

VoyagesAfric

ISSUE 030 | September/October 2024 Edition

Africa's Leading Travel and Tourism Magazine

Tourism Education in Africa sees a giant leap as First UN Tourism Academy breaks ground... pg. 20



AviaDev 2025 heads to Zanzibar pg. 61

TBCSA CEO calls for African solutions following landmark ruling on Booking.com price parity pg. 44

ISSN 2550-3405



9 772550 340004



Namibia Tourism Board

Step into the Namibia's Unique Blend

As the world's travel enthusiasts begin to circle their destinations for the next big adventure, we're reminded of the country's vast and breathtaking expanse of space, where the stars shine bright, and the night sky is a canvas of endless possibilities.

The Namibia Tourism Board (NTB) together with the Namibia tourism stakeholders plays a crucial role in the success of Namibia's tourism industry by promoting and enhancing the country's authentic experiences, cultural heritage, and natural beauty.

Namibia offers a serene refuge for tourists looking for quiet, a vibrant cultural heritage, and a strong commitment to peace.

Time stands still in this enchanting land, where the rhythms of nature and the warmth of the African sun conspire to slow down the pace of life. Whether you're trekking through the majestic dunes of Sossusvlei, exploring the ancient rock art of Twyfelfontein, or simply basking in the golden light of sunset, Namibia's unique blend of space, peace, and time is sure to leave you feeling refreshed, rejuvenated, and ready to take on the world.



AFRICA'S INTERNATIONAL BUYER FORUM

2-4 DECEMBER 2024
Sarit Expo Centre Nairobi, Kenya



Be part of Africa's premier meetings-driven tourism event connecting the continent's vibrant tourism industry

Unlock Africa's tourism potential and forge meaningful new partnerships through pre-scheduled meetings, exciting networking events, insightful talks and familiarisation trips across Africa

Curated by On Show Solutions and Experience Africa Events

essenceofafrica.travel

Space: The Vast Expanse of the Desert

Imagine standing at the edge of the world's oldest desert, where the sky stretches out in every direction, seemingly without end. The Namib Desert is a haven for astronomers, with some of the gloomiest skies on the planet. Watch the sunset over towering dunes, and then gaze up at the star-filled night sky, feeling the vastness of the universe unfold before you.

Peace: Serenity in a World Gone Mad

In an increasingly fast-paced and hectic world, Namibia offers a tranquil escape from the hustle and bustle. From the gentle rustle of the desert grasses to the soothing sounds of the Atlantic Ocean, every moment in this country is an opportunity to unwind and reconnect with nature. Take a leisurely drive through the rolling hills of the Khomas Hochland or stroll drive along the peaceful shores of Etosha Pan National Park and let your worries melt away.

Time: A Journey Through Ancient Landscapes

Namibia's rich history and diverse cultures are waiting to be discovered. Visit ancient rock art sites, where centuries-old paintings tell stories of long-forgotten civilizations. Explore the Namibian capital, Windhoek, with its German colonial architecture and vibrant markets. And step into the world of the San Bushmen or Ovahimba, who have lived in harmony with this land for thousands of years.

Practical Information

Getting There: Fly into Windhoek Hosea Kutako International Airport (WDH)

Language: English is widely spoken, but German and Afrikaans are also common.

Currency: Namibian Dollar (NAD), but credit cards are acceptable

Best Time to Visit: Namibia is an all-year destination but from May to October pick sessions for game, landscape viewing, and

many other activities November to March for mostly surfing and swimming

Accommodation: Ranging from luxury lodges to budget-friendly guesthouses and camping sites.

Safety: Safer than most African countries but familiarize yourself with the Namibia Tourism Board safety brochure at the website: www.visitnamibia.com.na

Namibia Tourism Board invites you to experience Namibia's unique blend of space, peace, and time. To capture the essence of Namibia's unique attractions the importance of slowing down and appreciating the country's natural beauty. Namibia Tourism Board highlights the value of disconnecting from technology and reconnecting with oneself and nature.

So why wait?
Book your trip to Namibia today!

Prepared by:
Flora Quest

Contents



8 "Amplifying Africa's voice": UN Tourism Chief stresses gastronomy's role in boosting African tourism

9 UN Tourism and TUI Care Foundation partner to support African artisans in rural areas

10 Africa region thrives through UN Tourism- Led Cooperation and Investment

15 Four African Chefs named UN Tourism Ambassadors for Gastronomy Tourism

Nigeria to Host 68th UN Tourism CAF Meeting

16 Basque Culinary Centre's Joxe Marie Aizega upbeat about potential of Africa's gastronomy tourism

18 UN Tourism Executive Council Meets to Place Tourism in Global Economic Agenda

19 UN Tourism and World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance to Advance Common ESG Framework



20 Tourism Education in Africa sees a giant leap as First UN Tourism Academy breaks ground

22 Unleashing the Untapped Potential: A Vision for Tourism in the Democratic Republic of Congo

23 Dominican Republic to convene maiden Biregional Africa-America UN Tourism Meeting

25 63rd ICCA Congress: A landmark event for the global meetings industry in Abu Dhabi

26 Kenya's tourism sector welcomes new Tourism CS

27 Africa's Academic and Cultural Exchange: The Africa By Bus Project

28 Casablanca & Region: Destination Business and Chill

29 Uganda's new tourism policy to embrace gastronomy following UN Tourism Forum insights

30 Zimbabwe embraces Gastronomy tourism to fuel economic growth

32 Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee (WITLAC) champions gender equality in African tourism

34 Unlocking Africa's Tourism Potential: Key Lessons from the 7th ATLF

38 'Tourism boards should push Africa's aviation growth'

40 Strategic Route Development: Gavin Eccles Highlights the Synergy Between Tourism and Aviation

41 KOFISI CEO highlights AI integration in hospitality and future of workspaces at AHIF

42 Labadi Hotel's David Eduafu is CIMG 'Marketing Man of the Year'

43 Meta's Judith Mongala on empowering Sub-Saharan Africa through technology

44 TBCSA CEO calls for African solutions following landmark ruling on Booking.com price parity

45 Botswana swears in Nnaniki Makwinja as new Environment & Tourism Minister, following the passing of Dumezweni Mthimkhulu

45 NTB appoints Charmaine Matheus Acting CEO

46 Get to know the spectacular Seychelles

48 Park Hyatt Jo'burg sets to redefine luxury hospitality with grand October opening

49 Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust unveils ambitious five-year strategic plan

50 NAMIBIA: Adventure paradise that awaits you

52 Newly Appointed ICCA Africa Director outlines vision for MICE industry growth

53 10th FIKANI Tourism Fair projects Mozambique's vibrant tourism & cultural potentials

