

# VoyagesAfriq

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Africa's Leading Travel and Tourism Magazine

**Zambia's  
Minister of  
Tourism  
strategises for  
growth and  
development**  
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Rodney Sikumba,  
Zambia's Minister of Tourism

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Exclusive chat with SA Tourism Acting  
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Travel and Tourism Magazine

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Dear Reader,

It gives me pleasure to come to your home, offices and where you find your authoritative travel news companion. Without being complacent about the recovery and future of tourism, it is safe to say tourism is back in full force with the trade and the industry seeing incredible returns like never before. As the latest UNWTO world barometer attests with almost average 84% international tourist arrivals recovered, tourism has once again showed its transformative force and resilience.

The first quarter of the year has seen all major travel shows and expos in the continent surpassing both 2022 and 2020 figures and even to some extent some have even topped pre pandemic figures. Tourism education and innovation championed by the UNWTO is beautifully shaping up in Africa.

Zambia's inaugural travel and tourism hospitality education summit was a bold step by the country's tourism government and ensure that the critical element in the tourism chain is well taken off. It gathered educators, industry experts, and strategic partners to join forces in ensuring Zambia's dream of becoming centre of excellence in tourism education is realised.

Her southern African neighbours Namibia through the Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Summit has been intentional in becoming a hub to nurture the potential of Africa's youth. These are exciting for the future of tourism on the continent.

Gastronomy tourism is another segment of the industry which is gaining momentum on the ground. The First Lady of Zimbabwe Dr Auxiliary Mnangagwa under her patronage has encouraged the SADC region to prioritize gastronomy tourism to foster rural development.

The beautiful Indian Ocean Island of Mauritius will be welcoming UNWTO members to its 66th Commission for Africa (CAF). The Deputy Prime Minister welcomes us to the island with his welcome message while a feature highlighting the green revolution taking place in the country is a must read in this issue.

This issue is filled with many more exciting industry news and an encouraging trend of national governments making tourism a major economic driver. Malawi's President Lazarus Chakwera at the Malawi International Tourism Expo unveiled the plan of his government to help maximize the tourism potential of the country.

Highlights from the Inaugural Tourism Investments Forum Africa (TIFA) held in Uptington South Africa underscored the need for smart financing of the tourism sector.

Our cover story unravels the reforms the Zambian government is undertaking to make tourism a transformative force. The Minister of Tourism and arts Rodney Sikumba in an exclusive chats sheds light on how it's determined to reach the 1.5 million tourists by end of the year. Taking over the leadership position on the eve of the country's major travel show, the Africa's travel Indaba, Nomasonto Ndlovu the Acting CEO of South African Tourism is determined to make the rainbow nation a tourist hotbed. We have details of her vision for the organization in an exclusive conversation with her.

There is more than enough industry news articles that are guaranteed to keep you the reader informed and updated on key happenings on the continent's travel and tourism and beyond.

Have a great read!







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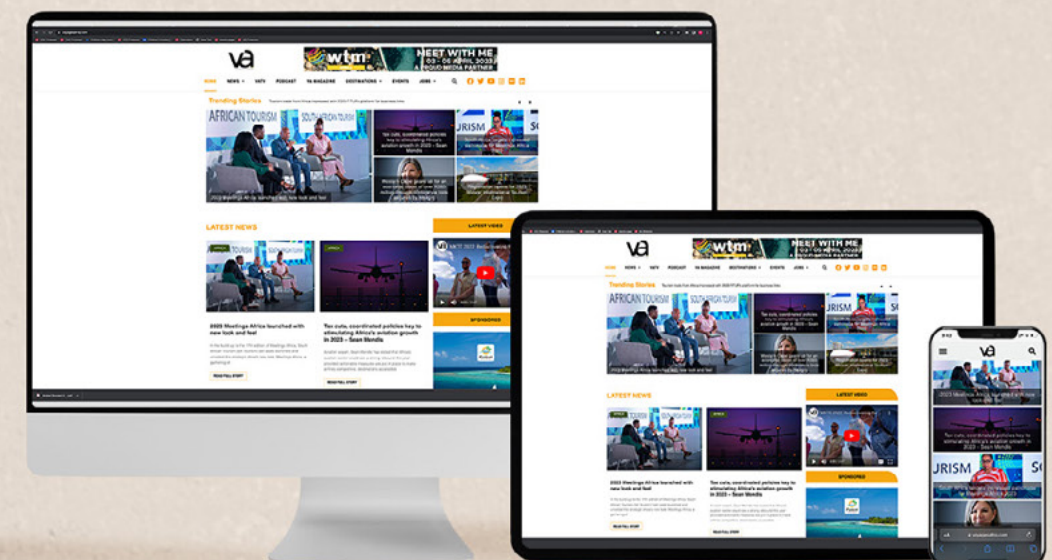


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## Mauritius prepares for 66th UNWTO CAF Meeting

Mauritius is gearing up to host African Tourism Ministers and stakeholders for the 66th UNWTO Commission for Africa (CAF) Meeting. The Meeting which will take place at Le Meridien from 26 to 28 July 2023 is on theme: *Rethinking Tourism For Africa: Promoting Investment And Partnerships; Addressing Global Challenges*.

The Commission meeting will also be followed by a conference and a technical workshop. The UNWTO Regional Commission for Africa is the major institutional platform where ministries in charge of tourism discuss the latest trends of the sector at the continental and global level and the implementation of their program of work.

The Commission of Africa Meeting is held every year as part of UNWTO's statutory events. It will be the second time the archipelago island country which has been a member of the UNWTO since 1975 will be hosting the CAF Meeting.

Tourism in Mauritius is an important component of the Mauritian economy as well as a significant source of its foreign exchange revenues. Mauritius is mostly appreciated for its natural environment and man-made attractions, the multi-ethnic and cultural diversity of the population, the tropical climate, beaches and water sports.



Louis Steven Obeegadoo, Deputy Prime Minister, Mauritius



## UNWTO Executive Council Meets in Punta Cana

With global tourism on track to reach pre-pandemic levels by the end of the year, UNWTO convened its Executive Council to advance plans to place education, investments and sustainability at the centre of the sector's future.

Ahead of the 118th session of the UNWTO Executive Council, the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer showed international arrivals reached 80% of pre-pandemic levels. The first quarter global results of 2023 set the pace for this upward trend to continue.

Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "In 2022, UNWTO asked the world to 'rethink tourism'. Now it's time to put those plans into action. Building a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive tourism sector will require more and better-targeted investments, skilled workers and more innovation. UNWTO is working closely with our Member States to make significant progress in all these areas and we leave Punta Cana with a clear focus around shared goals and a shared vision for our sector."

### Highest Political Support for Tourism

UNWTO welcomed delegations from 40 countries to its Council meeting with the high-level political support reflecting tourism's heightened relevance.

- UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili met with President Luis Abinader of the Dominican

Republic. The one-on-one meeting focused on tourism investments and education, both shared priorities.

- The 118th session of the Executive Council counted on the participation of high-level delegations from 40 countries, including 30 Council members.

- Secretary-General Pololikashvili was awarded the Association of Hotels and Tourism of the Dominican Republic's "Champion of Tourism" recognition for his leadership of the sector and friendship of the country.

### Guiding Tourism Forward

The UNWTO Secretary-General gave Member States an overview of the Organization's work since the previous Executive Council (Marrakesh, Morocco, 25 November 2022) as well as UNWTO's priorities looking ahead:





- The Secretary-General's report provided an up-to-date overview of tourism numbers and trends, identifying potential challenges for 2023 and beyond, including the cost-of-living crisis and geopolitical uncertainty.
- Members were given an overview of UNWTO's key achievements around its main priorities (investments, education and jobs, innovation and tourism and rural development).
- Participants were provided with an update on UNWTO's status as an Organization, including plans to open new Regional and Thematic offices, and new approaches to tourism governance.

#### Focus on Sustainability

On the eve of the Executive Council meeting, UNWTO participated in an International Forum on Sustainable Tourism organized by the Dominican Republic. In Punta Cana, UNWTO:

- invited the Dominican Republic and Maldives to become the first countries to sign up to the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative, designed to reduce waste and increase circularity in the sector;

“  
In 2022, UNWTO asked the world to “rethink tourism”. Now it's time to put those plans into action. Building a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive tourism sector will require more and better-targeted investments, skilled workers and more innovation

- provided an overview of its central role in advancing sustainability, including as part of the One Planet Network, which UNWTO will continue to lead in 2024-25; and
- announced progress on the creation of a landmark first global standard for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism

#### Education, Jobs and Investments: Priorities for Tourism

During its Executive Council session, the UNWTO Secretariat provided

updates on progress made in advancing its key priorities of education, jobs and investments:

- UNWTO and the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts have partnered for a Bachelor's Degree in International Sustainable Tourism
- Reflecting the feedback of Members, UNWTO is set to launch a new Educational Toolkit to help make tourism a subject in high schools everywhere
- UNWTO Investment Guidelines are serving as the bridge between investors, destinations and projects, with editions focused on countries in the Americas and Africa
- Plans to create a Pan-African Tourism Fund, a Guarantee Fund to provide security for banks, investors and financial institutions, to continue to advance

Within the framework of the Executive Council, UNWTO held the first ever Thematic Session on tourism communications and its role in building a new narrative focused on the sector's importance for economic development and social opportunity.



## Tourism on Track for Full Recovery as New Data Shows Strong Start to 2023

International tourism is well on its way to returning to pre-pandemic levels, with twice as many people travelling during the first quarter of 2023 than in the same period of 2022.

#### New Data from UNWTO: What We've Learned

The second UNWTO World Tourism Barometer of the year shows that the sector's swift recovery has continued into 2023. It shows that:

Overall, international arrivals reached 80% of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2023

An estimated 235 million tourists travelled internationally in the first three months, more than double the same period of 2022.

Tourism has continued to show its resilience. Revised data for 2022 shows over 960 million tourists travelling internationally last year, meaning two-thirds (66%) of pre-pandemic numbers were recovered

#### Recovery by Region in Q1 2023:

The Middle East saw the strongest performance as the only region exceeding 2019 arrivals (+15%) and the first to recover pre-pandemic numbers in a full quarter.

Europe reached 90% of pre-pandemic levels, driven by strong intra-regional demand.

Africa reached 88% and the Americas about 85% of 2019 levels

Asia and the Pacific accelerated its recovery with 54% of pre-pandemic levels, but this upward trend is set to accelerate now that most destinations, particularly China, have re-opened.

The UNWTO data also analyses recovery by sub-region and by

destination: Southern Mediterranean Europe and North Africa have also recovered pre-pandemic levels in Q1 2023, while Western Europe, Northern Europe, Central America and the Caribbean all came close to reaching those levels.

#### What it Means:

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili says: “The start of the year has shown again tourism's unique ability to bounce back. In many places, we are close to or even above pre-pandemic levels of arrivals. However, we must remain alert to challenges ranging from geopolitical insecurity, staffing shortages and the potential impact of the cost-of-living crisis on tourism, and we must ensure tourism's return delivers on its responsibilities as a solution to the climate emergency and as a driver of inclusive development.”

International tourism receipts grew back to hit the USD1 trillion mark in 2022, growing 50% in real terms compared to 2021, driven by the important rebound in international travel. International visitor spending reached 64% of pre-pandemic levels (-36% compared to 2019, measured in real terms). By regions, Europe enjoyed the best results in 2022 with nearly USD 550 billion in tourism receipts (EUR 520 billion), or 87% of pre-pandemic levels. Africa

recovered 75% of its pre-pandemic receipts, the Middle East 70% and the Americas 68%. Due to prolonged border shutdowns, Asian destinations earned about 28%.

#### Looking Ahead: What's in Store?

The Q1 2023 results are in line with UNWTO's forward-looking scenarios for the year which project international arrivals to recover 80% to 95% of pre-pandemic levels. UNWTO's Panel of Experts expressed their confidence in a strong peak season (May-August) in the Northern Hemisphere, reflected in the latest UNWTO Confidence Index which indicates performance for the period is on track to be even better than 2022.

However, tourism's recovery also faces some challenges. According to the UNWTO Panel of Experts, the economic situation remains the main factor weighing on the effective recovery of international tourism in 2023, with high inflation and rising oil prices translating into higher transport and accommodations costs. As a result, tourists are expected to increasingly seek value for money and travel closer to home. Uncertainty derived from the Russian aggression against Ukraine and other mounting geopolitical tensions, also continue to represent downside risks.





## Tourism's Potential for Mountain Ecosystems and Communities Outlined in New Report

While mountain tourism has become an increasingly relevant motivation for travel, data on its size and impact remains scarce, a new report from the UN agencies the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Mountain Partnership (MP) makes clear.

Mountain tourism represents between 9 and 16% of international tourist arrivals worldwide, translating into 195 to 375 million tourists for 2019 alone. However, the scarcity of domestic mountain tourism-related data make it difficult or even impossible to assess the economic, social and environmental impacts of this important segment. This new report aims to address this data gap.

### Mountain tourism for sustainability and inclusion

Mountains are home to around 1.1 billion people, some of them among the poorest and most isolated in the world. At the same time, mountains have long drawn tourists interested in nature and open-air destinations and outdoors activities like walking, climbing and winter sports. They also attract visitors with their rich biodiversity and vibrant local cultures. However, in 2019, the most recent year for which figures are available, the 10

most mountainous countries (in terms of average height above sea level) received only 8% of international tourist arrivals worldwide, the report "Understanding and Quantifying Mountain Tourism", shows.

Managed sustainably, mountain tourism has the potential to boost the incomes of local communities and help preserve their natural resources and culture. And, according to FAO, UNWTO and MP, measuring the volume of visitors to mountains represents the first vital step towards unlocking the potential of the sector.

"With the right data, we can better control the dispersal of visitor flows, support adequate planning, improve knowledge on visitor patterns, build sustainable products in line with consumer needs, and create suitable policies that will foster sustainable development and make sure tourism activities benefit local communities," FAO Director-General QU Dongyu and UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said in a joint statement.

### Recommendations

The study, which was based around research carried out in 46 countries, shows that generating economic

benefits, creating opportunities for local communities and developing sustainable products are the main motivations for mountain tourism development. The sustainable development of mountain tourism was also identified as a means to help to spread tourism flows, tackle seasonality and complement existing tourist offerings.

Through the report, FAO, UNWTO and MP highlight the importance of collective efforts, involving public and private stakeholders from across the value chain, to improve data collection, standardization and delivery to gain a more comprehensive assessment of mountain tourism in terms of volumes and impacts, so that it can be better understood and developed to align with the Sustainable Development Goals. The report also calls for concerted work to help raise awareness of the socio-economic importance of tourism in mountains and targeted policies to create jobs, support small and medium sized businesses and attract green investments in infrastructure and the digitalisation of tourism services.

Its publication coincides with the end of the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development 2022.



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## Africa Day 2023: UNWTO calls for regional collaboration, harmonised policies to spur continent's growth

Zurab Pololikashvili, UNWTO Secretary-General



As the world joined Africa to celebrate the continent on this year's Africa Day celebration on May 26, 2023, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has called on the need for sustained regional collaboration, harmonised policies, especially in aviation, in order to spur continued growth on the continent.

Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General, UNWTO, made the call in his message on Africa Day 2023 celebration.

"At the same time, regional collaboration and harmonized aviation policies in line with the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) will help us achieve the objectives of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the UN Agenda 2030," he said.

Speaking further, Pololikashvili noted that the removal of tariff barriers and the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) would undoubtedly bring new opportunities to Africa while facilitating the free movement of individuals for business, work or for studies, would help reduce economic disparities between regions, and deliver more opportunities, particularly for the most vulnerable,

“*Africa is also a hub of entrepreneurship and innovation and boasts some of the most exciting tourism destinations on the planet*”

including women, who form the majority of the tourism workforce in Africa.

The UNWTO chief said that Africa is being celebrated by the World for many reasons.

"Africa is home to the world's youngest population, as well as to a rapidly expanding middle class. It is a vast and diverse continent, with vibrant cities and rich cultures."

"Africa is also a hub of entrepreneurship and innovation and boasts some of the most exciting tourism destinations on the planet," Pololikashvili said.

He is also concerned that despite that tourism is a real lifeline for millions of people across Africa, the sector's potential is still to be truly realized.

He urged that if managed properly, tourism can accelerate socio-economic recovery and growth, and it can spur wealth creation and inclusive development in Africa.

However, the UNWTO is working with Africa to spur growth by realigning its agenda for Africa.

"In support of our member states responding to the current challenges of tourism, particularly the need for more trained workers, more decent jobs, and more and better-targeted tourism investments, we have also realigned our UNWTO Agenda for Africa: Tourism for Inclusive Growth.

"And above all, we will continue to advocate for tourism as a driver for positive change and a pillar of economic growth for the continent," the Secretary-General said.

On behalf of everyone at UNWTO, the Secretary-General concluded saying, "I wish you all a happy Africa Day."

## DRC Tourism Minister calls on UNWTO Chief



Minister of Tourism of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Didier Mazenga Mukanzu and UNWTO Secretary-General, Zurab Pololikashvili

The newly appointed Minister of Tourism of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), His Excellency Didier Mazenga Mukanzu, recently visited the World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) Headquarters in Madrid, Spain, with his team.

Having taken on his ministerial role just two months ago, His Excellency Mr. Mukanzu affirmed the DRC's continued relationship with the Madrid-based United Nations Tourism Agency to Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili.

During the visit, Minister Mazenga Mukanzu and his team also had the opportunity to learn about the diverse services offered by UNWTO. They received insights into technical cooperation, sustainable development, tourism marketing, and the Best Tourism Village initiative. They were also informed about the institutional structure and the various organs within the UNWTO.

Currently, the DRC holds the position of second vice chair of the Commission for Africa (CAF) within the organization's

structure. Minister Mazenga, a respected member of Felix Tschizenedi's government, has previously served as the Minister of Regional Integration and Francophonie.

A productive meeting took place between the Congolese Minister and the Secretary General of UNWTO.

Mr. Pololikashvili who expressed his keenness to further progress the UNWTO's Agenda for Africa, stating, "Together we make tourism work for people and the environment in the DRC."

The DRC has been a member of the UNWTO since 1975.





## UNWTO reiterates commitment to members at Africa's Travel Indaba

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has reaffirmed its support to members in the development of tourism post the Covid -19 pandemic.

The region has seen an incredible recovery of its tourism per the latest UNWTO tourism barometer. It has recovered 88% of international tourist arrivals as well 75% of receipts have been recorded so far.

Attending this year's Africa's Travel Indaba in Durban, South Africa the UNWTO Regional Director for Africa, Elcia Grandcourt, engaged with Ministers of State and Heads of delegation to bring them up to speed with the activities and programs of the Madrid-based UN Tourism Agency.

In her meeting with Mozambique's Minister of Culture and Tourism Eldevina Materula, the latter briefed the Regional Director on the progress of the country's e-visa program and how it has seen a surge in tourist arrival figures. Ms. Materula further revealed that in the coming days and weeks, high-end luxury hospitality properties

will be opening up in Mozambique. Ms. Grandcourt reiterated the support of the Secretary General to the country and said UNWTO will be by its side in the restart of tourism.

Malawi's new Minister of Tourism, Vera Kamkutule welcomed Ms Grandcourt to the Malawi stand and outlined the initiatives her Ministry is undertaking to make tourism a true economic pillar.

The Regional Director also held meetings with Zambia's Minister of Tourism and Arts Mr Rodney Sikumba and wrapped up her mission in Indaba with meetings with Zimbabwe's Minister of Tourism and Climate Change and Lesotho's Permanent Secretary at the Ministry.

