africa's narrative meant that Africans could transform the continent's story from one of people looking for succor to one that showed its present-day entrepreneurial spirit.

"We are a continent full of people with initiative. We have the energy and passion to revive an entire industry, such as tourism, with our own hands. Our story says to the world that we are ready to welcome them and we are open for business."

The three-day travel showpiece that attracted 3700 delegates and hosted 14 000 successful meetings has been described as a "great show, in exciting times and successful."

Amanda Kotze-Nhlapo, Chief Convention Bureau Officer at South African Tourism, said the 2022 Travel Indaba attracted 655 exhibitors and 955 buyers from various countries.

She said the sheer size of Africa's Travel Indaba, although below the 2019 numbers, "shows the resilience of our sector and our people."

She added: "Although the numbers were lower than the pre-Covid 19 times, each buyer still had 10 meetings a day on average."

According to Durban's Deputy Head of Tourism, Winile Mntungwa, the City of Durban experienced hotel occupancy rates of over 85 percent, netted R29 million in direct spending and expects a contribution of R72.5 million

to the City's GDP. Mntungwa confirmed that 145 short term jobs were created during the period.

She said the show instilled confidence in the City of Durban as a great destination and fantastic host.

"Being physically there in a destination gives you a true picture and accurate assessment of the state of readiness to take on tourists again after the triple pandemics – July unrest, Covid-19 and recent floods," she said.

"All doubts about the city's preparedness to yet again offer its exciting tourism products have been removed through hosting this travel extravaganza," she said.

Phindile Makwakwa, the acting CEO of Tourism KwaZulu-Natal, said the 2022 edition of Travel Indaba had an "air of exciting event, real connection, love and passion."

Makwakwa decried the impact of Covid-19 on tourism as something that hit hard at the heart of human connection. "It was good to host in person again," she added.

Lindiwe Rakharebe Durban ICC CEO, the host venue of Africa's Travel Indaba, said that even though the convention centre was affected by flooding recently, they worked around the clock to get it ready for the most prestigious travel show on the African continent and the third must-see in the world.

"The 2022 Africa's Travel Indaba was an incredible show. We pulled it off against all the odds," said Rakharebe.

For the first time at the show, the Africa's Travel Indaba Awards was held to honour tourism businesses and organisations that have advanced tourism during a time of unprecedented technological and industry change.

"Africa's Travel Indaba is about the spirit, the meetings and how we are treating our exhibitors. It is about us as Africa rising; us as Africa coming together to show the world all of our wares that we have," concluded Kotze-Nhlapo adding that the awards were meant to capture the spirit of the industry, which is built on warm relationships.



Africa's Travel Indaba in Pictures



• S. Zikalal, Premier of Kwazulu Natal Province



• Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of Tourism, South Africa





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**Global Business
 Events Community
 unites at IMEX
 Frankfurt**

The global business events community has reunited at IMEX in Frankfurt in a powerful sign of confidence for the sector.

IMEX in Frankfurt, which took place at Messe Frankfurt and ran until 2 June, marks a milestone moment for the industry: its biggest global gathering since the pandemic. The IMEX Show saw the community reunite – many for the first time in three years – to reconnect and do business, providing a global snapshot of the sector.

With exhibitors representing over 100 countries, the show floor was the ultimate living reflection of the international business events market. The show, celebrating its 20th year also reflected a new business reality – one of steady and sustained confidence.

There were over 40 new stands, and many returning suppliers who expanded their presence at the show – all with a strong story to tell that reflects recent and significant investment in the sector.

These included ExCeL London's expansion, Ethiopia's new convention bureau, the launch of Transcend Cruises and St Louis who are marking the start of direct flights to Frankfurt by bringing a high-level delegation to the show.



Destinations are also using IMEX in Frankfurt as the stage to launch new venues, they include Uzbekistan, New Zealand, Austria, Heidelberg, Bahrain and Bangkok.

With over 2,800 buyers registered and thousands of appointments made, the meeting effectively held up a mirror to the international business events and meetings community as it reignited; showcasing its state of business readiness and its short and long-term growth prospects.

Carina Bauer, CEO of the IMEX Group, explains: "This week's IMEX in Frankfurt represents a microcosm of the global marketplace and is at the heart of the industry's restart. We're in the early stages of rebuilding our sector but have every reason to be confident."