54 Unlocking Africa's Hospitality Potential: Trends, Opportunities, and Collaborative Growth

55 Driving Africa's Hospitality Growth: Insights from Paul Stevens of Accor

56 Tourism providers opting to abandon retention of legal counsel to their detriment

58 Essence of Africa targets quality buyers to fuel African tourism growth

61 AviaDev 2025 heads to Zanzibar, Tanzania

64 From Nationalism to Globalism: The Evolution of African Airline Ownership

66 AviaDev will help improve tourism and connectivity for Namibia and Africa - Bisey Uirab

68 João Pó Jorge Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award at AviaDev 2024

71 Young photographers spotlight Zimbabwe's culinary riches in UN Tourism contest

73 First batch of 64 events endorsed for 2024

78 Qatar Airways Invests in AirlinK to Boost African Network



VoyagesAfric

Travel and Tourism Magazine

EDITORIAL TEAM

Managing Editor
Kojo Bentum-Williams

Consulting Editor
Ben Ohene-Ayeh

Content Editor
Samuel Obeng Appah

Editor at Large
Ridwan Ibrahim Asante

Francophone Editor
Franck Olivier Kra

West Africa Editor
Obinna Emelike

Contributing Writers

Sean Mendis
Obinna Emelike
Jenice Aidoo
Jason Amoo
David Hayford Ddzidzenu
Safiya Akojee
Ana Paula Lopez Godoy
Moustapha Cherate

Administration/Marketing

Symphorien Kouabile
Glaou Eddie Fortune
Michel Kouassi

Photo Credit

Gilbert Amankwah Ampofo
Prince Charles Affum
Kamal Baghirli
UN Tourism
Moses Sage Mtonga
Nessy Hilifilwa & Oye Photography

Publisher

AfroViayes Media Services LTD.

Editorial

Dear Reader,

We are delighted to bring you another exciting edition of VoyagesAfric Travel Magazine, your trusted source for the latest in travel and tourism news across Africa and beyond. This issue is packed with milestone achievements that have shaped the continent's tourism landscape over the past three months.

Leading the highlights is the inaugural UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa, held in the majestic Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. The event saw the Secretary-General of the UNWTO, Zurab Pololikashvili, emphasize the pivotal role of gastronomy in promoting African tourism. In recognition of this, the UNWTO has appointed four African chefs as Ambassadors for Gastronomy Tourism, shining a global spotlight on Africa's rich culinary heritage.

Another remarkable stride is the groundbreaking ceremony for the first-ever UN Tourism Academy in Africa, hosted by Zambia. This academy is set to transform tourism education on the continent, positioning Africa as a hub of knowledge and expertise in the global tourism industry.



Kojo Bentum-Williams

As we look ahead, our coverage extends to the upcoming bi-regional Africa-America UN Tourism Meeting, which will make history in the Dominican Republic this October. It is expected to foster stronger tourism ties between the two regions.

In aviation, the recently held AviaDev Conference brought together global leaders in Namibia to discuss the future of Africa's aviation sector. South African Airways has announced a new route to Lubumbashi, while Virgin Atlantic makes a celebrated return to Accra. In addition, Airlink's new flight connecting Cape Town and Gaborone offers travellers more options to explore the continent.

Ghana's 'December in GH' is gaining momentum, with 64 events already confirmed, ensuring another spectacular season for tourists and locals alike. Meanwhile, in Nairobi, the highly anticipated 'Essence of Africa' will debut this December, bringing together quality buyers and key stakeholders to drive African tourism forward.

For the third and final time, Botswana hosted the Africa Tourism Leadership Forum (ATLF) in Gaborone. The event, held in early September, convened key players

from across the continent to discuss strategies for Africa's tourism development and growth.

As we move into the final quarter of 2024, we are proud to feature an exclusive interview with Frank Murangwa, the newly appointed Director of ICCA Africa. He outlines his bold vision for Africa's MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) industry, aiming to position the continent as a premier destination for global events.

This edition also includes thought-provoking opinion pieces from experts across Africa's travel and tourism sectors. You'll find insightful articles, exclusive interviews, and previews of major upcoming trade shows and industry events both in Africa and globally.

This September edition has been carefully curated to keep you, our cherished reader, informed to stay ahead of industry happenings. So, sit back, relax and enjoy the read!

Warm regards,

Kojo Bentum-Williams
Publisher

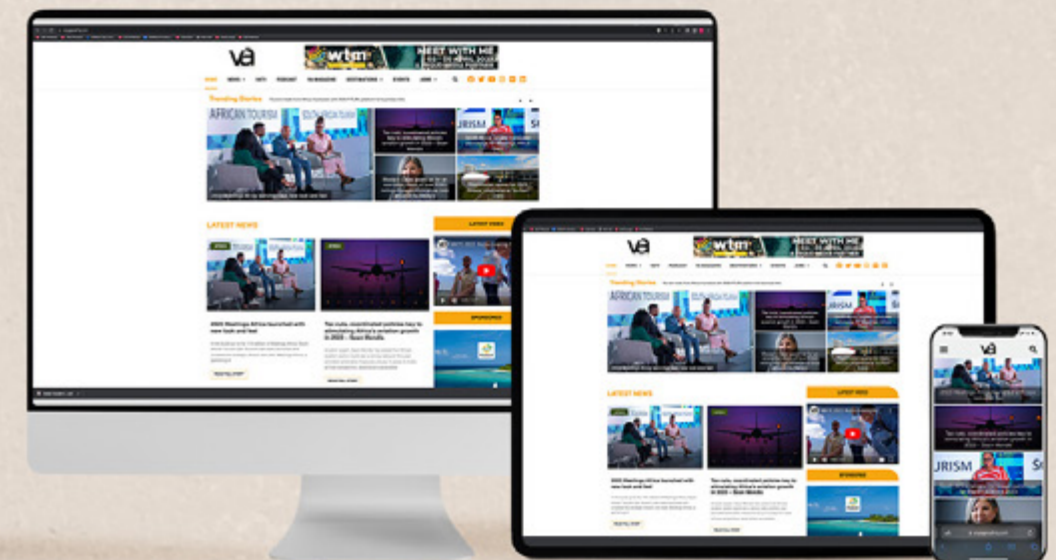


Your Most Credible Travel and Tourism News Source



Get Interactive & Connect with us on #VoyagesAfriq

www.voyagesafriq.com



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



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

Copyright
VoyagesAfriq

NMC No.
NMC/C.139/17/3036.



Africa's leading Travel and Tourism Magazine



“Amplifying Africa’s voice”: UN Tourism Chief stresses gastronomy’s role in boosting African tourism

The inaugural UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa has ended in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, gathering tourism professionals and stakeholders from across Africa and the globe to emphasise the importance of gastronomy as a catalyst for the continent’s tourism industry.

The forum explored how Africa’s rich culinary traditions, characterised by diverse flavours and exotic ingredients, could be leveraged to boost tourism.

UN Tourism Secretary General Zurab Pololikashvili delivered the opening remarks, expressing gratitude to President Emmerson Mnangagwa for his hospitality and Tourism Minister, Barbara Rwodzi for organising the event. He also acknowledged Joxe Mari Aizega of the Basque Culinary Centre for his support as co-organiser.

“This has been a truly global Forum from the start. It is only fitting that we meet in one of the world’s most exciting gastronomy regions – Africa! Zimbabwe is the natural host for this landmark event,” said Pololikashvili.

He praised Zimbabwe’s First Lady, Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa, for her enthusiasm and promotion of Zimbabwe’s culinary heritage, noting her active support for the Regional Traditional Festival.

Pololikashvili highlighted traditional dishes like ‘Mopane Worms’ and ‘sadza’, enjoyed by both locals and tourists, as key elements placing Zimbabwe on

“We are here today to amplify the voice of Africa and bring the continent to the forefront. By listening to the ideas of international experts and young entrepreneurs, we can tackle the big challenges and seize the opportunities regional gastronomy presents for Africa’s tourism”



the gastronomy tourism map. These dishes are central to the ZimBho! global marketing campaign, recognised at the recent Brand Africa forum in Zambia.