Still at the Travel Indaba, Ms. Grandcourt shared the organization's ten-point agenda and the progress made in implementing some of the targets during the global media Faceoff with CNN anchor Richard Quest.

"The UNWTO Agenda for Africa-Tourism for Inclusive Growth is driven by the UNWTO SG since 2019 and



Elcia Grandcourt,  
UNWTO Regional Director for Africa

endorsed by all African Member states. It is a strategic framework to unleash tourism potential and was realigned in 2020 and 2022 to respond to new challenges on the ground in the tourism sector post-recovery." She added.

## 2ND WORLD SPORTS TOURISM CONGRESS CHARTS SUSTAINABILITY PATH

Sports tourism can play an increasingly important role in the economic diversification, growth and sustainable development of destinations worldwide.

The 2nd edition of the World Sports Tourism Congress (WSTC), organized by UNWTO, Government of Croatia through its Ministry of Tourism and Sport, and the Affiliate Member Croatian National Tourist Board, brought together experts and leaders from across the sports and tourism sectors, alongside representatives of destinations and businesses. Held under the theme "Tourism and Sports United for Sustainability", the Congress focused on key issues such as sports tourism's economic impact and its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili in a statement, said "Sports Tourism plays a key role in enhancing economic growth and social

development in many destinations. It creates jobs and supports businesses in cities and rural communities alike. In order to maximize its potential, public and private sector actors must collaborate, and that's where UNWTO steps in."

Ms. Nikolina Brnjac, Minister of Tourism and Sport of Croatia said: "I am very proud of having hosted this Congress in Croatia. We enjoyed hearing many excellent international and Croatian speakers, as well as presenting the many opportunities of sustainable development of sports tourism in Croatia. Croatian government has secured generous funds for building active tourism infrastructure, in line with our goal of making Croatia a globally competitive sports tourism destination."

### Delivering sports tourism's benefits

Alongside assessing the impacts of sports tourism, the Congress also explored the potential benefits of the




growing sector, including its links to health and wellbeing, and its importance for promoting destinations to bigger and more diverse audiences. At the end of the Congress, leaders from both established and emerging sports tourism destinations shared their insights and best practices to produce recommendations for growing the sector in size and influence.


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# Zambia's Minister of Tourism outlines strategies for tourism growth and infrastructure development

**Zambia is adopting a multi-pronged approach towards building a robust tourism ecosystem that ensures the country maximizes the benefits of the sector. Key among these strategies is the development of infrastructure that cater to the needs of the tourism sector.**

To advance Zambia's tourism growth and development agenda, the country held its maiden Tourism and Hospitality Education Summit in May this year where Tourism Minister, Rodney Sikumba highlighted vital initiatives to drive Zambia's tourism industry forward in an interview with *VoyagesAfriq*.

Underscoring the significance of the Summit, the Minister emphasized the need for coordination and skill development within the tourism sector. Recognizing the significance of hospitality in creating a thriving destination, he highlighted the importance of a well-trained workforce capable of delivering excellent service across various sectors, including hotels, service industries, and law enforcement. The aim is to establish Zambia as a center of excellence for tourism in the region.

Sikumba also shed light on the potential of the tourism sector in job creation, aligning with the government's agenda to generate employment opportunities. Acknowledging that Zambia has faced challenges in comparison to neighboring countries, Minister Rodney stressed the importance of providing exceptional services that match the investment made by tourists.

The objective is to position Zambia as a reference point for quality food, vibrant nightlife, and outstanding service.

To achieve these goals, the minister emphasized the need for infrastructure development. He acknowledged the previous lack of emphasis on infrastructure and expressed the government's intention to address this issue.

"What has been lacking in the tourism sector for a long time is infrastructure. I realized that I probably started running before I could walk, and sometimes, that can lead to stumbling. But now we

recognize the need for infrastructure. We have been talking to the World Bank to access a concessional loan of about 100 million dollars for infrastructure development. This will address access to tourist sites, connectivity, and the availability of hotels," he indicated.

This funding will support improved access to tourist sites, enhanced connectivity, and the availability of hotels in key areas such as Kafue National Park, Kasaba Bay, and the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, home to the renowned Victoria Falls.

The Minister drew attention to the importance of creating destinations for business tourists, who tend to spend more money and explore investment opportunities during their visits.



Rodney Sikumba,  
Zambia's Minister of Tourism

To cater to this market, Sikumba disclosed "In our research of the tourism business in Zambia, we found that there is value in attracting business tourists. Business tourists tend to spend more money and have the opportunity to explore investment opportunities in the location they visit. Therefore, we have opened our doors to create destinations for MICE in Zambia. Specifically, we have developed Convention Centers in Lusaka and Livingstone. In Lusaka, we intentionally increased the bed capacity by adding 200 beds, and in Livingstone, the first Radisson resort in Africa was opened."

“  
 What has been lacking in the tourism sector for a long time is infrastructure. I realized that I probably started running before I could walk, and sometimes, that can lead to stumbling. But now we recognize the need for infrastructure.  
 ”

The minister recognised the value of festivals and nightlife in attracting tourists and engaging the younger generation. Collaboration with neighboring countries, such as the recent joint hosting of the Big Vic Falls Carnival with Zimbabwe, has proven successful in attracting visitors to both regions.

"By opening up the borders between the two countries, we saw an increase in tourists staying in both Livingstone and Zimbabwe. This collaboration between countries within the region is important, as we aim to complement each other rather than compete. Currently, we are in talks with Zimbabwe about further collaboration in hosting big meetings and facilitating border control," he maintained.

When asked about private sector expectations, the Tourism Minister acknowledged the high hopes placed upon him due to his background in the private sector. He highlighted the

significance of creating a dialogue platform where both the government and private sector can find common ground and work together to drive the tourism industry forward.

Drawing from his international experience, Minister Rodney emphasised the significance of foreign direct investment in stimulating economic growth. Leveraging the UNWTO platform, he intends to showcase Zambia's investment potential to international investors in major cities such as London, Paris, and the UAE. This

approach aims to attract investment and foster partnerships that will contribute to the growth and development of Zambia's tourism sector.

"This way, we can stimulate the growth of the tourism sector without relying solely on government funds. Additionally, the exposure I have gained through the UNWTO Executive Council and interaction with various cultures will allow me to bring back valuable knowledge to replicate and elevate our tourism industry within the country," Minister Sikumba added.





## Radisson Hotel Group announces seven new hotels in Africa

Radisson Hotel Group continues its ambitious growth in Africa with the signing of seven new hotels, adding over 1,400 rooms to its African portfolio. The new hotels expand the Group's brands, spanning from upscale to premium luxury lifestyle with a new market entry in Gambia and the introduction of new brands in key markets with the first Radisson Collection in Nigeria and Egypt, the first Radisson RED hotel in Nigeria, and the introduction of the Radisson brand in Kenya.



Ramsay Rankoussi, Vice President, Development, Africa & Turkey at Radisson Hotel Group

As one of the fastest-growing hotel companies in Africa, Radisson Hotel Group plans to further strengthen its robust African presence this year beyond signings with at least seven hotel openings and over 1,400 rooms. These openings include the Group's first hotel openings in Reunion Island and Ghana and expanding its resort presence in Casablanca and Saidia in Morocco as well as in South Africa, Egypt and Tunisia.

Elie Younes, Executive Vice President and Global Chief Development Officer at Radisson Hotel Group comments: "Thanks to the relevance of our brands and trust of our owners, we have been able to maintain our growth momentum across Africa, bringing our tally of new signings for 2023 so far to seven hotels and over 1,400 rooms. With the continent remaining a focus market for us, we are committed to further contribute to the African hospitality industry, providing more possibilities to our guests and employment

opportunities to the local communities."

Ramsay Rankoussi, Vice President, Development, Africa & Turkey at Radisson Hotel Group adds: "An even better indication of our growth is the materialization of our pipeline into openings, where we have led consistently the biggest market share for the last 36 months, translating to a commendable 15 percent growth on our African portfolio, year-on-year, placing us well on track to reach our objective of 150 hotels within the next five years from 100 hotels today. Our rate of materialization and openings is a testament not only to the quality of our pipeline but also reflects our conversion strategy in repositioning existing hotels under one of our brands. We are also proud to further entrench our stance as the operator with the most extensive presence in Africa with once again a new market entry as the only hotel operator."

The new hotel signings include:

### Radisson Collection Resort, Marsa Alam Port Phoenix

Scheduled to open in early 2025, the resort, which introduces Egypt to the Group's premium lifestyle brand, Radisson Collection, will be situated in Port Phoenix on the Red Sea, a waterfront premier integrated resort community boasting luxury residents, golf estates, water activities, retail centers, hospitals, and schools and easily accessible from Marsa Alam International Airport (only 35 minutes' drive away). The resort location makes it an excellent spot for a vacation, with venues for dining, entertainment, boutique shopping, cultural expedition, activities, and lively nightlife located all nearby.

### Radisson Collection Hotel & Conference Center, Abuja

The new-build, 249 room hotel will be Abuja's first luxury hotel and will further expand the Group's Radisson Collection portfolio in Nigeria as the country's third Radisson Collection hotel and the premium lifestyle brands debut in Abuja. The hotel will have an expansive range of rooms, from standard rooms and apartments to lofts and presidential suites. Spanning across almost 3000 square meters, the meeting spaces will consist of a dividable conference hall, five meeting rooms, a board room, as well as a pre-function area.

### Radisson Blu Beach Resort & Spa, Banjul

The new-build, 462 room hotel currently under construction, marks the Group's debut in Gambia as the first internationally branded hotel in the country. Scheduled to open early 2025, the resort will be located in the Bijilo region in Banjul, the country's capital city, spanning over 17 hectares with direct access to the ocean, surrounded by tranquil, picturesque landscapes. The resort will offer large, contemporary rooms, presidential apartments, and



royal villas as well as five food and beverage outlets, including a cocktail bar, an all-day dining restaurant, a specialty restaurant, poolside restaurant and beach bar. Other hotel facilities will include a fitness and wellness center.

### Radisson Blu Hotel Abuja CBD

Following the recent signing of Radisson Collection Abuja, is the announcement of the first Radisson Blu hotel in Nigeria's capital city, the Group's 10th hotel and 3rd Radisson Blu in Nigeria. The 104-room hotel, scheduled to open early-2025, will be in Abuja's Central Business District (CBD), 45 minutes from the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport.

The hotel will have a stylish piano bar and an all-day dining restaurant along with fitness and wellness facilities and 245 square meters of meetings and events space.

### Radisson RED Lagos VI

Further expanding the Group's presence as its 11th hotel in Nigeria and 7th hotel in operation and under development in Lagos, is the highly anticipated debut of the bold and cutting-edge upscale Radisson RED brand in Nigeria. The new-build, 62 room hotel scheduled to open end-2025 will introduce the country to the renowned Radisson RED brand and its unique food and beverage concepts through its lobby bar, all day dining restaurant and rooftop bar and terrace which in true Radisson RED style will become the most coveted rooftop venue in the country.

### Radisson Hotel Nairobi Airport

The Group's 4th hotel in Kenya and first Radisson property in the country, is the new build, 200 room Radisson Hotel Nairobi Airport, scheduled to open mid-2027

With proximity to JK International Airport, the property will be easily accessible to tourists as well as business travelers. It is also 22km from Nairobi National Park, the only national park in the world in proximity to the city. The hotel will have a lobby bar and an all-day dining restaurant as well as extensive facilities including a gym, spa, pool, retail unit and crew lounge. The meetings and events area will consist of a conference room, two meeting rooms, a board room and a business center.

### Radisson Hotel Algiers El Mouradia

Marking the Group's second hotel in the country, complementing the Radisson Hotel, La Baie d'Alger, currently under construction and bolstering the limited internationally branded hotel supply in Algiers is the country's second Radisson hotel, scheduled to open mid-2026.



## Spotlight on Nomasonto Ndlovu as she steps into the big role of leading South African Tourism

*Nomasonto Ndlovu was appointed to lead South African Tourism as its new Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in May just a few days to this year's Africa's Travel Indaba. Prior to that she was the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the organization. She brings to her new position years of experience within the country's vast tourism value chain, having previously served as CEO of Limpopo Tourism. In this exclusive interview with VoyagesAfric, Sonto, as she is affectionately called shares her pillars for executing her mandate of leading the organisation responsible for marketing and promoting destination South Africa as a must-visit for tourists globally.*

### How does it feel to lead the organisation now?

Undoubtedly, this is a mammoth task, yet an exciting and a welcomed challenge. It helps that I have been in tourism for almost 20 years, thus have a lot of experience in this sector. Leading the organisation right now is a big responsibility and an interesting challenge but one that I am willing to take on. I am fortunate in that I have a fully supportive and experienced Executive Committee and senior management team, most of whom have been in the organisation for a long time. There is no doubt, we have had a turbulent start to the year and that may have threatened the stability of South African Tourism and also the image of our organisation.

What is important for me is that we remain focused on executing our marketing mandate and continuously increasing arrivals to South Africa so we can contribute to our economy. The work done by SA Tourism in 24 key markets that we focus on, via our nine (9) offices around the world is very important. We have some of the most talented and experienced people at SA Tourism and I am confident that we will come out at the end of this year with great performance results.

Fortunately, I am also leading the organisation when the greater tourism sector has an even more appetite to collaborate. This means that there are more opportunities for greater collaboration to create real magic for the organisation and the greater tourism industry.

### What will be your driving pillars/force even in this acting capacity?

Firstly, I love working with hard working and dedicated people and getting ideas from the various experts that there are

in the organization and in our wider network of stakeholders and partners. What really drives me is seeing in action a team that is fully committed to delivering on its mandate. Our focus as SA Tourism is to ensure we meet our mandate of increasing tourist arrivals to our country as well as growing domestic tourism so that we can contribute to our country especially on job creation. We continue to apply our best available resources to do so – we are driven to meet our targets and our immediate vision is to return to full recovery of the sector.

The big driving force for me in my acting capacity will be how much of the work we are doing at SA Tourism gets to contribute to positively influence the image and



Nomasonto Ndlovu



perception, various people have of our country and how that translates to people visiting South Africa, but most importantly, how much our work contributes to inclusive economic growth.

### How would you describe this year's Africa's Travel Indaba?

This year's Africa's Travel Indaba was truly a step in the right direction towards a more cohesive and united and collaborative tourism sector. Africa's Travel Indaba remains a powerful platform to showcase the best of our continent's tourism sector to the world. Seeing the number of products exhibited not only from our country but from the rest of the continent too cemented this year's theme of "Unlimited Africa". We remain committed to our plans to grow African representation at this mega travel exhibition, and it was encouraging that we had twenty-two (22) African countries exhibiting.

In addition to this, seeing young people from various tourism educational institutions in the province, enthusiastically working at the show while gaining first-hand exposure is truly special. Tourism is one sector that can meaningfully contribute to youth empowerment and this happened at Africa's Travel Indaba. SA Tourism employed not less than 100 tourism students from the Durban University of Technology to work at Indaba this year.

Through the various services required, we were able to also hire some black-owned businesses and therefore contribute to an inclusive economy. Close to 200 tourism businesses and SMMEs were also supported and got to be part of the exhibition floor showcasing a wide variety of their products.

“The big driving force for me in my acting capacity will be how much of the work we are doing at SA Tourism gets to contribute to positively influence the image and perception, various people have of our country and how that translates to people visiting South Africa, but most importantly, how much our work contributes





## Labadi Beach Hotel makes history with first Ghanaian Managing Director



Ghana's premier five-star hotel, Labadi Beach Hotel has appointed Mr. David Eduaful as Managing Director of the hotel. David Eduaful is an accomplished hospitality professional with over 30 years of experience in the industry. He is the first ever Ghanaian Managing Director of a five-star hotel in the country having previously served in various capacities in the hotel.

With his extensive knowledge and expertise, David has successfully played both a strategic and operational role in the hotel. His diverse local and international experience has provided him with a comprehensive understanding of different aspects of the sector.

David's educational background includes an Executive Masters in Business Administration from the University of Ghana Business School and a Degree in Marketing from the Central University in Ghana.

Commenting on the landmark appointment, Professor Douglas Boateng, Acting Chairman of the Board said "David's commitment to service delivery quality, client relationship management and unquestionable passion for the hospitality industry continues to receive admiration from the supervisory Board of the hotel and his peers."

Since its inception in 1991 the Hotel has led Ghana's hospitality industry, providing exceptional services to its cherished guests, and thus contributing immensely to the Tourism sector and by extension the economy of Ghana. Set amidst tropical landscaped gardens, adjacent to one of Ghana's most popular beaches in the Country's



Mr. David Eduaful,  
Managing Director of Labadi Beach Hotel

central business district, the hotel caters for the business and leisure traveler.

Labadi Beach Hotel which started with 104 rooms in 1991 can now boast of 164 rooms including 2 Presidential Suites, 4 Executive Suites, 4 Superior Suites, 5 Bars, 2 restaurants, a 900-seater multi-purpose conference and banqueting facilities, a Spa with plunge pool, well equipped Gym, Lagoon for fishing, 2 plush Leisure and lap pools on a sprawling tropical landscaped garden overlooking the natural Maale Lagoon.

Clientele of the hotel have included the British Monarchy, Heads of state, Prime Ministers, and very important personalities who continue to make it their preferred resort for business and leisure activities.

Speaking to the press, Mr. David Eduaful said, "the success story of this indigenous brand can be attributed to its innovative approach, an adaptation of the highest standards of operation and service delivery through its dedicated and most passionate staff who go the extra mile to exceed the expectations of customers."

Labadi Beach Hotel has consolidated its lead in the Hospitality industry by winning many awards including recently the coveted CIMG Hospitality Facility of the Year 2018, 2019 and 2021 respectively, Best Maintained Facility 2019, Best Events Hotel Venue 2019 & 2020 respectively, Best 5-star Hotel of the Year award 2020 & 2021 respectively, Most Secure Hotel of the Year 2021, Most Digitalized Hotel of the Year 2021 organized by the Ghana Hotels Association and Hospitality Company of the Year 2022 awarded by Ghana Business Awards.

In March 2023 the hotel paid a GHc10 million dividend to SSNIT, its sole shareholder.

776\*

"With the unwavering support of the Board of Directors coupled with his strong leadership skills, and support from his management team, we are confident that David Eduaful will continue to make the hotel the most admired both locally and regionally". Professor Boateng further stated on behalf of the entire board.

## President of Skai Nairobi reiterates the organization's mission to empower the youth and women

**Liz Tapawa, President of Skai Nairobi has reaffirmed the club's commitment to empower more women and create avenues for the Kenyan youth. In an interview, she stated that measures are underway to facilitate more youth involvement in Skai Kenya.**

"We have the young Skalites side of the club where we have young people who joined very young. Some of them we sponsor, and some are able to pay for themselves. We also work with young people from colleges within Kenya whom we invite to Skai to see what we do so that in the future when they are stabilizing their career, they can join Skai."

She elaborated on what Skai Nairobi is doing to facilitate women's participation and empowerment in tourism and hospitality. She confirmed that training and mentorship sessions are being organized for women. This is being done under the auspices of the Kenyan Association of Women in Tourism where the latter is an ardent member.

"We are doing a lot of mentorship under the Kenyan Association of Women in Tourism. We are going to colleges again; we are working with the hospitality schools. We have our members every month engaged in the schools where they are mentoring our young students. And when we are doing the mentorship we are mentoring not only women but all the students. That at the end of the day, we want the young women in the hospitality sector to know that there is an opportunity for them to take up these positions when we are long gone. So we are preparing the future through the Kenyan Association of Women in Tourism through our mentorship programs which is a very strong program. Every hotel school in Kenya is working with us and a few other universities."

