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# VoyagesAfriq

ISSUE 029 | Sierra Leone Edition

Africa's Leading Travel and Tourism Magazine

**Sierra Leone's Tourism  
Renaissance: The Visionary  
Leadership of Minister  
Nabeela Farida Tunis**



**The Tourism Policy of Sierra Leone:  
A Comprehensive Roadmap**

**Championing Sierra Leone: An exclusive  
conversation with Chef Fatmata Binta**

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## VoyagesAfric

Travel and Tourism Magazine

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## Editorial

Dear Reader,

### Discover the Untamed Beauty of Sierra Leone

Welcome, wanderlust adventurers, to the hidden gem of West Africa—Sierra Leone. This captivating destination, often overshadowed by its more frequented neighbours, offers an unparalleled blend of natural splendour, rich history and warm hospitality. From the pristine beaches of the Peninsula to the lush rainforests of Tiwai Island, Sierra Leone is a treasure trove for those seeking authentic and unspoiled adventures.

Imagine waking up to the sound of waves caressing the golden sands of River Number Two Beach or embarking on a journey through the vibrant streets of Freetown, where history is etched into every corner. Explore the mystique of Bunce Island, a poignant reminder of the past, or immerse yourself in the exuberant wildlife at Outamba-Kilimi National Park.



Kojo Bentum-Williams

Whether you're a thrill-seeker, a culture enthusiast, or a nature lover, Sierra Leone promises a journey like no other. Join us as we uncover the magic of this extraordinary land, where every moment is an invitation to rediscover the true essence of adventure. Let Sierra Leone be your next great escape.

The rationale for the focus on the country in this special edition is well-captured by H.E Rtd. Brigadier Julius Maada Wonie Bio, President of Sierra Leone, who described the tourism sector as a cornerstone of the country's national heritage and a pivotal engine for socio-economic development.

According to him, Sierra Leone's tourism assets are at the forefront of the nation's agenda.

For would-be investors, the article on "Tourism as a critical stimulator of Sierra Leone's economic growth and transformation" is

an investment guide and worth reading.

On page 19, Abdu Muwonge, country manager for the World Bank in Sierra Leone, in an insightful piece, shared the inspiring journey of the country's tourism renaissance, amid unveiling a multi-dimensional approach that resulted in the giant strides.

As expected, Sierra Leone Minister of Tourism, Culture, Creativity and Innovation Nabeela Farida Tunis, who is leading the campaign for visa waivers even in this issue, takes her time to unravel the country's tourism strides and action plans in detailed format on pages 20 and 21. Read to appreciate her commitment and selfless service to her country.

Madam Tunis's view on the Tourism For All campaign, the 10-year tourism master and the country's role in the UN Tourism are worth

reading too.

If you intend to visit the country soon, the article on 'Taste of Sierra Leone', 'Top Ten Attractions', the interview with Chef Fatmata Binta and the frequently asked questions about the country are handy and good to read also.

In the same way, the Salone's Fabric Fashion story connects you to the fashion and lifestyle of the people.

Again, access to this West Africa's best kept secret is better now by flight as Ethiopian Airlines had its debut flight in May to Freetown International Airport, while Idris Elba's visit and acceptance of brand ambassador, further endorse the destination as a must-visit in West Africa.

Just scroll through, you will see more things worth your reading pleasure in this bumper edition.

Cheers!

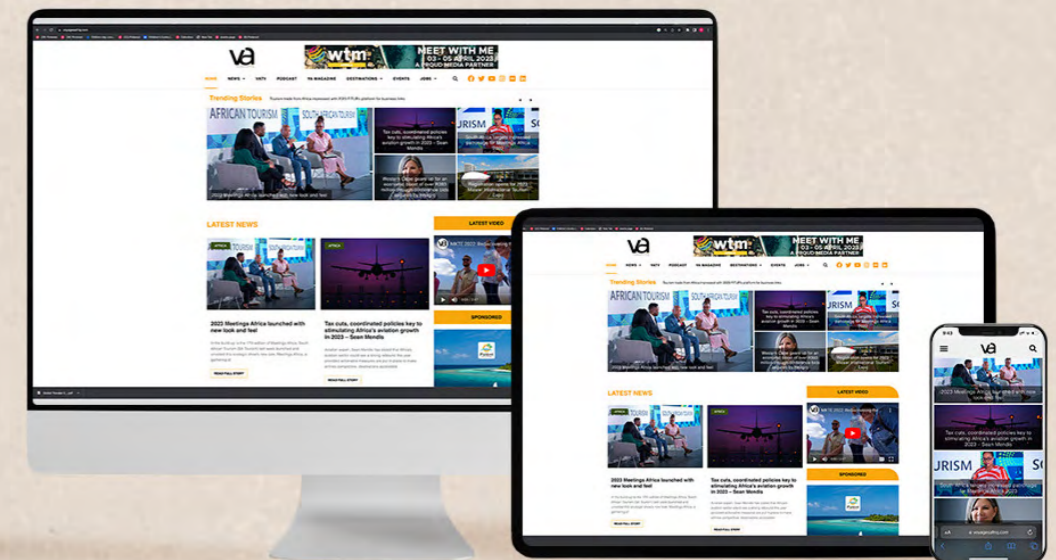


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H.E Rtd. Brigadier Julius Maada Wonie

# Official Statement of H.E. Rtd. Brigadier Julius Maada Wonie Bio on Sierra Leone's Tourism and Cultural Sector with Investment Approach

*Our Distinguished Guests, Esteemed tourist from around the world.*

It is with immense pride and unwavering commitment that I address you today on the vital subject of Sierra Leone's tourism and cultural sector, a cornerstone of our national heritage and a pivotal engine for socio-economic development. As we navigate the path to progress and prosperity, the strategic enhancement and promotion of our tourism assets remain at the forefront of our national agenda.

Our beloved nation, Sierra Leone, is blessed with unparalleled natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and a diverse array of attractions. From the pristine beaches of the Freetown Peninsula to the lush rainforests of Tiwai Island, from the historic relics of Bunce Island to the vibrant traditions of our local communities, we offer an experience that is both unique and unforgettable.

Today, I extend a heartfelt invitation to visitors from major tourist-generating regions around the world. We welcome you to explore, enjoy, and immerse yourself in the wonders of Sierra Leone. Our doors are open to travellers from every corner of the globe, promising an adventure that blends natural splendour with cultural richness.

To our potential investors, I say this: Sierra Leone is ripe with opportunities. The tourism sector is a fertile ground for investment, offering promising returns and the chance to contribute to a burgeoning industry. We are committed to creating a conducive environment for



investment, characterized by stability, transparency, and robust infrastructure. Our government is dedicated to supporting initiatives that promote sustainable tourism, ensuring that development benefits both our people and the environment.

In this spirit of growth and collaboration, I call upon our international partners to join us in this endeavour. We seek to forge strong alliances and partnerships with nations around the world, leveraging their expertise and resources to elevate our tourism sector. Together, we can create a thriving industry that not only showcases Sierra Leone's beauty but also drives economic growth, creates jobs, and fosters cultural exchange.

Our vision is clear: to position Sierra Leone as a premier tourist destination, known for its hospitality, diversity, and commitment to sustainability.

By working together, we can build a resilient, vibrant tourism industry that serves as a pillar of our national economy and a beacon of our cultural heritage.

In conclusion, I am confident that with the collective efforts of our government, private sector, international partners, and the wonderful people of Sierra Leone, we will achieve great strides in the tourism and cultural sector. Let us embrace this opportunity to show the world the true essence of Sierra Leone – a land of beauty, history, and warmth.

Thank you, and I look forward to welcoming you to our beautiful country.

**H.E. Rtd. Brigadier Julius Maada Wonie Bio**  
President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.



# Tourism as a critical stimulator of Sierra Leone's economic growth and transformation

The government recognizes tourism as a vital component of its national development strategy due to its potential to create jobs, generate foreign exchange, and stimulate other sectors of the economy. The following represents several areas within the tourism sector that are crucial to the growth agenda.

## Natural and Cultural Attractions

Sierra Leone boasts beautiful beaches, tropical rainforests, and rich cultural heritage. Attractions like the Banana Islands, Bunce Island, and the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary are unique selling points for potential investors.

## Infrastructure Development

Investing in infrastructure is crucial for the growth of tourism. This includes transportation (roads, airports), electricity, water supply, and communication networks. The development of the new airport Lungi International Airport, Tacugama Innovation Centre and the Leicester Peak Visitors Centre are examples of infrastructure investments that is benefiting the sector.

The initiative includes upgrading Leicester Peak roads (\$1,499,457) and constructing panoramic viewing decks (\$1,988,411) to showcase breathtaking city views. The Tacugama Innovation

Centre (USD 6,604,375.25), situated near the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, will integrate nature and technology to address global challenges. Additionally, Bureh Beach's facilities (\$1,074,687) will be modernized to enrich the coastal experience. These developments will significantly enhance visitor experiences and position Sierra Leone as a premier destination for both nature and innovation.

## Hospitality Training

There is a need for skilled personnel in the hospitality industry. Investments

in education and training for hotel management, culinary arts, and customer service can improve the quality of services offered to tourists.

## Eco-Tourism and Sustainable Practices

There is a growing trend in eco-tourism, with tourists increasingly seeking sustainable and environmentally friendly travel options. Investments in eco-lodges, conservation projects, and community-based tourism like the Wildlife Tourism Policy and protected area tourism business plans can appeal to this market.



Artist impression of Tacugama Innovation Centre



Artist impression of Tacugama Innovation Centre



Viewing decks at Leicester peak

## Marketing and Promotion

Investment in marketing and promotion of Sierra Leone as a tourist destination is essential. This could involve partnerships with airlines, travel agencies, and tour operators, as well as participation in international tourism fairs and online marketing campaigns.

## Public-Private Partnerships

There are opportunities for public-private partnerships (PPPs) where the government and private sector collaborate on projects. These can

be especially effective in large-scale developments such as resort areas or infrastructure projects.

## Tourism Status and overview

Sierra Leone, with its captivating natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and historical significance, has been working to position itself as a desirable tourist destination within West Africa. The country offers a variety of attractions, including pristine beaches, wildlife, cultural sites, and historical landmarks related to the transatlantic slave trade.

In the period from 2021 to 2024, the government and private sector have been making efforts to improve the infrastructure and services to cater to international tourists. This includes upgrading transportation, accommodation facilities, and promoting eco-tourism and cultural experiences.

## Culture

The culture of Sierra Leone is diverse, influenced by its various ethnic groups and their customs, traditions, and languages. Cultural expressions can





Beach View in Sierra Leone



Sierra Leone's Wildlife



A Market Day in Sierra Leone

be experienced through music, dance, festivals, and cuisine. The country is also known for its traditional crafts and artistry, including weaving, wood carving, and mask making.

Cultural events and festivals are an important aspect of Sierra Leone's tourism appeal. Events such as the Sierra Leone National Dance Troupe performances and various traditional ceremonies showcase the country's rich cultural tapestry to both locals and tourists.

**Tourism Investment**

Investment in tourism has been encouraged to develop the sector further. The government has sought to create an investment-friendly environment with incentives for potential investors in the tourism industry. This includes easing the process of acquiring land for tourism development and offering tax concessions to businesses related to tourism.

**Beaches**

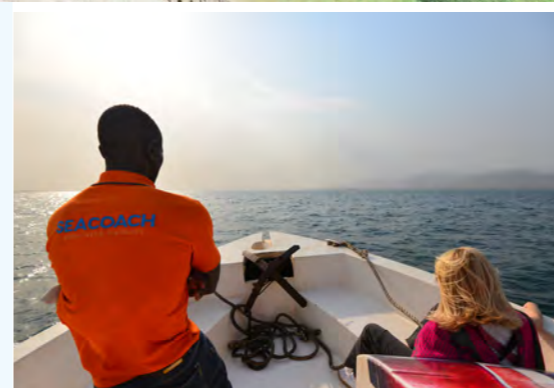
Sierra Leone is known for its beautiful beaches, such as River No. 2 Beach, Lumley Beach, and Tokeh Beach, among others. These beaches are known for their white sands and clear waters, offering opportunities for relaxation, water sports, local cuisine and whale watching along the Banana Island beach. The government and private investors have been working to improve amenities and access to these beaches to enhance the visitor experience.

**Mountains**

The country is home to the Loma Mountains, which include Mount Bintumani, the highest peak in Sierra Leone. Trekking and hiking in this region offer adventurous tourists the chance to explore the country's natural landscapes and biodiversity.

**UNESCO Monuments**

Sierra Leone has important historical sites connected to the transatlantic slave trade era. Bunce Island, for example, was a significant slave trading fortress in the 18th century. While it is not currently a UNESCO World Heritage Site, there have been discussions and efforts to nominate it due to its historical importance. The preservation and promotion of such sites are essential for educational and heritage tourism.



A Mountainous Landscape



A Group of Tourism Ministers and Industry Experts with the UN General Secretary Zurab Pololikashvili at the 2nd UN Tourism Regional Conference on Brand Africa

# Sierra Leone's Tourism Minister Calls For Visa Waivers To Encourage Tourists In-Flow Into The African Continent

Sierra Leone's Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Hon. Nabeela Farida Tunis on Monday 22nd July, 2024 informed colleague Ministers of Tourism and the African Tourism Community that the Government of Sierra Leone has embarked on rigorous policy reforms to improve the investment climate including but not limited to tax incentives, ease of business registration and infrastructural development among others.

The Minister made these remarks while addressing the 67th Meeting of the UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa and the 2nd UN Tourism Regional Conference on Brand Africa under the theme: 'Promoting Africa to unlock tourism investments and the sector's growth potential', in Livingstone, Zambia.

She indicated from the outset that the Government of Sierra Leone, since 2018 has made the tourism industry a priority growth sector that has real potential to drive sustainable development. "I would like to appreciate the continent's renewed focus on enhancing quality education and skills development to propel sustainable tourism growth on the continent. This approach will



Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Mrs. Nabeela Farida Tunis, Speaking at the 2nd UN Tourism Regional Conference on Brand Africa

certainly insulate the sector from shocks, promote inclusive growth, support sustainable development, peace and cohesion" The Minister emphasized.

On "Inclusion" and "Empowerment", Minister Tunis proudly stated without

fear of contradiction that, Sierra Leone is known for putting women issues at the front and center of its development processes. She indicated that in 2024 her Ministry trained 900 women in handicrafts, tourism entrepreneurship,



travel and hospitality among others. According to her, plans are underway to train frontline hospitality personnel later this year, and over half of the beneficiaries of the training will be women.

The Minister added that there are several challenges in the Sierra Leone tourism sector but with regional and global cooperation some of these challenges can be surmounted to unleash the true immeasurable potential of tourism.

In her usual display of courtesy, The Hon. Minister expressed her profound gratitude to the organizers of the event for the warm reception extended to her delegation and further congratulated the Minister of Tourism of Zambia, Rodney Malindi Sikumba, for providing excellent facilities to host the conference.

In concluding, Minister Tunis strongly advised her colleagues that visa waiver is a critical next step that must be taken to encourage tourists in-flow into the continent. This aspect must be addressed in tandem with the challenge of difficulty in air travel between and among African countries. "I am with the strongest conviction that with sincere cooperation among countries on the continent, these issues will be swiftly addressed".

Sierra Leone's delegation at the conference was headed by the dynamic Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Mrs Nabeela Tunis. Other members of the delegation included the General Manager of the National Tourist



Board, Mrs Fatmata Hamid-Carew, Kai Bockarie-Saquee, the Public Relations Anchor at the National Tourist Board and Prince Gaima, Tourism Specialist of the Sierra Leone Economic Diversification project. (SLEDP).