During the forum, a new brochure developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry was launched, showcasing the richness of Zimbabwean gastronomy.

The event also featured pitches from four entrepreneurs proposing local solutions to regional gastronomy tourism challenges, along with presentations from some of Africa’s top chefs and culinary experts.

Pololikashvili announced the naming of new UN Tourism Ambassadors, tasked with promoting sustainable gastronomy tourism, and emphasised the forum’s goal to establish a long-term roadmap for the growth of gastronomy tourism in Africa.

A significant outcome of the forum was the establishment of the Africa International Tourism Academy for Culinary Arts in collaboration with UN Tourism, which aims to provide students with the knowledge and guidance needed to excel professionally in the culinary field.

“We are here today to amplify the voice of Africa and bring the continent to the forefront. By listening to the ideas of international experts and young entrepreneurs, we can tackle the big challenges and seize the opportunities regional gastronomy presents for Africa’s tourism,” Pololikashvili postulated.

The regional forum laid the groundwork for the development of a comprehensive Agenda for Gastronomy Tourism in Africa, ensuring the sector benefits both people and the planet.

UN Tourism and TUI Care Foundation partner to support African artisans in rural areas

UN Tourism and TUI Care Foundation have solidified their ongoing partnership by signing an agreement at the UN Tourism headquarters in Madrid, Spain. The agreement focuses on empowering artists and artisans, particularly women and youth, in rural tourism destinations in Africa. With this new agreement, TUI Care Foundation becomes the first partner to support the pilot phase of the Tourism for Rural Development Small Grants Programme by UN Tourism.

With this collaboration, UN Tourism and TUI Care Foundation will launch ‘Colourful Cultures’ Call for Proposals to empower artists and artisans in rural destinations in Gambia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia and Zambia.

The call will allow non-profit organisations in these countries to develop innovative initiatives that benefit artisanal and artist communities to boost income opportunities, protect intangible cultural heritage, and promote rural tourism.

UN Tourism and TUI Care Foundation have been collaborating to promote sustainable development through tourism. In 2023, both organisations

launched the Tourism for Development Fund with EUR 10 million to support sustainable development in destinations in Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Empowering Rural Communities Through Tourism

Speaking at the signing ceremony of the agreement, Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General of UN Tourism said: “Tourism has the power to transform lives and communities, especially in rural areas. By supporting artists and artisans, we are not only preserving cultural heritage but also creating sustainable income opportunities. This collaboration with TUI Care Foundation exemplifies our commitment to inclusive and sustainable tourism for rural development.”

Thomas Ellerbeck, Chairman of the TUI Care Foundation, echoed this sentiment, stating, “By supporting artists and artisans, we are preserving cultural heritage and promoting economic growth and social well-being in some of the world’s most vulnerable tourism destinations. This change-making collaboration with UN Tourism, inspired by our global TUI Colourful Cultures programme, is an important cornerstone of our Foundation’s strategy.”

Driving Sustainable Tourism Development in rural communities in Africa

Tourism serves as a lifeline for many rural communities and has a unique capacity to create new job opportunities, promote territorial cohesion, and protect natural and cultural resources. It also empowers women and the youth.

Rural areas face increasing challenges, such as depopulation, aging populations, lower income levels and gaps in infrastructure, health, and financial services. Despite significant improvements in recent decades, disparities between urban and rural areas persist. This call for proposals aims to:

- Increase the capacity of artists and artisans to engage in the tourism economy and enhance their income
- Increase the visibility of artists and artisans in rural tourism destinations
- Increase the availability of support services for artists and artisans in rural tourism

The call is expected to open for applications in September.





Africa region thrives through UN Tourism-Led Cooperation and Investment

UN Tourism continues to deliver on its Agenda for Africa, bringing the region's Members together around a focus on investments, multilateral cooperation and education.

The 67th meeting of the UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa (22-24 July) welcomed public and private sector leaders from across the region. The Member States met as Africa's tourism sector experiences strong recovery. During the first quarter of 2024, arrivals were up 5% compared to pre-pandemic levels. This positions the continent as the second-best performer globally, surpassing all regions except the Middle East.

Secretary General, Zurab Pololikashvili, stated, "Zambia, as the whole African region, is an excellent example of the positive impact of tourism, which leads to new investments and job creation. Furthermore, our Members come together in Livingstone as Zambia celebrates 60 years of peace and independence, an inspiration as we get set to mark World Tourism Day around the theme of 'tourism and peace' in September."

Investing in African tourism

In the last 10 years alone, Africa has attracted over 160 greenfield projects in tourism, representing a total capital investment of USD 10.7 billion, and the potential to create over 24,000 jobs. Recognizing this positive trend, the Commission Meeting Session featured a special Ministerial-level discussion focused on global tourism investment trends, with a special emphasis on the promising tourism outlook in Zambia. The session offered insights into sustainable development opportunities and strategies to attract and secure tourism investments.

Key talking points included sustainable tourism development strategies, enhancing Africa's global tourism competitiveness and innovation in tourism marketing and branding.

The meeting also saw the launch of a new set of the Investment Guidelines for Zambia. The publication focuses on tourism and inclusive growth in Zambia, which aligns with the UN Tourism Agenda for Africa, identifying opportunities for global investors.

New Tourism Academies planned for Africa

At the meeting, Memoranda of Understanding were signed for the creation of the Tourism Centre of Excellence in Livingstone, Zambia and the Academy for Culinary Arts in Zimbabwe.

The Academies will add to the growing network of education centres supported by UN Tourism, helping give workers the skills they need to thrive in the sector and so drive economic growth and social opportunity. Secretary-General Pololikashvili also announced 100 scholarships for the UN Tourism Online Academy to each of the countries.

“Zambia, as the whole African region, is an excellent example of the positive impact of tourism, which leads to new investments and job creation. Furthermore, our Members come together in Livingstone as Zambia is celebrates 60 years of peace and independence, an inspiration as we get set to mark World Tourism Day around the theme of 'tourism and peace' in September.”

Technical support for African Members

Out of 50 technical cooperation projects worldwide, UN Tourism is currently working on 13 in 10 African countries covering areas such as tourism statistics, digital transformation or skills development. Several technical cooperation projects are currently being developed in the region, aligning with the five pillars of the Agenda for Africa: branding, connectivity, innovation, education, and investments. Secretary-General Pololikashvili also confirmed that UN Tourism will work with its Members across the region to develop and implement a new communication strategy designed to showcase the uniqueness of African destinations.

Additionally, Members embraced the Secretariat's emphasis on safety and security recommendations in the UN Tourism Agenda for Africa which includes a tourism police initiative in collaboration with The West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

With the aim of widening the portfolio and expanding on-the-ground presence of the organization, the establishment of a new Regional Office in Marrakesh is currently under discussion.

Expanding global cooperation

Looking ahead, UN Tourism will hold a first joint meeting of its Regional Departments for Africa and the Americas (Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, 3-5 October 2024). Here, Members of both Commissions will meet to discuss South-South cooperation through investments, education, cultural roots, creative industries, and innovation.

Pointe noire

We are back!