The show floor played host to partners, buyers and suppliers from across the globe, and the deals discussed led directly to job creation, professional development and industry advancement, in turn helping to generate positive economic impact the world over."



Magical Kenya Travel Expo is back with exciting Innovations in its enriched menu

Undoubtedly one of Africa's flagship Tourism exhibitions, The Magical Kenya Travel Expo (MKTE) is set for a physical return after a two-year hiatus due to the Covid pandemic.

The region's most sought-after tourism show has been announced to take place on October 5-7 at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi.

As it were with other major global travel events during Covid times, Kenya Tourism Board opted for a hybrid show to keep the travel trade abreast with Kenya's diverse tourism offerings.

As East Africa's travel exhibition reference point. Last year the organiser's had to postpone the eagerly awaited 10th anniversary celebration of the show since its inception.

In a brief statement on the official portal of the event, it says "Kenya Tourism Board invites you for the Leading Tourism Exhibition- The Magical Kenya Travel Expo 2022 themed "Rediscover The Magic".

This follows a hugely successful virtual edition in 2021. We are excited to bring the travel trade together once again for face-to-face engagements in Nairobi."

As always, we welcome our partners from around the world to come and rediscover travel, meet with the passionate hosted buyers from key source markets and share our passion for driving tourism to Africa." It continued

MKTE is a renowned flagship gathering of East Africa's



tourism leaders, products, global buyers, and media.

Onshow Solutions, the appointed organiser for the exhibition in the coming days and weeks is expected to outline modalities for registration of trade, media and visitors.

The Magical Kenya Travel Expo has over the years brought together different international buyers from top prioritized countries into Kenya who have seized and created opportunities in the country's thriving tourism which is one of the backbones for the country's economy.

MKTE attracts hundreds of participants from across the globe each year. Organizers are planning for a bigger event next year as the show reaches a decade milestone.

The travel show has played a significant role in boosting the country's tourism and by extension, East Africa's.

Africa's Travel Indaba gives us confidence of quick rebound- TOUGHGA President

Having led over 20 Ghanaian tour operators to the 2022 Africa's Travel Indaba (ATI 2022), President of the Tour Operators Union of Ghana (TOUGHGA), Mrs. Alisa Osei-Asamoah has stressed her satisfaction at the platform the event provided to create business linkages.

TOUGHGA members took part in key engagements such as the CEOs Breakfast Meeting, South Africa Airways Breakfast Meeting, speeding marketing and networking sessions and myriad meetings with exhibitors and buyers during the May 2-5 event in Durban.

For Mrs. Osei-Asamoah, the avenue to meet, interact and transact business at the nascent stage of tourism's recovery is commendable.

In an interview with VoyagesAfriq, she said that: "As tour operators, our primary concern is to package attractions and experiences and sell to clients. Sometimes it's difficult getting direct access to the people who are responsible for the products and services but what we saw at Indaba was a unique chance for us to directly meet those in charge for us to do good business and that is something we were very happy about and applaud."

She added that ATI2022 gave the tourism industry confidence that all hope is not lost in its progressive path to recovery.



• Mrs. Alisa Osei-Asamoah, President of the Tour Operators Union of Ghana (TOUGHGA)

Mrs. Osei-Asamoah maintained, "It is amazing what South African Tourism has been able to achieve with this event with all the things the host province, KwaZulu-Natal had to endure prior to the show. It demonstrates their tenacity of purpose to push the travel agenda and we are grateful to have been given the opportunity to be part of it.

The President insisted that TOUGHGA would work to consolidate their partnership with South African Tourism to bring more visitors to the destination while calling on other countries to emulate the country's example.

"I believe South Africa has set the benchmark for other African countries to follow in quickly reviving their tourism and we look forward to attending such events across the continent. I know it may not be easy, but there are a lot of cues that can be gleaned from South Africa' leadership role in Africa's tourism recovery journey," she asserted.



ICCA Ranking Report sheds light on industry's adaptability and progress in 2021

The International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) has released its annual analysis of association meetings worldwide. The latest ICCA Ranking Report examines 8000 meetings scheduled for the year 2021 and categorises them based on how the meetings were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report also compares last year's affected meetings with ICCA's analysis of meetings in 2020.