A Group Photo of Tourism Experts at the 2nd UN Tourism Regional Conference on Brand Africa



# Sierra Leone Flights Schedule

Day	SEA COACH	SEA BIRD	FLIGHT	FROM	ARR.	FLIGHT TO	DEP.	FLIGHT NUMBER
SUNDAY	05:00	05:00	ASKY AIRLINES	BANJUL	08:05	FREETOWN-ACCRA-MONROVIA	08:45	KP023
SUNDAY	13:00	13:30	ASKY AIRLINES	LOME-ACCRA	16:05	FREETOWN-BANJUL	16:45	KP022
SUNDAY	13:30	13:30	BRUSSELS AIRLINES	BRUSSELS-FREETOWN	17:00	FREETOWN-MONROVIA-BRUSSELS	18:15	SN243
SUNDAY	14:30	14:30	KENYA AIRWAYS	ACCRA	17:30	FREETOWN-ACCRA-NAIROBI	18:30	KQ510/11
SUNDAY	20:00		AIR PEACE	LAGOS	23:00	FREETOWN-LAGOS	23:40	P47760/1
SUNDAY	21:00	21:30	TURKISH AIRLINES	INSTANBUL-OUAGAGOUGOU	00:25	FREETOWN-OUAGAGOUGOU-INSTANBUL	01:25	TK533/4
MONDAY	05:00	05:00	ASKY AIRLINES	BANJUL	08:05	FREETOWN-ACCRA-LOME	08:45	KP023
MONDAY	13:00		ASKY AIRLINES	LOME-ACCRA	15:55	FREETOWN-BANJUL	16:35	KP042
MONDAY		13:30	ASKY AIRLINES	LOME-ACCRA	15:55	FREETOWN-BANJUL	16:35	KP022
MONDAY			ASKY AIRLINES	LOME-ACCRA	16:05	FREETOWN		KP040
MONDAY	16:00	16:30	AIR SENEGAL	DAKAR	18:55	FREETOWN-BANJUL	19:50	HC213/4
TUESDAY	05:00		ASKY AIRLINES	FREETOWN	08:05	FREETOWN-ACCRA-LOME	08:45	KP041
TUESDAY		05:00	ASKY AIRLINES	BANJUL		FREETOWN-ACCRA-LOME	08:45	KP023
TUESDAY			ASKY AIRLINES	BANJUL	08:30	FREETOWN-ACCRA-LOME	09:10	KP043
TUESDAY	13:00	13:30	ASKY AIRLINES	LOME-ACCRA-FREETOWN	16:05	FREETOWN-BANJUL	16:45	KP022
WEDNESDAY	05:00	05:00	ASKY AIRLINES	BANJUL	08:45	FREETOWN-LOME	08:45	KP023
WEDNESDAY			ASKY AIRLINES	LOME-ACCRA-FREETOWN	16:05	FREETOWN		KP040
WEDNESDAY	13:00		ASKY AIRLINES	LOME-ACCRA-FREETOWN	15:55	FREETOWN-BANJUL		KP042
WEDNESDAY		13:30	ASKY AIRLINES	LOME-ACCRA	15:55	FREETOWN	16:35	KP022
WEDNESDAY	14:30	14:30	KENYA AIRWAYS	NAIROBI-ACCRA	17:30	FREETOWN-ACCRA-NAIROBI	18:30	KQ510/11
WEDNESDAY	16:00	16:30	AIR SENEGAL	DAKAR	18:55	BANJUL-FREETOWN	19:50	HC213/4
THURSDAY	05:00	05:00	ASKY AIRLINES	BANJUL	08:10	FREETOWN-LOME	08:45	KP023
THURSDAY			ASKY AIRLINES	LOME-ACCRA-FREETOWN	08:30	FREETOWN-BANJUL	09:10	KP043
THURSDAY	13:00	13:30	ASKY AIRLINES	LOME-ACCRA-FREETOWN	16:05	FREETOWN-ACCRA-LOME	16:45	KP022
THURSDAY-FRI	21:00	21:30	TURKISH AIRLINES	INSTANBUL-OUAGADOUGU	00:25	FREETOWN-OUAGADOUGU-INSTANBUL	01:25	TK533/4
FRIDAY	05:00	05:00	ASKY AIRLINES	BANJUL	08:10	FREETOWN-ACCRA-LOME	08:45	KP023

Day	SEA COACH	SEA BIRD	FLIGHT	FROM	ARR.	FLIGHT TO	DEP.	FLIGHT NUMBER
FRIDAY		13:30	ASKY AIRLINES	BANJUL	15:55	FREETOWN-ACCRA-LOME	16:35	KP022
FRIDAY	13:00		ASKY AIRLINES	LOME-ACCRA-FREETOWN	15:55	FREETOWN-BANJUL	16:35	KP042
FRIDAY			ASKY AIRLINES	ACCRA	16:05	FREETOWN-ACCRA-LOME		KP040
FRIDAY	13:30	13:30	BRUSSELS AIRLINES	BRUSSELS-FREETOWN	18:55	FREETOWN-ROBERT-BRUSSELS	18:15	SN243
FRIDAY	14:30	14:30	KENYA AIRWAYS	ACCRA	17:30	FREETOWN-ACCRA-NAIROBI	18:30	KQ510/11
FRIDAY	16:00	16:30	AIR SENEGAL	DAKAR	18:55	FREETOWN-BANJUL	19:50	HC 213/4
FRIDAY	20:00		AIR PEACE	LAGOS	23:00	FREETOWN-LAGOS	23:30	P47760/1
SATURDAY	05:00	05:00	ASKY AIRLINES	BANJUL	08:05	FREETOWN-ACCRA-LOME	08:45	KP023
SATURDAY			ASKY AIRLINES	LOME-ACCRA-FREETOWN	08:30	FREETOWN	09:10	KP043
SATURDAY	13:00	13:30	ASKY AIRLINES	LOME-ACCRA-FREETOWN	16:05	FREETOWN	16:45	KP022
SATURDAY	16:00	16:30	AIR SENEGAL	DAKAR	18:55	BANJUL-FREETOWN	19:50	HC213/4
SATURDAY-SUN	21:00	21:30	TURKISH AIRLINES	INSTANBUL-OUAGADOUGU	00:25	FREETOWN-OUAGADOUGU-INSTANBUL	01:25	TK533/4
TUESDAY	13:30	13:30	BRUSSELS AIRLINES	BRUSSELS-FREETOWN	17:00	FREETOWN-ROBERT-BRUSSELS	18:15	SN243
TUESDAY	14:30	14:30	KENYA AIRWAYS	NAIROBI-ACCRA	17:30	FREETOWN-ACCRA	18:30	KQ510/11
TUESDAY	21:00	21:30	TURKISH AIRLINE	OUAGADOUGOU	00:25	FREETOWN-OUAGADOUGOU	01:25	THY533/4
TUESDAY	23:00	23:00	ROYAL AIR MAROC	CASABLANCA	02:05	FREETOWN-CASABLANCA	03:05	AT565/4
TUESDAY-WED	23:00		ROYAL AIR MAROC	CASABLANCA	02:05	CASSABLANCA	03:05	AT563/4
WEDNESDAY	20:00		AIR PEACE	LAGOS	23:00	FREETOWN-LAGOS	23:40	P47760/1
THURSDAY-FRI	23:00	23:00	ROYAL AIR MAROC	CASABLANCA	02:05	FREETOWN-CASSABLANCA	03:05	AT565/4
SATURDAY-SUN	23:00	23:00	ROYAL AIR MAROC	CASABLANCA	02:05	FREETOWN-CASABLACA	03:05	AT563/4

Source: <https://www.visitsierraleone.org/sierra-leone-flights-schedule/>

# Pointe noire We are back!

Starting October 2, 2024



## Igniting Tourism in Sierra Leone Through a Multi-Dimensional Approach

As the World Bank's Country Manager for Sierra Leone, I am honoured to share the inspiring journey of Sierra Leone's tourism renaissance—a multi-faceted approach that intertwines climate change resilience, cultural preservation, heritage celebration, and dedicated conservation efforts. This holistic strategy not only aims to boost ecotourism but also to ignite an economic revolution that will uplift communities across our beautiful nation.

### Climate Change Resilience

Sierra Leone is acutely aware of the global challenges posed by climate change. Our nation, blessed with rich biodiversity and stunning natural landscapes, stands at the forefront of climate resilience efforts. By investing in sustainable infrastructure and promoting eco-friendly practices, we ensure that our tourism assets are preserved for future generations. Initiatives such as reforestation projects, sustainable agriculture, and renewable energy development are pivotal in safeguarding our environment while providing tourists with eco-conscious travel experiences

### Cultural Preservation and Heritage Celebration

Our cultural heritage is a tapestry of vibrant traditions, music, dance, and artisanal crafts that reflect the soul of Sierra Leone. By prioritizing the preservation of our cultural heritage, we offer visitors an authentic and immersive experience. Investment in cultural festivals, heritage sites, and local crafts not only enriches the tourist experience but also empowers local communities. These efforts create a sense of pride and ownership among our people, fostering a deeper connection to our roots and traditions.

### Dedicated Conservation Efforts

Sierra Leone's conservation efforts are a testament to our commitment to protecting our natural heritage. National parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and marine reserves are being meticulously managed to ensure the survival of endangered species and the preservation of our unique ecosystems. Ecotourism initiatives, such as guided wildlife tours and sustainable fishing practices, provide visitors with a chance to witness the beauty of nature while contributing to its conservation. These efforts are crucial in maintaining the

delicate balance between tourism and environmental stewardship.

### Economic Revolution through Ecotourism

The renaissance of Sierra Leone's tourism sector has the potential to drive an economic revolution. By attracting investments in sustainable tourism infrastructure, creating job opportunities, and promoting local entrepreneurship, we can catalyze economic growth. Community-based tourism projects, such as eco-lodges and cultural tours, empower local residents and ensure that the benefits of tourism are distributed equitably. This inclusive approach fosters social cohesion and economic resilience, paving the way for a brighter future for all Sierra Leoneans.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone's approach to tourism is a beacon of hope and innovation. By embracing climate resilience, celebrating our rich culture, committing to conservation, and driving economic development through ecotourism, we are crafting a sustainable and prosperous future. I invite travellers from around the world to discover the hidden gems of Sierra Leone and join us on this transformative journey. Together, we can preserve our heritage, protect our environment, and propel our nation towards a thriving and sustainable future.



**Abdu Muwonge**  
Country Manager for Sierra Leone  
World Bank (AFWVP)

# Sierra Leone's Tourism Renaissance:

## The Visionary Leadership of Minister Nabeela Farida Tunis

It has been a year since President Julius Maada Bio appointed Nabeela Tunis to lead the tourism sector. Since then, she has introduced pragmatic initiatives aimed at transforming Sierra Leone's tourism industry into one that is sustainable, inclusive and encourages greater private sector participation.

Sierra Leone, a nation endowed with stunning landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and diverse wildlife, is poised for a transformative journey under the stewardship of Madam Nabeela Farida Tunis, the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Creativity, and Innovation. Her strategic vision encompasses a multifaceted approach to elevate Sierra Leone's tourism sector, with a particular emphasis on domestic tourism, inclusivity, local stakeholder engagement, international profile enhancement, innovation, and cultural promotion. This detailed write-up delves into her comprehensive plans and the anticipated impact on the country's tourism landscape.

### Domestic Tourism Awareness Campaign

Minister Tunis recognizes the untapped potential of domestic tourism as a cornerstone for sustainable growth. Her campaign focuses on raising awareness among Sierra Leoneans about the treasures within their own borders. By promoting local travel, she aims to foster a sense of national pride and create a stable economic base for the tourism industry.

#### Key initiatives include:

- **Educational Programs:** Collaborating with schools and universities to incorporate tourism education into curricula.
- **Media Campaigns:** Utilizing social media, radio, and television to

highlight lesser-known destinations and travel experiences within Sierra Leone.

- **Community Engagement:** Hosting town halls and workshops to educate local communities about the benefits of tourism and how they can participate.

### Inclusive Tourism Campaign

Inclusivity lies at the heart of Minister Tunis's vision. Her plans ensure that tourism benefits are widely distributed across all demographics, including marginalized groups.

#### Strategies include:

- **Accessibility Improvements:** Enhancing infrastructure to accommodate tourists with disabilities.
- **Diverse Tourism Offerings:** Developing tourism products that cater to various interests and backgrounds, from adventure tourism to cultural experiences.
- **Community-Based Tourism:** Encouraging local communities to develop and manage their own tourism projects, ensuring that profits stay within the community.

Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Mrs. Nabeela Farida Tunis



### Engaging Local Stakeholders

To ensure that the tourism sector thrives, Minister Tunis is committed to involving local stakeholders from regions and districts across the country. This approach not only decentralizes tourism development but also empowers local entities.



#### Actions include:

- **Stakeholder Meetings:** Regular consultations with local leaders, business owners, and community representatives to gather input and build consensus.
- **Capacity Building:** Providing training and resources to local stakeholders to enhance their ability to contribute to and benefit from tourism.
- **Regional Development Plans:** Tailoring tourism development strategies to the unique strengths and needs of each region.

### Raising International Profile

To attract international tourists, Minister Tunis plans to enhance Sierra Leone's presence in key tourist-generating hubs around the world.

#### Efforts include:

- **International Marketing Campaigns:** Leveraging digital marketing, international travel fairs, and partnerships with global tour operators to showcase Sierra Leone's attractions.
- **Brand Ambassadors:** Enlisting celebrities and influencers to promote Sierra Leone as a must-visit destination.
- **Travel Incentives:** Offering special packages and incentives to international tourists to encourage visits.

### Innovation and Technology in Tourism

Modernizing the tourism sector through innovation and technology is a priority for Minister Tunis. By integrating digital solutions, she aims to streamline operations and enhance visitor experiences.

#### Initiatives include:

- **Smart Tourism Platforms:** Developing mobile apps and online portals that provide comprehensive information on destinations, bookings, and travel itineraries.
- **Virtual Tours:** Creating virtual reality experiences that allow potential tourists to explore Sierra Leone's attractions remotely.
- **Data Analytics:** Utilizing data to understand tourist behaviour and preferences, thereby improving service delivery and marketing efforts.

### Cultural Promotion

Sierra Leone's rich cultural heritage is a powerful draw for tourists. Minister Tunis plans to uncover and market these cultural traits globally.

#### Projects include:

- **Cultural Festivals:** Organizing events that celebrate Sierra Leone's traditions, music, dance, and art, attracting both locals and

international visitors.

- **Cultural Heritage Sites:** Restoring and promoting historical sites and monuments.
- **Artisan Support:** Encouraging local artisans to create and sell traditional crafts, providing them with a platform to reach a global audience.

### Private Sector Partnership and Collaboration

The private sector plays a crucial role in the tourism ecosystem. Minister Tunis's strategy includes fostering strong partnerships with private enterprises to drive growth.

#### Collaboration efforts include:

- **Investment Incentives:** Offering tax breaks and other incentives to attract private investment in tourism infrastructure and services.
- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Collaborating on projects that require significant investment and expertise, such as hotel development and transportation networks.
- **Tourism Clusters:** Creating clusters of tourism-related businesses to enhance service delivery and create a seamless visitor experience.

### Local Packaging and Tours

To provide a holistic and immersive experience for tourists, Minister Tunis emphasizes the development of local tour packages.

**Actions include:**

**Customized Tours:** Working with local tour operators to create tailored packages that highlight unique regional attractions.

**Sustainable Practices:** Ensuring that tours are designed with sustainability in mind, preserving the environment and respecting local cultures.

**Quality Assurance:** Regularly monitoring and evaluating tours to maintain high standards and customer satisfaction.



Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Mrs. Nabeela Farida Tunis

### Anticipated Impact on Sierra Leone's Tourism Landscape

Minister Nabeela Farida Tunis's strategic vision is expected to bring about significant and multifaceted impacts on Sierra Leone's tourism landscape:

**Economic Growth and Job Creation:** By fostering both domestic and international tourism, the initiatives are poised to stimulate the economy, creating jobs and supporting local businesses across the country.

**Cultural Preservation and Promotion:** The focus on cultural heritage will not only attract tourists but also preserve and promote Sierra Leone's unique traditions and history, reinforcing national identity and pride.

**Inclusivity and Community Empowerment:** Emphasizing inclusivity ensures that the benefits of tourism are widespread, reaching marginalized communities and promoting social equity. Community-based tourism projects will empower locals, giving them control over tourism development and revenue.

**Sustainable Development:** The emphasis on sustainable practices will help protect Sierra Leone's natural and cultural resources, ensuring that tourism development does not come at the expense of the environment or local communities.

**Enhanced International Profile:** Through targeted marketing and partnerships, Sierra Leone's visibility



on the global tourism map will increase, attracting more international visitors and enhancing the country's reputation as a desirable travel destination.

**Innovation and Technological Advancements:** The integration of technology will modernize the tourism sector, improving efficiency, accessibility, and the overall visitor experience, making Sierra Leone a competitive destination in the global market.

**Strengthened Private Sector Collaboration:** By engaging the private sector through incentives and partnerships, the tourism infrastructure and services will see significant improvements, leading to a more robust and resilient tourism industry.

**Regional Development:** Tailoring tourism strategies to regional strengths will ensure balanced development across the country, preventing over-concentration in certain areas and promoting regional equity.

Minister Nabeela Farida Tunis's visionary leadership promises a renaissance for Sierra Leone's tourism sector. Her comprehensive and inclusive approach, centred around sustainability, innovation, and cultural promotion, sets a solid foundation for long-term growth and prosperity. As these initiatives take root, Sierra Leone is set to become not only a cherished destination for tourists but also a beacon of sustainable and inclusive tourism development.



# A message from the country's Ministry of Transport

I am delighted to extend warm greetings from the Ministry of Transport and Aviation of Sierra Leone. As we strive to elevate our nation's profile on the global stage, the promotion of tourism stands as a pivotal pillar in our economic and cultural development.

Sierra Leone, with its rich history, vibrant culture, and breathtaking landscapes, holds immense potential as a premier tourist destination and eco-tourism. From the pristine beaches of the Freetown Peninsula to the lush rainforests of the interior, our country offers unique experiences that captivate and inspire visitors from around the world.

In our efforts to bolster tourism, the Ministry of Transport and Aviation is committed to enhancing our transportation infrastructure, ensuring safe, efficient, and convenient travel for all. We have invested in the modernization of our airports, upgrading road networks, and improving maritime services to facilitate seamless connectivity across the country.