Starting October 2, 2024



www.flyasky.com

ASKY
The Pan African Airline

67th Commission for Africa Meeting in Pictures



Photo Credit: Moses Sage Mtonga

Four African Chefs named UN Tourism Ambassadors for Gastronomy Tourism



Responsible Tourism for their exceptional efforts in promoting national cuisines and advocating for sustainable culinary practices.

On the sidelines of the Forum, UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili presented the prestigious accolades to Chef Yohanis Gebreyesus from Ethiopia, Chef Adenike Adefila from Nigeria, Chef Mounir El Arem from Tunisia, and Chef Carl Joshua Ncube from Zimbabwe. These chefs were honored for their dedication to spreading awareness about Africa's culinary diversity, flavors, and traditions, and for demonstrating the positive impact that gastronomy can have on local communities

on the global stage. Their work is seen as a lifeline for many local communities, providing economic opportunities and fostering a sense of pride in Africa's diverse culinary traditions.

'Commenting on the appointment, Chef Yohanis Gebreyesus stated that he acknowledges it as a "significant recognition giving to people within the field, a higher platform to voice our challenges and explore possibilities to bring the continent together via tourism."

His counterpart from Nigeria, Chef Adenike Adefila said he was humbled by the opportunity given him to share Africa's food culture with the rest of the world.

"For too long, Africa's rich culinary heritage has been underrepresented on the global stage. 'Ohun tí a bá gbagbe n'ílé, á padà wa rí nítá,' meaning 'What we forget at home, we will eventually find outside,' reminds us of the importance of telling our own story and documenting our food story. Now is the time to share our culture with the world. I am honored to champion this narrative."

"The time for Africa is now!" he added.

The second edition of the Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa is scheduled to be held in Tanzania in 2025, promising to further the dialogue and development of gastronomy tourism across the continent.

The inaugural Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa, hosted in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, was a landmark event celebrating Africa's rich culinary heritage and its potential to drive sustainable tourism. The forum, organized by UN Tourism, saw the recognition of four new African UN Tourism Ambassadors for

"For too long, Africa's rich culinary heritage has been underrepresented on the global stage. 'Ohun tí a bá gbagbe n'ílé, á padà wa rí nítá,' meaning 'What we forget at home, we will eventually find outside,' reminds us of the importance of telling our own story and documenting our food story. Now is the time to share our culture with the world. I am honored to champion this narrative"

Nigeria to Host 68th UN Tourism CAF Meeting

Nigeria has won the bid to host the 68th UN Tourism Commission for Africa (CAF) Meeting in 2025.

Nigeria beats off competition from Algeria and Kenya to take the institutional annual meeting to the West African nation during the 67th Commission meeting in Livingstone, Zambia.

An elated head of delegation and Nigeria's Minister of Tourism Lola ADE-John expressed excitement and the opportunity to host the African tourism fraternity again at the next commission.

She thanked member states for the confidence reposed in Nigeria to once again showcase the country's rich cultural and heritage offerings.



Lola ADE-John, Minister of Tourism

Minister Lola assured the UN Tourism body and the African Member States of

a great event to be held in Abuja. Nigeria has been a member of UN Tourism since 1975 and presently a member of the Executive Council. The country is currently one of the Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission for Africa.

The Commission of Africa Meeting is held every year as part of UN Tourism's statutory events. The UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa is the major institutional platform where ministries in charge of tourism discuss the latest trends of the sector at the continental and global level and the implementation of their program of work.

The country in conjunction with UN Tourism will announce the date soon.

DISCOVER NAMIBIA

NWR
namibia wildlife resorts

1. Popa Falls Resort
2. Onkoshi Resort
3. Namutoni Resort
4. Halali Resort
5. Okaukuejo Resort
6. Olifantsrus Camp
7. Dolomite Resort
8. Terrace Bay
9. Torra Bay
10. Khorixas Camp
11. Waterberg Resort
12. Gross-Barmen Resort
13. Sossus Dune Lodge
14. Sesriem Campsite
15. Naukluft Camp
16. Hardap Resort
17. Duwisib Castle
18. Shark Island Resort
19. Fish River Canyon & Hobas Camp
20. /Ai-/Ais Hotsprings Spa
21. Mile 72
22. Mile 108
23. Jakkalsputz
24. Boplaas Campsite

For reservations: call us at +264 61 285 7200 / +264 64 402 172
or email us: reservations@nwr.com.na

Visit us now at www.nwr.com.na

Basque Culinary Centre's Joxe Marie Aizega upbeat about potential of Africa's gastronomy tourism

Zimbabwe's gastronomy tourism is on the brink of a transformative era, propelled by a strategic vision aimed at harnessing the rich culinary heritage of Africa. During the inaugural UN Tourism Forum on Gastronomy Tourism held in Zimbabwe, Joxe Marie Aizega, Director General of the Basque Culinary Centre, articulated a comprehensive plan to elevate African gastronomy on the global stage.

At the forum, Aizega praised Zimbabwe's commitment to developing its gastronomy sector.

"I've seen a strong interest, a strong commitment to develop gastronomy and to develop the whole proposal, the ecosystem, the different stakeholders in gastronomy," he observed. According to him, this dedication mirrors a broader continental movement to integrate diverse culinary traditions into a cohesive, robust gastronomic ecosystem.

Aizega emphasised the critical role of education and ongoing training in achieving culinary excellence and elevating African gastronomy to a different level.

"Education is key because attracting new talent and training of professionals is important," he stated.

Adding on, he elucidated that one of the forum's key takeaways was the need to document and preserve Africa's diverse culinary heritage. Aizega advocated for comprehensive efforts to "collect the diversity of gastronomy products, recipes, traditions" and suggested creating inventories and developing online resources. "I think it's important to have an inventory to collect and publish books on websites."

For African cuisines to gain worldwide acclaim, Aizega stressed the importance of maintaining standards while embracing uniqueness. He noted that international visitors "are probably looking for authenticity, traditions and cultures, while also expecting quality." According to him, by refining professional techniques and ensuring high presentation standards, African gastronomy can meet and exceed global expectations.



Aizega stressed innovation as a cornerstone of contemporary gastronomy. He encouraged African chefs to explore new methods of food presentation and culinary techniques. He said, "I would also promote innovation. For that I mean, to present cuisines in different ways a dish, or instead of presenting a piece of meat in a very traditional way present it in a different way. I think the presentation sometimes means incorporating new elements of the experience."

Aizega further highlighted that effective communication and promotion are pivotal for elevating African gastronomy. He mentioned that leveraging social media and other digital platforms can connect African cuisines to a global audience of food enthusiasts.

"I've seen a strong interest, a strong commitment to develop the gastronomy, and to develop the whole proposal, the ecosystem, the different stakeholders in gastronomy"

"A lot of interesting content can be created, showcasing traditions, techniques, or products. It's important to talk about social media because with social media one can reach a wider and appropriate audience," he asserted.

Aizega underscored the importance of engaging the global culinary community. He recommended inviting international chefs, journalists, and influencers to experience and promote African gastronomy.

"The people that are connected with gastronomy all over the world involves a huge community that are looking to discover the authenticity of a territory or a country. Invite chefs from all over the world, journalists, influencers, and also organise events abroad to spread the word. There are a lot of things to do. We have talked about them in the forum. Now we must go and work."