After a hiatus in 2020, ICCA Rankings have returned to the 2021 ICCA's Destination Performance Index (DPI). The DPI ranks destinations' success in winning the original bid, COVID-19 event policies, adaptability and technological capabilities to convert on-site events into virtual or hybrid events – thereby maintaining business continuation.

"Now that the global meetings industry has had more time to adapt to the challenges of the pandemic, we wanted to acknowledge and reward the effort of destinations to not only keep these crucial meetings going but also to improve their business operations. The investments that destinations have made in new technologies, partnerships, and advocacy initiatives will continue to drive our industry forward," said ICCA CEO Senthil Gopinath.

He continued, "Although we have yet to return to pre-pandemic numbers, we have gained significant grounds on the road to full recovery. Further, we have transformed the meetings industry in the process."

The report reveals that the year 2021 brought out a "show must go on" mentality in the industry. For example, the market share of virtual and hybrid meetings doubled in just one year. Business continuation also increased by 30% while business cancellation dropped from 61% to 31%. The

Middle East had the highest business continuation rate of all regions (77%), followed by Latin America (72%) and Asia (71%). Of all regions, Latin America demonstrated the most significant growth in business continuation compared to 2020, with an increase of 35%.

"This report delivers a more holistic representation of the pandemic's impact on association meetings globally. Moreover, it reveals strong and definitive signs of progressive recovery for the industry," Gopinath said.

The full 2021 ICCA Ranking (Destination Performance Index [DPI]) is available to ICCA members and complements ICCA's online Destination Comparison Tool (DCT).





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Group of photo of speakers at this year's STAS



New ideas, partnerships, and stronger commitments, as STAS 2022 charts pathway for sustainable tourism in Africa

The 7th Sustainable Tourism Africa Summit (STAS 2022) held in Diani in Kwale County, Kenya, brought together sustainable tourism professionals for discussions about charting the pathway for sustainable tourism in Africa. Taking a hybrid format with delegates joining from Africa, Europe, and the US, the summit's theme was critical shifts in tourism in Africa. Panel discussions, speaker presentations, and workshop sessions for the two-day event held on 26th and 27th May 2022, focused on perspectives and strategies for a resilient future amidst critical shifts observed in global tourism.



Judy Kepher-Gona, Lead for Sustainable Travel & Tourism & Consulting presenting an award to participant

A hallmark for the event was commitments to support Africa's tourism Net Zero journey, where 15 companies signed the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism. The declaration launched at COP26 in November 2021 pledges to "...to accelerate climate action in tourism and to secure strong actions and commitment to support the global goals to halve emissions over the next decade and reach Net Zero emissions as soon as possible before 2050." Conference participants also made climate declarations in line with COP26 tourism declaration. In a like manner, TourCert, an internationally recognized consultancy for the tourism sector, was present to advise tour operators, accommodation providers, and other tourism companies in attendance, on step by step sustainability qualification. These will have the opportunity to join TourCert's worldwide community of about 400 members.

Africa needs to develop a sense of urgency when it comes to sustainability of tourism, saying that "Sustainable tourism is the competitive advantage that Africa has in terms of tourism."

The opening panel identified critical shifts that matter for tourism in Africa:

- Climate change impacting habitats that support tourism
- Uptake of digitization in tourism, which presents a big opportunity for small businesses in Africa's tourism.
- Growing demand for outdoor experiences is important and Africa has capacity to capitalize on.
- Enhancing local tourism.

STAS 2022 was officially opened by Kwale County Executive Committee Member for Tourism, Hon. Omar Nassib, who remarked tourism must change, or else it risks a dark future from negative impacts on environment and social resources on which the sector is dependent. Starting off the discussion, Judy Kepher Gona of STTA explained that

Ensuing dialogues through speaker presentations and workshops rejoined strategies for a resilient future. Emphasis was on building resilience and accessible finance as a priority when tourism responds to unfolding disruptions. The summit's conclusion forecasted a future of Africa's tourism that is youth led and is in intra-Africa collaboration to make travel in the region Africa ready.