The tourism industry recognizes that the Single African Air Transport Market is the surest means to providing significant economic and social benefits. It will facilitate tourism, trade, connectivity, generate economic growth, provides jobs, improve living standards, alleviates poverty, provides a lifeline for remote communities and enables a rapid response when disaster occur. There is no doubt that liberalizing the air transport market can stimulate intra-African tourism, which is needed the most for cultural reawakening and collective self-discovery.

However, the success of our tourism initiatives relies on the spirit of collaboration and partnership. We invite stakeholders from the public and private sectors, local and international investors, and development partners to join hands with us in this exciting venture. Together, we can create a sustainable and thriving tourism industry that benefits not only our economy but also our communities and environment.

We look forward to

working with you to showcase the beauty and hospitality of Sierra Leone to the world. Let us embark on this journey of transformation and growth, ensuring that every visitor leaves with unforgettable memories and a desire to return.

**Amb Alhaji Fanday Turay Esq**  
Minister of Transport and Aviation



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## Tourism For All: An all inclusive campaign that highlights Sierra Leone globally

Considering the commitment to boost tourism awareness and growth in domestic and international tourism, the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs (MTCA) is making tourism to count in the country's economy.

Things are looking up in Sierra Leone, especially in the tourism sector, as more visitors through the West African country for leisure and excitement now than before.

But the MTCA is not relenting on its pivotal role of promoting and preserving Sierra Leone's rich cultural heritage and natural beauty.

It is rather taking on bigger responsibilities, especially with the recent launch of a Tourism for All campaign; a year-long activities plan, which encompasses a wide range of events, initiatives, and programmes aimed at showcasing and driving demand for Sierra Leone's cultural diversity and natural wonders.

Each month of the Tourism for All campaign features a different theme linked to key messages and targeted activities that are being implemented in close collaboration between MTCA and the tourism private sector, MDAs, and other strategic partners.

However, the overarching goal of the Tourism for All campaign is to instil a sense of national ownership, promoting peace and cohesion, widespread movement around Sierra Leone.

It encourages participation in the MTCA's Strategic Pillars and sustainable tourism development activities such as Women Entrepreneurship Empowerment, Youth Creativity and Innovation, and Community Beatification.

According to the MTCA, the above is being achieved through a participatory and inclusive approach supported by digital and traditional marketing, stakeholder engagement and outreach, volunteerism and awareness raising activities that are designed to create buy-in and co-ownership.

It is expected to enable the campaign partners to collectively demonstrate the multiplier effect of tourism and the achievement of the campaign objectives.

The campaign is anchored on four Strategic Pillars, with the first being to share knowledge, so that stakeholders at all levels will understand the value of tourism.

At the end, it is hoped to generate some basic level of unaided awareness of the value of tourism to a minimum of 3.5 million Sierra Leoneans, diaspora, and other international visitors.

The second pillar is to encourage movement to and within Sierra Leone by increasing the affordability and value of the tourism products for the domestic and international markets.

In line with the above, Tourism for All campaign will contribute to the achievement of the Sierra Leone Strategic Tourism Plan resulting in an increase in visitor arrivals, tourism receipts and jobs.

But the third pillar demonstrates the value of tourism through a yearlong portfolio of tourism-centric activities.

It is expected to successfully implement all the Tourism for All activities that are planned and track the results associated with each through key performance indicators.

Lastly, the fourth pillar demonstrates the value of inter-ministerial, multi-stakeholder collaboration to unlock the full potential of the campaign. It is aimed at establishing an inter-ministerial platform and secure inter-ministerial, multi-stakeholder collaboration at all levels with key campaign partners leading select campaign activities.

Of course, the MTCA that envisioned the strategic pillars also expects outcomes. Foremost of the outcomes is that the Tourism for All Campaign will contribute to the Government of Sierra Leone's BIG FIVE Initiative in: Inclusive Economic Growth, Human Capital Development,



Youth Empowerment, Investing in Innovation, as well as contribute to the UNSDGs.

His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone is excited too at the campaign and overall impact of tourism on the country's economy.

"The overarching goal of instituting a robust culture of domestic tourism in Sierra Leone is to build the bedrock on which tourism can flourish and deliver its benefits of economic diversification, prosperity, social cohesion and tolerance. The prioritization of the tourism sector as a key enabler in the 2024 - 2028 National Development Agenda has escalated the pressure for the sector to deliver. Tailoring tourism into the BIG FIVE is a pathway to achieve sustainable and radical socio-economic transformation," President Bio said.

In the same vein, Nabeela Farida Tunis, Sierra Leone Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, noted that the potential for the tourism sector in Sierra Leone to become a fundamental pillar of the country's transformation and economic prosperity is huge.

"Sierra Leone is now being recognized as one of the 'World's Greatest Places to Visit' in the global marketplace. It is now high time for Sierra Leoneans to gain an understanding of the value of tourism and the tangible benefits they can derive from the sector. The Tourism for All campaign is centred on making it possible for all Sierra Leoneans to benefit from tourism," Minister Tunis said.

## Sierra Leone aims to transform tourism industry with comprehensive 10-year tourism master plan

In May of this year, the Sierra Leone government launched its inaugural 10-year Tourism Strategic Master Plan. This initiative forms part of the country's ongoing efforts to reposition itself as a tourism hub, attracting visitors and harnessing the potential of an industry that could be pivotal for economic growth and transformation.

The multi-layered plan was discussed by the country's Minister of Tourism and Culture, Nabeela Tunis, on the VA Tourism Podcast with host Kojo Bentum-Williams.

"The components of the Tourism Strategic Master Plan speak to the African continent agenda on tourism. We do have a strong component on developing our tourism development areas, we have a strong component on creating jobs and ensuring that women have dignity. We have a very strong component on conservation and ecotourism is one of our key strengths within our Tourism Master Plan," she said.

According to the Minister, much of the plan's components are already being implemented, with a focus on revitalising private sector participation in Sierra Leone's tourism landscape.

Tunis explained: "Currently, the document does state that we need to have reforms within the tourism landscape in Sierra Leone, and having a private sector-driven approach is something that we are focusing on. Interestingly, within the Ministry itself,

**“We have mapped out tourism development areas with the Ministry of Lands already, we have received the title deeds of one of the tourism development areas that have been outlined in the plan. We've also started to hold our tourism council meetings with other ministries because the tourism sector is quite diverse and it's intertwined with several other sectors”**



we've already done a complete overhaul of our structure to meet the current demands of the tourism landscape. We now have an expanded structure which speaks to private sector enhancement and resource mobilisation."

"Regardless of that, we are working very closely with the private sector, organising them into a federation, so that it's an effective body that investors and the government can also relate to, because we do know that the private sector is more or less actively involved in the tourism landscape. They are the majority investors within the tourism landscape."

Additionally, the Minister noted that they have identified tourism development areas and commenced deliberations with other ministries as part of a broad stakeholder approach aimed at elevating the country's tourism sector.

"We have mapped out tourism development areas with the Ministry of Lands already, we have received the title deeds of one of the tourism development areas that have been outlined in the plan.

We've also started to hold our tourism council meetings with other ministries because the tourism sector is quite diverse and it's intertwined with several other sectors," Tunis emphasised.

The master plan is accompanied by a five-year implementation plan, which she mentioned is a positive step forward for the country in terms of engaging with investors and charting a course towards promoting tourism in Sierra Leone.

In line with the ongoing transformation agenda, Sierra Leone also welcomed operations by Ethiopian Airlines earlier this year, a significant move aimed at making the West African country more accessible.

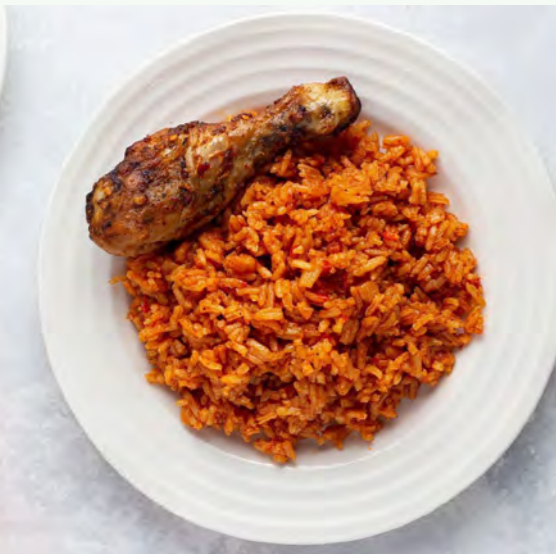
Beyond this, Nabeela Tunis disclosed, "We are now working on an e-visa system, we are working on what other countries have done to completely remove visa protocols for all African countries and we are also working on having specific packages for other countries where we have large travellers and large visitors coming in."

# Taste of Sierra Leone:

## A Journey through Sierra Leone's Unique Gastronomy

Sierra Leone, a vibrant West African nation, is a goldmine of culinary delights that tantalize the taste buds and offer a rich cultural experience. The country's diverse regions – East, West, South, and North – each contribute unique flavours and cooking techniques to the national cuisine. From the mouth-watering sauces to the hearty stews and vegetable dishes, let's embark on a gastronomic journey through Sierra Leone and explore some of its most iconic dishes.

### Salone Jollof: A Festive Staple



No celebration in Sierra Leone is complete without Salone Jollof. This iconic dish, a symbol of West African cuisine, is a flavorful blend of rice cooked in a rich tomato sauce with a medley of spices. The Sierra Leonean version often features either meat or fish, with chicken being a popular choice. A hint of bay leaf and garlic elevates the dish, while precise seasoning brings out its robust flavors. Each bite of Salone Jollof is a harmonious symphony of taste, making it a beloved staple at gatherings and special occasions.

### Foofoo and Sawa: A Comforting Combo

Foofoo, a starchy side made from pounded cassava or plantains, is a cornerstone of Sierra Leonean meals. It pairs perfectly with Sawa, a sour, savory soup that can be made with seafood like crabs and shrimps, or meats such as cow and goat. The combination of Foofoo and Sawa is both comforting and satisfying, reflecting the heart and soul of Sierra Leonean home cooking. The tangy notes of Sawa soup, balanced by the neutral, smooth texture of Foofoo, create a delightful contrast that is both nourishing and delicious.



### Pemahun and Laffidi: Local Power Cuisines

Pemahun and Laffidi are two traditional dishes that pack a punch with their flavors and nutritional value. Pemahun, a rich blend of potato leaves shredded over the rice interspersed with palm oil and Maggie or pounded herring. Often made with fish or showcases the depth of Sierra Leonean spices and cooking techniques. Laffidi, on the other hand, is a hearty dish made from grains like rice or bulgur, mixed with vegetables and sometimes meat or fish. These dishes are not only delicious but also embody the resourcefulness and creativity of Sierra Leonean cooks.



### Cassava Leaves and Potato Leaves: Green Goodness

Vegetables play a crucial role in Sierra Leonean cuisine, with cassava leaves and potato leaves being among the most popular. These leafy greens are typically cooked with fish or meat, resulting in deeply flavorful and nutrient-rich dishes. The cassava leaf stew, often simmered with palm oil, offers a unique, slightly bitter taste that is balanced by the richness of the oil and the umami from the meat or fish. Potato leaves, on the other hand, provide a milder flavor and are often cooked with a variety of spices to enhance their natural taste.

### Krain Krain: A Vegetable Delight

Krain Krain, a dish made from jute leaves, is another vegetable-based staple in Sierra Leone. It is commonly cooked with fish or meat and served with rice. The slimy texture of the jute leaves, combined with the savory broth, makes Krain Krain a distinctive and beloved dish. Its unique consistency and rich flavor profile make it a must-try for anyone exploring Sierra Leonean cuisine.

### Banka Soup and Peanut Soup: Hearty and Rich

Banka soup, made from palm oil nuts, is a rich and hearty dish that is a true representation of Sierra Leonean culinary tradition. The thick, nutty soup is often paired with fish or meat and served with rice or Foofoo. Peanut soup, another popular choice, is creamy, slightly sweet, and deeply satisfying. Both soups highlight the use of nuts in Sierra Leonean cooking, adding a rich depth of flavor to their respective dishes.

### Tola: The Ultimate Comfort Food

Tola, a traditional Sierra Leonean stew, is a comforting and hearty dish that combines meat or fish with a variety of vegetables and spices. The slow-cooked stew allows the flavors to meld together, creating a rich and satisfying meal that warms the soul. Tola is often enjoyed with rice or Foofoo, making it a versatile and beloved dish across the country.



### A Beverage to Remember

No meal in Sierra Leone is complete without a refreshing drink. Whether it's a cool Coke, a bottle of Star beer, or a glass of local Palm wine, the right beverage can enhance the dining experience. Palm wine, in particular, offers a unique taste that is both sweet and slightly tangy,

providing a perfect complement to the rich and spicy flavors of Sierra Leonean cuisine.

Sierra Leone's gastronomy is a vibrant tapestry of flavors, textures, and aromas that reflect the country's rich cultural heritage and culinary traditions. From the festive Salone Jollof to the comforting Foofoo and Sawa, each dish tells a story of community, resourcefulness, and a deep love for food. Whether you're savor



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## Sierra Leone joins ATTA® demonstrating commitment to growing tourism

ATTA® welcomes the National Tourism Board of Sierra Leone as its newest member, as the destination is forging links with international partners and investing in its tourism future. This milestone demonstrates the commitment of the Sierra Leone government to expanding sustainable tourism under Minister Tunis' leadership.

"We feel privileged to welcome Sierra Leone into the ATTA® membership family at this important moment as they actively promote the country's reinvigorated tourism brand and offerings internationally," said Jon Danks, CEO of ATTA®.

"Together we'll use the power of our platforms and network to connect, support and promote the country's inspiring tourism brand to a worldwide audience. Sierra Leone now has valuable new channels to showcase its vibrant culture, wildlife, beaches, nature, and warm hospitality. Together we aim to support Sierra Leone's hard-working tourism industry to sustainably grow visitor numbers and benefit local communities for the long term."

Sierra Leone is determined to revitalise its tourism industry, with investments pouring into critical infrastructure and strategic marketing. New hotels and ecolodges, catering to international visitors, are springing up along stunning beaches and within nature reserves – a haven for eco-tourism activities like chimpanzee tracking.

The country is also spotlighting its rich

cultural heritage, attracting the African diaspora and history enthusiasts interested in the transatlantic slave trade era and beyond. Authentic cultural experiences foster meaningful connections between visitors and local communities.

A recently launched 10-year tourism brand and strategy amplifies Sierra Leone's global visibility, setting the stage for a surge in traveller numbers. With its natural attractions and warm hospitality, Sierra Leone's tourism prospects look promising.

The recent appointment of Her Excellency Minister Nabeela Tunis further signals the government's commitment to sustainable tourism development. Her background spans diverse sectors, including development, and international diplomacy, equipping her with a unique set of skills to champion Sierra Leone's tourism potential.

"This, along with the warm hospitality of the Sierra Leonean people, creates a foundation for the industry to flourish," adds Danks.

"During this important moment in Sierra Leone's tourism development, we are delighted to be joining ATTA® in this strategic partnership," Minister Tunis said.

"We feel honoured to be part of such an esteemed network of partners dedicated to promoting African tourism, and we're proud to be flying the flag for West Africa, which is often underrepresented in the tourism sphere. We look forward to a productive and inspiring year ahead, connecting with ATTA®'s wealth of trade,



media and industry members who share Sierra Leone's passion for responsible tourism in Africa."

Minister Tunis added, "Following last year's successful show, we also look forward to exhibiting at Experience Africa again in 2024."

ITB Berlin, the world's largest travel trade show, provides the perfect platform for Sierra Leone and ATTA® to solidify their partnership. This strategic move marks Sierra Leone's official entry into the ATTA® community, granting it access to valuable resources and a global network of industry leaders.

Through participation in events by ATTA®'s events division, Experience Africa Events, Sierra Leone will gain exceptional opportunities to showcase its diverse offerings to ATTA® members and influential media, paving the way for enhanced visibility for the destination.

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## Ethiopian Airlines Lands at Freetown International Airport: A New Dawn for Sierra Leone's Tourism

In a historic milestone for Sierra Leone, Ethiopian Airlines made its maiden landing at the Freetown International Airport on Friday, May 31, 2024. The arrival of the Boeing 787, carrying 100 passengers from diverse international origins, marks the airline's 65th destination, offering smart connections to Asia, Europe, Africa, and America.

The ceremonial event was graced by prominent figures, including the Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Mrs. Nabeela Farida Tunis, the Minister of Transport and Aviation, Retired Colonel Ambassador Alhaji Fanday Turay Esq., the Director General of the Sierra Leone Civil Aviation Authority, Madam Musayero Barrie, and the Vice President of Ethiopian Airlines, Mr. H. Mamo. Their presence underscored the significance of this development for Sierra Leone's aviation and tourism sectors.