According to the president of Skai Nairobi, in addition to these measures is a conscious effort to improve women's participation and representation in the tourism and hospitality sector. In her view, it is imperative, to ensure a balance.

"It is an ongoing process; it is a work in progress. For example, where I work

placed women strategically and ensuring that the numbers come out to balance".

So we are doing it every day. It is a continuous process. It is something that you wake up and say now we have done it. We have to continue reminding ourselves, reminding the people that we work with that there must be space for women in every organization."

Skai is a professional organization of tourism leaders who are promoting global tourism and friendship. It is the only international group uniting all branches of tourism and travel industry.

Liz Tapawa, President of Skai Nairobi





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## Malawi positions Tourism as key economic pillar, counts gains at 4th International Expo

Malawi's Ministry of Tourism has hailed the return of the Malawi International Tourism Expo (MITE), which was an overwhelming success this year.

The two-day international tourism expo tagged "Takulandirani" brought together tourism operators, experts, DMCs, and local suppliers to transact business at the Bingu Wa International Convention Centre in Lilongwe.

Speaking at the official closing ceremony of this year's MITE, Dr. Lazarus Chakwera, President of Malawi, said he found it necessary to join the tourism industry and participants to demonstrate his government's unwavering commitment to the tourism industry.

"On this last day of the Expo, I felt it necessary to come and join you in person for one simple reason. I wanted to demonstrate my government's unwavering commitment and support to the tourism industry in Malawi as a central piece of our ATM Strategy for revolutionizing the three sectors of Agriculture, Tourism and Mining to boost the productivity of our economy and the prosperity of Malawians," the President said.

The Malawian leader also revealed he has directed Vera Kamtukule, Minister of Tourism, to look at the environment of Malawi to identify both the tourism assets and obstacles hindering its progress in order to create a buoyant tourism sector.

"In this respect, I directed the Minister of Tourism, Hon. Vera Kamtukule, to look at the environment of Malawi with a new and critical eye to identify both our tourism assets and the obstacles we must lift this year to turn them into tourist attractions that generate revenue, both from Malawians with disposable incomes and international guests with a taste for beautiful and hospitable countries, of which Malawi is the crown Jewel," President Chakwera added.

"While we as a government are working on creating a conducive environment for tourism to thrive, there is no substitute for the changes and innovations that players in the tourism sector itself have to embrace in order to make the most of the environment we are creating."

President Chakwera said his government is committed to supporting the growth of the sector being an important enabler of Malawi 2063.

On her part, Vera Kamtukule, Minister of Tourism, said the event exceeded their expectations considering the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on businesses and destinations.

"We were planning for 70 exhibitors to take part in this year's event considering the break due to Covid-19 challenges, but I am happy to report that instead, we had 115 exhibitors. This was one of the success stories in this year's event. We also had Zimbabwe Ministry of Environmental Affairs, Tourism and

Hospitality Management and Tanzania Tourist Board represented," she revealed.

The Minister, who was full of appreciation for the support from the tourism industry, extolled the resilience of the people of Malawi for showcasing the country's warmth to the visiting delegates in spite of the multitude of challenges particularly the recent cyclone, which has seen almost 1000 lives lost.

She was optimistic that the various networking session between the international buyers and local tourism service providers shall lead to business partnerships that will transcend into Malawi tourism products being sold on the international markets starting this September 2023 when most tour packages are developed for the 2024 season and beyond.

Justin Dzinkambani, chairperson of the Malawi Tourism Council, was full of praise for the President in participating in this very important event. He reiterated the private sector's commitment and collaboration in supporting tourism to create more jobs in Malawi.

He commended the government's policy to waive visas for Malawi's key source markets and urged the appropriate authorities to expedite action on rolling out the policy. The Malawi Vision 2063 plan provides futuristic hope for the people of Malawi and working hard with the tourism ecosystem will help in actualizing the plan.

### Hosted Buyers

There was a total of 51 international buyers (tour operators /travel agents) and media from across Africa and the world including UK, USA, Germany, Italy, Spain, South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Ghana and Nigeria, who had the opportunity to sample our tourism products in addition to doing business with Malawi's local suppliers.

Some of the highlights of the expo include pre and post-tours organized for the visitors to enable them have a first-hand appreciation of Malawian tourism attractions. The tours were organised by the Ministry of Tourism, Malawi.



Dr. Lazarus Chakwera, President of Malawi



## Snapshots of Malawi International Tourism Expo



## Malawi excites International Tourism operators

International tourism operators and media have expressed their delight in Malawi's tourism offering and its potential to be a choice of destination for many markets.

Lilongwe, the capital of Malawi recently played host to many international hotel stakeholders, experts and media during the return of the Malawi International Tourism Expo (MITE).

During the event, visitors were exposed to the country's major draw as a destination and cultural immersions of the warm heart of Africa.

Places visited by operators and media included Nhokatakorta, Blue Zebra Island, Blantyre, Lake Malawi, Salima Beach Town among others.

Speaking to *VoyagesAfriq* on their impressions of the exhibition and pre/post tours many said, the southern African country was yet to reach its full potential since it is endowed with amazing tourism offerings.

Floreana, Italian DMC representing .. said " I have been thrilled with the options the destination offers and will work with local suppliers to have a curated service for its clients. She was however quick to add that, it will be wonderful to have access to the sites and infrastructure is crucial in delivering a seamless experience to the guest.

Yohannes, an African travel specialist from Germany was impressed with the show and the cultural offers it showcases. He however also wanted more time allocated to speed networking and B2B to have more engagement with suppliers.

"Malawi remains a diamond in the rough. Facing both environmental and



development-related challenges, the country continues to create a diverse and exciting tourism experience - just below the surface of most people's radar. As for the MITE 2023, it was an important step after Covid to again raise awareness of the positive development that is happening in Malawi's tourism.

What political stakeholders however need to keep in mind, is that such international events - in order to be effective - should be primarily aimed at catalyzing business relations and opportunities for the private sector and less an occasion to showcase the performance and importance of government to its domestic audience. It would have been great if less time was allotted to government functions and speeches, which might be of great importance to some but not necessarily to international buyers and consumer-oriented travel media. More time for in-depth business meetings would have been appreciated, as there were to many highly interesting exhibitors but to little time to talk to everyone, I would have liked to. A Similar pattern I could see with the complimentary Educational Trips before and after the Expo. More room for interaction between the players of the private sector and less room for government protocol would have been

more beneficial to the international audience, the local tourism sector and quite frankly the Malawian people."

Making her first visit to Malawi as a South African, Vivian Siyalai was full of praise for the organizers and happy to have sampled the products and services of Malawi ready to place it on itineraries for clients.

"Takulandirani Malawi a small hidden Gem of Africa with Big warm rich hearts, filled with Culture, Nature, Adventure, and people with patience. The food was worth the wait. Happy to have visited the country which gave me more insight and light compared to dealing with the internet which didn't visit with expectation, I let every stop of attraction with their establishments unfold with surprise. Looking to specialize in more with deeper understanding and guidance." She concluded.

The Minister of Tourism Vera Kamkutule in an interaction with international buyers on the final day of the show, expressed utmost appreciation for making time to visit Malawi and was optimistic about the benefits the country stands to benefit. She further encouraged them to share their experiences to help Malawi even put up a better show in the future.



## Zambia Tourism Agency in a joint Tourism promotion efforts with Emirates

Emirates and Zambia Tourism Agency have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly promote tourism and boost visitor arrivals to Zambia by leveraging Emirates' extensive global network of over 140 destinations.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Badr Abbas, Emirates' Senior Vice President (Commercial Operations for Africa), and Matongo Matamwandi, CEO, Zambia Tourism Agency (ZTA) at the Arabian Travel Market, ATM in Dubai, UAE.

Through this partnership, the two parties will explore opportunities to collaborate on key initiatives and undertake various activities to promote experiences in Zambia and increase the visibility of the destinations within the Emirates network. Both parties will also consider various advertising and marketing campaigns to drive inbound visitors to Zambia.

Badr Abbas, SVP, (Commercial Operations), Africa at Emirates, said: "We

are pleased to work with Zambia Tourism and support their initiatives to advance the tourism economy. Zambia has been part of our destination network for more than ten years. We have been steadily building traffic into Zambia across the Middle East, Europe, the Americas, India, and China, and we look forward to driving more travelers to Zambia. The MoU signed today will help us explore mutually beneficial initiatives that will boost the nation's tourism and trade sectors and provide Emirates with an opportunity to serve market demand."

Matongo Matamwandi, CEO Zambia Tourism Agency, said: "Zambia offers a rich tourism offering and wealth of opportunities to pursue outdoor activities, a rich and diverse cultural heritage, and unrivalled wildlife offerings in 20 National Parks and 36 Game Management Areas. The country has unique landmarks including Victoria Falls in Livingstone and the World's largest Bat migration in Kasanka National Park"

Emirates launched operations to Zambia

in 2012 and has grown the route over the years to offer a daily service with seven flights a week. The route is served by a Boeing 777-300ER offering eight private suites in First Class, 42 lie-flat seats in Business Class, and 310 spacious seats in Economy Class.

Zambia Tourism Agency is participating at the Arabian Travel Market, (ATM), with a number of private sector players in the tourism sector. The ATM is a Global Tourism platform that Zambia is exploiting among other strategies to enhance international travel to the country in support of the 2023 destination Zambia Marketing plan, aimed at attracting 1.5 million international arrivals for Zambia in 2023.



## Ghana to introduce e-visa by end of 2023 as it steps up activations for more tourists



Ben Anane-Nsiah, Deputy CEO, Ghana Tourism Authority in charge of General Services

Ghana is expected to roll-out an e-visa regime for travellers by close of 2023. The introduction of the online visa platform is expected to boost visitations to the West African country as it seeks to ramp up tourism figures for 2023. Ghana received 914, 892 arrivals last year with some \$2.5 billion in revenue.

The country showcased at this year's ITB Berlin expo, where Deputy CEO of the Ghana Tourism Authority in charge of General Services, Ben Anane-Nsiah disclosed in an interview with VoyagesAfriq that plans were far advanced

in the introduction of the e-visa as parties involved have are finally making headway in the process.

"After a long talk, there is now light at the end of the tunnel with respect to the e-visas. Sometimes the mindset changes - the visa is managed by the Ministry of Interior, outside, it's managed by Foreign Affairs, there is a revenue component and who manages the money and all of that but that is finally resolved and at least we should be able to get it before the end of the year to be fully operational. This should help solve the problem of people who live in cities and countries with no Ghanaian Missions," the Deputy CEO disclosed.

With the Ghana gradually hitting pre-pandemic levels in terms tourism numbers, the Ghana Tourism Authorities are back to their key markets including North America and Europe to try to redirect tourist traffic to the country. In this respect, there are planned roadshows in countries such as the Netherlands and Germany as they intensify their activations in the Americas and elsewhere. Annane-Nsiah believes all these, among other things should help shore the numbers by at least 30% of 2022 figures.

He explained, "We are almost at pre-

covid levels, and we want to push up and do some more growth this year. So, with the target that has been set, I think we can do 30% growth, I think we can reach 1.3 million. Generally, we expect the numbers to go up; we can feel the pent-up demand and with the interactions we are having it's like life is tough, but we still want to travel, so we expect to grow this year."

In addition, GTA will also push for arrivals from sub-regional markets including Cote d'Ivoire and the Gambia with roadshows also planned in selected cities across Nigeria which Ghana's biggest source market in Africa.

"We are also looking at the sub-regional market because Nigeria continues to be an important market for us, and the numbers are interesting. We are looking at engaging them some more on some roadshows in some of the cities in Nigeria and engage with their travel operators to move those numbers up a little more," the Deputy CEO maintained.

In readiness for the anticipated numbers, Anane-Nsiah stated that the country will continue to enhance its tourism product quality and invest in rehabilitating existing sites and attractions.

## Zimbabwe Tourism Authority turns attention to capacity building and market expansion for post-COVID recovery

Zimbabwe is focusing on building and strengthening its human capacity within the tourism sector as a means for driving gains as the sector fully recovers from the effects of COVID-19. The Southern African country is also looking at extending its market reach in order to shore up tourism numbers for this year and beyond.

Taking her turn on the VA Tourism Podcast, Winnie Muchanyuka, the CEO of the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA), shed light on the organization's efforts to enhance the tourism industry through capacity building, quality assurance programs, and market expansion. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19

pandemic, the ZTA remains dedicated to improving the country's tourism offerings and ensuring a memorable experience for visitors.

One of the key areas of focus for the ZTA is human resource capacity. Recognizing the importance of well-trained industry professionals, the Authority has implemented a comprehensive quality assurance program and training initiatives aimed at achieving service excellence. The impact of COVID-19 has necessitated a review of these training programs to adapt to the changing landscape. To bridge the skills gap and enhance industry expertise, the ZTA has formed collaborations with educators, hotels, and schools to quickly fill these gaps and equip the workforce with the necessary skills.

Muchanyuka emphasized the ZTA's role in capacity building and overseeing inspections. The Authority, she said works closely with the private sector and advocates for funding opportunities, urging financial institutions to support the tourism industry's access to resources.

As a voice for the industry, the ZTA "strives to ensure that Zimbabwe's tourism offerings align with international standards by emphasizing the importance of refurbishing infrastructure and maintaining high service standards," she said.

Regarding market

priorities, the ZTA is targeting Europe, the United States, Australia, and emerging interests from Asia. The reopening of Zimbabwe ahead of other destinations has generated growing interest from regional markets, particularly West Africa. Africa as a whole is also gaining prominence as a market, presenting opportunities for growth and development.

The interview also touched on specific tourist attractions and offerings in Zimbabwe where the CEO mentioned that the iconic Victoria Falls remains a major drawcard, and the ZTA aims to leverage its popularity to promote other experiences and destinations within the country. Lake Kariba, known for its water activities and family-oriented appeal, is being highlighted as an emerging destination, with improved access facilitated by local flights.

Addressing the challenges faced by tourists regarding payment options, Winnie indicated that "the ZTA plans to collaborate with financial institutions to make payment platforms more accessible for foreign guests." In the interim, the authority aims to communicate the limitations to potential visitors through various operators and facilitate arrangements to ensure a smoother experience.

Looking ahead, Zimbabwe is set to host large-scale events and signature conferences that will enhance the country's reputation as a business and tourism hub. Despite the limitations posed by the pandemic, there is optimism about future growth and the continued efforts to improve the industry's offerings.

As Zimbabwe moves forward, the ZTA, in collaboration with its partners, remains committed to strengthening human resource capacity, expanding markets, and aligning with the nation's tourism goals. By focusing on quality assurance, training initiatives, and market priorities, the Authority aims to position Zimbabwe as a desirable and memorable destination for travellers in the post-COVID era.



Winnie Muchanyuka, CEO, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA)





## South African Tourism uplifts SMMEs at the Arabian Travel Market

South African Tourism, along with a group of small South African tourism businesses in South Africa's tourism sector are taking the international stage at Dubai's Arabian Travel Market (ATM).

ATM is the leading Middle East B2B exhibition which brings together over 2,800 exhibitors, and 26,000 visitors from around the world to meet, network and do business. The show takes place at the Dubai World Trade Centre from 1-4 May.

At this trade fair, these SMMEs are showcasing their brands alongside the crème de la crème of the industry, including top established tourist destinations, cutting-edge travel technology providers, leading airlines, and giants in hospitality and accommodation.

The tourism industry was severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and Small, Medium to Macro Enterprises (SMMEs) were hit the hardest. In an effort to support their recovery, South African Tourism is providing these businesses with an opportunity to showcase their offering at the Arabian

Travel Market (ATM).

The move is part of the tourism sector recovery plan, which recognises the important role and contribution of SMMEs to the sector, especially in the accommodation and hospitality sub-sectors. The inclusion of SMMEs at ATM is expected to yield positive results not only for the participating businesses but for the industry as a whole.

"SMMEs are a very critical part of our tourism offering. Through these businesses, we are able to showcase a wide range of tourism products and experiences that travellers are looking for. By having these SMMEs taking part at trade shows of this magnitude, we are able to fully show the world what our country has to offer as a business event and leisure destination," says South African Tourism Chief Operations Officer, Nomasonto Ndlovu.

South African Tourism is doing this in partnership with STEA's, whose core mission is to empower small businesses through engagement, employment, and active participation in the tourism sector. This partnership demonstrates SA

Tourism's commitment to supporting the growth and success of small businesses in the tourism sector.

In the year 2022, South Africa emerged as an appealing destination for international travellers, welcoming 5.7 million visitors from various parts of the world. Middle Eastern arrivals amounted to 40,600. The Middle East is the only one to have fully recovered in terms of air capacity. The number of seats available to South Africa from the region in 2023 is 95.9% of the seats that were available before the pandemic in 2019, and arrivals from the Middle



region have surpassed their previous share and are now representing 0.7% of all arrivals.

"The UAE, and more specifically Dubai is home to many expats, this presents a wonderful opportunity for SMMEs to meet and engage a broader audience and create lasting impressions. By participating in events such as Arabian Travel Market, they get to expand their reach beyond local boundaries," said Ndlovu.

She added that "the participation of these small businesses at the ATM is expected to contribute to boosting destination competitiveness, catalysing industry

transformation and accelerating tourism growth.

Small Tourism Enterprise Association (STEA) reports that participants from last year's ATM returned home with lucrative deals with some companies even forging strategic collaborations to bolster their ground-handling services and product offerings.

Jabu Matsilele, Chairperson of STEA, emphasised the importance of market access for small businesses, saying, "It plays a key role as a strategy for transformation in the industry, where historically disadvantaged enterprises are still at the bottom of the pyramid. The



domination of large companies across various value chains makes it challenging for small businesses to operate within the value chain. Therefore, platforms like ATM offer invaluable market access opportunities for small businesses to participate in both global and local markets."

## Seychelles showcases diverse tourism offerings at Arabian Travel Market

The 115-island destination was extensively represented on the international media platform for four days at the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from May 1st to 4th 2023.

The delegation was led by the Principal Secretary for Tourism, Sherin Francis and was accompanied by Mrs Bernadette Willemin, the Director General for Destination Marketing for Tourism Seychelles, and Mr Ahmed Fathallah Tourism Seychelles representative for the Middle East.

The group of tourism professionals from Seychelles comprised 9 private sector companies namely; Berjaya Beau Vallon Bay Resort, Eden Bleu Hotel, Hilton Seychelles, Kempinski Seychelles Resort, and Savoy Seychelles Resorts & Spa 7 Degrees South, Luxury Travel, Masons Travel, and Ocean Blue Travel.

Mrs Francis and Mrs Willemin took part in a total of 11 international media interviews to broaden the visibility of the island destination, including those with Al Ekhbariya TV, one of the most important Saudi Arabian TV channels, Breaking Travel News, and internet media moguls Travel & Tourism News and Destination World News.

On the first day, while speaking on a panel discussion on "responsible hospitality for a better world" with other CEOs from around the world, Mrs. Francis shared her thoughts and the destination's long-term vision on the subject. "As a small destination dependent on tourism, sustainability has a deeper meaning for us as the survival of



our nation depends on it and therefore, practicing sustainable tourism remains one of our primary objectives for the destination," she said.

Continuing along the same line during another session under the theme "green technology for responsible tourism" session, Mrs Willemin, the Director General for Destination Marketing, said, "Green technology for responsible tourism means we must be creative and resourceful to reduce environmental footprint and preserve cultural heritage."

Mrs Francis also participated in a panel discussion on Maritime Tourism - Practical Solutions and Amazing Developments, alongside Mr Will Bateman, CEO and Founder of CCell Renewables and the Honourable Ni Made Ayu Marthini, Deputy Minister of Tourism in Indonesia, where she discussed the opportunities the Middle East market presents for the island while preserving maritime prosperity.