Reflecting on his experience in Zimbabwe, Aizega shared his appreciation for local dishes.

"I like Sadza. It's a staple food. It looks like a very humble dish. I mean, what regular people eat every day. Again I have seen how they mix the flour and prepare the Sadza in a traditional way. It's so simple, but tasty," he recounted.

TRAVEL HOSPITALITY & TOURISM EDUCATION SUMMIT

Save The Date
for the largest gathering of Tourism
Educators, Policymakers, and Employers
on the continent.

April, 2025

Lusaka, Zambia

For more info
events@ziths.edu.zm

With the participation of



UN Tourism

UN Tourism Executive Council Meets to Place Tourism in Global Economic Agenda

Tourism leaders from across the world have met again to shape the sector's future, emphasizing the sector's vital economic importance while also placing it firmly on the political agenda.

The 121st session of the Executive Council of UN Tourism welcomed representatives of 47 countries, including 18 Ministers of Tourism, to advance the Organization's vision for the sector as it achieves full recovery from the impacts of the pandemic. According to UN Tourism data, around 285 million tourists travelled internationally in the first quarter of 2024, 20% more than the same period of last year, while international tourism receipts grew back to USD 1.5 trillion in 2023.

Investments and education remain priorities for sector

Opening the session, UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili, stressed the need to embrace innovation and grow and direct investment into the sector in order to drive its positive transformation. "With tourism having bounced back from the biggest crisis in its history, now is the time to channel our energy into building greater resilience against any future shocks," he said. "At the same time, we must ensure tourism's growth benefits people everywhere, above all by expanding access to education and job opportunities and harnessing the power of new technology."

The Secretary-General then presented his report to Members, summarising the Organization's achievements since the Council last met, again with a special emphasis on the shared priorities of



investments into tourism, education and accelerating innovation across the sector. Also, Members adopted the Work Plan for the UN Tourism Agenda for Europe, including three projects focused on the future of winter travel destinations, the regulation of short-term rental platforms, and strategies to mitigate the effects of green investments on tourism SMEs.

Chairman of the Executive Council of UN Tourism and Minister of Tourism of Saudi Arabia, His Excellency Ahmed Al-Khateeb said, "Chairing the UN Tourism 121st Executive Council Meeting was a monumental moment for us, uniting global leaders to tackle the pressing challenges in tourism and progress the industry forward. This gathering underscored our collective vision for a dynamic and flourishing global tourism sector, fuelled by innovation, investment,

growth, and strategic partnerships."

First Tourism Law Observatory Added to Growing Global Presence

In Barcelona, the Executive Council took a significant step forward in UN Tourism's commitment to creating a harmonized legal framework for the global sector in order to boost confidence in international travel. At the most recent meeting of the Organization's Regional Commission for the Americas (Varadero, Cuba, 30 April 2024) Members supported the candidature of Uruguay to host the "Tourism Law Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean" in Montevideo. The Executive Council approved the decision for the groundbreaking legal hub, setting in motion work to add to UN Tourism's growing portfolio of Regional and Thematic Offices as it continues to move closer to its Members on the Ground.

In Barcelona, the Executive Council was updated on the planned Regional Office for Africa, to be opened in Marrakesh, and the Regional Office for the Americas, to be located in Rio de Janeiro. Keeping this momentum going, the UN Tourism leadership signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Tourism of Greece to establish a Research and Monitoring Centre for Coastal and Maritime Tourism in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

Urban tourism agenda

Recognizing the management of urban tourism as one of the "pressing challenges" referenced by the Chair, UN Tourism commended Spain's leadership in advancing sustainable tourism, and Barcelona for taking the lead in shaping responsible and inclusive urban tourism practices. Meeting with UN Tourism Secretary-General Pololikashvili and Spain's Minister of Industry and Tourism Jordi Hereu, on the sidelines of the Executive Council, Mayor Collboni

underscored the importance of tourism for Barcelona, while also outlining plans to manage the sector's growth and potentially place limits on visitor numbers.

Mayor Collboni also set out plans to organize a special forum for city leaders from across the world to meet to debate the key themes relating to urban tourism and the need to boost private sector involvement. Also Minister Hereu announced that the Government of Spain will present its 2030 Strategy for Sustainable Tourism at the next meeting of the Spanish Tourism Council, to be held in the coming weeks.

Looking ahead to next Executive Council sessions

To conclude, Members confirmed the hosts of the next meetings of the Executive Council. The 122nd session will be held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. The 123rd will be hosted by Spain in the first semester of 2025, and the 124th session by the Kingdom of

Saudi Arabia in the second semester of 2025.

Pindi Chana reappointed Tanzania's Minister of Natural Resources & Tourism

Tanzania's President, Samia Suluhu Hassan in a latest cabinet reshuffle, has reassigned Pindi Hazara Chana to head the country's Natural Resources and Tourism ministry.

Chana, who moves from her portfolio as Constitution and Law Minister had previously served as the Tourism Minister and led Tanzania's successful hosting of the 65th UN Tourism Commission for Africa meeting in 2022. She takes over from Angellah Jasmine Kairuki, who has been appointed as the President's Advisor.

Chana is expected to draw on her wealth of knowledge and experience to further consolidate the country's tourism gains which has been on an uptick trajectory in recent years.

UN Tourism and World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance to Advance Common ESG Framework

UN Tourism and the World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance will work together to implement a common framework for Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) for the sector.

The ESG Framework for Tourism Businesses, developed by UN Tourism in collaboration with the University of Oxford SDG Impact Lab, is aimed at helping enterprises across the sector measure and report their sustainability efforts and impacts more consistently and reliably. With this new agreement, UN Tourism will work alongside the Alliance to test the Framework, refine its indicators and relevant tools, and foster stakeholder engagement.

UN Tourism Executive Director Zoritsa Urosevic says: "The ESG Framework for Tourism Businesses is set to transform the tourism sector by establishing harmonised and essential standards for companies to assess and report their sustainability efforts. The collaboration between UN Tourism and the World Sustainable Hospitality

Alliance highlights how commitment and strategic partnerships can drive alignment and significant progress in ESG."

Glenn Mandziuk, Chief Executive Officer of the World Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, adds: "Collaborating with UN Tourism on the development of a harmonised ESG Framework represents a significant milestone for the global tourism industry. This partnership not only underscores our commitment to sustainability but also highlights the collective power of our industry to drive meaningful change. By establishing standardised metrics and fostering greater alignment between the private and public sectors, we are paving the way for a more sustainable and resilient future for tourism worldwide."

Partners leverage fields of expertise

The partnership comes as tourism businesses face increasing pressure to disclose their ESG actions and impacts. The ESG Framework for Tourism Businesses is rooted in the



Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism (SF-MST), endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission with unanimous support from all 193 UN Member States, and strives to bring greater and much-needed alignment between private and public sector data.

Alongside this, the Alliance's Net Positive Hospitality Pathway and Framework is designed to harmonise metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs), develop standards, and streamline reporting within the hospitality industry.





Tourism Education in Africa sees a giant leap as First UN Tourism Academy breaks ground

The African tourism sector witnessed a groundbreaking moment as the First UN Tourism Academy "ZITHS Mukuni International Academy for Tourism and Hospitality" was officially in Livingstone, Zambia. This landmark event marks the beginning of a new era in tourism and hospitality education on the African continent and a step forward in empowering the next generation of tourism leaders. The Academy will offer a range of courses, all focused on equipping students both new to the sector and established tourism workers, the skills they need to find work or advance in their careers.