In her address, Mrs. Nabeela Farida Tunis expressed optimism about the potential surge in tourist arrivals facilitated by Ethiopian Airlines. She highlighted the strategic importance of the airline's timely entry, which is expected to enhance traffic from key tourist-generating regions, including Asia, Africa, and America. "This is a great



Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Mrs. Nabeela Farida Tunis

potential to increase the traffic from newly tourist generating regions," she stated, emphasizing the broadening horizons for Sierra Leone's tourism industry.

Mrs. Tunis extended her heartfelt gratitude to Ambassador Fanday Turay and his team for their unwavering commitment to ensuring the successful and safe landing of the airline. She also commended the Director General of

Civil Aviation, Madam Musayero Barrie, for her relentless support in making this historic event possible.

Ethiopian Airlines will schedule flights to Sierra Leone three times a week, significantly improving connectivity and accessibility for international travelers. This increased frequency is expected to attract more tourists and investors, thereby stimulating economic growth and development in Sierra Leone.

The Vice President of Ethiopian Airlines, Mr. H. Mamo, expressed the airline's enthusiasm about expanding its network to include Sierra Leone. He reiterated Ethiopian Airlines' commitment to providing reliable and efficient services, thereby fostering stronger ties between Sierra Leone and other parts of the world.

In her closing remarks, Mrs. Tunis shed light on the vast tourism potential of Sierra Leone. She encouraged international tourists to explore the country's rich cultural heritage, pristine beaches, and breathtaking landscapes. She also highlighted the role of various tour operators and ground handlers in ensuring a seamless travel experience from the airport to various attractions within the country.

As Sierra Leone welcomes Ethiopian Airlines, there is renewed hope and anticipation for a vibrant tourism sector that promises to showcase the country's unique charm to the world. The collaboration between the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, the Ministry of Transport and Aviation, and



Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Mrs. Nabeela Farida Tunis with Ethiopian Airlines Board Members

Ethiopian Airlines heralds a new era of connectivity and growth for Sierra Leone.

The historic landing of Ethiopian Airlines at Freetown International Airport is more than just an addition to the airline's network; it is a beacon of hope for Sierra

Leone's tourism industry. With strategic partnerships and increased connectivity, Sierra Leone is poised to become a top destination for international tourists seeking unique and enriching experiences. The future looks promising as the nation embarks on this exciting journey of transformation and growth.





# Sierra Leone's role in UN Tourism:

## A reflection of the adoption of global tourism ideals

Sierra Leone's role at the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism) encompasses a broad range of activities and responsibilities aimed at promoting and developing sustainable tourism within its borders and in collaboration with other nations. Below is a detailed outline of Sierra Leone's involvement in various aspects of tourism and travel through conventions, policies, and protocols.

### Tourism and Travel by Convention

Sierra Leone actively participates in international conventions and agreements facilitated by the

UN Tourism to promote sustainable tourism practices. These conventions often focus on:

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Aligning tourism strategies with the SDGs, particularly goals related to sustainable economic growth, environmental conservation, and social inclusiveness.
- International Standards: Implementing international tourism standards and best practices to enhance the quality and competitiveness of its tourism sector.



### Policies and Protocols on Tourism

Sierra Leone has adopted several policies and protocols to foster tourism development, which include:

- National Tourism Policy: A comprehensive framework that outlines the strategic direction for tourism development, focusing on sustainability, community involvement, and economic benefits.
- Tourism Master Plan: A long-term plan that details infrastructure development, marketing strategies, and investment opportunities to boost tourism.

### Hospitality

In the hospitality sector, Sierra Leone emphasizes:

- Quality Standards: Establishing and enforcing standards for accommodations, restaurants, and other hospitality services to ensure high-quality experiences for tourists.
- Training and Capacity Building: Providing training programs for hospitality professionals to improve service quality and customer satisfaction.

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### Environmental and Ecotourism

Sierra Leone is committed to promoting ecotourism and environmental conservation through:

- Protected Areas: Developing and maintaining national parks and reserves to attract eco-tourists while preserving biodiversity.
- Sustainable Practices: Encouraging tourism operators to adopt sustainable practices that minimize environmental impact.

### Tourism Finance

To support the tourism sector financially, Sierra Leone engages in:

- Investment Incentives: Offering tax breaks and other incentives to attract both local and foreign investment in tourism infrastructure and services.
- Funding Programs: Collaborating with international financial institutions and development partners to secure funding for tourism projects.

### Tourism Governance

Effective governance is key to Sierra Leone's tourism strategy, which includes:

- Tourism Boards and Agencies: Establishing bodies like the National Tourist Board to oversee tourism development and marketing.
- Regulatory Framework: Implementing regulations to ensure the sustainable and ethical operation of tourism businesses.

### Bilateral Support to Other Countries

Sierra Leone engages in bilateral cooperation to strengthen tourism ties,



Mrs. Nabeela Farida Tunis, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, with Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General of UN Tourism

including:

- Tourism Agreements: Signing bilateral agreements with other countries to promote mutual tourism growth and facilitate tourist exchange.
- Knowledge Sharing: Participating in knowledge and expertise exchanges with other nations to improve tourism practices.

### Visa Regime

To facilitate travel, Sierra Leone has:

- Visa Policies: Streamlining visa processes to make it easier for tourists to visit. This includes e-visa

systems and visa-on-arrival options for certain nationalities.

- Regional Integration: Collaborating with regional bodies like ECOWAS to harmonize visa policies and promote regional tourism.

### Trade Fairs and Tourism Reputation

Promoting its tourism sector internationally, Sierra Leone:

- Trade Fairs and Exhibitions: Participating in international tourism fairs and exhibitions to showcase its attractions and investment opportunities.
- Branding and Marketing: Developing and promoting a positive national tourism brand through various marketing campaigns and public relations efforts.

Sierra Leone's role at the UN Tourism and its broader tourism strategy are multifaceted, focusing on sustainable development, quality improvements, environmental conservation, and international cooperation. By implementing and adhering to international standards, engaging in bilateral agreements, and promoting its tourism sector through various means, Sierra Leone aims to boost its attractiveness as a tourist destination and contribute to global tourism growth.

# The Tourism Policy of Sierra Leone: A Comprehensive Roadmap

## Introduction

The Tourism Policy of Sierra Leone is designed to create a sustainable and inclusive tourism sector that highlights the country's rich natural resources, cultural heritage, and unique biodiversity. This policy serves as a roadmap for the development and management of tourism in Sierra Leone, ensuring that it contributes to the socio-economic growth of the nation while preserving its environmental and cultural assets.

## Legal Framework and Protocols

The policy is underpinned by a robust legal framework that includes tourism-specific laws and regulations. These laws ensure that all tourism activities are conducted responsibly and sustainably. Key protocols include:

- Tourism Act: Establishes the legal basis for tourism development and management.
- Environmental Protection Act: Mandates environmental impact assessments for all tourism projects.
- Wildlife Conservation Act: Protects biodiversity and endangered species from exploitation.

## Conservation and Climate Change

The policy emphasizes the importance of conserving Sierra Leone's natural resources and combating climate change. Strategies include:

- Promoting renewable energy and sustainable practices in tourism operations.
- Implementing reforestation programs and protecting mangroves and wetlands.
- Encouraging eco-friendly infrastructure and reducing carbon footprints.

## Island Tourism

Sierra Leone's islands, such as the Banana Islands and Turtle Islands, are integral to its tourism appeal. The policy aims to:

- Develop sustainable tourism facilities on the islands.
- Promote marine conservation and responsible tourism practices.
- Facilitate community involvement in tourism operations.

## Preservation of Natural Products

The policy promotes the preservation and sustainable use of natural products through:

- Supporting local artisans and producers.
- Encouraging the use of organic and locally-sourced materials in tourism services.
- Implementing certification and labeling schemes for sustainably produced goods.

## Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a cornerstone of Sierra Leone's tourism strategy. The policy focuses on:

- Developing eco-lodges and nature trails.
- Training guides in environmental education and conservation.
- Promoting wildlife safaris and birdwatching tours.



Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Mrs. Nabeela Farida Tunis

## Wildlife

Wildlife conservation is critical for sustainable tourism. The policy includes:

- Strengthening national parks and wildlife reserves.
- Implementing anti-poaching measures.
- Promoting wildlife tourism that supports conservation efforts.

## Domestic Tourism Guidelines

To boost domestic tourism, the policy outlines:

- Encouraging local travel through promotional campaigns.
- Offering discounts and incentives for domestic tourists.
- Improving infrastructure and facilities to support local tourism.

## Heritage Preservation

Sierra Leone's rich cultural heritage is a vital tourism asset. The policy aims to:

- Protect historical sites and monuments.
- Promote cultural festivals and traditional practices.

- Support the documentation and preservation of intangible heritage.

## Customs and Traditions

The policy encourages the integration of customs and traditions into the tourism experience by:

- Promoting cultural exchanges and interactions.
- Encouraging the inclusion of traditional music, dance, and crafts in tourism offerings.
- Supporting community-led cultural tourism initiatives.

## Tourism and Transportation

Efficient transportation is crucial for tourism development. The policy focuses on:

- Improving road, air, and sea transport infrastructure.
- Enhancing connectivity between key tourist destinations.
- Promoting sustainable transport options, such as cycling and electric vehicles.

## Riverine Tours

Sierra Leone's rivers offer unique tourism opportunities. The policy

includes:

- Developing river cruises and boat tours.
- Promoting fishing and water sports.
- Ensuring the conservation of river ecosystems.

## Community Engagement and Exchange

Community involvement is essential for sustainable tourism. The policy encourages:

- Supporting community-based tourism enterprises.
- Facilitating community consultations and participation in tourism planning.
- Promoting community benefits from tourism revenue.

## Visiting Friends and Families (VFR)

To support VFR tourism, the policy includes:

- Offering incentives for diaspora engagement.
- Promoting family-friendly tourism activities.
- Enhancing facilities and services that cater to VFR tourists.

## Visa Regime

An efficient visa regime is vital for attracting tourists. The policy aims to:

- Simplify visa application processes.
- Introduce e-visa systems.
- Offer visa waivers or special arrangements for tourists from key markets.

## Tourism and Educational Exchange

Educational tourism fosters cultural exchange and learning. The policy promotes:

- Developing partnerships with educational institutions.
- Encouraging study tours and educational trips.
- Supporting internships and volunteer programs in the tourism sector.

The Tourism Policy of Sierra Leone provides a comprehensive framework for the sustainable and inclusive development of the tourism sector. By focusing on conservation, community engagement, cultural heritage, and sustainable practices, the policy aims to position Sierra Leone as a leading eco-friendly and culturally rich tourist destination.



Vice President of Sierra Leone, Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh



A Photo of Stakeholders from the Sierra Leone Tourism Board

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



Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Mrs. Nabeela Farida Tunis

Vice President of Sierra Leone, Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh

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

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

The Vice President, Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, emphasized the importance of the plan, stating, "Since 2018, we have been making large investments in tourism. We have invested resources into infrastructure, such as our brand new airport, which is a gateway to easy travel. Also, we have ensured that the journey from Lungi Airport to the water transportation service are upgraded. We shall continue to improve the transition

from Lungi to Freetown. Additionally, Sierra Leone is now a visa-free country with visa on arrival, and we shall continue to expand access. Furthermore, publicity on Sierra Leone as a tourist destination has heightened with published articles from leading international news outlets."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ITS SUBVENTED AGENCIES: Fostering Sustainable Partnerships for Tourism Growth in Sierra Leone

The Ministry of Tourism in Sierra Leone, along with its subvented agencies, plays a pivotal role in nurturing a robust and sustainable tourism sector. Recognizing the immense potential of tourism as a driver for economic growth, the Ministry has strategically focused on fostering healthy and sustainable partnerships with key stakeholders in the aviation industry, Airport Authority, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), and major airlines. These collaborations are vital for achieving a tourism sector that not only generates significant revenue but also ensures a steady influx of tourists from key Tourist Generating Regions (TGRs).

### Strategic Partnerships in Aviation and Airport Authority

Aviation is the backbone of international tourism, and the Ministry of Tourism has prioritized establishing strong ties with the aviation sector and the Airport Authority. These partnerships are crucial for improving air connectivity, enhancing the traveler experience, and ensuring that Sierra Leone is accessible and attractive to international tourists.

- **Aviation Collaboration:** By working closely with airlines, the Ministry has facilitated the introduction of new routes and increased flight frequencies to and from Sierra Leone. This not only boosts tourist arrivals but also makes the country more accessible to business travelers and investors.
- **\*Airport Authority Engagement\*:** Collaborating with the Airport Authority, the Ministry has spearheaded initiatives to modernize airport infrastructure, streamline immigration processes, and enhance safety and security measures. These improvements are essential for providing a seamless travel experience and making Sierra Leone a competitive destination in the global tourism market.

### Empowering Destination Management Organizations (DMOs)

Destination Management Organizations are critical in promoting Sierra Leone as a prime tourist destination. The Ministry of Tourism has empowered DMOs to effectively market the country's rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and historical significance.

- **Marketing and Promotion:** Through joint marketing campaigns and trade shows, the Ministry and DMOs have showcased Sierra Leone's attractions to a global audience, particularly targeting key TGRs such as Europe, North America, and emerging markets.
- **Product Development:** Collaborations have also focused on developing tourism products that cater to diverse interests, from eco-tourism and adventure travel to cultural and heritage tourism. This variety not only attracts a broader audience but also encourages longer stays and repeat visits.

### Strengthening Ties with Key Airlines

Major airlines are indispensable partners in the tourism ecosystem. The Ministry of Tourism has worked diligently to foster relationships with key carriers to ensure consistent and reliable air service to Sierra Leone.

- **Airline Incentives:** Offering incentives to airlines, such as reduced landing fees and marketing support, has been a successful strategy in encouraging more flights to Sierra Leone. These incentives align with broader efforts to boost tourist arrivals and enhance the country's connectivity.
- **Collaborative Marketing:** Joint marketing initiatives with airlines have been instrumental in raising Sierra Leone's profile as a must-visit destination. These campaigns highlight the unique experiences

travelers can enjoy, from pristine beaches and wildlife adventures to vibrant cultural festivals.

### Achieving Sustainable Growth and Revenue Generation

The ultimate goal of these partnerships and collaborations is to achieve sustainable growth in the tourism sector, translating into substantial revenue generation for Sierra Leone. By ensuring a steady stream of tourists from key TGRs, the Ministry aims to create a thriving tourism industry that supports local communities, preserves cultural heritage, and protects the environment.

- **Sustainable Tourism Practices:** Emphasis on sustainable tourism practices ensures that growth does not come at the expense of Sierra Leone's natural and cultural resources. Initiatives such as eco-friendly accommodations, community-based tourism projects, and conservation programs are central to this strategy.

- **\*Economic Impact\*:** A vibrant tourism sector contributes to job creation, infrastructure development, and foreign exchange earnings. The Ministry's efforts are geared towards maximizing these economic benefits while maintaining a balance between growth and sustainability.

The Ministry of Tourism in Sierra Leone, through its strategic partnerships with the aviation sector, Airport Authority, DMOs, and key airlines, is paving the way for a dynamic and sustainable tourism industry. These collaborations are essential for achieving a steady increase in tourist arrivals from key TGRs, driving revenue generation, and fostering long-term economic growth. With a commitment to sustainable practices and an inclusive approach, Sierra Leone is poised to become a leading destination in the global tourism landscape.

# How West Africa's best-kept secret is preparing to welcome more tourists

Vibrant West African culture, verdant landscapes, and pristine beaches... Sierra Leone holds plenty of appeal for adventurous travellers looking to explore somewhere relatively undiscovered. And it's becoming easier to get there and travel around. Since a new international airport, Lungi, opened in Sierra Leone's capital city Freetown in March 2023, the destination has been upping its efforts with the travel trade, while the European Union is funding 100km of road upgrades, improving connections for tourists.

Speaking to TGT, Fatmata Mida Hamid Carew, general manager of the Sierra Leone National Tourist Board, says: "Our main goal is to increase visitor footfall to Sierra Leone, so we are engaging with European tour operators to encourage product and itinerary development. We invest each year in trade fairs, and European trade shows are crucial in our engagement."

The tourist board exhibits annually at WTM, Experience Africa, FITUR and ITB, and has recently become a member of the African Travel & Tourism Association (ATTA).

Aito member Undiscovered Destinations has a Sierra Leone - Forts, Chimps and Beaches itinerary; Rainbow Tours, a long-time champion of Sierra Leone, has a new Discover Sierra Leone tour;

and KE Adventures has just launched its inaugural tour.

The new Freetown Lungi airport can process 90,000 passengers per month, five times the previous capacity, and it is powered by a 1.5- megawatt solar farm: "It's the first fully green airport terminal in West Africa," says Hamid Carew. The runway has been resurfaced and the next phase of the development plan includes a five-star hotel near the airport. Currently, three airlines - Brussels Airlines, Turkish Airlines and Royal Air Maroc - make Sierra Leone accessible from Europe. "This access is combined with our easy e-visa service," she adds.

Sierra Leone's natural environment makes it a tempting draw for adventurous travellers, with surfing on Bureh Beach, diving at the remote Turtle Islands and hiking Mount Bintumani (the highest peak in West Africa) all highlights.