AFRICA'S TRAVEL INDABA:

Tamtam Guide leads DRC's private sector Participation



• Marie-France Cécile Sombo, CEO of Tamtam

The Tourism private sector of the Republic of Congo (DRC) made a bold statement at the recently ended Africa's Travel Indaba in Durban, South Africa.

Leading private sector participation at the return of Africa's biggest leisure show, TamTam guide which coordinated the showcasing of the different players believes now is the time for the private sector to lead and /or complement the efforts of the public institutions to place DR Congo on the Tourism Map of Africa and the world.

The contingent comprised, Parc de la Vallée, Hotel Tcham, Jolive restaurant, +243 Fast foods, Hypnose building, gastronomy DRC at is best.

Speaking to VoyagesAfriq from the showground, the Founder and CEO of Tamtam Marie-France Cécile Sombo said, their participation was essential to the sector's recovery and believe it offered a great opportunity to court not only tourists but investors and other areas of growth to the mining dependent economy.

She added that, as a Gastronomy enthusiast and entrepreneur, she was encouraged by the attention given to Africa's cuisine as a way of promoting our culture and food, and way of life.

We are so happy to let Africa know that we are ready to open and do business and exchanges with them.

Tamtam-guide is a platform which aims at creating

synergies between Congo D.R.C and the rest of Africa.

Parc De La Vallée De La N'sele

The park is the first real ecological park in D.R.C with sustainable energy as its main driving force. The whole park has an eco-friendly setup with 3 wings. The first wing is dedicated to nature preservation where you can find the big five.

Hotel Tcham

The Hotel Tcham is situated on the banks of Tanganyika's lake. In the same chain hotel you find two unique restaurants Bodeguita Lubumbashi club/bar/ restaurant with traditional food.

Bodeguita Kinshasa Club/bar/restaurant with traditional food.

Hypnose from Lubumbashi which hold in is a wall a mall, cinema restaurants, and conferences rooms.

Jolive restaurant

Jolive restaurant is a fusion food restaurant which adapts the best recipe from our mom to make them more modern while keeping the Congolese taste.

+243.

+243 is a fast food restaurant made with 100% bio beef.

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Sorrento get set to host First Global Youth Tourism Summit

The Italian coast town of Sorrento is set to stage the maiden Global Youth Tourism Summit scheduled from June 27 - July 4. The youth summit powered by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in collaboration with the Italian government through the Ministry of Tourism is aimed at enhancing youth empowerment and engagement in the tourism sector.

It will be a series of international events, workshops, education initiatives, that will give children and the youth a unique platform to share and discuss innovative ideas, visions and their proposals for the future of sustainable tourism within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Participants will be exposed to explore different aspects of responsible and sustainable tourism through a variety of interactive activities: workshops, roundtables, masterclasses, plenary sessions, cultural and sports activities and UNWTO General Assembly simulations.

The event will bring together children and youth, aged 12-18, with the UN and government officials, representatives of the tourism industry, globally recognized celebrities, experts and other major stakeholders.

Young generations are considered to be important stakeholders in the efforts of achieving the SDGs. The Youth, recognized as a major force for development and social change, have the potential to drive also the sustainable development in the tourism sector.

Considering the rapid growth of youth tourism over the last decade, as well as its social, cultural, economic and environmental impact, it is essential to directly involve



young people in the discussions and actions related to sustainable development and future of the tourism industry.

For young people, travel is a form of learning, a way to meet other people and explore other cultures. It is a means of self-development and an essential part of everyday life. Youth tourism creates a diverse social and cultural understanding and fosters daily interaction between young people and their hosts.

"Children and youth must have a say in the actions we take today, that will shape the tourism - and the world we live in tomorrow. - UNWTO Secretary General Zurab Pololikashvili

"You have the talent, energy and ideals to prevent conflicts, defend human rights, secure peace, and realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development." - António Guterres -UN Secretary-General

A host of international celebrities have confirmed their participation in this maiden event. The list includes the Ivorian and Chelsea Legend Didier Drogba, and many others.



Sonto Ndlovu is SA Tourism's New COO



• Ms. Nomasonto Ndlovu, COO, SA Tourism

South African Tourism has announced the appointment of Ms. Nomasonto Ndlovu as the organisation's new Chief Operations Officer. Nomasonto will officially commence her role on 1 July 2022.