The ceremony, held in Zambia's tourist capital of Livingstone, was performed by the UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili and Zambia's Minister of Tourism, Rodney Sikumba. Laying the foundation stone in Livingstone, Secretary-General Pololikashvili said: "Africa's tourism sector is growing and diversifying at a tremendous rate. These new Academies in Collaboration with UN Tourism will help train the tourism workers of



tomorrow in a range of specialisms, giving African tourism the talent it needs to thrive."

The Secretary General added, "Investing in people to help young generations become tourism leaders and work in hospitality is our main objective." His words resonated deeply, highlighting the

academy's mission to provide concrete skills development opportunities and bridge the knowledge gap in the tourism sector.

Joining the Secretary-General at the ceremony, the Minister of Tourism of Zambia, Rodney M. Sikumba, said: "Through the adoption of the UN



Tourism Education Guidelines, Zambia has been able to reposition the role of education in tourism development. The establishment of the Academy is a game changer in how we will bridge the evident skills gap for the existing and future workforce of our tourism sector."

Minister Sikumba also expressed his enthusiasm for the project, acknowledging the academy's potential to transform tourism education in Africa. The establishment of the UN Tourism Academy signifies Zambia's commitment to becoming a global reference in tourism education, offering a robust curriculum that includes the implementation of the

UN Tourism Education Toolkit for high schools and a comprehensive train-the-trainers program.

The ceremony included a symbolic planting of a baobab tree, representing growth and a bright future for African tourism education. This gesture underscored the collaborative efforts of UN Tourism and the Zambian government in nurturing the continent's tourism potential.

The UN Tourism Academy aims to provide a platform for aspiring tourism professionals to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in the industry. With initiatives like offering

100 scholarships through the UN Tourism Online Academy, the academy is poised to become a beacon of excellence in tourism education, not just in Africa but globally.

This historic milestone is not just about building an institution; it's about creating a legacy of empowered, educated individuals who will lead the charge in transforming Africa's tourism landscape.

The event took place as part of the 67th UN Tourism Commission for Africa Meeting (CAF) and 2nd Brand Africa Conference held in Livingstone, Zambia from 22-24 July 2024.



Unleashing the Untapped Potential: A Vision for Tourism in the Democratic Republic of Congo

As the new Minister of Tourism for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Didier Musanga M’Pambia embodies a unique blend of private sector experience and public service commitment. His journey from the marketing world to public administration is a testament to his dedication to transforming DRC’s tourism sector into a global attraction. With over 25 years of experience in marketing, Didier’s expertise in public relations, business administration, and strategic communication is now being channeled into a new mission: elevating DRC’s tourism industry to unprecedented heights.

Didier’s career began in Canada, where he pursued studies in business administration, specializing in marketing, journalism, and public relations. Upon returning to DRC, he joined a local branch of Ogilvy, a global advertising and marketing agency. His entrepreneurial spirit led him to establish his own company, Optimum, which quickly became a leading force in public relations and marketing in the region. Through Optimum, Didier spearheaded the launch of major brands like Orange and Vodacom in DRC, and organized large-scale events, including the highly successful Pop Fanfare Arrival in New York City and the vibrant Roomba Festival. These achievements have positioned him as a visionary leader with a profound understanding of both the private and public sectors.

Transitioning from the private sector to public service, Didier brings with him a results-oriented approach. He acknowledges the differences in working within the public sector but remains committed to applying the same level of strategic planning and measurable objectives that marked his success in marketing. With the backing of the Prime Minister, who also has a strong background in development and strategic planning, Didier is confident in his ability to drive transformative changes in the DRC’s tourism landscape.

Didier’s vision for DRC’s tourism is bold and innovative. He plans to introduce the concept of a “touristic village,” an ecosystem that integrates various sectors such as energy, healthcare, education, and hospitality. This model aims to create a sustainable infrastructure that benefits local communities while attracting international tourists. Inspired by the success of tourism-driven cities like Victoria Falls, Didier envisions replicating this model across DRC, leveraging the country’s rich cultural and natural resources to create a vibrant tourism industry.

One of Didier’s key priorities is ensuring that tourism in DRC benefits the local population. He believes that for tourism to thrive, it must start with domestic engagement. By fostering a culture of local tourism, DRC can build a resilient tourism industry that is less vulnerable to global disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Didier is committed to creating opportunities for Congolese citizens to explore their own country, thereby laying the foundation for a sustainable and inclusive tourism industry.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is often referred to as a geological marvel, but Didier sees it as much more of a touristic marvel waiting to be discovered. The country is home to unique species like the okapi, a fascinating blend of giraffe, zebra, and antelope, found nowhere else in the world. DRC also boasts the Congo River, the second-longest river in Africa, which presents untapped opportunities for eco-tourism. The Atlantic coastline, with its turtles and mangroves, offers breathtaking natural beauty that rivals the best tourist destinations globally.

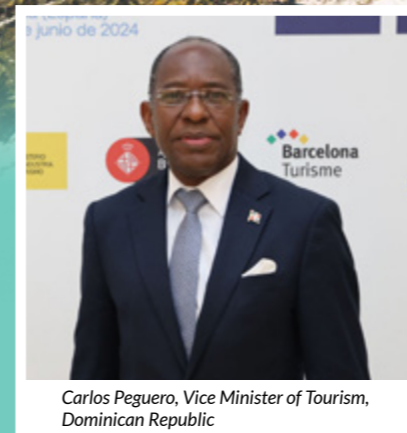
Despite these incredible assets, DRC’s tourism potential remains largely untapped. Didier recognizes that one of the biggest challenges is the lack of infrastructure and a domestic culture of tourism. To address this, he advocates for increased promotion and collaboration with countries like Zimbabwe, which has successfully harnessed its tourism potential. By learning from other African nations and fostering intra-African tourism, Didier aims to position DRC as a premier destination for African tourists, as well as international visitors.

Beyond tourism, Didier sees his role as an ambassador for peace. He is acutely aware of the ongoing conflicts in the eastern regions of DRC, conflicts that he believes are driven by external interests at the expense of African unity. Didier is committed to promoting peace and stability in the region, recognizing that a peaceful DRC is essential for the growth of the tourism sector. He envisions building strong relationships with neighboring countries, fostering a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect that transcends borders.

As Didier takes the helm of DRC’s tourism ministry, his vision is clear: to unlock the immense potential of the country’s tourism sector, to empower local communities, and to position DRC as a leading destination on the global tourism map. With his extensive experience, innovative ideas, and commitment to progress, Didier is poised to lead DRC into a new era of tourism excellence.



Didier Musanga M’Pambia,
Minister of Tourism for the Democratic
Republic of Congo (DRC)



Carlos Peguero, Vice Minister of Tourism,
Dominican Republic

UN Tourism and the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic is set to host the 1st UN Tourism Africa & Americas Summit, scheduled to take place from October 3 to 5, 2024, in the stunning coastal city of Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. This landmark event will bring together key stakeholders from the tourism sectors of Africa and the Americas to foster collaboration, exchange ideas, and celebrate the vast potential of these two regions in driving the future of global tourism.