There are also plans for a new eco-tourism circuit that includes Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary and Mt Bintumani. The route will comprise regenerative and community-led tourism projects that both create opportunities for local people and help protect the local environment. The Tacugama team has provided training for 21 eco-guardians to patrol in Loma Mountains National Park, providing livelihood support and

helping educate on how to safeguard chimpanzees.

Hamid Carew says: "When new visitors arrive in Sierra Leone, many are struck by just how friendly and safe the country feels. The past's challenges have built a real resilience and tolerance in the Sierra Leonean people, who have a positive outlook on the future of the country."

The government is working to promote domestic tourism and to engage and invest local communities in the array of opportunities offered by tourism. Hamid Carew explains: "One core way that we are working to develop this is through our domestic scheme, Tourism for All. The programme includes a wide range of events and initiatives, including discounted entry to Sierra Leone's top cultural and natural attractions for local people. We hope that Tourism for All will instil a sense of pride in Sierra Leone, which in turn will encourage more to work within the tourism sector, driving the economy."

An example of local engagement is the Freetown the Treetown project, a 2023 Earthshot Prize finalist, which aims to reverse the deforestation caused by urban development in the city. The city has enlisted tree guardians to plant and monitor trees, which are tracked via an online platform. Since inception, nearly one million trees have been planted.



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# From people to places: The untold allure of Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone, often hailed as the "Freedom Destination," is a land of vibrant sights and sounds, where a rich tapestry of culture, history, and natural beauty intertwine to create an unforgettable ambiance.

The heart and soul of Sierra Leone lie in its people. Warm and hospitable, they are known for their infectious smiles and welcoming nature. The nation's diverse population is composed of various tribes, each with its own unique traditions and customs. Prominent tribes include the Temne, Mende, Limba, and Krio, kono, each contributing to the rich cultural mosaic.

Traditional attire is a vivid display of the country's cultural identity. Men and women wear colorful garments such as the "Gara" and "Tie Dye" or "Batik," which are hand-dyed fabrics that represent originality and craftsmanship. These clothes are often worn during festivals, ceremonies, and everyday life, showcasing intricate patterns and a riot of colors that reflect Sierra Leone's artistic heritage.

Sierra Leone is divided into several provinces, each with its own distinct charm. From the bustling streets of Freetown, the capital, to the serene landscapes of the Eastern Province, the colors and ambiance vary widely. Freetown, with its historical landmarks like the Cotton Tree and the Old Fourah Bay College, offers a glimpse into the colonial past while pulsating with modern energy.

The nightlife in Sierra Leone is an electrifying experience. The cities come alive after dark with bars, clubs, and live music venues offering a taste of the local culture. Music is a cornerstone of social life, with genres ranging from traditional folk songs to contemporary Afrobeats. The sounds of drums, guitars, and local instruments like the "soku" rekindle the voices of heroes and heroines, echoing the country's storied past and vibrant present.

Sierra Leone's natural beauty extends beyond its people and culture. The country is home to diverse wildlife and pristine ecosystems. The Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, for instance, is dedicated to the conservation of the national animal, the chimpanzee. Dense forests, rolling hills, and expansive savannas provide habitats for a myriad of species, making it a haven for eco-tourists.

Greater Freetown is steeped in history, with landmarks that serve as reminders of the colonial era and the fight for independence. The city's architecture, from colonial-era buildings to modern structures, tells the story of a land that has seen both struggle and triumph. Religious tolerance is a hallmark of Sierra Leonean society, where Christians and Muslims coexist peacefully, often participating in interfaith marriages and communal celebrations.

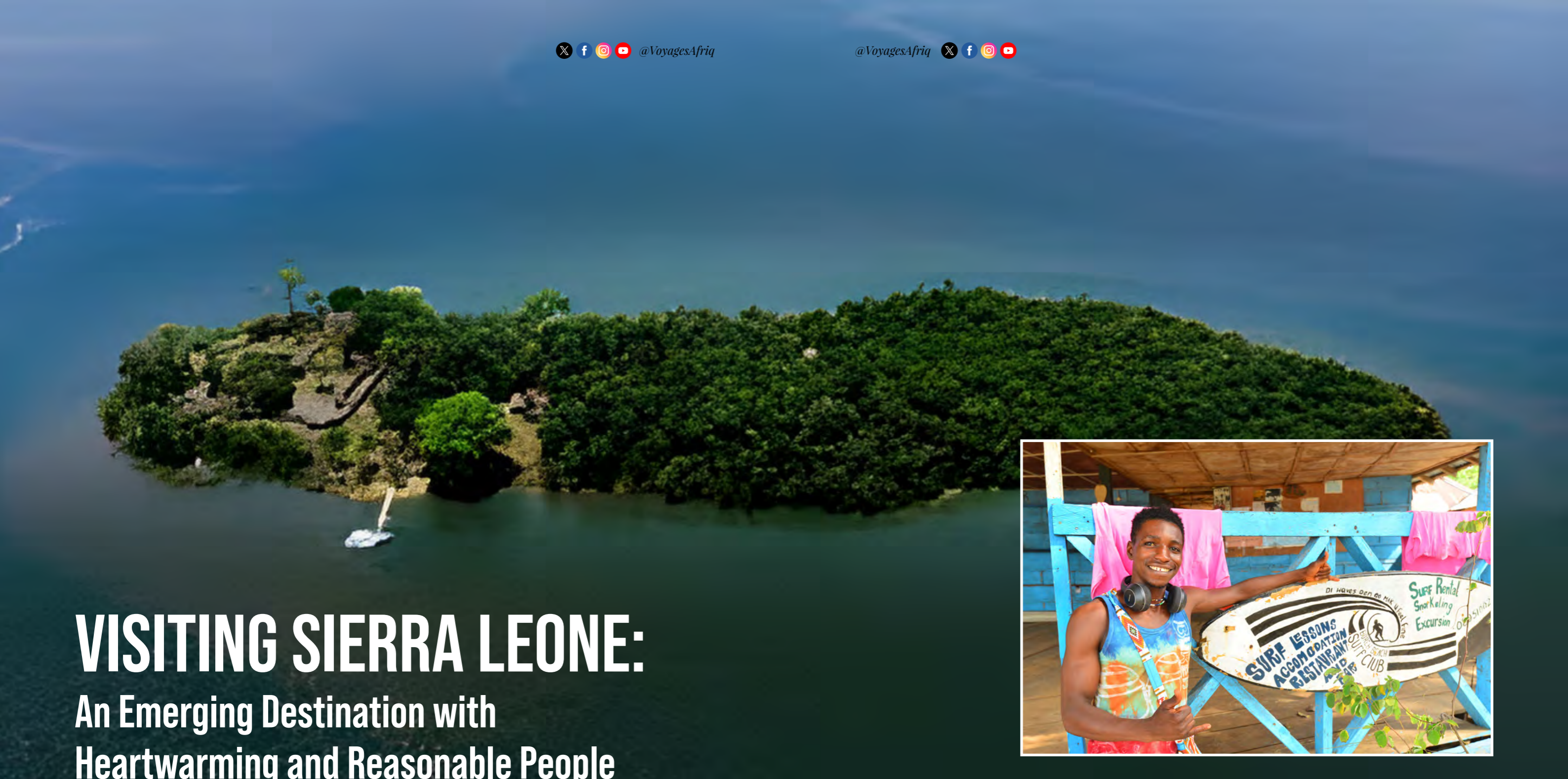
Each town and city in Sierra Leone has its own unique vibe. Bo, known as the "Educational Center," is lively with students and intellectuals, while Kenema, the "Diamond City," sparkles with its rich mining history. The colors of these towns reflect their individual identities, from the lush greenery of rural areas to the bustling urban palettes.

Cultural dances are integral to Sierra Leonean celebrations, with each tribe boasting its own traditional moves and rhythms. These dances are performed during festivals, weddings, and other significant events, accompanied by special tracks that resonate with the people's sense of belonging and pride.

For visitors, Sierra Leone offers the convenience of a visa on arrival, making travel accessible and straightforward. The new ecotourism airport greets travelers with a friendly ambiance, setting the tone for an enriching experience. The country's commitment to sustainable tourism ensures that its natural and cultural treasures are preserved for future generations.

Sierra Leone is a land where history, culture, and nature converge to create a destination unlike any other. From the colorful garments and traditional dances to the rich wildlife and historical landmarks, every aspect of Sierra Leone invites exploration and celebration. It is a place where the past and present meld seamlessly, offering a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere that truly embodies the spirit of freedom.





# VISITING SIERRA LEONE: An Emerging Destination with Heartwarming and Reasonable People



Sierra Leone is a hidden gem waiting to be discovered by adventurous travelers seeking unspoiled natural beauty and genuine hospitality. As an emerging destination, it offers an experience that is both unique and memorable, allowing you to explore before the rest of the world catches on. From its untapped beaches and delectable seafood to locally made cassava bread and Kankankan, Sierra Leone promises an unforgettable journey.

One of the most appealing aspects of visiting Sierra Leone is the ease of entry, with a visa on arrival making it convenient for travelers. As soon as you step off the plane, you'll be greeted with the warm fragrance of hospitality and the kind touch of love that the people of Sierra Leone are known for. The locals, often referred to as "Salone man," have a reputation for their friendliness towards strangers, and their welcoming nature will make you feel right at home.

Sierra Leone boasts almost 400 kilometers of white sandy beaches, many of which remain largely undiscovered by tourists. The beaches around the Peninsula are dotted with a variety of resorts, offering a perfect blend of relaxation and adventure. Whether you're lounging on the pristine sands or exploring the vibrant marine life, the coastal beauty of Sierra Leone is sure to captivate you.

The people of Sierra Leone are incredibly helpful, and their genuine affection for visitors is evident in every interaction. "Salone man lek strangers" - the locals truly love having visitors and are eager to share their culture and traditions with you. This warmth extends to the tour guides and hotel staff, ensuring that your stay is comfortable and enjoyable. The hotels are clean and well-maintained, providing a cozy retreat after a day of exploration.

When it comes to transportation, Sierra Leone offers three modes: air, land, and sea. This makes it easy to explore the diverse landscapes and attractions the country has to offer. You can visit the islands and estuaries, each with its own unique charm and natural beauty. The historic sites and landmarks will transport you back in time, connecting you with the rich history of the region.

Sierra Leone is not just a destination; it's

an experience that embodies the spirit of freedom and adventure. The untapped beaches, delicious local cuisine, and heartwarming people create a tapestry of memories that will stay with you long after you've left. So, why wait? Explore Sierra Leone now and discover the magic of this emerging travel paradise.



## Sierra Leone Showcases Tourism Potential at FITUR 2024 Amidst Strategic Meetings and Global Partnerships



As the international tourism industry convened at the renowned FITUR 2024, Sierra Leone's tourism sector stood out on the event's second day with a series of strategic meetings aimed at bolstering its presence on the global stage. The West African nation's delegation, demonstrating a blend of readiness and grace, engaged in well-organized dialogues with influential industry partners, signaling a promising leap forward in its tourism development.

Sierra Leone, a country rich in natural beauty and cultural heritage, has long sought to expand its reach within the international tourism market. The efforts at FITUR 2024, where over 150 countries gathered, have shown that the nation is not only serious about attracting visitors but also committed to sustainable practices, a pivot that aligns with the growing global demand for responsible travel.

One of the day's highlights was the meeting between Sierra Leone's tourism delegation and Lola Mellado, the product manager from ICARION. With a vast portfolio encompassing more than 1,000 itineraries in 140 countries, ICARION's dedication to sustainable tourism resonates with Sierra Leone's vision. Mellado emphasized that for Sierra Leone to be featured in ICARION's offerings, a sustainable approach is not just preferred but essential, underscoring the importance of environmental and cultural preservation in today's travel industry.

After a brief intermission, representatives from HOTEL BEDS, including Florian Blois and a colleague, joined the discussion to explore the integration of Sierra Leone's accommodations into their booking system. This potential collaboration

promises to generate increased leads for local tourism businesses, enhancing the country's visibility and accessibility to international travelers.

The momentum continued with a meeting with Mr. Ruben Torres, the Development Director from LUZOTOUR. Torres, an expert tour operator with origins in Morocco and a history of charter flight services, has now turned his expertise toward Africa. His keen interest in Sierra Leone was evident, indicating a strong vote of confidence in the country's tourism sector from a seasoned industry professional.

As the day progressed, Mr. Adolfo Alonso, the Strategic Partnerships Account Manager from DESTINA, took the lead in engaging the Sierra Leonean team on the prospect of promoting Sierra Leonean accommodations to their extensive client base in Spain. This interaction opened up a crucial European market for Sierra Leone's hospitality sector, fostering a bridge between the two regions.

The day concluded with a meeting with Maryana Marcano, a tourism specialist from EXOTICCA, an online tour operator known for crafting sophisticated and enticing travel itineraries. Marcano expressed interest in developing unique travel packages that would showcase Sierra Leone's allure, targeting a special market niche that seeks out-of-the-ordinary experiences.

Sierra Leone's presence and proactive engagement at FITUR 2024 not only reflect the nation's dedication to developing its tourism sector but also its commitment to sustainable and responsible tourism practices. The strategic meetings held on the second day of the event have set the groundwork for future collaborations and have positioned Sierra Leone as a rising star in the global tourism landscape. As the country moves forward with these partnerships, the promise of increased international exposure and tourism growth shines brightly on the horizon for this vibrant and culturally rich destination.

The attendees of the meeting were high-

level officials and stakeholders in the tourism industry, including:

- Mr. Mohamed Jalloh, the Director of Tourism from the Ministry of Tourism, who plays a significant role in shaping the country's tourism policies and strategic direction.
- Mrs. Fatmata Mida Carew, the General Manager (GM) of the National Tourist Board, who is responsible for overseeing tourism promotion and marketing within the country and external.
- Mr. Francis Kaifala, the Chairman of the Monuments and Relics Commission, tasked with the preservation and promotion of Sierra Leone's cultural heritage sites.
- Lucinda Kargbo, the Marketing Manager, whose role involve marketing and promoting Sierra Leone as a desirable tourist destination.
- Mr. Ishmael Abu Kamara, the Deputy Director of Culture, has vested interest in incorporating cultural elements into tourism initiatives.
- Annmarie Kamara, the Administrative Manager of the Monuments and Relics Commission, involved in the administrative side of preserving and promoting historical sites.

Additionally, various travel and tour companies, including Tourism is Life Tours, Best Travel Solutions, Kallon Travel, and Tasso Ecotourism, were managing a promotional booth. These entities have been responsible for engaging with potential tourists and partners, showcasing what Sierra Leone has to offer in terms of tourism experiences.

The report notes that the booth captured the attention of 352 stand visitors on the first day, indicating a substantial interest in Sierra Leone as a travel destination.

This level of engagement is a positive sign for the country's tourism industry, suggesting that their presence at the event was well-received and generated curiosity among the event attendees.

## Record 1,651 Tourists Engage with Sierra Leone at ITB, Setting New Heights in Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs and the National Tourist Board (NTB) unveiled an unprecedented achievement at a press conference hosted at the Ministry's Kingharman Headquarters. A remarkable 1,651 tourists flocked to Sierra Leone's Explore Freedom stand during the Internationale Tourismus-Börse Berlin (ITB) in Germany, marking a significant milestone in the nation's tourism sector. The event served as a platform to share the triumphs and insights gained from this remarkable endeavor, with private sector partners contributing their perspectives on the groundbreaking success.

In his opening address, Permanent Secretary Edward Kwame Yankson underscored the global significance of ITB as the prominent tourism trade fair annually hosted in Berlin. He hailed Sierra Leone's participation as not only successful but also as the pinnacle achievement to date, yielding promising outcomes across various facets of the tourism landscape.

Minister Nabeela Tunis echoed these sentiments, lauding the myriad



accomplishments stemming from Sierra Leone's presence at ITB. From securing membership in esteemed organizations like the African Travel and Tourism Association (ATTA) to fostering heightened engagements on a global scale, Minister Tunis emphasized the pivotal role of the private sector in driving the industry forward. She emphasized the importance of positive

media coverage in advancing the nation's tourism agenda while expressing gratitude to the Ministry's staff, partner agencies, and private sector collaborators for their unwavering dedication and contributions.

The General Manager, NTB, Fatmata Hamid Carew premised her submission on the key takeaways from the showpiece event, mentioning the record number of tourists that visited Sierra Leone's stand, being the first West African destination to join ATTA as well as becoming a member of a specialized tour operators association. She laid emphasis on the different products of the destination that were marketed, ranging from the authentic natural attractions to the wonderful Sierra Leonean cuisine that is making headways in the international space.

On another front, Minister Tunis will chair the Women in Tourism Leadership for African Committee (WiTLAC), a milestone that demonstrates the profile and respect earned in global tourism agendas.

Private sector operatives explained their inputs, and also proffer recommendations for leveraging opportunities in the international space.





# Sierra Leone's 10-Year Tourism Strategic Master Plan: Voices of industry stakeholders

The recent unveiling of Sierra Leone's 10-year Tourism Strategic Master Plan has been met with widespread acclaim, particularly among private sector stakeholders who see the document as a pivotal tool for rejuvenating the nation's tourism industry.