The Director General for Destination

Marketing expressed her satisfaction with the event's success, stating, "The four days have been excellent and very fruitful for Seychelles, as it was clear that there was a lot of market interest in expanding the business." We noticed a notable rise in interest in the destination from a number of significant major media outlets sites. We are grateful that we were able to seize every opportunity to showcase our product in all of its facets and provide further information about Seychelles and the island's strategic tourism development objectives and priorities."

Mr Ahmed Fathallah, Tourism Seychelles representative on the market, added that Seychelles' participation in the Arabian Travel Market is a great way to keep Seychelles in the minds of potential business partners.

Tourism Seychelles and Emirates Airline signed their annual Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) during the 2023 ATM, reaffirming their commitment to the growth of Seychelles as a destination.





Seychelles is a great place to spend quality time with the family. Firstly, there are no visas required from any nationality and you can stay up to a month. Then there's the fact that Seychelles is considered as the 'land of perpetual summer', providing day after day of balmy weather with temperatures rarely descending below 24° or rising above 32° centigrade. There are no tropical diseases to concern yourself with, either, because Seychelles is wonderfully disease free.

And the good news does not stop there, Seychelles is all about diversity and discovering all that these islands have to offer will take you on the journey of your lifetime. Island-hopping is a favourite among many visitors and the islands of Praslin and La Digue are just 15 minutes away by plane or an hour by fast catamaran ferry. Including these islands in your itinerary will introduce your family to some of the best beaches in the world: Mahe's Beau Vallon beach; Praslin's gorgeous Anse Lazio and La Digue's amazing Anse Source d'Argent. If you just want to stay on the mainland, don't worry because there are more than 65 beaches to enjoy!

Why not take your family on a hike into one of the most mysterious places on the planet, the extraordinary Vallée de Mai, UNESCO World Heritage Site, where the famous double-lobed coconut, the coco-de-mer, grows on towering palms in an ancient hidden valley? There are also several guided walks and trails that you can enjoy on the main islands on which to discover Seychelles' amazing flora & fauna which features some of the rarest life forms on Earth.

There is also great fishing to be enjoyed in the waters around the island or even a cruise aboard a traditional schooner, catamaran, or motor yacht from where you can discover the real beauty of Seychelles – by sea.

Why not try a round of golf with the family on Praslin's 18-hole Championship course with its astonishing ocean panoramas, or a spot of horse riding along the shore of Mahé's spectacular Grand Anse?

When it comes to mealtime, there is a host of hotels and restaurants to tempt the family palate, with many offering special menus for the young and Seychelles is just the place to indulge in some of the freshest seafood you will find anywhere.

Far as it is from the madding crowd, Seychelles is just the place to treat your family to a once-in-a-lifetime holiday, where welcoming, friendly smiles, a safe, pristine environment and entertainment galore will give you memories that will never leave you.

**To note all travelers entering the Seychelles needs to register on <https://seychelles.govtas.com/> 72 hours before travel.**

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DESTINATION NEWS

## Mozambique's e-visa roll out has seen surge in tourist figures



Eldevina Materula,  
Minister of Culture and  
Tourism, Mozambique

Mozambique made its 6th appearance at this year's Africa's Travel Indaba in Durban, South Africa. Presenting 38 exhibitors at the trade floor, the country touted its new e-visa which has seen an upward trajectory in its tourism figures.

Mozambique's Minister of Culture and Tourism, Eldevina Materula in an interview revealed the paradigm shift of its visa regulations to promote not only tourism but create a seamless environment to thrive.

Since the introduction of the e-visa program, we have seen a weekly average of 500 American travellers visiting the country along with other European countries such as France and the UK. Chinese travellers have also developed an interest in our country as well. This is

well beyond tourism as it is helping drive investments to Mozambique.

She revealed that in the coming weeks, Singita, the one and only luxury hospitality brand will be opening in Mozambique.

On the promotion of intra-African travels, the Minister said Mozambique is committed to regional tourism development.

"We had a very important discussion yesterday in the dialogue of ministers. We definitely want to change. The decision was to stop talking and act. For that, we are with our colleagues and we want to act now. It will be important now for the next steps; to get together with our international partners and organizations that we are members of. I would mention the UNWTO where Mozambique is a member of the Executive Council. I would maybe say in Southern Africa where we have the advantage of three of South African countries being part of the executive council. And in that form, we want to raise our unique voice to fight and to put on the table our main challenges that haven't changed; the transportation, the air connectivity, and the brand in

Africa."

The Minister stressed the importance of partnerships and coming together as African countries to facilitate seamless travel in and out from one African country to the other.

She said "We want to send out a positive message. We are responsible to improve tourism in Africa. We also as African countries are responsible to increase and change the tourism sector. Because of that, we are making partnerships with each other.

For Mozambique, we signed an agreement with Eswatini and South Africa Mpumalanga and now we are promoting our countries together. With the meetings that we have already had in this Indaba, we are definitely going to move forward with Zimbabwe and Malawi. Tourism is about being together, it is about giving the chance to our citizens, local citizens to travel into our country in the best conditions."

In addition, Mozambique has started the execution of e-visas and recently implemented the exemption of visas to 29 countries.

## Ethiopian inaugurates second phase of Skylight Hotel

Ethiopian Airlines Group, the largest aviation group in Africa, holds a grand opening of the largest hotel on the African continent as it inaugurates the second phase of Ethiopian Skylight Hotel.

Ethiopian Airlines opened the first phase of Ethiopian Skylight Hotel back in January 2019. With the new extension, the hotel now has a total of 1,024 modern rooms and suites with different room types including fully equipped apartments suitable for long and short staying guests.

The hotel also incorporates meeting and event facilities which can accommodate from small to up to 5000 guests, 19 food and beverage outlets including Ethiopian, Italian, Arabian and Asian restaurants, coffee houses, bars, recreational facilities and spots for sips or hand-crafted cocktails with a panoramic view of the airport and the city.

Regarding the grand opening of Ethiopian Skylight Hotel's second phase, Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Mesfin Tasew said "We are truly pleased to be standing here

today on the grand opening ceremony of Ethiopian Skylight Hotel's second phase as we will now have an even greater facility to accommodate guests. Above all we are thrilled with the accomplishment as it takes our contribution to Ethiopia's tourism sector a step higher. The hotel is suitable to accommodate both business and leisure events and stays. Skylight Hotel has been providing a wide range of luxury experiences to its guests and with the completion of the second phase more five- star facilities and experiences will be available. With Skylight Hotel having more than 1000 rooms and several other facilities, we can now proudly say that we have the largest hotel on the African continent"

Located in the diplomatic capital of Africa, Addis Ababa, home to UNECA and AU headquarters, Ethiopian Skylight Hotel, stands within a prime location at just 5 minutes' walk from Addis Ababa Bole International Airport. The hotel is built to be a suitable space for both business and social event gatherings.



Construction of phase two of the project had been ongoing while the hotel's services were open and available for guests through the first phase of Ethiopian Skylight facility. It is also to be recalled that Ethiopian inaugurated a Five-Star In-Terminal Hotel which is set to take passengers transit experience at Ababa Bole International Airport to a whole new level with 97 modern and luxurious rooms, a restaurant, a meeting space, and other facilities within the airport Departure Terminal 2 back in September 2022 which is managed under Ethiopian Skylight Hotel.



# Mauritius,

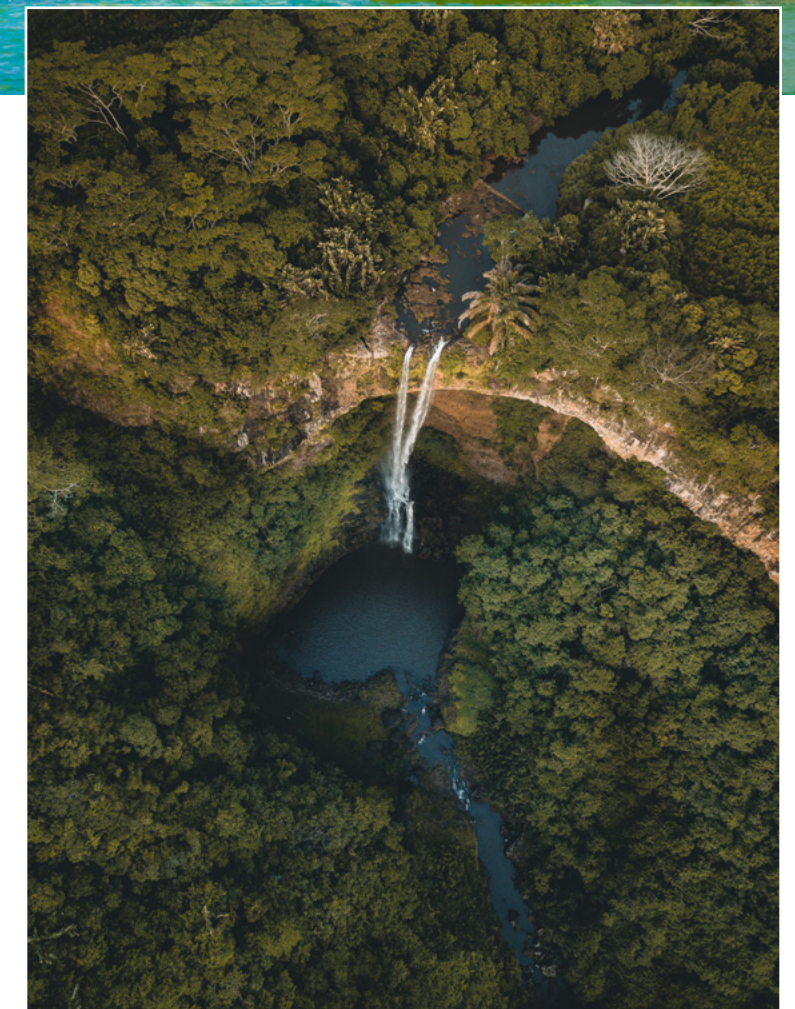
## *the ultimate green destination*

Pristine beaches, transparent turquoise waters, and warm sun; is probably the image one has of Mauritius, the tiny rock in the southwest of the Indian Ocean. An idyllic image which, it is believed, prompted American novelist, Mark Twain, to coin this aphorism, "Mauritius was made first and then heaven; and heaven was copied after Mauritius." The island is today synonymous with the ultimate tourist destination to visit at least once in life. However, it would be a pity to reduce the island's image to the tagline beach, sea, and sun, because Mauritius has a wealth that is second to none.



The assets of Mauritius are indeed numerous and the island nation has today considerably expanded its offer to an ideal destination for cultural tourism, leisure, sports, nature, and other activities. Its people remain the main attraction; welcoming, smiling, and hospitable, the Mauritian is known for his open-mindedness. This is not surprising when we know that the islanders are the descendants of migrants from Europe, Africa, India, and China. They live today in harmony often cited as an example of peaceful coexistence for the world.

Nevertheless, this model has emerged from the troubled periods of slavery and indentured labour. Two historical facts that are inscribed in the memory of the island, but also on the UNESCO World Heritage List through two sites, the Cultural Landscape of Morne and Apravasi Ghat. Two sites to visit, if you want to understand the history and the people of the island, next to the places of worship: mosques, temples, churches, and pagodas, which coexist across the island.





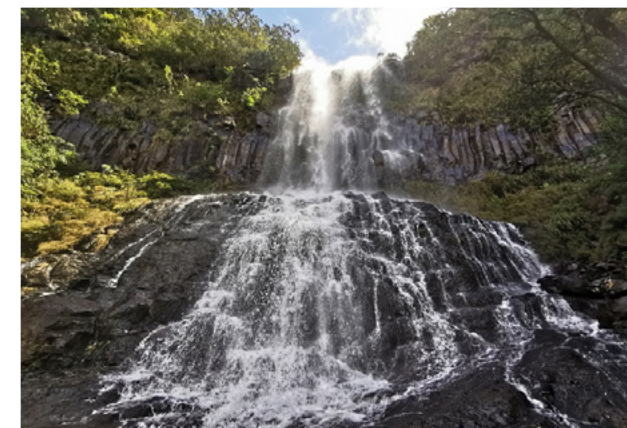


This meeting of cultures is also reflected in Mauritian cuisine so rich in spicy flavours offering dishes representative of the world's cuisines. Our three main trends include Creole cuisine with a strong French influence and African additions, Indian cuisine, itself divided into various regional cuisines and Chinese cuisine.

Over the decades these cuisines have been shared, intermixed, and finally appropriated by nearly all Mauritians.

Mauritius is a land of cultural encounters in line with the trends of modern travel driven by sustainability. The island is the ideal place for travellers who want to understand more about the local culture and engage with the local community. Mauritius positions itself as a green tourism destination and has committed itself to develop sustainable activities and leisure-laced experiences during the last few years.

Since 2022, Mauritius has been a proud Destination Member of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. The Tourism Authority (TA) has set up the 'Sustainable Island Mauritius' to position Mauritius as a green destination. An initiative that has been recognised at the World Travel Market (WTM) Africa Responsible Tourism Awards 2023' where the island bagged two gold awards for 'Best for Local Sourcing, Craft and Food' and 'Addressing Climate Change'. The TA has been working very closely with international bodies such as the WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council) as one of the first destinations to adopt the Hospitality Sustainability Basics for the accommodation sector.



Many hotels in Mauritius are focusing on destination-driven experiences which are offering their guests to connect with Mauritius and its people. All stakeholders of Mauritius are trying their best to offer an experiential luxury holiday experience filled with immersive, unique, once-in-a-lifetime activities that leave an impression on the traveller. Activities are available to discover the island and its population, explore villages and pristine landscapes, or visit its various localities and go deep into authentic Mauritius.

To reconnect with nature, there are a multitude of green zones on the island; several circuits are possible namely incursions in part of the primary forests of the island on the heights of Plaine

Champagne thanks to the conservation efforts of the National Parks and Conservation Service which has created protected areas (Conservation Management Area) for this purpose. Mauritius also has beautiful mountains that are suitable for climbing on one's own or with guides.

The diversification of the Mauritian tourism offer continues in line with the trends of world tourism and is now gaining the sphere of wellness. Traditional spas give way to wellness centres. So, with beach, gastronomy, leisure, nature, and wellness, Mauritius will always have something for the most demanding traveller.



## Namibia Tourism Board excited about travellers' growing interest in destination

More travellers are expressing interest visiting and exploring Namibia as a tourist destination. This was made clear at this year's Africa's Travel Indaba in Durban, which attracted a lot of visitors and enquiries about the destination. In an interview with VoyagesAfriq, the Head of Marketing, Namibia Tourism Board (NTB) Charmaine Matheus said they were happy about the level of visitations and feedback they received at the tradeshow.

"One of our key source markets is the United States and we've been getting a lot of enquiries from people from the USA and from other African countries as well; Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, and Ghana, especially, with our CEO just returning from a destination engagement session in Ghana. We see a lot of interest coming from our African counterparts."

She added that NTB was particularly delighted with the many discussions on partnerships and collaborations geared towards not just promoting Namibia, but Africa's tourism.

Charmaine explained: "We have had a very interesting discussion with the African Tourism Board. You can see the interest in partnerships and

liaising, working together as a unit and a continent as opposed to silos. So, we say we are not necessarily competing with each other, but the idea is to make sure that we bring the travellers into the continent so that everyone can benefit from that and also grow the base with domestic and intra-African travel."

Despite the growing interest, travel to Namibia for many, remains a headache as visa application and acquisition pose a great hurdle. The Head of Marketing, acknowledging this continent-wide problem maintained that there have been ongoing discussions to liberalise the country's visa application process to allow for interested persons to visit.

"For us, we wish to open the borders and welcome everyone freely into Namibia, but obviously together with the Ministry, we understand that there are protection mechanisms that need to be put in place making sure that we understand who is entering the country when and for what purposes. But the Ministries, especially, our Home Affairs do have initiatives in place to try and mitigate the challenges that people are currently experiencing with regards to visas for example, online visa applications that make the cumbersome process a bit more flexible.

"From the Tourism Board, we are also, in



Charmaine Matheus, Head of Marketing, Namibia Tourism Board (NTB)

some cases able to assist and facilitate to ensure that people who are really showing keen interest in visiting the destination do get their visas. We also do have discussions with the embassies within and outside the borders of Namibia just to find out what the key challenges are and how really can we assist to mitigate them" Charmaine maintained.

As part of efforts to sell the country's tourism to its source markets, the NTB will from June, commence a series of roadshows in selected European countries with a familiarization trip also planned for Ghanaian tour operators and travel agents.



## Prez Akufo-Addo gives impetus to Ghana's tourism agenda with 2-day summit



In a significant move showcasing the government's commitment to the tourism sector, President Akufo-Addo presided over Ghana's first-ever Presidential Summit on Tourism, a two-day event aimed at rejuvenating the country's tourism industry.

With Ghana eagerly seeking to regain pre-pandemic tourism numbers by close of 2023, the summit brought together key stakeholders from the tourism, arts, and culture sectors to strategise and chart a course for sustainable growth.

The summit, held under the theme "Rethinking Tourism for Economic Growth and Job Creation," underscored the government's dedication to harnessing the potential of tourism as a catalyst for economic prosperity. President Akufo-Addo unveiled his transformative vision for the sector, encapsulated in the "4Ps for transforming tourism": preservation, promotion, policy leadership, and partnership.

Amidst a backdrop of scenic beaches, vibrant culture, and rich historical heritage, the President emphasised the need to prioritize the preservation and promotion of Ghana's unique attractions. He underscored the significance of digitalization in enhancing tourism experiences and highlighted the importance of strategic investments to create an enticing tourism environment.

The Minister of Tourism, Arts, and Culture, Dr. Ibrahim Mohammed Awal reiterated the government's unwavering commitment to utilizing tourism as a driving force for economic growth. Emphasising the objective of making Ghana the premier destination in West Africa, the Minister outlined ambitious plans to position Ghana as the brand of choice for discerning travellers.

Notable attendees, including Chief of Staff Akosua Frema Osei-Opare, emphasised the imperative of protecting and preserving Ghana's historical sites. Acknowledging the tremendous value of these landmarks, Madam Osei-Opare called for concerted efforts to safeguard Ghana's cultural heritage for future generations.

Throughout the summit, stakeholders engaged in dynamic discussions, centered on enhancing collaboration among tourism, arts and culture to stimulate economic growth. The agenda encompassed six panel discussions featuring industry experts, creative arts icons and members of the diaspora community in Ghana deliberating on topics such as leveraging tourism to jumpstart the economy, creating an enabling business environment for tourism growth, and harnessing technology and data for sectoral expansion. Additional panels explored themes including building synergy for tourism growth, the role of the creative sector in driving economic prosperity and leveraging the diaspora dividend for economic growth.

By convening this landmark summit, the Ghanaian government has signaled its unwavering dedication to revitalizing the tourism sector. The event's comprehensive discussions, insightful perspectives, and strategic proposals provide a solid foundation for future initiatives. With renewed vigour and a



clear roadmap in place, Ghana is poised to harness its rich cultural tapestry, natural beauty, and historical treasures to usher in a new era of economic growth and job creation through tourism. This was the consensus gleaned from the two-day summit.

As the nation sets its sights on a vibrant post-pandemic future, the Presidential Tourism Summit also marks a pivotal milestone in Ghana's journey to become a leading global tourism destination and a catalyst for sustainable development. With the goal of generating \$4 billion in revenue and welcoming a minimum of 2 million tourists by 2025, Ghana is committed to showcasing its abundant offerings and positioning itself as a must-visit destination for travelers worldwide.

The summit was held from May 30-31, 2023 at the Peduase Lodge, Ghana's official presidential summer residence.