Nomasonto is currently employed by Transnet in the capacity of Executive Manager: Tourism, Heritage & Hospitality, a role she has occupied since November 2020. She has gained extensive experience in Marketing Operations, Brand Management, Communications, Stakeholder Management and Media Relations.

She has held various leadership positions in the tourism sector including her role as Global Manager: Business Tourism when she was previously at SA Tourism between 2008 and 2012 before joining the City of Tshwane as Strategic Executive Director Communications, Marketing & Events. Prior to joining Transnet, Nomasonto was at the helm of the Limpopo Tourism Agency in the position of Chief Executive Officer. A well-respected public speaker, content creator and opinion leader in the tourism industry, Nomasonto also mentors young upcoming tourism professionals.

"Our plans for the recovery of the tourism sector are well underway. As we move towards ensuring that we achieve

this goal for our organisation and the greater tourism sector, it is important that we have strong leadership at SA Tourism. I am thrilled to welcome Nomasonto back to SA Tourism. Given her experience and expertise, I am confident that her extensive knowledge will be invaluable and will help SA Tourism achieve its mandate. I wish her every success in her new role at SA Tourism," said Acting Chief Executive Officer, Themba Khumalo.

"The time to re-engineer the global positioning of South Africa and the rest of the African continent has come, and should be led by SA Tourism. It is time for the re-birth of the industry and the recalibration of the people in the sector and I am looking forward to being a part of this," said Ndlovu.

Khumalo also thanked Hanneli Slabber who has been holding the fort as Acting COO following the departure of Sthembiso Dlamini who held the position of COO.

"I would like to thank Hanneli for her dedication and commitment in ensuring a seamless transition. Hanneli will resume in her role as the Regional General Manager: Asia / Australasia / Middle East as we continue to reignite our country's tourism sector," concluded Khumalo.

African Gastronomy Conversation excites delegates at Travel Indaba



• Elcia Grandcourt, Regional Director for Africa, UNWTO

In an enthralling end to the return of Africa's Travel Indaba held in Durban from 2-5 May, delegates, participants, and experts gave organizers thumbs up for not only bringing to the fore Africa's unique and diverse gastronomic offering but another first of serving African dishes at the start of the session on gastronomy.

Returning after a 2-year hiatus to the KwaZulu-Natal Province, Africa's Travel Indaba changed tack and evolved to inculcate discussions seen as nagging for the tourism and cultural sectors in Africa.

Featuring two of the chefs profiled in UNWTO's Tour of African Gastronomy, Chef Bamba Moussa from Cote d'Ivoire, Chef Isaac Sackey from Ghana, sustainability champion Judy Kepher- Gona, solo traveller, Boipelo Hlubi, key and one of Africa's most celebrated Chefs, Chef Coco and moderated by Thebe Ikalafeng, the conversation on how to make African cuisines a core part of our narrative was widely the conclusion all came to.

The thought-provoking session also explored how Africa could push to protect some of the traditional cuisines and ultimately be named as part of UNESCO's intangible cultural assets.

You are sure the unending debate around the best Jollof Rice will not go unmentioned and Ghanaian Chef Isaac Sackey pontificated on why Ghana serves the best version of the popular West African cuisine.

South Africa's Chef Coco Reinharz opined those African

chefs and stakeholders in the gastronomy industry should rather see the gastronomy through the lenses of evolution rather than object to new innovations which can uplift and make African cuisines the most sought after.

The Regional Director for Africa at the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Elcia Grandcourt was full of praise for the organizers for identifying gastronomy as a key topic to be part of the tourism conversation.

She affirmed UNWTO's commitment to helping its member states to place gastronomy as a key product segment within the tourism ecosystem.

"Another key initiative, we have been driving in the last year is African Gastronomy – Gastronomy is a growing motivation to travel; it adds value to the destination, and promotes local products and know-how (the links with agriculture). By placing gastronomy as one of the priorities for product development and marketing, would allow for stories to be told and to showcase the people behind them; making us value local products)." Ms. Grandcourt said.

"The promotion of African Gastronomy and activities that bind cultures and people are examples which bring added visibility to destinations through its people. Over the past two days, most speakers in their intervention have reminded us that people are at the core of our business. Cultural and intangible heritage, including gastronomy, represents an integral part of a country's identity and history providing major opportunities for Africa to revitalize and diversify the industry and to promote local economic development by involving different professional sectors," she added.