The master plan, which has been carefully crafted with input from various sectors, is expected to provide much-needed incentives for larger investments in tourism, offering a comprehensive roadmap to address both individual and industry-wide challenges.

## A collaborative effort

John Shallop, National President of the Sierra Leone Hotel and Tourism Association, emphasised the collaborative nature of the master plan's development, which he believes will serve as a guiding document for the industry's future.

"First of all, that plan was really done in collaboration with the private sector," Shallop stated. "We had several meetings and evaluations, and the consultants even came to Sierra Leone, travelling across the country and we are very proud

of the inclusive approach, especially regarding the needs assessment that was developed.

"All that was captured in the plan, and an essential aspect is that, for everything, there should be a start. I think that should be our Bible or Quran. It should lead us to wherever we want to go, especially if it's done by phases. So yes, that plan is well done, well articulated. Eventually, in the long run, there will be phases two, three and four, but I think

for a starter, it's perfectly done."

Shallop also highlighted the importance of clearly designated tourism development zones within the plan, which offer security and clarity for investors. "One of the fantastic things about the plan is that it was able to segregate some areas, and there is also a tourism development area and tourism development zones, which is very necessary.



John Shallop, National President of the Sierra Leone Hotel and Tourism Association

"For example, one of the struggles we have as investors is wanting to invest in a zone without knowing whether we are protected or not. You can invest in a tourism establishment, and eventually, the government might declare that the zone is for fishing or mining. But now that it is indicated in the master plan, the private sector has some assurance, which is crucial for investment."

## The need for resources and mindset

Abdul Karim Jalloh, Proprietor of Estuary Resort, praised the strategic document but stressed the need for adequate resources and a shift in mindset to implement it effectively.

"I think just like with any strategic document, you need resources to implement it. And beyond the resources, you need a mindset that goes with whatever concept is embedded in that document. Therefore, I'd say the document is very good as a pathway towards where we dream. We need a lot of resources to actualise it, and we need a mindset to convey that particular dream. It's a holistic approach," Jalloh remarked.

He further elaborated on the importance of collaboration across different sectors, stating, "We need to consider how the Ministry, which interfaces with the private sector, will assist in resource mobilisation. From our side, we need to think about how we receive these changes. It's not only about physical infrastructure but also human resources, which is one of the challenges. If you want to change the thinking, you need to train people and ensure they synchronise with the strategic document.



Abdul Karim Jalloh, Proprietor of Estuary Resort

"This start should be in tandem with what I have just said—not only with the private sector but also with sister Ministries and MDAs. For example, when we talk about wildlife, how does the Ministry of Environment contribute in terms of forest preservation? How does Local Government come in, in terms of sensitisation and enforcing rules? How does the security force contribute in terms of discipline? It's a good document, but we need to see all the sectors coming together holistically."

## Raising awareness and attracting tourists

Shailendra Kumar, Director of Food & Beverage at The Place Resort, pointed out the need for increased awareness and investment to attract tourists to Sierra Leone, comparing the country's tourism visibility to that of its neighbours.

"I will not say there are many challenges. The only thing is that people are not aware of this place that much. If you talk of neighbouring countries like Gambia, people know it as a destination, and they go there. There must be more investments in this country so that people will think they must come and visit.

"For example, if anyone is visiting this place, they will always ask, 'Why are we going there?' They can sit on the beach for five days, but they will look for something else—activities, places to visit, and other attractions. Adding these elements will help our tourism, which is necessary for the nation's development."



Shailendra Kumar, Director of Food & Beverage at The Place Resort

## Challenges and opportunities

Paul Suffield, General Manager of New Brookfields Hotel, praised the efforts of the Ministry of Tourism but noted the challenges that lie outside the Ministry's control, particularly in relation to transportation and infrastructure.

"I think the Minister of Tourism and her team are doing a great job in trying to enhance tourism in Sierra Leone. And I think they've got the right people on their side to do so. The challenge, however, is outside her control—things like the taxis at the airport, the boat crossing when you arrive. Entering the country is very expensive, and those are the challenges we face. If you go to Dakar in Senegal, they've preserved a lot of their history, which attracts tourists. Sierra Leone has a rich history too, and preserving that while promoting it outside the country is crucial.

"Sometimes there are negative connotations associated with Sierra Leone's past, but the reality is there's a lot of beauty here, and the people are amazing. From the mountains to the sea, there's so much to offer. Anything that promotes tourism and brings more people into the country is positive."

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## I. Travelling to Sierra Leone

### Q: Do I need a passport or visa to enter Sierra Leone?

A: All visitors require a valid passport. It is also necessary to obtain a visa on arrival, at the cost of \$25 for African Union nationals and \$80 for passport holders of other countries. Nationals of the following countries are not charged for visas on arrival due to reciprocal agreements: Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Botswana, eSwatini, Fiji, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Trinidad & Tobago, St Kitts and Nevis.

### Q: How long can I stay in Sierra Leone?

A: Visas on arrival are valid for 30 days and can be extended for a further 30 days from the immigration department in Sierra Leone.

### Q: Where can I get more information once I arrive at the airport?

A: There is a tourist information booth at Lungi International Airport in Freetown, open from 10 am to 9 pm.

### Q: Are there any fees or taxes I will have to pay when I leave?

A: There is a \$25 exit fee that can be paid via Orange Money, Afrimoney or via the online platform [www.securipass.sl](http://www.securipass.sl)

### Q: What items are considered 'personal effects' by Sierra Leone Customs?

A: Under the customs regulation of Sierra Leone, personal effects are the personal baggage of visitors and articles contained therein, including clothes, accessories and other items for personal use that travelers may need during their time in the country.

### Q: What do I have to declare?

A: It is not necessary to declare personal effects. Visitors can also take 200 cigarettes or 250 grams of tobacco into the country, and 1 L of alcohol (no age limit). Weapons require a permit from the Police Head Office in Freetown and will be held until the permit is achieved, and pets can enter the country with valid health and vaccination certificates - please contact the nearest Sierra Leone Consulate or Embassy for information.

### Q: Are there limits for currency?

A: Nationals are allowed to take 50,000 of local currency and of up to \$5000 worth of foreign currency, while non-residents are allowed up to 50,000 of local currency and an unlimited amount on foreign currency, that needs to be declared upon arrival.

### Q: How long does it take to reach Sierra Leone from Europe and North America?

A: Sierra Leone is located in West Africa, bordering Guinea and Liberia. Lungi International Airport in Freetown has direct flights to several European airports including Brussels, Paris and Istanbul - travel time is 6-8 hours. To

fly to North America it's necessary to connect at one of the airports mentioned above, Casablanca or Nairobi, and total flight time is between 16/20 hours.

### Q: Which are the major airlines that connect Europe and North America to Sierra Leone?

A: Major airlines that fly into Sierra Leone include Air France, Brussels Airlines, Royal Air Morocco, Turkish Airlines and Kenya Airways.



## II. Vitals

### Q: What does 'Sierra Leone' mean?

A: The name Sierra Leone derives from Serra Leoa, Portuguese for Lioness Mountains, the name given by Portuguese colonizer Pedro da Sintra to the mountains of the Freetown Peninsula.

### Q: What's the climate like?

A: Sierra Leone's climate is tropical and hot throughout the year, with maximum temperatures around 28/30°C (82/86°F) and minimum averages around 23/25°C (73/77°F) on the coast. Temperature are usually a few degrees higher in the interior of the country. Sierra Leone has two distinct seasons: the dry season, from November to April, and the dry season, from May to October, and torrential downpours are commonplace. December/February is also harmattan season, a hot wind blowing from the Sahara bringing haze and dry heat, with temperatures sometimes reaching 40°C (100°F).

### Q: What clothes should I take?

A: Lightweight, casual clothing can be worn throughout the year. In the interior, it is recommended to wear long sleeves and pants to protect yourself from mosquitoes and other insects, especially at dusk.

### Q: What is the voltage in Sierra Leone?

A: In Sierra Leone the standard voltage is 230 V and the frequency is 50 Hz.

### Q: Is there electricity and Wi-Fi at all times?

A: Hotels in Freetown usually have reliable electricity and Wi-Fi, but destinations in remote areas may only have electricity on for a few hours a day. Wi-Fi connection outside Freetown ranges from spotty to non-existent.

### Q: What is the official language of Sierra Leone?

A: The official language in Sierra Leone is English, but the most common is Krio, an English-based Creole language. Every ethnic group in Sierra Leone also speaks a different language, the most common of which are Temne and Mende.

### Q: What kind of accommodation is available in Sierra Leone?

A: In Freetown you can find a range of accommodation options ranging from luxury hotels to hostels and budget guesthouses. In the interior and remote areas there may only be a few accommodation options available, usually quite spartan.

### Q: How expensive is accommodation in Freetown and around Sierra Leone?

A: In Freetown, accommodation ranges from \$25 for budget guesthouses to \$350 for a suite at the Country Lodge, the most luxurious hotel in town. In remote areas of the country accommodation prices also vary, but are usually offered in packages including guides, transport, activities and meals.

### Q: How much do I need to spend on a meal in Freetown and around the country?

A: A traditional Sierra Leonean meal including rice and accompaniments can be as cheap as \$4/6, whereas a meal in an upscale Lebanese restaurant can cost up to \$50.



## III. Safety and Medical Details

### Q: Are there any vaccinations that I need to get before travelling to Sierra Leone?

A: Vaccination against yellow fever is required to enter the country, and visitors will be asked to show proof of vaccination upon arrival. Malaria can be a concern in the wet season, so it is recommended to carry anti-malarial medication.

### Q: Is medical help available easily?

A: In Freetown and other major cities there are hospitals, but medical services in remote parts of the country can be hard to come by. All visitors are recommended to have travel insurance.

Some of the major hospitals in Freetown are:

- Choithram Memorial Hospital, Hill Station, tel +232 76 980000
- Life Care Hospital, 198 Wilkinson Road, tel +232 80 220220
- Freetown International Hospital, 28b Lumley Beach Road, +232 33 400400

### Q: What are the precautions for drinking water?

A: It is recommended to only drink bottled water, and take water purification tablets or equipment when heading to remote areas where there may not be bottled water available.

### Q: Are there any safety precautions that one must take in Sierra Leone?

A: Sierra Leone is a very safe country and people are warm and welcoming. The roads are not always in good conditions, so avoid travelling at night; hiring a local driver is also recommended. Avoid walking around Lumley Beach at night, especially if you're a woman, and always pay attention to your belongings in crowded areas.

## IV. Travelling Around Sierra Leone

### Q: What modes of transportation can I use to get around?

A: In Freetown, you can use rickshaws, poda poda (minibuses) or moto taxis. Between major cities you can take bush



taxis and poda poda, but most visitors hire a 4x4 with a local driver to take them around the country.

#### V. Handling Money

**Q: What's the exchange rate? Where can I exchange my money?**

A: Exchange rates may vary, but at the time of writing \$100 were approximately equivalent to NLE 2,050. The best place to exchange money is the airport, offering the most competitive exchange rates, but you'll also find exchange offices around Freetown. Most large hotels will also offer exchange services, but rates may not be as convenient.

**Q: Can I use my credit cards/ATM cards in Sierra Leone?**

A: In Freetown and other major towns in Sierra Leone there are various ATM machines in operation accepting Visa and Mastercards. They can be found at the following banks: UBA, GTBank, Eco Bank, Rokel Commercial Bank, Sierra Leone Commercial Bank, Union Trust Bank, and Access Bank Sierra Leone.

**Q: Are there any alternative methods to withdraw cash?**

A: Yes, you can also get cash through Bank Transfer via Moneygram, Orange Money, Western Union, Afrimoney and RIA.

#### VI. Conveniences

**Q: Where can I get a local SIM card?**

A: You can easily pick up a local SIM card at your arrival at Lungi Airport.

Sellers will approach you offering SIM cards from various companies, and you can also pay them to add airtime. There are four mobile phone operators in Sierra Leone: Orange, Africell, Sierratel and QCell.

**Q: Can I get laundry done in Sierra Leone?**

A: Most hotels offer laundry services.

**Q: Are there convenience stores in Sierra Leone?**

A: Yes, in Freetown you'll find well-stocked supermarkets and convenience stores with all the essentials you might need (including toilet paper, sanitary towels, tissues, snacks...). In smaller towns and remote areas you'll find small shops, but they usually only carry a few basic food items - so be sure to stock up before leaving Freetown.

#### VII. Activities and Culture

**Q: What sorts of activities are available to me during my stay?**

A: Depending on the length of their stay, visitors can engage in a number of activities. Here are some suggestions:

Visiting historic landmarks in Freetown and enjoying its vibrant nightlife

Exploring beaches in the Freetown Peninsula

Wildlife watching in national parks such as Tiwai or Gola Rainforest

Learning about colonial history in Bonthe Island

Seeing chimpanzees at Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary

**Q: What festivals are held in Sierra Leone each year?**

A: Several festivals take place in Sierra Leone throughout the year, which may be of interest to tourists. Here are some examples:

Ma Deng Beach Festival (December)

Afro- Caribbean Festival (December/ January)

Monument and Relics Commission Citizenship Conference Ceremony/ Tracing of DNA/Roots Tourism (April)

Eco Fest Sierra Leone (December)

**Q: Which are the best places to go birding in Sierra Leone?**

A: You can see over 600 bird species in Sierra Leone, including 14 species endemic to the Upper Guinea Forest. The best birdwatching opportunities in Sierra Leone can be found in the country's national parks and reserves, such as Gola, Kambui Hills, and Kangari Hills Forest Reserve.

**Q: Which are the best places for wildlife spotting in Sierra Leone?**

A: In Sierra Leone it's possible to see a variety of animals, including chimpanzees and other rare species such as pygmy hippos and Western red colobus monkeys. The national parks offering the best chances to see wildlife are Gola, Outamba-Kilimi, Mamunta Mayosso and Tiwai Island.



# Idris Elba awarded Brand Ambassador status in Sierra Leone



His Excellency President Dr Julius Maada Bio has issued the British Hollywood actor and musician, Idris Elba, with a Sierra Leonean Diplomatic Passport and pronounced him a Brand Ambassador for the small resource-rich West African nation.

During a meeting at the State Lodge on Hill Station, President Bio said that Mr Elba's visit to Sierra Leone had been long-awaited, saying that he could feel his burning desire to come back home to be welcomed by his country people. He said that the country had gone through a lot with a scarred image, which needed a conscientious effort from everyone to change that perception and create a new narrative.

"We have tried our best to change the narrative but we need more hands on deck. With you, we have a capable hand to join my government in shaping the future of this country - telling the world a new narrative about a Sierra Leone that is ready to grow and a nation that is ready to be the hub for innovation and technology in Africa and a nation that is looking forward.

"We are conferring you a citizenship of this country and to make you a Brand Ambassador of Sierra Leone. We want

to tap into your network to be able to tell the world that the little nation they knew for bad things is now a new Sierra Leone. We want to let the world know that Sierra Leone is now ready for business," he said.

Receiving the passport, Idris Elba said that he was honoured and thankful for the opportunity to become a citizen of

his father's country, noting that it was an honour for his family. He said he had always wanted to come to Sierra Leone and make a mark adding that he was thankful that his career had afforded him and family the ability to come back to Sierra Leone with determination to rebrand the country.

"This is my first visit to Sierra Leone but will not be my last. I will love to bring with me the new energy that President Bio is so focused on. I am very excited for this honour and I want to take this honour to make the President and people of Sierra Leone proud of me," he said.

Elba's father, Winston Elba, migrated from Sierra Leone to the United Kingdom in the late 1960s where he met with his Ghanaian mother, Eve Elba. He is also a producer and director continually securing his place as one of the most versatile performers in Hollywood. He is a winner of several accolades for his distinguished service in the field of entertainment. In addition to his Golden Globe win, he is the first male actor to receive dual Screen Actors Guild awards in one evening.



Mrs. Nabeela Farida Tunis in a Photo with Idris Elba



Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs

# Sierra Leone

**National Strategic Tourism Plan:  
Roadmap for a Sustainable Tourism Future**

**Final Strategy and  
Action Plan**

**Volume I - Core Report**

2024

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## Sierra Leone is a top African Destination for 2024 according to CNN Travel

This recognition was awarded based on a thorough evaluation of various factors, including available destinations, national parks, wildlife and safaris, a wide range of activities, and stunningly beautiful landscapes. The focus on Sierra Leone highlights the country's diverse and captivating allure, encouraging travellers to explore its rich cultural heritage and natural wonders.

Sierra Leone, as highlighted by CNN Travel, is experiencing a tourism revival with enhanced accessibility thanks to upgraded infrastructure. The major facelift given to Freetown's international airport in 2023 and ongoing road renovations are making this West African gem more reachable than ever.

Nature takes center stage in Sierra Leone, boasting wide sandy beaches kissed by Atlantic waves and a mountainous plateau harboring the country's national treasure, the chimpanzee. The charm extends beyond

scenery, with community-led initiatives showcasing the nation's natural beauty. Notable projects include the first surfing school at Bureh Beach and the Tasso Ecotourism Project on Tasso Island, championing a rescue program for the endangered Timneh grey parrot.