The summit, which promises to be a defining moment in the history of international tourism cooperation, aims to deepen the connections between Africa and the Americas, two regions rich in cultural heritage, biodiversity, and tourism potential. With both continents experiencing strong growth in their tourism sectors, the summit offers a unique platform to explore shared challenges and opportunities, promote sustainable tourism development, and enhance cross-continental partnerships that benefit local communities and economies.

Tourism leaders, Ministers, and key players from both Africa and the

Americas will converge in Punta Cana to participate in high-level discussions focused on sustainability, innovation, investment, and cultural exchange. Attendees will explore strategies for boosting tourism while prioritizing environmental stewardship and the empowerment of local communities.

The event will feature panels, workshops, and networking opportunities designed to cultivate meaningful partnerships across the continents. Discussions will cover critical topics such as post-pandemic tourism recovery, green tourism investments, digital transformation, and the role of creative industries in shaping the future of tourism.

With sustainability at the forefront of the agenda, the summit will also explore how both regions can jointly tackle issues like climate change, biodiversity loss, and the protection of cultural heritage sites, ensuring that tourism growth remains balanced and inclusive.

The maiden UN Tourism Africa & Americas Summit will be a powerful demonstration of the commitment of both regions to strengthening regional

1st UN Tourism Africa & Americas Summit: A milestone for global tourism collaboration

ties through tourism. The Dominican Republic, a thriving hub for tourism in the Americas, serves as the perfect backdrop for this historic event. Its diverse landscapes, vibrant culture, and strong tourism infrastructure make it a fitting host as it leads the way in promoting tourism cooperation.

As international travel continues to rebound and diversify, this summit marks a critical step in leveraging tourism as a driver for economic development and cultural diplomacy. Both Africa and the Americas possess extraordinary tourism assets, from the majestic wildlife and landscapes of Africa to the rich cultural traditions and tropical paradises of the Americas. By uniting these two regions, the summit will amplify efforts to position them as leading global destinations for travelers seeking authentic, sustainable, and enriching experiences.



AFRICA SHOWCASE™

On Show Solutions hosts the leading African roadshows on six continents, promoting travel to Africa, through direct access to travel trade in the source markets.

Join fellow African products, experiences and tourism authorities and get out on the road with AFRICA SHOWCASE!

GET IN TOUCH

ideas@africashowcase.travel

www.africashowcase.travel

63rd ICCA Congress: A landmark event for the global meetings industry in Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, will host the 63rd edition of the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) Congress from 20th to 23rd October 2024. This annual event is considered the highlight of ICCA's calendar, and this year's edition is set to be its most ambitious yet. The ICCA Congress has grown to be an essential gathering for professionals in the global meetings industry, with this year's event promising to offer an unparalleled platform for engagement, innovation and collaboration.

ICCA Congress participants will gather in Abu Dhabi, one of the world's most vibrant and cutting-edge capitals. Renowned for its exceptional hospitality, ultra-modern infrastructure and state-of-the-art facilities, the city offers the perfect backdrop for a global event of this magnitude. From its awe-inspiring skyscrapers to its rich cultural heritage, Abu Dhabi provides a seamless blend of modernity and tradition that makes it a world-class meeting destination.

A unique networking and knowledge-sharing experience

The ICCA Congress has always been more than just a business event; it is a global gathering where relationships are built, ideas are exchanged, and new opportunities are forged. Attendees from across the globe will participate in a series of thought-provoking, imaginative, and industry-shaping experiences. With delegates representing every corner of the meetings industry, the Congress provides an unparalleled chance to strengthen cross-border relationships and collaborate with peers from different time zones and regions.

One of the most anticipated aspects of the Congress is its industry-leading content programme, which will feature cutting-edge discussions and innovative ideas. The 63rd ICCA Congress has been designed to foster active participation from all attendees, ensuring that everyone has a voice. The programme promises:

Practical Working Sessions: Participant-led sessions that enable attendees to share insights and explore solutions together, making every voice heard.

World-Class Speakers: Inspirational industry leaders and experts who will offer fresh perspectives on the future of the meetings industry.

Creative Insights: Special guests who

will share out-of-the-box ideas to inspire innovative thinking.

Active Solutions: Practical strategies for addressing the challenges facing the industry, including how associations can work together to influence society positively.

Global Networking: Dynamic networking and social events designed to foster stronger international connections throughout the Congress experience.

Focus areas and key themes

The 63rd ICCA Congress will address some of the most critical challenges confronting the meetings industry today, with a strong focus on innovation, cultural awareness, sustainability, and business growth. Technology will be a central theme, with discussions exploring the latest advancements in artificial intelligence and blockchain, both of which have the potential to revolutionise the way business events are organised and conducted.

The Congress will also delve into cultural awareness and social impacts, including the importance of legacy-building and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across the global events landscape. Another key focus will be on sustainability and the environmental impact of business events, with sessions dedicated to examining how the industry can adopt more sustainable practices and reduce its ecological footprint.

In addition to these pressing issues, the Congress will offer insight into current business trends and growth strategies, including cutting-edge approaches to sales and marketing. Delegates will explore emerging business opportunities and innovative strategies that are driving the meetings industry forward, ensuring that participants leave with practical tools to achieve success in a rapidly evolving landscape.

Shape the Future of the Industry

The ICCA Congress offers an exceptional platform for attendees to engage in shaping the future of the association meetings industry. As the world evolves, so too must the way we approach business events. The Congress encourages participants to actively contribute to discussions and join forces to craft solutions that will influence the industry and society positively.

Moreover, the Congress provides



unparalleled access to new business opportunities. Attendees will have the chance to connect with international associations, explore potential collaborations, and expand their networks. These interactions will not only inspire fresh ideas but also provide tangible opportunities to grow businesses and drive innovation within the industry.

Beyond its robust content programme, the ICCA Congress promises to deliver an experiential adventure that will captivate and delight attendees. From innovative discussions to hands-on activities, the Congress aims to push boundaries and ignite new ways of thinking. With the dynamic backdrop of Abu Dhabi, participants will be immersed in a unique environment that fuels creativity and fosters meaningful connections.

A stellar list of speakers

A lineup of esteemed speakers have already been announced for "Shaping Tomorrow's Horizon," – a key discussion highlight. Moderated by Anita Mendiratta, the discussion will feature H.E. Fahd Abdulmohsen AlRasheed, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Saudi Conventions & Exhibition General Authority; H.E. Fatima bint Jaffer Al Sairafi, Minister of Tourism Bahrain; H.E. Makram Mustafa A. Queisi, Minister of Tourism & Antiquities, Jordan; H.E. Saad bin Ali bin Saad Al Kharji, Chairman, Qatar Tourism; and H.E. Azzan Qassim Al Busaidi, Undersecretary, Ministry of Heritage and Tourism Oman.

The session will delve into the evolving landscape of business trends and growth within the tourism industry, spotlighting the innovative strategies and collaborative efforts shaping the future.

Kenya's tourism sector welcomes new Tourism CS

The Kenya tourism sector has recorded a historic milestone with the appointment of Hon. Rebecca Miano as Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife.

The welcome development, according to stakeholders, will inject new energy into Kenya's tourism industry.