Sustainability champion and Founder of Sustainable Travel and Tourism Agenda (STTA) Judy Kepher- Gona said "Unlocking the potential of Gastronomic tourism in Africa will start with an appreciation of this opportunity by tourism operators who promote Africa to Africa and the world. The untapped potential of gastronomic tourism in Africa is denying communities the most needed tourism revenue. The answer lies with destination marketers. The lack of awareness and appreciation of Africa's gastronomic diversity is driven by tourism business preferences and not consumer choices."



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SIXTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE UNWTO REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

FORUM ON "REBUILDING AFRICA'S TOURISM RESILIENCE FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT"

5-7 OCTOBER 2022, ARUSHA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA



A Chat with Ghana's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain and Permanent Representative to UNWTO, H. E. Mr. Muhammad Adam



• Ambassador Muhammad Adam

development and underscored Ghana's commitment to playing a sustained role in the UNWTO within the context of the increasing importance of tourism to the country's economy and the recognition of the sector's contribution to GDP.

The multilingual career diplomat referred to Ghana's contribution to other international organizations, noting that an important plank in the country's foreign policy objectives is to actively participate in international organizations of which it is a member, being championed by the Foreign Minister, Hon. Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey.

He cited amongst other things, Ghana's endeavours at the United Nations where it currently occupies one of the non-permanent seats on the Security Council for the period 2022 to 2023, His Excellency President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's chairmanship of the Economic Community of West African States, Ghana's hosting of the headquarters of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, as evidence of the country's positive involvement in the work of international organizations in recent times.



• Ambassador Muhammad Adam presenting his credentials to the King of Spain, Felipe VI

In a first of a series to interact with African Envoys and their roles in making tourism a priority as they represent their respective countries, we caught up with Ghana's Ambassador to Spain and Permanent Representative to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), H. E. Mr. Muhammad Adam, during the 116th Executive Council Meeting in Jeddah from 7th to 8th June 2022, in which he represented Ghana.

Speaking to VoyagesAfric, in Jeddah where he had been Ghana's Consul General 20 years ago, Ambassador Adam stressed the relevance of tourism to economic



• Ambassador Muhammad Adam presenting his credentials to the UNWTO Secretary General Zurab Pololikashvili

On the UNWTO, the Ambassador recalled Ghana's hosting of the first regional congress on women empowerment in the tourism sector in Accra in 2019 as well as the World Tourism Day in 2009. According to Ambassador Adam, the Minister of Tourism and Culture, Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Awal, has demonstrated exemplary leadership for which he the Ambassador is taking the necessary follow-up actions for Ghana to continue to contribute to and benefit from the UNWTO.

Marriott International Appoints Richard Collins as Area Vice President for Sub Saharan Africa

Marriott International (Marriott.com) has appointed Richard Collins as its Area Vice President for Sub-Saharan Africa. In this new role, Collins oversees the company's managed operations in the region and will be based out of the company's Cape Town office. He takes on his new position following the announcement of Volker Heiden's retirement, effective from the end of March 2022.

Marriott International's current portfolio in the Sub-Saharan Africa region features nearly 100 properties (managed and franchised) and over 12,000 rooms across 16 markets.



"Richard is an experienced leader with a proven track record, and we are delighted to have him lead our operations across Sub-Saharan Africa," said Phil Andreopoulos, Chief Operating Officer, Sub-Saharan Africa, Marriott International. "With his leadership and extensive knowledge, Richard will play a pivotal role in building on our successes in the region."

Collins has over 30 years of hospitality experience and is a 20-year veteran with Marriott International. A graduate of the Shannon College of Hotel Management in his native Ireland, Collins started his career with Marriott International in Scotland at the Marriott Dalmahoy Hotel and Country Club in Edinburgh in 2001, before leading the Marriott Druids Glen Hotel and Country Club near Dublin.

Richard moved to the United Arab Emirates in 2013 where he was General Manager of Dubai's first JW Marriott Hotel. Following a successful period at the JW Marriott Hotel Dubai, Richard then took the helm at The Ritz Carlton, Dubai where within a three-year period the property saw unprecedented success growing its business, profit, associate engagement, RevPAR index, and guest voice scores.