## Emirates reaffirms its commitment to supporting Seychelles, Mauritius and Sri Lanka tourism

Emirates has signed Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) at the Arabian Travel Market 2023 in Dubai with three tourism boards – Tourism Seychelles, Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) and the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau.

All three agreements reaffirm the airline's commitment to the island-nations and outline key joint initiatives to promote trade and tourism to the respective countries.

### The Seychelles

Emirates has been serving Seychelles since 2005, consistently contributing to the growth of its tourism industry. The airline's commitment to the nation continues with the renewal of a decade-long partnership to promote tourism and broaden its appeal across Emirates' global network of over 140 passenger destinations. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Ahmed Khoory, Emirates' SVP Commercial, West Asia & Indian Ocean, and Sherin Francis, Principal Secretary Tourism Department, Tourism Seychelles, in the

presence of Adnan Kazim, Emirates' Chief Commercial Officer.

The agreement outlines activities to boost visitation including trade shows, trade familiarisation trips, exhibitions, and workshops. Emirates will also support Tourism Seychelles' award programme, Lospitalite Lafyerte Sesel, which recognises top operators and individuals for exceptional service standards.

Emirates currently operates two daily flights to the island-nation, and was the first international airline to resume passenger services to Seychelles in August 2020, coinciding with the country's re-opening to international tourists.

### Mauritius

Now in its 20th year of service to the island nation and 10th year of partnership with Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA), Emirates' latest agreement includes initiatives designed to promote the nation's tourism and trade industries.

The MoU was signed by Ahmed Khoory, Emirates' Senior Vice President of Commercial West Asia & Indian Ocean, and Mr Arvind Bundhun, Director, MTPA, in the presence of Adnan Kazim, Emirates' Chief Commercial Officer.

The successful partnership has allowed Emirates to support demand for travel to the island by showcasing it to customers across its global network. The renewed partnership will enable the airline to promote the country through its network of agents in key strategic markets, and develop special packages designed to appeal to various customer segments in addition to collaborating on joint familiarisation trips to raise awareness of the destination's offerings to audiences in key feeder markets.

Mauritius continues to be an important destination for Emirates, and last year the airline celebrated 20 years of operations to the island nation, which has seen more than 6.5 million passengers carried on the Dubai-Mauritius route since 2002. The airline currently provides two direct daily flights to Mauritius, both operated by its flagship A380 aircraft.



## AviaDev Africa celebrates Airlink CEO Rodger Foster with Ato Girma Wake Award

AviaDev Africa, the premier platform dedicated to developing air connectivity to, from and within the African continent, is pleased to announce that Mr Rodger Foster, CEO and Managing Director of Airlink, has been awarded the prestigious Ato Girma Wake Award for his outstanding contribution to Route Development in Africa.

Since 2018, AviaDev has presented one distinguished leader in aviation with this annual award for their contribution to route development in Africa.

Previous winners include: Adefunke Adeyemi, Regional Director, Advocacy and Strategic Relations, Africa – IATA; Raphael Kuuchi, Special Envoy on Aero-political Affairs, IATA; Chris Zweigenthal, Chief Executive, Airlines Association of Southern Africa and Sanjeev Gadhia, Founder and CEO, Astral Aviation.

The Ato Girma Wake Award is voted for by all members of the AviaDev Africa advisory board and presented annually to an individual who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and innovation in promoting connectivity and improving



the aviation industry in Africa.

## South African Airways announces fleet expansion to relaunch long haul routes

South African Airways (SAA) has announced that it has been given the green light for a significant expansion of its fleet to pave the way for the national carrier to relaunch international routes and increase seat capacity for its regional and domestic destinations.

Interim CEO, Professor John Lamola, says the airline's plan to lease six new aircrafts has been approved by the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Public Enterprises. "The aircraft will be delivered before the end of this calendar year, and the planes include a wide-body aircrafts as well as five narrow-body aircraft – all of them Airbus equipment," Lamola said.

"We are excited, as SAA, to lay the groundwork for the relaunch of our first international route since coming out of business rescue and since the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. We will announce the new route in the coming few weeks, and we will open commercial marketing and sales for it."

Lamola said the terms and conditions attached to the deals for the new aircraft are along the same competitive, transparent, and cost-effective lines that have characterised the 'new' SAA since it emerged from Business Rescue in September 2021.

"Currently a Request for Proposals is

out for four A320 narrow-body aircrafts. The other two – an A330 and A320 have already been secured from the lessor community on the same terms as the ones issued in the RFP."

"The four aircraft that we are ordering will all be deployed by September 2023. This is a significant boost for the domestic and regional markets and underscores our commitment to expanding our route network and increasing our frequency in the African market. It will also ensure that the equilibrium between the supply of seats and the flow of traffic will benefit our passengers," Lamola added.







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- Boat ride to Namalenje Island
- Day visit to Crocodile Farm
- Day visits & sundowners at Kuti Game Park
- Salima Hiking Trails
- Day visits at Mua Mission (Kungoni Center of Culture)
- Gwirize Cultural Village (Salima)



Southern Africa, Malawi -  
Salima  
G-map coordinates: 6JM5+53  
Senga



Time Appx from Kamuzu International  
Airport: 1hour & 30 mins



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# Africa's Travel Indaba: Collaboration and Innovation key to consolidating post pandemic gains



More than 6,000 delegates, including 1,000 international buyers and 1,000 exhibitors showcasing 350 products, were captivated as South Africa's Tourism Minister, Patricia de Lille, delivered her keynote address at the official opening of Africa's Travel Indaba 2023.

Indaba boasts exhibitors from 21 African countries, including 10 tourism boards and 123 Small Businesses sponsored by the Department of Tourism at R11.7 million to feature at the trade show as part of transformation efforts.

With a captive audience, de Lille spoke passionately on the importance of the industry, highlighting the need "for collaboration and innovation to drive growth in the sector."

The Minister said competition is essential for destination marketing and tourism. However, "it should be balanced with collaboration to avoid unhealthy practices and foster healthy competition based on quality and innovation."

She noted that harmonising visa regimes and simplifying the application process is vital for unlocking Africa's tourism potential.

According to de Lille, collaboration across the value chain is necessary to make it easier for visitors to move from one country to another within the continent. South Africa, she added, "is leading the way with visa waivers for

several African countries and the rollout of an e-visa system to countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and Egypt." She promised that the goal "is to expand the e-visa system to 20 more countries, making Africa a more attractive destination for Africans and international travellers.

For South Africa, we have seen, she said, "encouraging growth in our tourist arrival numbers between January and December 2022, where it reached nearly 5.8 million with over 4 million of those arrivals from African countries." This represents an overall inbound increase of 152.6% for South Africa compared to January to December 2021.

She bemoaned the dearth of celebrating together as Africans, calling for a special event to bridge the chasm of geography, language and culture amongst Africans. "We must stop bickering," she added firmly.

"Our people across the continent of Africa are our greatest asset. As Africans, we must do more to break down the stereotypes by promoting cultural exchanges, celebrating excellence and diversity through song and dance and sharing various cuisines that make Africa the magnet of international tourists," she insisted.

According to the Minister, the future looks bright; "we have, collectively, weathered the COVID-19 hurricane and it should only propel us to exceed our targets."

She said Africa's Travel Indaba offers an opportunity to "honour the African people's incredible ingenuity, fortitude, and magnificence."

The Minister also encouraged local trade partners to participate in Sho't Left Travel Week by providing discounted travel rates to locals to help boost domestic tourism efforts.

Mayor of Durban Councillor Mxolisi Kaunda told his attentive audience that

Durban, was honoured to host the 2023 Africa's Travel Indaba, a premier trade show in Africa. Kaunda said Thekwini Municipality has identified meetings, conferences, workshops, exhibitions, and business travel as its area of focus for post-COVID-19 recovery. Recent statistics, he revealed, "show that the sector [in Durban] will recover to 95% of the 2019 job levels."

In addressing safety and security concerns, he announced that the city has implemented tough security measures to increase safety, including recruiting 400 Metro Police Officers annually and partnering with community crime-fighting structures and business forums.

"Major investment projects, such as the R600m Platinum Walk at Oceans Mall and the R8 billion Westtown development, are expected to boost local tourism," he said.

He appealed for cooperation and partnership with the private sector. "The city is working closely with product owners to offer affordable prices to boost tourism. Major international events, such as the World Table Tennis Championship Finals and the Hollywoodbets Durban July Experience, are expected to attract thousands of visitors and boost the sector's recovery," he added.

KwaZulu-Natal Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube underscored the importance of tourism in driving the province's economic recovery, creating job opportunities, and narrowing the gap between the rich and poor. She welcomed all visitors to KwaZulu-Natal and wished them a pleasant stay in the province. She received the greatest ululation when she announced that Durban would soon become the permanent home of Africa's Travel Indaba 40 years after its launch.

Siboniso Duma, KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs, said, "Africa's Travel Indaba presents a unique opportunity to shape the future of Africa through the connections made over the next three days."

He added, "This event plays a vital role in expanding tourism across the continent while putting South Africa and the KwaZulu-Natal province on the map of Africa and the world."



## Botswana: Private sector hails country's participation at Africa's Travel Indaba

Botswana's tourism private sector players have hailed the participation of the country at this year's Africa's Travel Indaba.

The recently held Africa's Travel Indaba saw the increased participation of sector players from 28-38 with a sizable SMMEs forming a nucleus of their participation.

The exhibitors who spoke to *VoyagesAfric* expressed appreciation to the Botswana Tourism Organization for the coordination and for creating a conducive platform to engage the travel trade.

Excited to be part of the show, Dawson Ramsden of Wilderness Safaris said, "We participated in this region to maintain the relationships we have been growing throughout the years. We also want to meet new people, new agents, and new operators in the industry so that we can grow our business in terms of attracting guests or visitors to Botswana as a country and to our facilities. We have very good traffic coming into our desk, and we have got very good meetings with a lot of substance. It is amazing. We have met a lot of people who have been

working with wilderness in Botswana for many years."

He added that a lot of people are interested in visiting Botswana and experiencing its itinerary and all it offers. "We are not only your international participants but your local and regional participants. I am very happy to say that the comments that we have had just from interested parties of how they enjoy Botswana as a tourist model for tourism destinations is amazing," Dawson of Wilderness Safaris concluded.

Ludzi Godson of Glam Safaris applauded the tremendous haul by Botswana and reaffirmed the interest of more people to see and experience Botswana.

She said, "They already know that they want to sell Botswana, the only thing that they are looking for from us is partnership. They came and said that they always wanted to do Botswana and you Glam Safari being a destination marketing company, you are the right people we are looking for. So, I don't talk much in these meetings. They are the ones actually coming in and telling me of Botswana. So, this show is really wonderful, Botswana is on the map.

Everyone wants to sell Botswana and it's good for business to be here."

On her part, Marketing Assistant at Kessa's Chalets Sego Galobaitse highlighted the overall success and exposure of the travel trade.

"I think this trade show will help us a lot because so far I have already met my target markets. When I came here, I targeted Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa. I was looking for your operators, travel agents and so far I have met many and they have shown interest in my products. So far, I have had positive outcomes."

Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO) has been participating at INDABA since its inception over 22 years ago, to give service operators an opportunity to exchange ideas, promote and sell their services and further network as part of marketing.

The 2023 edition of Africa's Travel Indaba saw over 8,500 delegates, 1023 exhibitors, and 1737 international buyers, from 22 countries with a laudable representation of tourism private sector players.



## Quest Means Business at Africa's Travel Indaba media Face-off

The stage was set for an electrifying showdown as Richard Quest, the esteemed news anchor and business news aficionado, squared off against Patricia de Lille, South Africa's Tourism Minister, in a heated global media face-off.

The adrenaline-fueled event occurred at the premier trade show, Africa's Travel Indaba, in the vibrant city of Durban, on an unforgettable Tuesday.

The face-off between the internationally renowned Quest and the no-nonsense South African Tourism Minister, Patricia de Lille, was joined by a distinguished panel of industry leaders. This included George Mothema, CEO of the Board of Airlines Representatives of Southern Africa, Blacky Komani, Chair of the Tourism Council of SA (TBCSA), and Elcia Grandcourt, Regional Director from UNWTO. To further add to the excitement, audience participation was welcomed. In typical Quest style, he invited attendees to ask tough questions but warned that he had no patience for speeches. This ensured that the session was concise, sharp, and to the point.

Quest fired the first salvo by questioning De Lille's decision to accept the position of Tourism Minister, which he deemed to be a "poisoned chalice" that could either end a political career or lead to its downfall.

De Lille retorted that she had seen a chance to "clean up. I am like the proverbial new broom that sweeps clean", referring to her propensity to ensure effective and clean governance.

Quest fired back, asking, "What are you going to do. It's a formidable task?"

The Minister quickly pointed out that within her short tenure, she dealt with the controversial Tottenham Spurs deal under former Tourism Minister Lindiwe Sisulu to promote tourism abroad.

"I established the necessary procedures to investigate the matter, including an assessment of the costs and legal implications, before ultimately deciding to cancel it," she said.

She added, however, that she could not put the department in order without the support and collaboration with the private sector, with whom she had already started engaging.



"They are doing a sterling job, but there are gaps and a trust deficit," she said, adding that this had to be overcome as it was a case of "we work together or sink together."

The friendly sparring continued as Quest demanded to know what she was doing about the challenges preventing the tourism sector from flourishing.

The Minister admitted that the rollout of an e-visa was still a problem she was addressing. She added that after speaking with tour operators and other stakeholders who need licenses, there was a need for this to be addressed as "it takes forever". She had already spoken to the Minister of Home Affairs, Aaron Motsoaledi, and hoped to resolve the visa issue.

The panellists had no objection to it but pointed out that the security risk was one of the biggest problems with the e-visa issue.

But the host was not satisfied and quizzed them about why Africa could not "piggyback" by using the security clearance for visas by the EU and allow those who have Schengen visas to travel.

Quest questioned Elcia about why the UNWTO had the power to get African countries to move online; she responded that each country was different, so progress was slow. "We can see Mozambique moving online. Slowly slowly. We work with different associations," she said.

The host expressed frustration saying, "Collaboration is an excuse for procrastination".

When Quest likened De Lille to the late "iron lady" of Britain, Margaret Thatcher,

because of her no-nonsense way of dealing with bureaucracy, she admitted being "impatient with laziness. I cut egos. I have no time for it".

Quest wanted to know why Africa was adopting an open-air policy. Mothema admitted that there had been little movement since the 1999 Yamoussoukro agreement. Still, there was some progress. "We are seeing more and more countries with bilateral air links," he noted.

Asked about the new Minister's performance, Komani said he was optimistic: "I met her on the third day; we lack leadership; if we work together, we can succeed." He said the problem was that "we tend to work against each other."

The panellists agreed that South Africa had problems with implementation, and the Minister, who said she hated meetings, undertook to ensure action and movement.

According to Quest, the typical response he received from people he had spoken to was that they had great confidence in De Lille, with many expressing hope and optimism in her abilities as a Minister.

"If we are both in our positions next year, what will you say? Quest asked to which De Lille responded: "Give me a chance. Together we can make it happen."

It may have seemed to be like a sparring match, but in the end, Quest and De Lille met on common ground when they agreed to take "a road trip" to showcase the hidden gems of the country, the neglected provinces like Limpopo that were not on most tourist's agenda at present.

So let's fasten our seatbelts for "The Quest and Patricia Roadshow."



## Snapshots of Africa's Travel Indaba



## On Show Solutions Unveils 2024 Africa Showcase Roadshow Schedule, Bringing African Tourism To The Global Travel Market



Amanda Margison &amp; Jacqui Reynolds

secondary markets, including Australia, Southeast Asia, Central Eastern Europe and Latin America, forging a path to expand opportunities and reach new audiences.

“Operating across North America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia since 2009, Africa Showcase transforms the traditional sales and marketing approach by offering a more targeted and impactful solution tailored to each market's dynamics.”

Exhibitors gain direct access to pre-qualified buyers, carefully identified by Africa Showcase's global team of market experts. Jacqui Reynolds, co-owner of On Show Solutions, emphasises the significance of their in-country facilitators in delivering exceptional roadshows. “Our dedicated facilitators are the driving force behind our events, enabling us to stay in tune with the pulse of each market. We have collaborated extensively with our facilitators to carefully curate the 2024 schedule, ensuring an exciting line-up of cities and dates.”

Operating across North America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia since 2009, Africa Showcase transforms the traditional sales and marketing approach by offering a more targeted and impactful solution tailored to each market's dynamics.

Africa Showcase is meticulously designed to forge international travel connections and accelerate business growth for African tourism companies. In line with Africa's traditional primary markets, where a significant number of travellers historically originate, there is a strong focus on North America and various regions of Europe. However, Africa Showcase also embraces emerging and



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

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

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**AFRICA SHOWCASE: SOUTHERN EUROPE**  
04 – 09 February 2024  
Rome | Madrid | Lyon

**AFRICA SHOWCASE: CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPE**  
26 February – 01 March 2024  
Budapest | Prague | Warsaw

**ITB BERLIN**  
05 – 07 March 2024  
Berlin

**AFRICA SHOWCASE: NORDICS**  
22 – 26 April 2024  
Copenhagen | Oslo | Stockholm

**AFRICA SHOWCASE: SOUTH AFRICA**  
10 – 14 June 2024  
Johannesburg | Durban | Cape Town

**AFRICA SHOWCASE: AUSTRALIA**  
21 – 26 July 2024  
Brisbane | Sydney | Melbourne

**AFRICA SHOWCASE: LATIN AMERICA**  
18 – 23 August 2024  
Santiago | Buenos Aires | Sao Paulo

**AFRICA SHOWCASE: MITTELEUROPA**  
16 – 20 September 2024  
Frankfurt | Hamburg | Munich

**ITB ASIA**  
23 – 25 October 2024  
Singapore

**AFRICA SHOWCASE: NORTH AMERICA**  
11 – 21 November 2024  
Toronto | Chicago | Houston | Los Angeles

Released June 2023 Subject to change





# Africa Connects in Botswana

**Venue: Gaborone, Botswana**

**Date: 4 - 6 October 2023**

#ATLF2023 #ATLFAwards #ATLF6 #BotswanaATLF2023

**For information, contact Rejoice Chishamba**



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MICE

## Africa's travel trade impression of WTM Africa 2023

This year's World Travel Market Africa (WTM Africa) has provided once again, a good marketplace for industry players to meet, network, learn new insights, and do good business.

Many African national tourism agencies and private businesses in the sector exhibited at the show.

The show was back to pre-pandemic numbers with over 5,000 registrations, almost 600 exhibitors, 49 new countries, 200 expert speakers and over 80 hours of content sessions. The event also had 9,200 pre-scheduled appointments, a 35% increase compared to last year. Over 63% of the buyers this year are new and come from exciting markets such as Malaysia, Pakistan, Thailand, Philippines, Romania, Armenia, San Marino, and Uzbekistan.

In a conversation with VoyagesAfric, some of the African exhibitors expressed delight with the platform WTM Africa

has provided for engagement, sharing ideas and promoting their respective destinations.

"As Malawi we are at WTM Africa to showcase the diversity of Malawi's tourism product offerings so that we can drive traveler traffic not only from RSA and the region but also from source markets to Malawi. We are happy with the quality of buyers and all the other networking events that have been set aside for exhibitors to engage and share ideas and knowledge," said Sarah Njanji of the Malawi Department of Tourism.

Susan Ongalo, CEO of the Kenya Tourism Federation, said her experience at the travel market gives her confidence about a full rebound for Kenya's tourism.