Sierra Leone's historical significance is evident at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bunce Island, a poignant reminder of its role in the transatlantic slave trade. As tourism

blossoms, more accommodation options are emerging, including the expansion of Freetown's boutique hideaway, Toma, and the introduction of the country's first Hilton in 2024, offering luxurious rooms. Additionally, the laid-back Estuary Resort, situated along a scenic inlet, is expanding with new chalets and a pool, inviting travelers to experience the diverse beauty of Sierra Leone.



## Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee champions gender equality in African tourism



initiatives in an interview with **VoyagesAfric**.

"We had the first WITLAC brainstorming meeting. WITLAC is a committee of all female tourism ministers, as well as selected members of the private sector, who have come together to drive the women's agenda within tourism in Africa. About 67% of the tourism workforce are women, and ensuring dignified standards within the sector has been a significant issue. We seek to ensure that women get the dignity they deserve within the sector," said Tunis.

She elaborated on the multifaceted approach WITLAC is taking to address these issues, including education, mentoring, capacity building, and training. The committee is also focusing on labour issues and promoting equality and women empowerment policies across different countries.

"As women ministers, we have a unique opportunity to lead by example and attract the majority workforce within the tourism landscape to ensure they achieve the dignity they deserve. We discussed the structure and future meetings and we are working on a concrete plan of action to be presented at the African Union level to promote women in the tourism landscape," Tunis added.

A WITLAC training workshop on business and entrepreneurial skills is scheduled to take place on the sidelines of the Women in Tourism Forum in Freetown, Sierra Leone, later in October this year. This workshop aims to equip women with the necessary skills to succeed and lead in the tourism industry.



UN Tourism Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines by implementing gender-inclusive strategies for tourism businesses at the regional level. The committee also focuses on providing networking opportunities to facilitate connections and collaborations among women in the tourism industry.

Through tailored capacity-building and mentorship programmes, WITLAC aims to develop women's skills and leadership potential. Additionally, the committee advocates for the adoption of gender mainstreaming policies to promote equality. To highlight the importance of gender equality in tourism, WITLAC conducts awareness-raising campaigns. Furthermore, the committee celebrates successful initiatives and individuals by showcasing role models and best practices.

In a closed-door meeting held on the sidelines of the First UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, WITLAC members discussed crucial issues and formulated an action plan.

Nabeela Farida Tunis, the Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Committee Chair, shared insights into the committee's goals and upcoming

Despitemakingup70%ofAfrica'stourism workforce, women predominantly occupy low-skill and lower-paid roles, facing significant gender disparities such as unequal pay, limited access to education, and restricted leadership opportunities.

Addressing these challenges, the Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee (WITLAC) has taken on the mission to empower women and foster gender equality across Africa. This mission aligns with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 5 of the Agenda 2030, which focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

WITLAC emerged from the 2nd Leadership Taskforce on Women Empowerment in Tourism in Africa, launched in November 2019 in Accra, Ghana. This event coincided with the 1st Regional Congress on Women Empowerment in the Tourism Sector, focusing on Africa. Since then, WITLAC has been dedicated to promoting women's empowerment and leadership in the tourism sector through a comprehensive approach.

The primary objective of WITLAC is to promote women's empowerment and leadership in the tourism sector. The Committee is committed to promoting



## EUROPE TO AFRICA BY ROAD: Budapest Bamako Rally returns to Sierra Leone

From Hungary in Central Europe to Sierra Leone in West Africa, the Budapest-Bamako Rally returns to Freetown for the third time.

"After days en route, these cars have traveled from Europe to Africa, traversing through various countries.

Known as the world's largest amateur vehicular rally and Africa's biggest humanitarian event, this year saw Sierra Leoneans participating for the first time, with three of them raising awareness for autism.

### Raising awareness for autism

"For me it's been a dream come true," says Ibrahim Cole, Co-founder Puzzle Pieces. "I couldn't have chosen to be in this car with two people other than these guys; it was a fantastic trip. Autism is very near and dear to us - he has a nephew [pointing at fellow participants] he has a nephew also now and my son."

Another participant, Drizilik, who is also an artist, says he wants to encourage

Sierra Leoneans to get involved.

"I enjoyed been part of this cause and enjoyed spending time with these two gentlemen," he says.

For Mohamed Waritay, the experience was "amazing".

"The landscape, the people, the culture and the food," Waritay says. "But more importantly the awareness and the love and the support that we get from people from Sierra Leone."

### A boost to tourism

Speaking to Africanews, the Founder and Director of the Budapest Bamako Rally, Andrew Szabo, says that Freetown was chosen to host the rally due to the security situations in Mali, shifting from the original destination of Bamako.

"I've been organizing the Budapest Bamako Rally for 18 years; this has been going on for almost 20 years - and it's been a fantastic experience," says Szabo. "We love every second of it and the participants had a great time and this is a

very authentic and genuine way for them to discover West Africa and the Sahara."

Sierra Leone's Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Nabeela Tunis describes the adventure as a remarkable venture noting that it will contribute to the country's revenue generation.

"We're looking at a multiplier effect to the economy. Just imagine you have 600 people in the country and you know that they're definitely gonna have to take [a hotel room] and stuff like that," says Tunis. "So certainly there will be a marked improvement in the revenue generation over the next couple of days. We're also happy about the integration - because they're here to see Sierra Leone as it really is."

This year, Sierra Leone welcomed over 600 participants with over 300 vehicles, driving through major routes from Bureh Town in the Western Area Rural to the Finish Line at Lumley, Western Area Urban.

By Africanews and Eric Kawa

# TOP TEN ATTRACTIONS in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has a variety of attractions that draw tourists to the country. Here are brief descriptions of the ten most visited destinations.

### Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary:

Located near Freetown, this sanctuary is dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of chimpanzees. It offers visitors a chance to see these amazing animals up close.



### River No.2 Beach:

Known for its beautiful white sand and clear waters, River No.2 Beach is a popular destination for both locals and tourists looking to relax and enjoy the beach.



### Tiwai Island:

Tiwai Island is a wildlife sanctuary in the Moa River, known for its diverse flora and fauna, including various primate species. Visitors can take guided tours to explore the island's natural beauty.



### Bunce Island:

This historic site was a major hub for the transatlantic slave trade. Today, it serves as a poignant reminder of this dark period in history and attracts visitors interested in learning about Sierra Leone's past.

### Warawara Mountains in Kabala:

The Warawara Mountains offer stunning natural landscapes and opportunities for hiking and trekking. The area is known for its lush greenery and picturesque vistas.



### Sierra Leone National Museum:

Located in Freetown, the museum showcases the country's rich cultural heritage through its exhibits on traditional arts, crafts, and history.

### The Bintumani Mountains:

The Bintumani Mountains are the highest peak in Sierra Leone and offer adventurous treks for hikers seeking stunning panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.



### Lumley Beach nightlife:

Lumley Beach in Freetown comes alive at night with a vibrant nightlife scene, featuring beach bars, restaurants, and live music venues where visitors can enjoy local cuisine and entertainment.

### Banana Island:

This picturesque island off the coast of Sierra Leone is known for its pristine beaches, crystal-clear waters, and opportunities for snorkeling and diving among vibrant marine life.



### Freetown historic city and York village:

Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, is a bustling city with a rich history dating back to the colonial era. York Village, located near Freetown, offers a glimpse into the country's past with its preserved architecture and cultural sites.

# Salone's Fabric Fashion: country's burgeoning draw card

Sierra Leone's fashion and textiles sector has dominated its social scene this year, and in the process is showing itself as an increasingly powerful tool for economic empowerment.

From Manikene's recent launch at Radisson Blu and Nyapuii Threads' 5th Anniversary Boutique Bash at Mango Peak, to the explosion of covetable bespoke fashion that lit up the country on Eid, to the opening of the Djulaa Concept Store, as well as the graduation of over 400 students from Madam Wokie's Skills Development Programme, event after event speaks volumes about the sector's aspirations for growth.

Common to all of these is their contemporary take on traditional artisanship, which is reviving heritage skills, techniques and materials and building on Sierra Leone's cultural legacy to create a unique and distinctive 'made in Salone' style.

In the process, the fashion industry's potential to drive positive change through job creation, cultural conservation and skills transfer is

moving rapidly up our policy agenda.

As Emmanuel Edwards, founder of newly launched clothing brand Manikene, says: "In Sierra Leone, I took on a new mission. Recognising the immense talent of local artisans, I sought to empower them by collaborating on projects and incorporating their traditional craftsmanship into my designs. This partnership elevated the quality of the finished products and nurtured an atmosphere of cultural exchange and appreciation."

Worldwide, the fashion and textiles sectors are estimated to be worth US\$2.5 trillion and employ more than 75 million workers, most of whom are women.

The market in sub-Saharan Africa is worth a relatively modest US\$31 billion. However, a growing interest in Africa's creative industries, combined with increasing consumer awareness of the high environmental and human costs of fast fashion, has created an opportunity for the individualised heritage-driven approach of designers like Sierra Leone's.

## INVEST SALONE

In addition, easy shipping access to Europe and several trade agreements that allow emerging markets to benefit from low or no tariffs on their products are expanding the fashion sector's export potential.

Invest Salone is working with individual fashion firms and the wider sector to boost competitiveness. Our work includes capacity building, providing design support and advice on key marketing materials, hosting learning sessions, showcasing export-ready firms, and collaborating with the sector to explore opportunities for official 'Made in Sierra Leone' accreditation, as well as encouraging sector coordination to address common challenges faced by brands, such as shipping, material sourcing, pricing strategies and marketing.

# Sierra Leone's fashion and textiles industry launches new national association

## INVEST SALONE

The Sierra Leone fashion and textiles industry continues to demonstrate its growing creative and economic significance, with the launch of the Fashion, Design and Textiles Association on 13 June 2024.

The launch event, which was hosted by the British High Commissioner, and supported by Invest Salone, the UK funded private sector development initiative, brought together the fashion and manufacturing industry, as well as public sector champions to hear the Association's vision for the future of the industry.

The fashion and textiles sectors play an important role in the global economy. It is estimated to be worth US\$2.5 trillion and employs over 75 million workers worldwide, most of whom are women. In sub-Saharan Africa, the market is currently valued at US\$31 billion but is expected to grow by 4-5% annually by 2027 due to the increasing demand for African fashion and textiles. Although Sierra Leone's fashion and textiles sector is small in comparison to regional heavy hitters like Nigeria and Ghana, there is significant potential for local brands to enhance their international competitiveness, leading to rapid economic gains.

British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Lisa Chesney MBE, said: "We are delighted to support the launch of the Fashion, Design, and Textiles Association. A vibrant and dynamic creative industry, centered around fashion and textiles, has the potential to unlock economic growth and create opportunities for all, while fostering the next generation of creative talent. This sector has proven itself to be an essential positive force for society, bringing joy, inspiration, and opportunity to our lives. This new national association marks a significant step towards amplifying Sierra Leone's creative capabilities. The British High Commission proudly supports this initiative, underscoring



our commitment to fostering innovation and growth. Let us seize this opportunity to celebrate and elevate Sierra Leone's rich creative landscape."

Frederica Williams, President of the Fashion, Design and Textiles Association, said that the Association was an opportunity to position Sierra Leonean fashion design and textiles as a creative force on the global fashion stage.

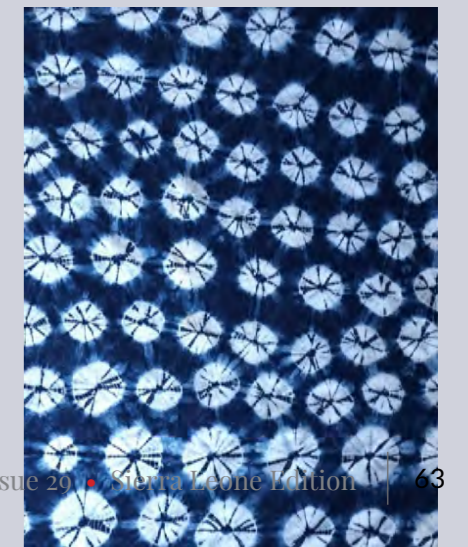
"Sierra Leone's fashion, design and textiles has been making visible and sustainable progress. The launch of the Fashion, Design and Textiles Association demonstrates how much we have to offer – as creatives, innovators, employers and as a source of economic growth. We look forward to working collectively with our members, to shape the evolution of our industry both here and internationally."

Avril Pratt, consultant with Invest Salone, congratulated the Association, saying: "From our work with the sector, especially at international events such as Africa Fashion Week London, we can say that Sierra Leone's designers are punching above their weight. Recognising the sector's significance, we are excited to support the Fashion, Design and Textiles Association, a first

mover for the country, in its launch."

She added that research conducted by Invest Salone and the Fashion, Design and Textiles Association had identified enhancing shipping services, developing skills, strengthening supply chains and promoting an enabling environment as priorities for the sector, and said that Invest Salone would continue its work with the Association to address related constraints to productivity.

As part of the launch event, industry representatives took part in a panel discussion on the sector's opportunities and challenges and a pop-up exhibition featured the work of Sierra Leonean designers.



Sierra Leone's Fashion Stylings



# Sierra Leone's Tour de Lunsar and Street Child Marathon highlight the potential of 'Made in Salone' sports tourism

With a growing number of international participants, two of Sierra Leone's biggest sporting events – the 'Tour de Lunsar' and the 'Street Child Sierra Leone Marathon and Cycle Challenge' – are promising indicators of how sports tourism can positively impact the economy by attracting visitors, creating jobs and generating revenue for local businesses.

The travel and tourism industry offers opportunities for economic diversification and market-creation and is responsible for one-in-four new jobs globally. Sports tourism is one of the fastest growing sub-sectors – generating around 10% of the world's expenditure on tourism.



With an exciting and expanding list of competitive and leisure sporting events, Sierra Leone has started to capitalise on its potential with uniquely 'Made in Salone' sports and outdoor activities including:

- Set up by Karim 'Stylish' Kamara, as a way of giving his local team a way to compete, the Tour de Lunsar has grown into the biggest cycling event in West Africa, attracting international participants and sponsorship.
- The Street Child Sierra Leone Marathon and Cycle Challenge is an annual event to raise money for Street Child's work. The 'off the beaten track' route goes through tropical jungle and local villages, providing participants with a truly unique way of discovering Sierra Leone.
- Sierra Leone's surfing scene, centred round the Bureh Beach Surf Club on the country's Western Peninsula,

is a prime addition to West Africa's surf community. Surf lessons and equipment hire are available, and the shallow waters and warm temperatures make it a great place for beginners or more advanced surfers.

- Yoga instructors offer daily lessons and occasional retreats in spectacular locations like the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary or at the Peninsula's many beach resorts.
- Freetown Golf Club has an 18-hole golf course overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and holds the biggest golf tournament in West Africa.
- Snorkelling, spear fishing and whale watching are offered at Daltons Guesthouse on the idyllic Banana Island.
- Sierra Leonean destination management agencies – Visit Sierra

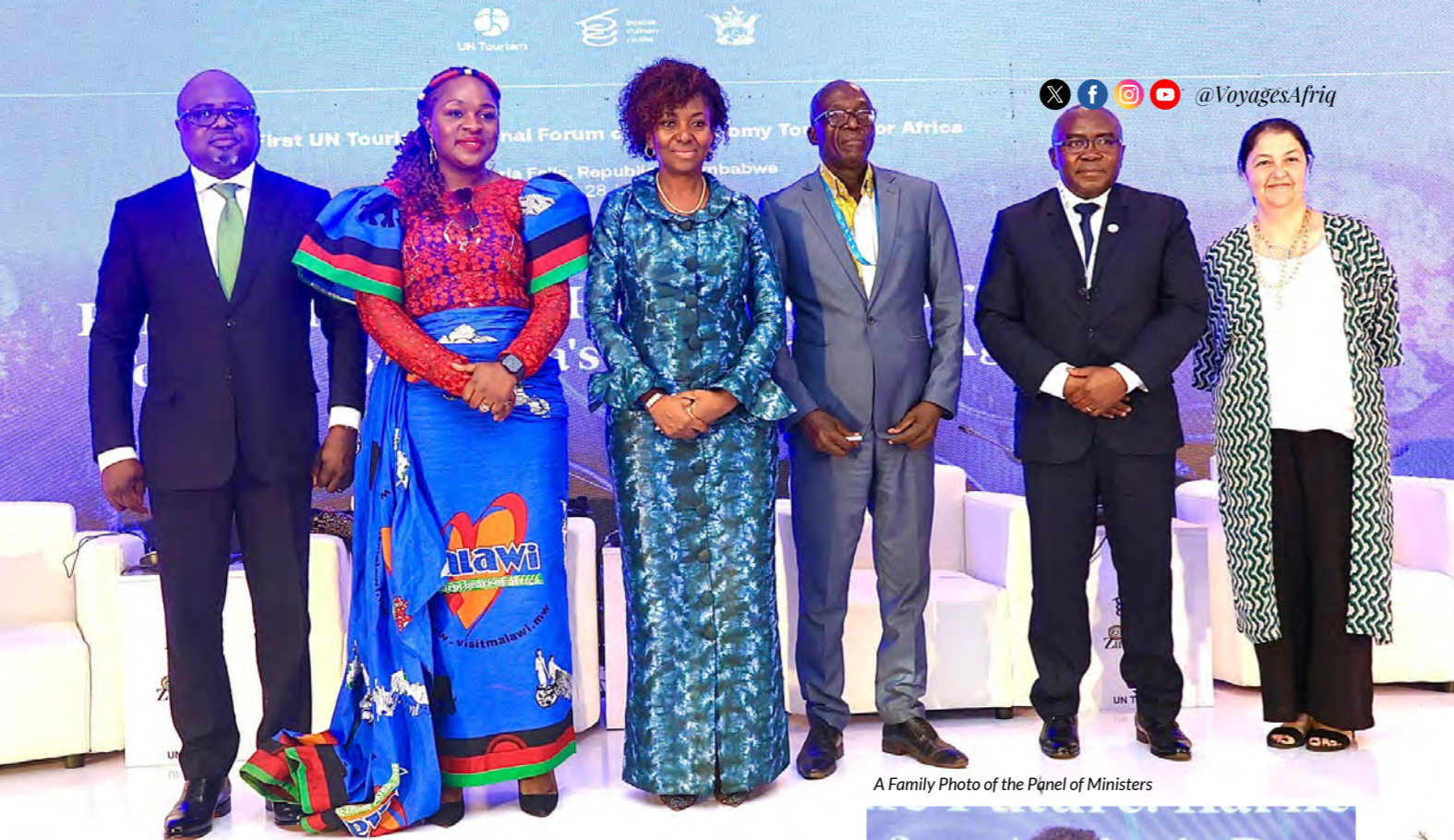
Leone and IPC Travel – organise regular hikes around Freetown and farther afield for walkers of all levels. Trails take you through diverse landscapes and offer spectacular views of Sierra Leone's famous 'Lion Mountains'.