In 2018, Collins was appointed his first multi-property role as Area General Manager of Abu Dhabi for Marriott International, during which he also managed the successful transition of all Starwood Legacy properties to the Marriott network.

Commenting on his appointment, Collins said, "I am delighted to take on this new role and be part of this exciting region. Marriott International has a longstanding presence across Sub-Saharan Africa and this region continues to be an important market for the company's current operations and future growth opportunities."



Radisson Hotel Group debuts in South Sudan with the opening of Radisson Blu Hotel, Juba

Radisson Hotel Group has announced its arrival in South Sudan with the opening of Radisson Blu Hotel, Juba, the country's first internationally branded 5-star hotel.

Located in Juba, the fast-growing capital and largest city of South Sudan on the White Nile River, Radisson Blu Hotel, Juba is a 10-minute drive from Juba International Airport, in the heart of the city's business center.

Radisson Blu Hotel, Juba offers 154 bright and contemporary rooms and suites with views of either the pool, the city, or the famed White Nile River. The rooms are designed for maximum comfort, security, and relaxation. The hotel offers several amenities, including a modern gym, a spacious outdoor pool, and a wellness center which includes a refreshing spa with a sauna, jacuzzi, steam bath, and male and female salons.

Tim Cordon, Area Senior Vice President, Middle East & Africa at Radisson Hotel Group, says: "We are delighted to strengthen our presence in Central Africa by opening the doors to our first hotel in South Sudan and the country's first five-star internationally branded hotel. With the highest level of security measures in place for a comforting stay, its modern finishes and business and leisure facilities, coupled with our renowned Radisson Hotels Yes I Can! service and hospitality, we are confident the hotel will be a great addition to help promote the country's hospitality offering."

Featuring a wide array of flavors and cuisines, the hotel's six bars and restaurants offer a variety of delectable dishes in stylish and welcoming venues. The Larder offers an extensive menu of international cuisine prepared with

the freshest ingredients. Guests are invited to sit back and enjoy the latest sporting events at The Sports Bar or head to the Pool & Grill for a refreshing drink along the poolside. The Sky Lounge on the 13th floor offers a breathtaking 360-degree view of Juba, making it the ideal venue to end the day and watch the sunset. Guests can also enjoy a wide selection of light snacks, pastries, and a selection of coffees and teas in the comfortable Lobby Lounge.

George Balassis, General Manager, Radisson Blu Hotel, Juba, says: "In true Radisson style, my passionate team and I look forward to welcoming and making every moment matter for our guests and the community of Juba in hotel where safety & security are a top priority. With our abundance of inviting facilities, restaurants and bars, we are certain that our hotel will become their home away from home and the venue of choice for events and special occasions of all kinds."

For guests planning to host a meeting or event, the hotel has the largest meeting facilities available in the city, offering three stylishly designed boardrooms, three meeting spaces as well as an expansive ballroom which can accommodate up to 500 guests.

With the health and safety of guests and team members as its top priority, Radisson Blu Hotel, Juba is implementing the Radisson Hotels Safety Protocol (<https://bit.ly/38c2ZTh>) program. The in-depth cleanliness and disinfection protocols were developed in partnership with SGS, the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company, and are designed to ensure guest safety and peace of mind from check-in to check-out.



RELAXATION IN THE HEART OF ACCRA

Accra City Hotel, established in the buzzing central district of Accra, has revamped its space to exude a brand new sensation of calmness and relaxation. It is popular with the locals as the ultimate staycation choice and the international traveller. Accra City Hotel is a wholesome experience and a home away from home.

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, ranging from suites to studio units, designed to give guest a perfect restful night. In addition to its wellness centre is a tennis court and an open lawn area for weddings and other events.

The close proximity of market scenes and art centres as well lend a rich Ghanaian culture which guests of the hotel can delight in.

Accra city Hotel is one of the most awarded hotels in the country. Among its most recent achievements is receiving the Ghana's Leading Hotel award by the World Travel Hotel award by the World Travel Awards in 2019 and 2020. It is the ultimate hotel for your stay in Ghana from summer to the exciting festive season.




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HOTEL

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