She explained, "Good to be back to the WTM - Africa 2023. It feels re-energizing coming from the 'break' since 2019 for the Magical Kenya brand to be at CTICC. The Expo doors opened

with welcoming faces and a special handshake and stand visit from the Hon. Minister for Tourism, Patricia de Lille.

"The networking and experience exchanges were very promising towards accelerating the recovery of the travel, tourism and hospitality industry.

As the engines rear to go, remember that Magical Kenya awaits to unfold for: Africa to Africa, and international to Africa. Karibu!"

David Germain, the Tourism Seychelles Regional Director for Africa said "the WTM Africa exhibition is very important for Tourism Seychelles marketing efforts in Africa and provides great networking in enhancing our relationships with the travel trade."

WTM Africa 2023 took place from April 3-5, 2023 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, South Africa on the theme, "Recover. Rebuild. Innovate."

## WTM Africa 2023: Africa Poised for Growth in Adventure Tourism Industry says Panel of Experts

Adventure tourism presents a significant opportunity for the tourism industry in Southern Africa and Africa, as highlighted by a panel discussion at WTM Africa on 03 April in the host City of Cape Town. The discussion brought together industry experts Julia Louw, Head of Leisure Tourism for the DMO unit Wesgro; Hannelie Du Toit, Chief Operating Officer SATSA; Andre Du Toit, Executive Head of New Business Development for the first Equity Insurance Group and Director at SATIB Insurance Brokers; and Quintin Smith, Founder of Bikes 'n Wines, to discuss the potential for adventure tourism and the challenges facing the industry.

During the panel discussion, SATSA announced the release of its Adventure Tourism Self-Regulation Roadmap and Code of Good Practice documents for public comment. The draft Self-Regulation documents were developed in consultation with industry stakeholders and aim to provide a framework for adventure tourism operators to

operate in a responsible and sustainable manner while promoting growth and development in the adventure tourism industry.

"We believe that the Adventure Tourism Self-Regulation documents will provide a clear framework for operators to follow, resulting in the raising of standards and producing credible products with which we can position Southern Africa as a top adventure destination," said du Toit.

Africa is already recognised as a leading destination for thrill-seekers, and experts at the panel discussion predicted this trend will continue. The Southern African region offers numerous opportunities for adventure activities across the tourism value chain from big operators to the smaller SMMEs.

One untapped opportunity is sustainable cruise travel. This form of travel offers a unique and eco-friendly way to explore the continent's diverse landscapes and cultures. With smaller

cruise ships venturing into lesser-known towns, the concept of explorer cruising has gained momentum. This approach not only ensures that the cruise itself is environmentally responsible, but also supports local communities and economies by visiting smaller towns and promoting cultural exchange.

As adventure tourism continues to grow, new products and experiences will be created to transform the travel landscape, according to panelists. This is already evident in rural areas where cultural activities are now included in tour itineraries, bringing new opportunities to those who live there.

Africa's adventure tourism industry is poised for growth, with opportunities for innovation, job creation, and sustainable tourism products. The continent's natural environments, wildlife habitats, and local communities must be protected through cooperation between governments and tour operators to ensure the sector's continued success.



## Africa Travel Week Trends Report reveals Tourism Drivers for 2023



Shingai George, ForwardKeys

– Leisure travel, and particularly safari, is driving the recovery of travel and tourism in Africa. This was disclosed in the Africa Travel Week Trends report released this week at World Travel Market Africa, being held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre.

Data released by research firm ForwardKeys highlighted in the report reveals that all the top destinations on the continent are showing a marked improvement in Q1 2023, from 2022, with the improvement continuing into 2023.

What is noticeable is that four out of the top 10 destinations are in East Africa and Tanzania are on track to exceed pre-pandemic levels in Q1 2023, illustrating the critical role that East Africa will play in the recovery of travel in Africa.

Look at flight searches, the presence of South Africa, Tanzania and Kenya in the top half of the list suggests interest in safari holidays heading into Q2. This is further supported by the increase in the share of searches for South Africa and Kenya.

Further highlights revealed in the trends report include:

- **The rise of Adventure Tourism:** Namibia is a top performer in this regard, with Germany, France and Spain being key drivers of inbound tourism. For adventure tourists, it's not just about taking risks but also about connecting with new cultures and landscapes while being physically active.
- **Netflix to promote tourism and travel:** After exposure to South

African content on Netflix, viewers were 3.1 times more likely to consider it as their top travel destination. The exposure has sparked niche tourism offerings like "marine safaris," including Kelp Forest Snorkelling to dizzying heights.

- **Travelling light:** According to World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) and the Trip.com Group: 69% of travellers are looking for sustainable travel options in 2023. In response to this trend, eco-conscious travellers are now choosing to travel almost luggage-free to reduce CO2 emissions, with many purchasing holiday clothing and essentials from local suppliers and donating these items to charities and communities in need before their return flight.
- **Accessible travel:** The untapped market of accessible travel and tourism has the potential to expand significantly given that 1.3 billion people, or 16% of the world's population, live with disabilities. Safaris and other travel experiences are becoming more accessible to people with disabilities, with a multisensory approach that capitalises on other senses like hearing, smelling, and tasting.
- **Greenwashing vs Green-hushing:** The opposite of greenwashing, the term green-hushing refers to the fact that fewer companies are publicising their eco goals and accomplishments. This leads to a lack of accountability, missed opportunities, and lack of knowledge sharing.
- **The luxury traveller is young:** The 2023 luxury traveller is significantly younger than in previous years, looking for a more immersive travel experience, connecting with the local community, and want to stay longer in one place.
- **Faith-based tourism:** One of the trends identified in the report is the potential for marketing faith-based tours or experiences, which has proven popular among committed pilgrims or the culturally curious. Countries such as Morocco, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, and Egypt have popular religious sites, and South



Africa's faith-based tourism market has a 2-4% share in the global market. The Muslim travel market also shows tremendous potential, with the number of international Muslim travellers set to grow from 160 million to 230 million by 2028.

- **The rise of digital nomads:** While Namibia has already introduced a Digital Nomad Visa, other countries like Mauritius and South Africa are still in the process of developing similar programmes. Digital nomads seek a sense of community and want to fully immerse themselves in local cultures.
- **LGBTQ+ and inclusivity:** The LGBTQ+ market has been instrumental in leading the global tourism recovery after the pandemic. This travel market has significant purchasing power, and Africa is looking to attract this market. However, while progress is being made, there are still misconceptions and challenges that need to be addressed.

The Africa Travel Week Trends Report was released at the official opening of World Travel Market in the City of Cape Town.



## WTM Africa in Pictures







# 5th AYTIS:

## Celebrating budding African tourism innovators

...As Namibia counts gains, winners emerge

The government and good people of the Republic of Namibia are counting huge gains as Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Summit (AYTIS) 2023 opens in Swakopmund, a coastal city and tourism hub of the country.

This year's summit, which is the fifth edition of the AYTIS, is riding on the success of the 4th edition, which also held in Namibia.

In his speech at the opening ceremony, Pohamba Shifeta, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibia noted that the government is throwing its weight behind the summit because tourism has been identified in the country's Vision 2030 as a pillar of economic growth that contributes directly to poverty alleviation and

economic development in rural communities.

According to the minister, the sustained government's support for the tourism industry is further underpinned in the national development plan four (NDP4) and NDP5 of the Republic of Namibia, amid policies and strategic interventions, which caters for women and youth empowerment in the country.

"Moreover, it is established to nurture African youth, small enterprises, and introduce accelerator initiatives to pursue opportunities in the ever-growing travel & tourism ecosystem. Young people of Africa therefore, aim to become transformational industry change-makers and immediate future leaders of this important and profitable global travel and tourism sector," he highlighted.

Toeing same line with the minister, Zebulun Chicalu, Director of Tourism in the ministry, expressed satisfaction that the summit has created greater awareness of the importance of tourism economy and its multiplier effects to other industries and how the sector can positively and directly impact livelihoods.

Since it hosted the first Summit last year Exposed, Zebulun noted that Namibian youths have been exposed to employment opportunities within the sector. Some industry stakeholders have also witnessed more networking among youths tourism businesses and better market access.

From a global standpoint, Elcia Grandcourt Regional Director for Africa at UNWTO, noted that the UN Tourism body is supporting the summit in line with its agenda for Africa; captured under tourism for inclusive growth.

The strategic framework, according to her, aims to maximize the tourism sector's contribution to Africa's sustainable and inclusive development. "This Agenda, which has among other priorities, a key focus youth and women empowerment, education, investment, and innovation, providing a roadmap to navigate the complexities of the post-pandemic landscape and help to steer our collective efforts towards a sustainable and inclusive recovery," Grandcourt said.

"Leveraging the Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Summit and Challenge as an exceptional and unique platform, UNWTO supports the work that ATP is doing to drive innovation, facilitate youth leadership in tourism innovation, urging policy-makers to create conducive environment tourism start-ups and promote innovation in tourism with an emphasis on social sustainability, digital transformation and youth employability," Grandcourt said further.

She encouraged all delegates at the summit to connect, engage, share knowledge, do business and learn from each other. She also noted that it is while connecting and sharing that Africa will find the most disruptive projects that will drive growth and revolutionise youth entrepreneurship and employability, while changing the way people travel.

For Sindi Khumalo, a travel buyer from Cape Town, South Africa, the youth-focussed summit has offered his business insights into African tourism supply chain, evolving digital solutions and innovative ways of doing business, among other gains from the innovations of the participating youths.

Earlier in the summit, Kwakye Donkor, CEO, Africa Tourism Partners and organisers of the summit, expressed his excitement that the summit is ensuing healthy rivalry among African youths in entrepreneurship, particularly in the tourism ecosystem.

Meanwhile, African youths in tourism, who were the focus of the summit and challenge, truly represented the industry and the continent with breathtaking innovations that resulted from healthy rivalry among them.

The youth innovators had earlier had many exchanges, boot camp, mentorship and evaluation by the judges, and that set the stage for the emergence of Top Three winners in the entrepreneurship challenge.

The budding entrepreneurs emerged from a pool of 8 equally good tourism start-ups at the 5th AYTIS 2023, which held at MTC Dome in Swakopmund, Namibia.

The Top 3 winners are: Cornelius Ugwunwa, from Nigeria; Ntshabo Lehong, from South Africa and Gloria Kisilu, from Kenya.

At the final pitching on the second day of the summit, Cornelius Ugwunwa, impressed the team of judges consisting of technology, travel and tourism experts, with his tech travel solution app presentation, which enthralled the audience as well, while Gloria Kisilu, through detailed presentation, convinced the judges that her Shaba Craft brand is investable. But Ntshabo Lehong got the votes of mystery adjudicators to make

the Top 3 finalists with her hospitality and wellness tech app.

The overall winner will be announced at the African Tourism Leadership Forum in Gaborone, Botswana in October and will go home with the prize money of \$USD1000, though Africa Tourism Partners, the organisers of the challenge, promised that the other winners will smile to the bank as well.

Speaking at the event, Barry Clemens, CEO, Hospitality EQ, Kenya, chairman of the judging panel, noted that they found it difficult choosing the Top 3 as all the 8 contestants presented solution-based innovations and are considered winners despite that one winner will take home the \$USD1000 prize money, for being the best tourism technology talent revelation in Africa for the year 2023.

All the top contenders were awarded certificates of honour from Africa Tourism Partners.

Expressing his excitement at the quality of entries in 5th edition of the challenge and the painstaking adjudication by the panel of judges, Kwakye Donkor, CEO, Africa Tourism Partners, organisers of the event, commended African youths for taking on entrepreneurship in the tourism and travel sector and most importantly, offering solution-based products and services.

He urged them not to relent, while calling on many out there to step into the challenging world of entrepreneurship at a young age, summing up courage from the success stories of the participants at the summit this year.





## 5th Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Challenge celebrates excellence



## 'It's time for Africa' – maiden NANTA/TOUGHHA Confab urges increased travels within continent

The much-anticipated gathering of travel agents and tour operators from Nigeria and Ghana took place yesterday at the School of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Johannesburg in South Africa.

The 'NANTA Conference', an initiative of the National Association of Nigeria Travel Agencies (NANTA) in partnership with the Tour Operators Union of Ghana (TOUGHHA) with support from South African Tourism, saw over 200 participants from both countries in attendance.

Various speakers spoke on different subjects highlighting the need to forge close partnerships among industry stakeholders to boost intra-African travel and tourism.

Representatives of both the Nigeria and Ghana High Commissions in South Africa urged the gathering to engage the AU through the AfCFTA to explore opportunities for advancing travel within Africa.

Leadership of South African Tourism including, COO, Sonto Ndlovu and

West Africa Head, Thekiso Rakolojane, touched on issues surrounding SA visa application and acquisition especially for Nigerians. They both assured the travel agents that they would work with the appropriate authorities, including South Africa's Home Affairs Office to deal with bottlenecks in the visa application processes.

Presidents of NANTA and TOUGHHA, Mrs. Susan Akporiaye and Mrs. Alisa Osei-Asamoah in their respective presentations made strong cases for intra-Africa travel. While the former advocated for the beautiful tales of the continent, the latter reminded the gathering of the 'Garden of Eden' that is Africa and why it should be on the minds of tourists and travellers.

In a speech, CEO of the Tourism Business Council of South Africa, Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa admonished the two trade associations to make themselves robust as private sector units in order to be able to drive tourism and make themselves relevant to national tourism discourses.

The day's event featured activities including a panel discussion on the



theme, 'It's time for Africa' where panelists discussed ways of driving borderless movement to ensure bigger efforts for shoring up tourism numbers.

Collaboration and partnerships, loving one another as Africans and governments' prioritization of tourism as a key driver of economic transformation were some of the areas that were broached in the discussion.

There was also an extensive presentation by the School of Tourism and Hospitality on travel and tourism trends pre-COVID-19 and emerging ones after the pandemic. The conference offered participants an avenue to engage, learn, network and unravel issues hindering a truly integrated Africa that guarantees seamless travel and maximizes tourism's potential.

The NANTA and TOUGHHA members will next take part in this year's Africa's Travel Indaba in Durban from May 8-11.

## Botswana commits to MICE with new strategy in the offing

Botswana's Ministry of Tourism has assured the private sector of its commitments at accelerating tourism industry recovery. The Ministry through several initiatives is keen to see the industry surpass the pre pandemic levels.

Speaking at the 2023 HATAB conference,

Botswana's Minister of Tourism Philda Nani Kereng revealed that the Botswana Tourism Organisation is developing a Meetings Incentives Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) strategy to increase destination competitiveness and a diverse product offering.

The strategy will assist in promoting the country as a MICE destination to the international markets, identify and address the infrastructure and skills gaps that needs to be addressed to support the growth of the MICE industry.

"The MICE industry is changing and adapting itself to the growing demand, both globally and in Botswana and this is an opportunity not to be missed. We are currently working on the MICE strategy so we may inform the growth potential for the sector," the Minister indicated.

Through the strategy, activities suitable for local entrepreneurs will be identified in the tourism value chain which is aligned to the Botswana reset agenda.



Philda Nani Kereng,  
Botswana's Minister of Tourism



## Pearl of Africa Tourism Expo returns, advocating sustainable and responsible tourism



The long-awaited Pearl of Africa Tourism Expo (POATE 2023) made its grand return to Uganda in late April, marking the first physical edition in three years.

Following a virtual event held in 2021 after the interruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the expo which was the seventh edition opened its doors in the vibrant capital city of Kampala. The event drew patrons from Uganda, East Africa, Africa, and beyond, including both government and private sector stakeholders within the tourism, travel, and hospitality industries.

Amidst the excitement of being able to engage, learn, and conduct business in person, the opening ceremony saw the CEO of the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB), Lilly Ajarova, passionately advocate for the promotion of sustainable and responsible tourism practices. Ajarova emphasized the need to align interventions within the tourism sector to embrace this emerging trend, highlighting its potential to minimize negative social, economic, and

environmental impacts while generating greater economic benefits for local communities.

"In Uganda and East Africa, we must embrace sustainability and responsible tourism as the next frontier for tourism development," Ajarova asserted during her opening speech. She stressed that the enormous significance of tourism to socio-economic empowerment necessitates the adoption of sustainable practices throughout the sector.

The UTB CEO revealed that Uganda's key entities within the industry will soon align their practices, accordingly, promoting the use of recyclable materials, waste reduction, and environmental conservation while respecting host communities.

Tom Butime, the Minister of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities, underscored the pivotal role of peace, stability, and various government-led initiatives in propelling Uganda's thriving tourism industry. Despite the country's impressive tourism figures, Minister Butime emphasized that Uganda remains committed to attracting more visitors and raising the visibility of the destination.

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the country, having previously contributed over \$1.6 billion and accounting for 7.7% of the national GDP.

The government aims to more than double tourism earnings as the industry fully recovers.

POATE 2023 garnered significant attention, with over 150 exhibitors and 100 hosted buyers participating in the event. The expo attracted tourism boards and associations from various regions of Africa, including South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Egypt.

International representation included, Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Spain. The expo offered a platform for networking, exploring Uganda's tourism offerings, and fostering collaborations between local and international industry players.

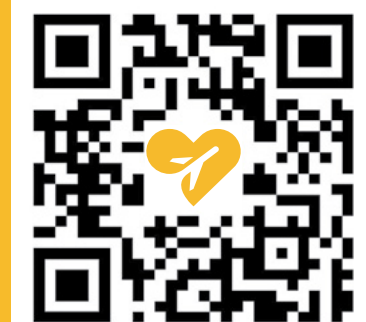
Lilly Ajarova expressed her excitement about POATE 2023, noting its growth and the interest it has generated among buyers looking to explore Uganda and include it in their African itineraries in the coming months.

The expo serves as a catalyst for showcasing Uganda's vast potential and attracting visitors, contributing to the continued growth of the tourism sector. There were pre and post POATE 2023 fam tours for hosted buyers and media to sample various tourism products across Uganda.



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## Countries showcase tourism opportunities at first Tourism Investment Forum (TIFA) in Upington, South Africa

Upington, a city of South Africa's Northern Cape province, played host to experts in the tourism, finance, aviation and the entire travel ecosystem at the inaugural Tourism Investments Forum Africa (TIFA).

The event, according to the organisers, was an intentional and deliberate effort to assemble the over 200 delegates in the above sectors to make a push for the investments needed in the continent's tourism industry in order to spur economic development.

The debuted Forum was themed, "Forging Global Partnerships for Inclusive Local Economic Development Through Sustainable Investment",

As well, it assembled over 200 public and private stakeholders from the tourism and investment sectors to create sustainable economic growth, job creation, and employment opportunities, amongst others.

Setting the scene for the opening of the

conference was Miller Matola, CEO of Millvest Advisory, at the boutique African Vineyards in Kanoneiland near Upington.

He said the focus of the forum is to connect project owners with investors and business representatives who are seeking partnerships to support the implementation of ready-for-market projects.

Amongst the desired outcomes of the Forum is also to promote the Northern Cape as a destination of choice for investors and equally one for the meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) sector, Matola added.

Welcoming delegates as the host of the event was Abraham Vosloo, MEC for Finance, Economic Development, and Tourism of the Northern Cape Province.

In his speech, the MEC highlighted the importance of investments to the province and the country at large and also underscored the province's



strategic importance to the South African economy.

In his speech to officially open the conference, Fish Mahlela, South Africa's Deputy Minister of Tourism, was happy with the choice of Upington as the host of the inaugural summit, which he said is in line with the government objectives, as outlined in the Tourism White Paper of 1996, which encourages the country to prioritize underdeveloped areas with high tourism potential for investment.



Abraham Vosloo, MEC for Finance, Economic Development, and Tourism

He noted the Forum will go a long way in promoting the Northern Cape as a MICE destination.