Invest Salone works with the public and private sector to compile evidence and bring national and international stakeholders together to identify opportunities to improve the tourism sector's competitiveness. This work includes supporting local destination management companies with technical assistance and to attend international travel fairs.

Our published research includes an 'Insights' report on investment opportunities in the tourism sector in Sierra Leone. We conduct research to understand the sector's investment potential and work with the local and international media as well as using our own platforms to share and promote information on Sierra Leone's tourism potential.

For more information visit our Resource Bank or get in touch at [enquiries@investsalone.com](mailto:enquiries@investsalone.com).





A Family Photo of the Panel of Ministers



Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Mrs. Nabeela Farida Tunis, Speaking at the Gastronomy Conference Held in Zimbabwe

## Sierra Leone harnesses culinary excellence to boost tourism growth

A key aspect of Sierra Leone's burgeoning tourism industry is its cuisine, which is becoming a significant draw for tourists and visitors. The country's Minister for Culture and Tourism is determined to leverage this growing popularity to drive further tourism growth.

In an interview with \*VoyagesAfriq\*, Nabeela Tunis revealed that more talents within the gastronomy sector have been spotlighted, with this component set to feature in the country's Tourism Development Act.

"Sierra Leone has been active in the gastronomy space, and there are talents that we have unearthed; we have the famous Chef Fatmata Binta, who is a UN Tourism brand ambassador and she's a Sierra Leonean. We also have Maria Bradford, Chef Nima, and several local chefs. What we did as a ministry and also in our strategic plan, which we also aim to put in our Tourism Development Act, which is under review, is having a strong component on gastronomy because we know that it can create jobs, it can

bring back dignity and it can empower women."

"Our cuisine has been termed exotic. Looking at marketing reports, we realised that most of the search engines are interested in Sierra Leone's food, our fabrics, and our fashion. This has driven us to take specific policy actions and directives towards enhancing this particular aspect, which will be a strong attraction for tourism in Sierra Leone," she added.

Tunis attended the inaugural UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa in Zimbabwe last June, where she participated in discussions aimed at maximising the vast opportunities in the continent's gastronomy as a catalyst for tourism growth. For the Minister, lessons from the event provide valuable insights for Sierra Leone to follow.

She explained, "We started the year with a food festival, and we will continue to hold these forums, discussions, opportunities, and platforms to ensure

that we promote local talents and introduce a level of professionalism. For example, we are aggressively working on initiatives such as holding training sessions within our hotel training centre because we believe we can develop a workforce that will also attract people to Sierra Leone."

The West African nation has been chosen to host the 3rd UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa in 2026. For the many guests and patrons expected to attend the event, Nabeela Tunis said, "Expect a mixture of culture, a mixture of natural landscapes, a mixture of history, and exotic food—food that they have never tasted anywhere else, because Sierra Leone is known for its distinct and delightful cuisine."

@VoyagesAfriq

## Could 'Made in Salone' cuisine be a bite-size gateway to the growth of Sierra Leonean tourism?

The flavour of 'Made in Salone' food is beginning to make its mark internationally. As Sierra Leone is set to host UN Tourism's third Regional Forum on Gastronomy for Africa in 2026, could food tourism – one of the world's fastest growing tourism categories – offer real opportunities to boost the country's economy?

Gastronomy or culinary tourism involves learning about, appreciating and consuming food and drink that reflect a destination's heritage and culture. With 34% of travellers worldwide choosing destinations that appeal to their culinary preferences, the food tourism market is estimated to be worth US\$1.1 trillion and predicted to reach US\$6.2 trillion by 2033.

### Pioneering women

Behind the small but significant surge of interest in Sierra Leone's unique food heritage is a handful of visionary women, whose innovative approach to local ingredients and traditional recipes has taken Sierra Leonean food to a much wider audience. They include:

- Award-winning **Chef Binta**, whose contribution to gastronomy, enhancement of local produce and community development was recognised by UN Tourism when she was appointed as a UN Ambassador for Responsible Tourism.
- Miatta Marke, whose **Cole Street Guesthouse** in Freetown was included in National Geographic's Best of the World list 2024, as one of 21 restaurants picked by the magazine's global community of explorers, photographers, writers and

editors. With a weekly Saturday pop up at London's Africa Centre until 24 August 2024, Cole Street is serving its award-winning cuisine to a much wider audience.

- UK-based Maria Bradford, who offers Sierra Leonean-inspired fine dining through her **Schwen Schwen** brand and pays homage to the country's food and its history in her recently published cookbook, *Sweet Salone*.
- **Susan Senesie**, who left a successful career as a private chef for companies including Hilton, Disney and Barclays, and returned to Sierra Leone to explore the fusion of Sierra Leonean and European recipes through pop ups, private catering and her new street food restaurant.
- Renata Mang-Kaprr Kamara, aka **Chef Renata**, whose exciting use of ingredients and Afro-fusion cooking style offers up creations such as gari-coated, suya-spiced salmon and chive croquettes.

Annual events – such as the Ma Dengn beach festival, which celebrates Sierra Leonean culture through food, literature, music, fashion and art – have also played a part in the rising appreciation of Sierra Leonean cooking.

### Global tourism – in numbers

Recent figures from the World Travel and Tourism Council show the increasing economic importance of the travel and tourism sector. In 2023, it contributed 9.1% to global GDP; an increase of 23.2% from 2022 and only 4.1% below the 2019 level.

The travel and tourism sector across

Africa is expected to create 14 million new jobs within the next decade, most of which will go to women, who make up much of the tourism workforce, albeit in low-paid jobs. To ensure that the sector can become a real driver of women's empowerment, creating opportunities for women's career progression, entrepreneurship and education and training is essential.

### Invest Salone's role

Invest Salone is a UK funded private sector development initiative which works to encourage investment, generate exports, create jobs and diversify key sectors in Sierra Leone, one of which is tourism. We work with the public and private sector to compile evidence and bring national and international stakeholders together to identify opportunities to improve the tourism sector's competitiveness. Our work also includes supporting local destination management companies with technical assistance and to attend international travel fairs.

Our published research includes an Insights report on **investment opportunities** in the tourism sector in Sierra Leone. We research the sector's investment potential and work with the local and international media and use our own platforms to share and promote information on Sierra Leone's tourism potential.

As we look ahead to the 2026 Regional Forum on Gastronomy for Africa, we are excited to see what Sierra Leone serves up next.

For more information visit our Resource Bank or get in touch at [enquiries@investsalone.com](mailto:enquiries@investsalone.com).



# CHAMPIONING SIERRA LEONE:

## An exclusive conversation with Chef Fatmata Binta, Destination Sierra Leone's new Ambassador

In this exclusive interview, we sit down with Chef Fatmata Binta, the trailblazing culinary artist who made history as the first African to be awarded the prestigious Basque Culinary World Prize in 2022. Following this remarkable achievement, Chef Binta was appointed as an Ambassador for Responsible Tourism by UN Tourism, further solidifying her role as a global advocate for sustainable practices and cultural preservation.

Born and raised in the heart of Freetown, Chef Binta brings a deep love for her homeland and an unwavering commitment to showcasing its rich cultural tapestry to the world. From the stunning landscapes and vibrant traditions to the culinary treasures that tell the story of a nation, Chef Binta is on a mission to position Sierra Leone as a premier destination for cultural and culinary tourism.

Join us as we delve into her journey, the unique allure of Sierra Leone, and her plans to put this West African gem on the global map.

**VA: What does it mean to be named as Ambassador for Destination Sierra Leone?**

**Chef Binta:** Being named as the Ambassador for Destination Sierra Leone is a profound honor and a responsibility that I hold close to my heart. As someone who was born and raised in Sierra Leone, this role allows me to showcase the rich cultural heritage, vibrant traditions, and untapped potential of my homeland to the world. It is an opportunity to highlight Sierra Leone as not just a destination but a cultural experience

that offers a unique blend of history, natural beauty, and culinary richness. I see this as a chance to contribute to the growth and development of Sierra Leone, particularly in tourism and gastronomy, by connecting the global audience to the authentic experiences that my country offers.

**VA: What makes Sierra Leone special as a destination?**

**Chef Binta:** Sierra Leone is special because of its incredible diversity, both in its landscapes and its people. From pristine beaches and lush rainforests to the vibrant energy of Freetown, Sierra Leone is a place where you can find a deep connection with nature, culture, and history. The warmth and hospitality of the Sierra Leonean people create an atmosphere that makes visitors feel like they are part of a larger family. Our rich traditions, Bubu music, and food are deeply rooted in our history, and each region has its own unique story to tell. What makes Sierra Leone truly special is its ability to offer an authentic experience that remains untouched by mass tourism, allowing visitors to connect with the soul of Africa.

**VA: Tell us about your upbringing in Sierra Leone.**

**Chef Binta:** I was born and raised in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in a Fulani family with Guinean roots. My upbringing was deeply influenced by the strong sense of community and the vibrant cultural traditions of my family. Growing up, I was immersed in the rich culinary traditions of the Fulani people, which later became a cornerstone of my culinary journey. My childhood was filled with memories



of communal meals, storytelling, and the simple yet profound joys of life in Sierra Leone. These experiences shaped my love for food and my desire to share the stories of my heritage with the world. My upbringing in Sierra Leone and Guinea Conakry my ancestral home has been the foundation of my work, and it continues to inspire me in everything I do.



Chef Fatmata Binta

**VA: What plans do you have to leverage your numerous ambassadorial roles globally to help promote Sierra Leone?**

I intend to leverage my global ambassadorial roles to put Sierra Leone on the map as a premier destination for cultural and culinary tourism. By integrating Fulani / Sierra Leonean cuisine, traditions, and cultural experiences into my global platforms, I can create awareness and drive interest in visiting Sierra Leone. Collaborations with international chefs, food festivals, and tourism initiatives will allow me to showcase the unique flavors and experiences that Sierra Leone offers. Additionally, I plan to work closely with the Sierra Leonean government and local stakeholders to develop sustainable tourism projects that benefit local communities, promote cultural preservation, and ensure that Sierra Leone's tourism sector grows in a way that is both impactful and inclusive.

**VA: What are your favorite Culinary Delights in Sierra Leone?**

**Chef Binta:** Sierra Leone has a wealth of culinary delights that are close to my heart. Some of my favorites include cassava leaves, which is a staple dish made with finely chopped cassava leaves, cooked with palm oil, and served



with rice. I also love groundnut stew, a rich and flavorful peanut-based dish that is comforting and full of depth. Another favorite is jollof rice, a popular West African dish that has its own unique Sierra Leonean twist. Finally,

the fresh seafood along our coastline is unparalleled, and dishes like grilled fish with lime and pepper sauce are simply irresistible. These dishes are not just meals; they are a reflection of our culture, history, and the vibrant flavors that make Sierra Leone's cuisine so special.



# Seychelles One big wow

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Namibia Tourism Board

Corner of Haddy & Sam Nujoma Drive  
Private Bag 13244, Windhoek, Namibia

Tel: +264 61 290 6000

Fax: +264 61 254 848

Email: info@namibiatourism.com.na

Site: www.visitnamibia.com.na



## Namibia Tourism Board

Doing what matters drives our ambition for Namibia

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

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

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

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

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

### **Mission**

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

### **Vision**

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

### **Values**

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

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

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

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

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



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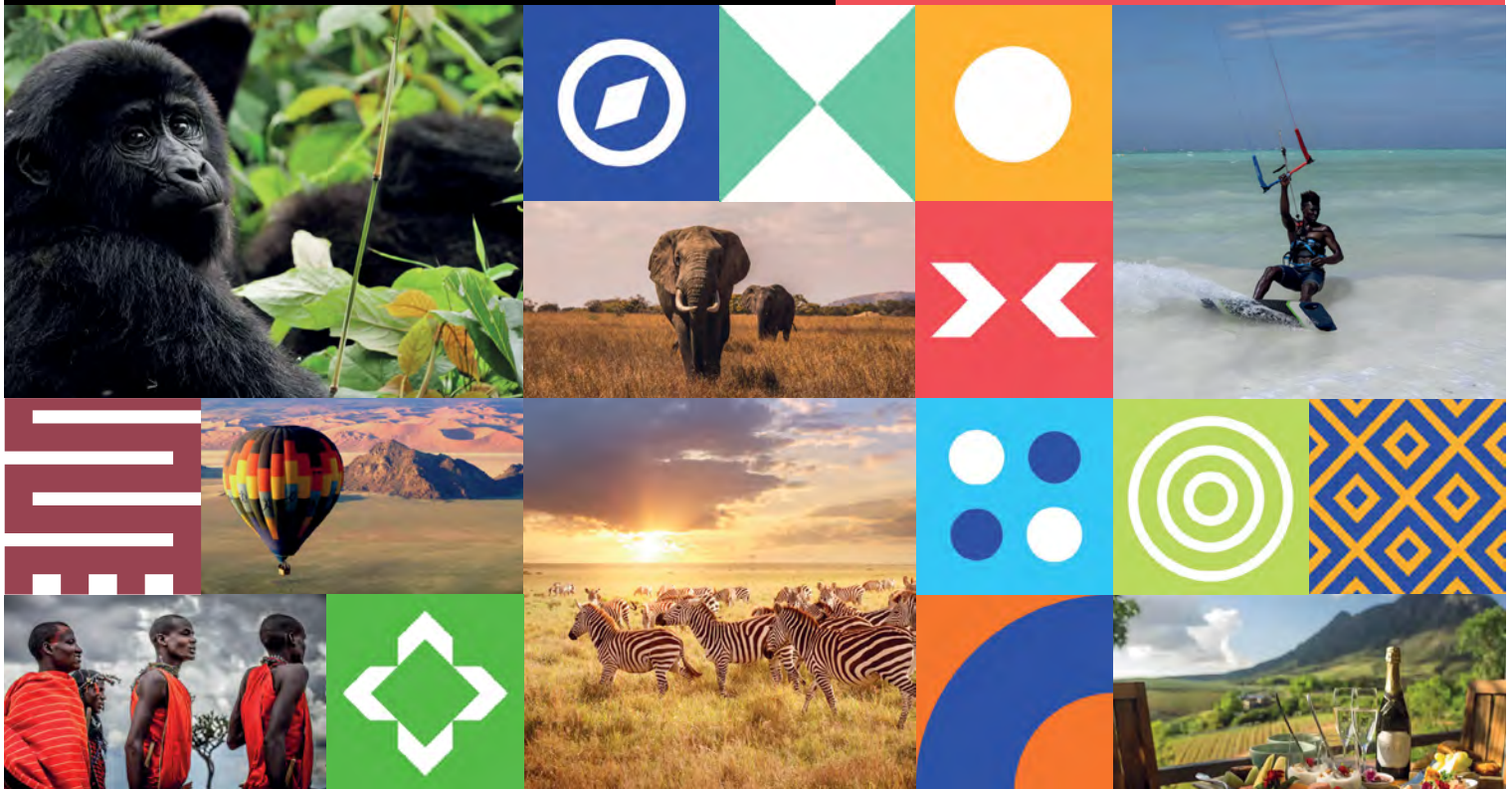
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