"At the height of the pandemic, we embarked on an extensive Infrastructure Maintenance Programme in state-owned attractions, which includes the Kgalagadi Transfrontier National Park (here in the Northern Cape) and Kruger



Miller Matola, CEO of Millvest Advisory

National Park (our largest national park that straddles two provinces).

"These efforts are aimed at protecting and rejuvenating the supply base of the tourism economy to ensure that when demand returns to the pre-pandemic levels, the supply side such as airports, roads, accommodation, and amenities such as broadband and health infrastructure are able to keep up with the anticipated demand in line with the objectives of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan as well as the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan," Mahlela added.

The Deputy Regional Director for Africa at the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Jaime Mayaki shed light on the Role of Infrastructure

Investment in ensuring the Sustainability and Competitiveness of Tourism Destinations – Practical lessons for tourism destinations and investment locations.

Namibia's Deputy Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism Heather Sibungo on a panel discussing the ease of doing business and smart regulations touted the success of the Namibian government in establishing the Namibia Investment Promotion & Development Board as a state agency lead and drive investments for the country.



Deputy Minister of Transport, Mr Lisa Mangcu

The gathering also saw countries and provinces showcasing the investment opportunities in their tourism sector.

The Tourism Department of South Africa offered insights into its investment



Fish Mahlela, South Africa's Deputy Minister of Tourism

climate. The Northern Cape, KwaZulu Natal, and Mpumalanga provinces took turns to outline the opportunities in their tourism sector for investments.

Namibia, Botswana, and Mozambique in their presentations underscored the deliberate and attractive investment climate enabled by the government to ensure return on investments in their respective countries.

Panel discussions centered around innovative ways of financing tourism developments, ease of doing business, and smart regulation as cornerstones of sustainable intra-Africa investment flows among other pressing issues.

The Tourism Investment Forum Africa (TIFA) is organized by Millvest Investments and Africa Tourism Partners with strategic partners such as Northern Cape Government AFCTA, Development Bank of Southern Africa, Mitsubishi and IDC





# BOTSWANA:

## *Beyond the African experience*

Botswana, whose billing is “*beyond the African experience*”, is a landlocked country in the Southern Africa region, bordering South Africa in the South and East, Zimbabwe in the East and North, Namibia in the West and Northwest and finally Zambia in the North. The country, which covers an area of approximately 581 730km<sup>2</sup>, also gained independence in 1966 from the British, and has a population of slightly over 2.3 million people. Botswana is best known for her peace and tranquility emanating from the politically and economically stability. Botswana prides herself as the safest destination to visit in the world and is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> safest country in Africa (just below Mauritius) as well as being the safest destination to visit in the world.

Botswana is blessed with unique and more than fascinating tourism products ranging from remote wilderness and wetlands as well as the desert experience. The southern African country is one of the prime wildlife safari destinations in the world with its game roaming in their undisturbed (by human) natural habitats, with 38 percent of the country's total land area dedicated to national parks, reserves and wildlife management areas, in an effort to promote conservation of the environment. Okavango Delta, game e reserves, national parks, Makgadikgadi Pans, camping, crafts, sports and adventure, culture, safari, landscape and people are some of tourist attractions found in Botswana. Activities in Botswana's precious destinations include: game viewing; photographic safari; hunting safaris; bird watching; star gazing; sport fishing; quad biking; sunset viewing; walking safaris; elephant/horse back safaris; as well as cultural exchange activities.



### Botswana tourism offerings include:

- Wildlife (flora & fauna)
- Wilderness experience
- Sports and adventure experience
- Culture and heritage
- Experiencing fascinating and varied landscapes
- Shopping
- MICE

### Botswana's tourism pride are:

- Welcoming and friendly nation
- Diverse product offering ranging from safari in the wilderness to song dance and cuisine.
- Social responsibility & community involvement
- Conservation & sustainable development
- Service excellence
- Knowledgeable and caring workforce
- Intimate & authentic traveler experiences

### Botswana's appeal to tourists:

- Low volume, low impact...the norm, not the exception
- Diversity of safari experiences
- All year-round tourist destination
- Iconic Okavango Delta, Chobe National Park, Makgadikgadi Pans, Kalahari Transfronteir Park as well as Central Kalahari Game Reserve and much more depending on the traveler's interest.
- Remote, pristine, wild
- Authentic African ssafari experience
- Authentic culture showcased through song dance and cuisine.

### Holiday Packages Offered:

- Honeymoon tours
- Safari tours
- Sports & adventure tours
- Luxury
- Cultural tours
- Diamond mine tours
- Heritage tours
- Events



## Mpume Mabuza is the new President and Chairperson of AAVEA



Mpume Mabuza, President and Chairperson of AAVEA

It's the dawn of a new age for the African attractions industry as the African Association of Visitor Experiences and Attractions (AAVEA) board welcomes Mpume Mabuza as its new President and Chairperson.

Mabuza, who previously served as AAVEA's Secretary, was elected as the new President and Chair, at a board meeting in April 2023. She takes over from Sabine Lehmann, who founded AAVEA in 2014.

As the current CEO of Downtown Music Hub (DTMH), the former Marketing Executive for uShaka Marine World and former Chairperson of the Durban Chamber Tourism Forum, Mabuza brings a wealth of experience and insights into the attractions industry to the AAVEA board. Her passion for social development, leadership and innovation are reflected in her tertiary qualifications which include a B Com, a post-graduate Diploma in Business Management and an MBA.

An avid traveler with a keen sense for adventure, Mabuza is thrilled about this exciting opportunity to lead AAVEA into its next chapter:

"I am honored to lead this association with a passionate team, aiming to create

a more inclusive and sustainable future for member attractions. Our focus will be on broadening our membership base to include smaller attractions and to increase our footprint into the rest of the continent, highlighting their stories and experiences while learning from larger attractions. Together, we showcase African attractions' richness and diversity, providing transformative experiences for visitors. We're excited to collaborate with the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), the global association for attractions, to increase membership and enhance industry competitiveness in Africa. By sharing knowledge, embracing innovation and sustainability, we can unlock the full potential of African visitor attractions."

Lehmann, who has been appointed to serve on the IAAPA Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) region advisory board as Chair of the Governance Committee, is proud to hand over the reins to Mabuza: "Mpume Mabuza comes with a depth and breadth of experience and is well placed to lead AAVEA into the next chapter. I am excited to see where the association goes as the industry is changing and consumer needs change."

AAVEA is a membership-driven

association, governed by a board of experienced industry professionals, which offers the only educational opportunities for visitor experience and attractions professionals in Africa.

**"I am honored to lead this association with a passionate team, aiming to create a more inclusive and sustainable future for member attractions. Our focus will be on broadening our membership base to include smaller attractions and to increase our footprint into the rest of the continent, highlighting their stories and experiences while learning from larger attractions"**

While AAVEA began its journey in 2014 as an annual two-day conference for the attractions industry focused on education, training, benchmarking, and networking, it was officially launched as an association in November 2018 and is growing the attractions and visitor experience industry beyond South Africa into the rest of the African continent.

## Time for Africa to tap into Halal Tourism potential

The world's Muslim population is increasing. By 2030, there will be 2.3 billion Muslims worldwide, or 27% of the world's population, up from two billion Muslims today (or 25% of the world's population). This is also expected to impact on tourism spend by Muslim travellers.

According to the ninth edition of the Mastercard-CrescentRating Global Muslim Travel (GMTI) 2022 report, which was published on June 1, an increasing number of young and tech-savvy Muslim travellers will have an impact on the development of 'Halal Tourism' in the future.

Halal tourism is a subset of tourism that caters to Muslim families who follow Islamic law. The hotels in these locations don't offer alcohol, have separate spas and swimming pools for men and women, only serve halal meals, and have both in-room and communal prayer spaces.

Muslim visitor numbers are also anticipated to reach 140 million in 2023 and return to 2019 pre-Covid levels of

160 million in 2024, according to the GMTI 2022, report's estimate for the growth of Halal tourism.

Africa could be a major player in maximizing the over \$200 billion Halal Tourism sector considering the fact that Nigeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Algeria have large population of Muslim travellers.

One organization that is spearheading the spread of Halal Tourism in South Africa is Halaal Hopper whose founder, believes it is time for Africa to recognize the sector as a viable option for transforming the continent's tourism.

In an interview with VoyagesAfric Mrs. Fayrouz Holliday-October said the general tourism value chain should make provisions for Halal Tourism to thrive.

"If populations are growing, at the end of the day we are going to need more food, so people in different spaces; whether in agro processing or other areas are needed to process more foods because more people are becoming Muslim. And these people want to travel and want to



go to different places and of course we need to be ready to welcome them to those places," she stressed.

Part of what Halaal Hopper does is to advance discussions on the need to promote Halal Tourism as it has huge benefits on raising economies in Africa.

Mrs. Holliday-October stated further, "We have had conversation with individuals across Africa so that we can make them understand the real need for it and how it can grow the economies at the end of the day which is the bottom line. It is not part of the conversation at the moment, but it's a big chunk that can be added to grow the bottom line exponentially."

## Gorilla Organization Rallies Support After Deadly DR Congo Mudslides

The Gorilla Organization is mobilizing support for its projects in South Kivu, DR Congo, in the wake of a series of devastating and deadly floods in the region.

After several days of heavy rainfall, flash flooding and mudslides hit several communities and settlements in the region, with the villages of Bushushu and Nyamukubi the worst affected. Officials have put the initial death toll at more than 400 people, with thousands missing and thousands more without shelter. Among the fatalities was a nurseryman working at the Gorilla Organization's projects area of Cyanika, close to the border with Rwanda. A further 200 beneficiaries work at the nurseries, created to provide sustainable livelihoods for the Batwa communities of South Kivu and also combat habitat loss threatening the native gorilla population.

Gorilla Organization Director Jillian Miller says: "These mudslides are the latest in a long list of tragedies to hit the people living in South Kivu. The Gorilla Organization team is based in the region"

The Gorilla Organization team in DR Congo will be visiting the victim's family to offer their condolences, to support the surviving nurserymen and women, and to assess the damage done to the projects by the rains and mudslides.

Country Manager Henry Cirhuza reported: "These rains caused a landslide and overflow of rivers that led to the destruction of houses, health centers, schools, bridges and many public buildings. In this disaster we lost two nursery sites, that of Bushushu and that of Nyamukubi. We mourn the death of a nurseryman, his family members and more than 200 beneficiaries in the two villages."



Over recent years, ongoing deforestation has not only added to the pressure facing the endangered mountain gorilla population of DR Congo, but has also raised the risk of flooding and mudslides. The Gorilla Organization is working to plant more than 1 million trees in the area, to provide a 'green buffer' between the gorillas and the neighbouring communities,



# Let's embrace gastronomy tourism to propel rural development – Zim First Lady



First Lady of Zimbabwe, Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa speaking to participants at the event

First Lady of Zimbabwe, Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa scored a first when she hosted an inaugural regional traditional cookout competition at the historic Great Zimbabwe monuments in Masvingo.

The competition drew participants from the SADC region and other parts of Africa who showcased their indigenous dishes at a colourful event which coincided with Africa Day celebrations.

Dr Mnangagwa, who is the country's environment and tourism Patron, introduced Ama's traditional cookout competition in 2020.

Following its successful implementation, the programme has gained popularity, culminating in a first-of-its-kind regional traditional gastronomy tourism festival.

In addition to Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Botswana and Nigeria were among the nations that had participants in support of Dr Mnangagwa's efforts to promote indigenous dishes. Kenya and Uganda were also represented.

The First Lady's initiative also set the platform for the growth in gastronomy tourism where people visit countries to sample exotic cuisines.

The event attracted SADC Ambassadors to Zimbabwe led by their Dean,

Mozambican Ambassador Mr Francisco Elias Paulo Cigarro.

Uganda's Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities Mrs D. Katsuiime and Namibia's Deputy Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Mrs Heather Sibungu Mwiza and UNWTO Regional Director for Africa, Mrs Elcia Grandcourt were also among the dignitaries.

Addressing the gathering, the First Lady said, the event was a key milestone achievement in the region as it sought to grow and popularise the African cuisine industry as part of the global tourism industry.

"This becomes even more urgent as the region, and indeed the continent recovers from the effects of COVID-19. As part of this recovery programme, we need to rebrand and it would not be an understatement to say that our local cuisines offer great opportunities and benefits in that regard.

"The concept of the Traditional Cookout Competition Programme we are witnessing today is as a result of my endless passion to promote and preserve our culture and tradition as Africans, after

realising the impending threat to our values as a result of cultural dilution and indeed, cultural erosion," she stressed.

Gastronomy Tourism, the First Lady emphasized, had enormous potential to attract high-value tourists who were willing to spend on unique and authentic food experiences.

"In addition, gastronomy tourism can help to promote local food traditions, support small businesses, and create jobs in the tourism industry," she said. "Ultimately, this has a positive impact on community livelihoods and a country's economy," Dr Mnangagwa said.

The Regional Director for Africa at the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Elcia Grandcourt commended the First Lady for championing the promotion of gastronomy tourism not only in Zimbabwe but in Africa.

"Gastronomy is a growing motivation to travel; it adds value to the destination, promotes local products and know-how, allowing for stories to be told and to showcase the people behind them," she stated.

Elcia added, "Whilst we recognize that tourism is a people's industry, Gastronomy which is much more than food, is that beautiful connection that combines the joy of discovering different traditional cuisines, people and the beauty of enjoying our rich cultural heritage. It also preserves our traditions and values so that they can be passed on to future generations."



## We want to make Praia, Cabo Verde's melting pot of tourism, culture – Mayor

Praia, the capital city of West Africa's Archipelago island of Cabo Verde, is positioning itself to become the country's heritage and cultural haven.

The city, which has a rich tapestry of Cabo Verde's history and was a major trading port during the trans-Atlantic slave trade, is planning to create a niche for itself as the must-visit island of Cabo Verde.

Even with its endowed beachfront/resources the municipality of Praia under Santiago is working assiduously to attract the interest of cultural and heritage towers.

The City boasts of the many places that showcase the Morabeza (warmth) of the pristine island.

The municipality last month played host to the Atlantic music expo and the famous Kriol Jazz Festival.

The latter, which returned after three years as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, attracted tourists, journalists, and music enthusiasts from all over the world to Praia. The three days were exciting for the music fiesta and a showcase of Cabo Verde's amazing musical talent.

In an exclusive interview with

VoyagesAfriq, the president of the municipality of Praia, Francisco Carvalho, said his office wants to position Praia as the cultural heartbeat of Africa with music and heritage as its main draws.

"We want to put Praia on the map of tourism. We want people to know, Praia and what we have here; our strong cultural programs all year round.

"We have different events related to music, gastronomy and we want people to know about this and to come here to visit because we really like to receive people here and to show what we have in the field of culture," Francisco Carvalho assured.

He further listed other notable events that will excite visitors including; the Festival of Gamboa in May, there was another festival in April, and something in December also.

"We have a special event in December called "Noite branca" in Platô where patrons dress in white dresses with live music and gastronomy on offer.

"Right now we are creating something new and with the support of stakeholders and everyone we can position Praia as the center of diversity and a melting pot in Africa" the president of the municipality of Praia said.



Francisco Carvalho, President of the municipality of Praia

He further added that the municipality sees tourism as the driving force for its economic development.

### History of Praia

Praia is the capital city of Cape Verde, which is off the coast of West Africa. The city is on the southern coast of Santiago Island. The old town center, called the "Plateau" by locals, is on a raised area overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. Around the bay, beaches include; Quebra Canela and Práinha, both near the Práinha neighborhood. Complementing the enthralling natural environment, shops and restaurants cluster in the Achada de Santo António quarter.

## SA Tourism Celebrates Jazz Legend Hugh Masekela's Induction into the Ertegun Hall of Fame



South African Tourism, in collaboration with the Hugh Masekela Heritage Foundation, celebrated the legendary jazz musician, Hugh Masekela, at an event held at Dizzy's Club at Jazz at Lincoln Center. The event honored

Masekela's contributions to jazz music and his impact on South Africa as a cultural destination.

The highlight of the afternoon was the induction of Hugh Masekela into the Ertegun Hall of Fame, a prestigious recognition for his exceptional talent and remarkable achievements in the music industry. South African Tourism and the Hugh Masekela Heritage Foundation hosted a pre-induction reception at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Ertegun Hall of Fame which was attended by special guests, jazz enthusiasts, and journalists, who gathered to pay tribute to Masekela's legacy.

Following the reception, guests were invited to Dizzy's Club for the induction ceremony and special musical

performances, which included select performances from Hugh Masekela Heritage Foundation scholarship students from the Manhattan School of Music. Selema Masekela and Pula Twala, the children of Hugh Masekela, accepted the honor on behalf of their late father.

Hugh Masekela, fondly known as "Bra Hugh," was born and raised in South Africa, and is widely regarded as one of the greatest jazz musicians of all time. His unique style and fusion of African rhythms, jazz, and world music have captivated audiences around the globe for decades. Masekela's music has become a symbol of South African culture, showcasing the rich heritage and diversity of the country and inspiring travelers to experience the destination's unique offerings.





## AviaDev Africa lauded for its commitment to continent aviation development



Jon Howell, CEO of AviaDev Africa

Africa's premier aviation route development, AviaDev Africa has for the 7th time assembled aviation industry experts, investors, stakeholders private and sector players in Kenya's capital Nairobi to discuss and find solutions to the challenges plaguing the sector on the continent.

The two-day event discussed the pressing needs of the continent as well as created a bespoke B2B platform to offer exhibitors and key players in the industry to discuss opportunities to help open the continent Africa.

AviaDev Africa is a platform for aviation professionals, policymakers, and

industry leaders to come together to discuss and develop solutions to the challenges facing the African aviation industry. The conference featured a range of speakers, panel discussions and workshops, as well as an exhibition of aviation products and services.

In his welcome message to the African aviation community, Jon Howell, CEO of AviaDev Africa, expressed appreciation to partners and the industry for the commitment towards the development of routes and other ancillary services needed to stimulate the growth of aviation and tourism business in the region.

Howell recounted the successes chalked since the last meeting of AviaDev in 2022 with particular emphasis on new routes developed and a number of exciting projects coming upstream.

Issues discussed include perennial issue of financing.

"I have been encouraged by the number of new routes and route expansions we have seen since we last met and we expect this year's event to catalyse decision making and create even more," Howell said.

"Since then, we have seen a serious recovery. There are certainly headwinds and turbulence to navigate but the hiatus we all endured certainly created the opportunity for all of us to take a breath, review our processes and there seems to be a renewed enthusiasm to do things differently, embrace innovation and see disruption as a positive force".



Rigathi Gachagu, Deputy President of Kenya

A new innovation at this year's AviaDev Africa was the AviaDev Real Estate, which aimed at helping airports and other industry players to particularly use the opportunity that exists to grow their non aeronautical revenues as well as enhancing the experience for travellers and the business environment.

*"I have been encouraged by the number of new routes and route expansions we have seen since we last met and we expect this year's event to catalyse decision making and create even more," Howell said.*

"A massive thanks to friends at NACO who worked with us to deliver the first ever event focused on airport real estate. It was a huge success and I hope will lead our airports to increase their revenues from real estate revenues and use this additional income to invest in infrastructure and support the airlines to manage their costs," Howell said further.

Rigathi Gachagu, Deputy President of Kenya, who was a Guest of Honour, was full of praise for organisers of the event for choosing Nairobi for the conference. He underscored the importance of the conference to Kenya's challenges in the real estate and aviation sectors.

He also invited the investors to choose Kenya as the government has incentives, which will help grow their business.

AviaDev Africa's enviable support for local project at the host destinations was once again celebrated with a support of US\$6,000.00 for the establishment of the first aviation resource center in Africa.

The AviaDev Ambassador's program had three young Kenyan's Ashley, Arnold and Elizabeth joining the conversation at the conference. Around 30 delegates were fortunate enough to visit the East African School of Aviation.

The visit was facilitated by the Director General, Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), where Kenya delivered a day of engagement and outreach activities with the next generation of the industry. Credit goes to Mercy Makau, Alex Koech and the Young Aviators Club of Africa team for hosting the visitors, who were led by Sean Mendis.



Charity run family photo

Delegates and partners of this year's event were happy with the value the event delivered for their various businesses.

### Partnership with AFCAC

AviaDev Africa and the Africa Civil Aviation Council (AFCAC) inked a memorandum of understanding, which will see the two institutions engage in various cooperative activities, including information sharing, events attendance, podcast participation and collaboration at relevant industry events. Jon Howell, the CEO of AviaDev, signed the agreement on behalf of his organization while Adeyemi Funke, Secretary General of AFCAC, signed on behalf of the latter.

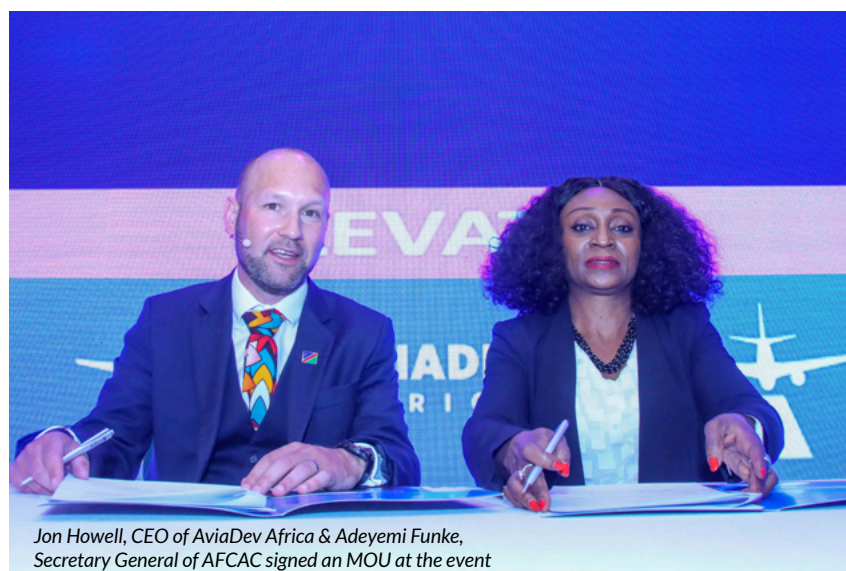
### Next destination

The baton was handed over to the Namibia Airports Company as host of the 8th edition of the continent's premier aviation platform. AviaDev Africa is renowned for its unique ability to create





Airlines VIP Day at Nairobi National Park



Jon Howell, CEO of AviaDev Africa & Adeyemi Funke, Secretary General of AFCAC signed an MOU at the event

a conducive environment for aviation professionals to network, exchange ideas, and collaborate on innovative strategies that drive sustainable air connectivity. By choosing Windhoek as the host city for the event in 2024, AviaDev aims to highlight Namibia's growing significance as a destination for the aviation industry and its commitment to bolstering regional connectivity.

"We are thrilled to host AviaDev Africa in 2024 and welcome industry leaders to experience the wonders of our country for both business and tourism," Bisey Uirab, CEO of the Namibia Airports Company, said. "From the enchanting coastal city of Swakopmund to the ethereal Namib Desert and the breathtaking wildlife encounters in Etosha National Park, Namibia offers

an unparalleled tourism experience. We are eager to share the magic of our destinations and forge partnerships that will further enhance connectivity and drive sustainable tourism growth and new business opportunities."

Namibia is a rapidly growing tourism destination, with a diverse range of attractions to offer visitors. The country is home to stunning scenery, including the Namib Desert, the Skeleton Coast, and the Etosha National Park. Namibia also has a rich cultural heritage, with a variety of ethnic groups and languages.

"AviaDev Africa not only aims to foster aviation growth but also serves as a platform to highlight the immense potential of the host country," stated Howell.

"We are impressed by the drive of the Namibia Airports Company and the unified approach of all stakeholders to support air connectivity to, from and within the country. By convening aviation professionals, policymakers, and industry leaders in Windhoek, we will deliver a memorable event experience and explore untapped opportunities that will drive the growth of air connectivity across the continent."

#### Receptions

"Last night, our partners at South African Tourism were our hosts at the wonderful welcome reception and they did a superb job of providing an atmosphere and catering perfect for networking and illustrating the close ties that exist between Kenya and South Africa," the organisers said.

"Our sponsors, Embraer, delivered an incredible evening of networking in the most amazing setting, so a round of applause for them and you can see some images on the screen".



Jon Howell & Mala Patel of AviaDev



## OUR SERVICES

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- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Accomodation
- ✓ Visa Application
- ✓ Tour Packages
- ✓ Grounds handling & Tour Operation. Etc...





# KRIOL JAZZ FESTIVAL PRAIA C A B O V E R D E

## Kriol Jazz Festival returned in style

Cabo Verde's capital of Praia came alive again with the return of this year's Kriol Jazz Festival.

The event which was disrupted as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic made an exciting return with performances from legendary and upcoming artistes from four continents to the excitement of patrons who missed this event.

Featuring 10 artistes from eight countries, the Kriol Jazz Festival got going with Senegal's Orchestra, Baobab setting the scene for the three-day music festival.

The Dakar-based band's energetic performance coupled with their enchanting genres of music and stagecraft got patrons on their feet for the entire duration of their performance.

The legendary American Jazz musician Dee Dee Bridgewater's wow stage act coupled with the Morabeza duo of Lucibela and Tcheka and the Catalan-based Dr. Pratt Group were some of the exciting nights of genres that could be remembered at the Kriol Jazz festival.

The Brazilian luedji Luna of Banho fame and Roosevelt Colier of the Yankee ensured the night was full of memories.

The Kriol Jazz Festival is a fusion of music from different origins all on one stage. Organized by Harmonia Lda in partnership with the council of Praia, the Festival's main objective is to promote Creole-inspired music from all the islands, whether in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean, Cabo Verde, Europe or Africa, the cradle of Creole.

The first night also witnessed Gabon's

effervescent artiste Pamela Badjogo entertaining the enthusiastic patrons at the plateau arena.

The city of Praia for an entire week was treated to a cocktail of great music genres as the Atlantic Music Expo rounded off a week of music, lectures and many more.

After three years of interruption, the city of Praia is getting ready to enjoy unique moments of quality music of different nations and origins, as well as musical fusion, exchanges of experiences, and healthy conviviality involving musicians, producers, journalists and visitors alike.

Discover a selection of the best artists from the Creole world for a program based upon exchanging as much on a musical level as on a human level.



Senegal's Orchestra, Baobab



Roosevelt Colier



Tcheka and his group



Dee Dee Bridgewater



Lucibela



Dr. Pratt Group





# Tourism Calendar of Events



July  
26-28  
2023

## 66th UNWTO Commission for Africa (CAF) Meeting

Venue: Mauritius

Contact: [rdaf@unwto.org](mailto:rdaf@unwto.org)

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



July  
27-28  
2023

## Africa Business and MICE Masterclass

Venue: Johannesburg

Contact: +27 813037030 Email: [rejoice@africatourismpartners.com](mailto:rejoice@africatourismpartners.com)

**About:** The Masterclass aims to offer focused Business Tourism & MICE capacity building for SMEs and youth as a critical component of their MICE development programme and to bridge the skills shortage and refresher gap in Business Tourism and MICE travel in post-pandemic recovery.

September  
6-8  
2023

## TBCSA Tourism leadership Conference

Venue: Sun City, Northwest Province- South Africa

Contact: +27 787277677 Email:

**About:** The annual TBCSA Tourism Leadership Conference brings together tourism industry professionals and leading experts to connect, learn, share, and collaborate on various topical industry-related issues. There are many reasons why you should join us in the Northwest for the two-day conference.



October  
4-6  
2023

## Swahili International Tourism Expo (SITE)

Venue: Dar re Salaam, Tanzania

Contact:

Email: [site.info@tanzaniatourism.go.tz](mailto:site.info@tanzaniatourism.go.tz)

**About:** The event is aimed at promoting Tanzania's tourism to international markets and also facilitate linking of companies based in Tanzania, Eastern and Central Africa with tourism companies from other parts of the world.



October  
4-6  
2023

## Africa Tourism Leadership Forum (ATLF) 2023

Contact: +27 813037030

Email: [rejoice@africatourismpartners.com](mailto:rejoice@africatourismpartners.com)

Venue: GICC, Gaborone, Botswana

**About:** Africa Tourism Leadership Forum is a Pan-African dialogue platform. It brings together key stakeholders of Africa's travel, tourism, hospitality and aviation sectors to network, share insights, and devise strategies for intra-Africa travel and tourism growth across the continent, whilst enhancing the brand equity of "Destination Africa".



November  
1-3  
2023

## WTTC Global Summit

Venue: Kigali, Rwanda

About: +44 (0) 207 481 8007

Email: [enquiries@wttc.org](mailto:enquiries@wttc.org)

**About:** WTTC's annual Global Summit is the most influential Travel & Tourism event on the calendar, and this year, industry leaders will once again gather with key government representatives to continue aligning efforts to support the sector's recovery and move beyond to a safer, more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future.



Nov - Dec  
29-3  
2023

## Botswana Travel and Tourism Expo

Venue: Kasane, Botswana

Contact: +267 72 788 119

Email: [mmatolela@botswanatourism.co.bw](mailto:mmatolela@botswanatourism.co.bw)

**About:** BTTE is an annual event, hosted by Botswana Tourism in collaboration with the local tourism industry and has been held in Kasane for the past 7 years. The expo brings together top-rated international buyers and local tourism business operators (exhibitors) to discuss, network and seal business deals.



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## A continent divided: Our own worst enemies



Sean Mendis

Africa, with its vast natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and untapped potential, has emerged as an attractive destination for global travelers in a post-pandemic world. Yet, despite all these positives, Africa still welcomes more tourists from outside the continent than from right here at home.

This is not normal. Everywhere else in the world, the largest source markets for visitors are neighbouring countries, or at least countries with some degree of proximity and ties. Many such regional blocs like the European Union or ASEAN have abolished visa regimes for their members, which has boosted the growth of airline traffic, tourist arrivals and general economic activity. However, despite the best intentions, Africa seems to enjoy bringing difficulties to its own. Despite a few regional pockets like SADC, ECOWAS and the EAC, citizens of African Union member states still require visas to visit more of their fellow member countries than not. Ironically, the average African Union citizen is more likely to need a visa to visit another country in the same African Union, than

*"In many African countries, there is also a lack of clarity on policy to attract visitors. It is not uncommon for the tourism authority to make announcements about simplified visa regimes, only to see the immigration department disavow all knowledge the next day."*

a European Union citizen needs to visit an African Union country. Xenophobic discrimination begins at home it seems.

I remember discussing with a tour operator a few years ago why they didn't target inbound tourists from their neighbouring country, despite what was seemingly a natural market and potentially huge volumes. Their answer was that if it became too popular, the tourists would set up their own tour companies and put them out of business. This fear of success assured a guarantee of failure.

In many African countries, there is also a lack of clarity on policy to attract visitors. It is not uncommon for the tourism authority to make announcements about simplified visa regimes, only to see the immigration department disavow all knowledge the next day. Destination marketing agencies attract conferences and other events, only to see the civil aviation regulators deny airlines additional flights to bring the attendees to the country. Petty bureaucrats tend to revel in their pathetic little fiefdoms, often losing sight of the larger objective.

Air transport is a perfect example of this. Despite having jointly signed on to liberalising African skies with the Yamoussoukro Declaration over 30 years ago, today only a small fraction of countries have actually implemented the very policies they claim to be championing. I recently attended the AviaDev Africa conference in Nairobi where a group of youth ambassadors pleaded for aging national leaders to not allow another generation to miss out on the benefits of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). Indeed, 70% of Africans have lived their entire lives waiting for this African Open Skies to dream itself into a reality. Yet inaction seems to be a matter of national pride to some countries that always claim to not be "ready" for competition. Once again, we are our own worst enemies.

Africa needs to have a clear and collaborative vision for not just individual countries, but also the continent to achieve our goals. Investment in infrastructure to benefit aviation and tourism industries as a whole, and not just to subsidise loss making national champions is one way to achieve this. African citizens, and especially the youth, deserve so much better from the leaders of our continent.

*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.*



## Zambia, Zimbabwe sign MoU for Lower Zambezi-Mana Pools TFCA



Zambia and Zimbabwe have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the development of the Lower Zambezi-Mana Pools Transfrontier Conservation Area.

Speaking on arrival at Rainbow Tower Hotel, the venue for the event, Zambia's Minister of Tourism, Rodney Sikumba said this marks the start of the two countries' joint collaboration of the signing ceremony in ensuring the sustainable development of wildlife resources in the Lower Zambezi – Mana Pools Transfrontier Conservation Area (LOZAMAP- TFCA).

He said Zambia and Zimbabwe have always been in close collaboration, working together to foster unity not only with our people but as well in other

aligned national and regional targets.

Hon. Sikumba said the LOZAMAP – TFCA will not be the first landscape in which the two neighbouring countries will be jointly managing a conservation area, but the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation area is another landscape in which the two sister countries have been working closely together in the sustainable management of natural resources.

The Zimbabwean Minister of Environment, Climate, Tourism, and Hospitality Industry, Nqobizitha Mangaliso Ndhlovu, said the signing will bring development to the area as it will unlock the potential of the area by attracting partners who bring funding to the landscape.

He said the two countries should be more deliberate in fostering the other shared natural resources such as the Zambezi River in the same manner as that of the Victoria Falls which remain as jewels and endowments to the two neighbors.

## Donald Payen named Chairperson of Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority

Donald Payen has been appointed as the new part-time Chairman of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA). This appointment was endorsed by the Council of Ministers.

As Principal Adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism since August 2020, Donald Payen is no stranger to the Tourism industry. It was after 41 years with the national aviation company, Air Mauritius, where he held several management positions: Commercial Director, Vice-President of Communications, Vice-President of Operations...

Donald Payen, recipient of the British Empire Medal at a ceremony at Westminster House in August 2022 and elevated to the rank of "Chevalier

de l'Ordre National du Mérite" in May 2017 by France, remains one of the most respected in the tourism industry. In a nutshell, his mission at the supervisory ministry was to advise Steven Obeegadoo on the strategy to be adopted on the sidelines of the reopening of borders and the revival of the tourism sector.

In the current situation, Donald Payen is considered the "providential man" needed to help the MTPA to take a new step in its development so that Mauritius can have more visibility on niche markets and new markets. Now, as president, Donald Payen is called upon to support the director of the MTPA, Arvind Bundhun who "is already doing a good job."

## ATTA appoints Jon Danks as new CEO



African Travel and Tourism Association (ATTA) has announced the appointment of Jon Danks as CEO. Jon has held numerous senior leadership positions at multinational membership organisations, with over 40 years travelling the continent of Africa. Well known to the African media buyer, agent, and operator audience, he brings experience in public affairs connected across the continent's high commissions and tourism agencies.

He has also held several key roles in aviation at BA and SAA and as Marketing Chairman (UK) for Star Alliance and joins from Avis where he held a senior role driving commercial performance. Jon will be based at ATTA's new office (Matrix Studios, 91 Peterborough Road, SW6 3BU) and can be contacted via email – at jon@atta.travel or on the usual office phone number. Chris Mears will continue as CEO of Experience Africa Events, ATTA's wholly-owned events subsidiary.



Donald Payen, Chairperson of Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority

## AskY expands fleet with a 13th Aircraft

ASKY, The Pan African Airline has announced an addition to its fleet. This brings its total fleet to 13th aircraft in its 13 years of service in Africa.

In a media statement, the airline said "This modern aircraft will be used to improve connectivity, increase frequencies, and open new routes across the region."

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.

ASKY currently operates a fleet of thirteenth aircrafts: Nine (9) Boeing 737-800s and four (4) 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 foster regional development, tourism, economic growth and regional integration as a major economic bloc.



## Kenya Tourism Board drops MKTE for Regional Tourism Expo

The Kenya Tourism Board has announced that it will not be hosting its flagship tourism trade event, Magical Kenya Expo (MKTE) this year.

A communique signed by John Chirchir, Acting CEO of the Kenya Tourism Board says, "Kenya will instead host the 3rd edition of the East African Regional Tourism Expo (EARTE).

The news has angered Kenya's tourism stakeholders with many describing the move as ill-advised. How can the agency let a tourism marketplace which had become a major platform for Kenya and the region to trade and place the nation as the destination of choice was the big question among Kenya's tourism players.

"After years of investments to make us the leading destination in the region is shortchanged with a barely three-year-

old regional show which is yet to gain traction in the tourism industry, "an anonymous voice told us in a written response.

This latest announcement is seen as a final straw in what many in Kenya's tourism industry consider a further drop in interest in tourism by the administration.

In the statement addressed to the chairperson of the Kenya Tourism Federation, it failed to adduce the reasons for sacrificing the revered tourism marketplace for the regional expo.

"EARTE is a regional travel fair showcasing the region's diverse tourism offering to consumers, trade, media, and buyers. The expo is scheduled to take place from 17 to 21 November



2023 in Nairobi." The statement said. EARTE is held on a rotational basis by member states of the East African Community (EAC). Tanzania and Burundi hosted the first two editions in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

The event is part of the region's tourism marketing strategy which is geared towards positioning the EAC as a leading sustainable tourism destination in Africa.

The big question for Kenya's tourism administration is; What will they do next year if the event is moved to another country?





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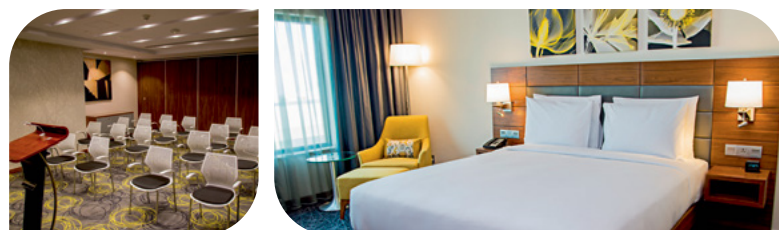
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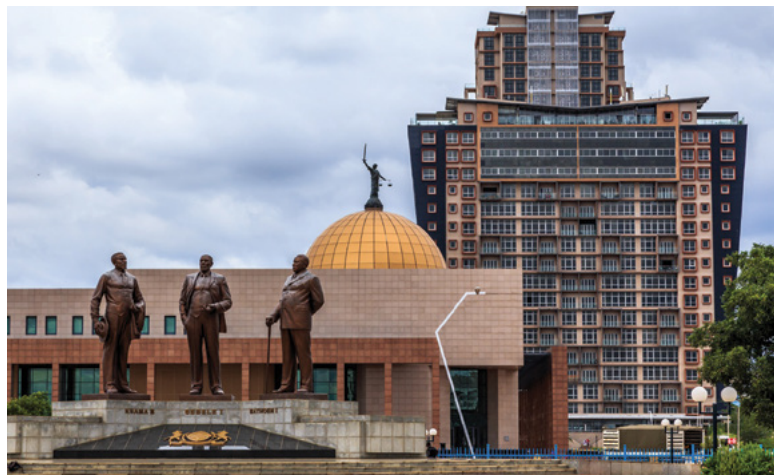


# BOTSWANA

## BREATHTAKINGLY, BEAUTIFUL

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