The appointment is also timely as Hon. Miano, who takes over from her predecessor, Alfred Nganga Mutua, steps into the pivotal role at a time Kenya's tourism sector is undergoing significant transformation, with a renewed focus on sustainability, innovation, and global competitiveness.

The appointment is not only a testament to her distinguished career and leadership but also a signal of the government's commitment to advancing Kenya's tourism industry. Her extensive experience, particularly in the energy sector where she served as the managing director and CEO of Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen), has been marked by a strong focus on corporate governance, sustainability, and strategic growth qualities that will be essential as she steers the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife.

In her new role, Hon. Miano is expected to build on the robust foundation laid by her predecessor, while bringing a fresh perspective to the challenges and opportunities facing the sector. With her at the helm of affairs, the Ministry is poised to enhance Kenya's position as a premier global tourism destination, leveraging the country's rich cultural heritage, diverse wildlife, and innovative tourism products.

Commenting on the appointment of Ms Rebecca Miano, Mohammed Hersi, the chairperson of the Diani Tourism Association said, he hopes the cabinet secretary brings in the necessary stability the sector requires.

CEO of Kenya Tourism Federation, Susana Ongalo was confident she will engage with the private sector to address some of the present challenges militating against the growth of the sector.

"As we await an initial meeting with the new Cabinet Secretary, Hon. Rebecca Miano, we anticipate a fresh leadership which marks a promising chapter for Kenya's tourism. Hon. Miano's dedication to sustainable tourism, strengthening public-private partnerships, and elevating Kenya as a top global



destination will be transformative. With a focus on preserving Kenya's biodiversity, while driving economic growth through tourism, I am confident that she will lead the tourism, travel and hospitality sector to new heights," KTB CEO, Susan Ongalo said.

She added, "I look forward to the incremental growth that the CS tenure will bring to the MagicalKenya brand."

The Kenya Tourism Board (KTB), along with other stakeholders in the tourism industry, looks forward to working closely with Hon. Miano to promote Kenya's tourism offerings both locally and internationally. Her leadership is anticipated to invigorate efforts to attract more international tourists, boost domestic tourism, and ensure that the industry continues to be a major contributor to the country's economy.

In a recent post, the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) extended warm congratulations to Hon. Rebecca Miano, EGH, on her appointment as Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, stating: "Congratulations! The Board of Directors, Management, and Staff of the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) wishes to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Hon. Rebecca Miano, EGH, on your appointment as Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife"



Africa's Academic and Cultural Exchange: The Africa By Bus Project

The future of African education is being reshaped through collaborative, cross-border initiatives like the Africa By Bus Project, an academic and cultural exchange programme designed to foster internationalisation in higher education. Professor Bhaso Ndzendze, Associate Professor of International Relations and Vice Dean of Internationalisation at the University of Johannesburg, has become one of the key figures advocating for this initiative. During an interview with the VA Tourism Podcast, Professor Ndzendze discussed the project's significance and the broader goals of integrating African students into a global network, while promoting African-driven academic growth.

The Africa By Bus Project offers students a unique opportunity to travel across multiple African nations, engaging in cultural immersion and academic collaboration. The programme, which saw students journey from Johannesburg through Botswana to Windhoek, Namibia, encapsulates the University of Johannesburg's mission to expand learning beyond the classroom. Professor Ndzendze highlighted the practical elements of this endeavour, stating,

"We don't just want to give students an education in the classroom. We want them out in the world, applying themselves in practical ways and creating new opportunities for themselves."

One of the key challenges African universities face today is ensuring that the education students receive aligns with market demands. According to Professor Ndzendze, while universities must maintain a solid academic foundation, they also need to remain adaptive to the needs of industries that are continuously evolving.

He explained, "What's in the marketplace is sometimes different from what is being taught in the classroom. Students need exposure to the world beyond their campus to truly understand the dynamics of the industries they will enter."

The Africa By Bus Project addresses this gap by providing students with diverse experiences across different countries, industries, and educational institutions, all while maintaining a focus on collaboration.

The University of Johannesburg has adopted new educational approaches to remain competitive with global trends. Students are encouraged to take modules on artificial intelligence, robotics, and sustainable development alongside their traditional courses. Professor Ndzendze elaborated on this, pointing out the

importance of blending theory and practice:

"We want our graduates to leave not just with knowledge, but with skills they can apply immediately. They should be able to step into the world and contribute meaningfully, whether they choose to enter the job market or create opportunities for themselves."

At the heart of the Africa By Bus Project is the goal of promoting internationalisation within Africa itself. Internationalisation is no longer just about global connections but also about fostering deeper inter-African relations. Professor Ndzendze emphasised the importance of these ties, stating,

"This programme is about making connections within Africa, not just with the world outside. We want our students to see themselves as part of a larger African community and to understand the importance of collaboration between African countries." By travelling through multiple countries and engaging with students and academics from other institutions, participants experience first-hand the logistical and cultural realities of inter-African travel.

The academic component of the Africa By Bus Project is equally critical, as students collaborate with peers from partner universities, including the University of Science and Technology in Namibia. These interactions allow for a cross-pollination of ideas and methodologies, broadening students' academic perspectives. As Professor Ndzendze noted,

"We've seen how students come back with new ideas, new approaches, and even new ambitions after spending time with their peers in other countries. This cross-border collaboration is essential for innovation and ensuring that African universities remain competitive on the global stage."

According to Professor Bhaso Ndzendze, measuring the success of the Africa By Bus Project involves both quantitative and qualitative assessments. Student satisfaction is an immediate measure, gauged through feedback and academic papers produced by participants. However, long-term success will be determined by the impact these experiences have on the students' careers and the collaborations they foster.

"We are in the early stages, but the excitement we've seen from students and the feedback we've received tell us we're on the right track. It's not just about what happens during the trip, but what happens after," Professor Ndzendze said.



Logistical issues are an inevitable part of every inter-African project. Travel between Africa is still hampered by bureaucratic obstacles, especially when it comes to border crossings. In response, Professor Ndzendze stated that although initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have yielded some success, more work remains. He noted,

"One of the biggest obstacles our students face is simply moving between countries. It's frustrating that in 2024, we still have so much red tape preventing the free movement of people and ideas across Africa. Simplifying visa processes and enhancing digital solutions could make a significant difference."

He also highlighted the role of frontline personnel, particularly border officers, in shaping the experience of inter-African travel:

"A country's most important diplomats are its border personnel. The first interaction a visitor has with a country is often with its immigration officers, and that interaction can set the tone for the entire visit. We need to train border staff to make this process as seamless as possible, especially for our students."

The Africa By Bus Project is but a small portion of a bigger plan that integrates global best practices with an emphasis on distinctively African intellectual and cultural exchange to shape the future of education in Africa. African colleges can mould the future generation of leaders by implementing programs such as these, giving them a solid academic foundation as well as a profound comprehension of the cultural and socioeconomic complexity of the continent. Professor Ndzendze summed up the project's overarching goal:

"Education is not just about what happens in the classroom. It's about preparing students to engage with the world and contribute to it in meaningful ways."

Casablanca & Region:

Destination Business and Chill



Choose exoticism and efficiency for your business events in Casablanca, where tradition and modernity meet to serve your professional ambitions.

Why Choose Casablanca for Your Next Business Event?

A Contemporary Capital and Connected Hub

Casablanca, the economic capital of Morocco, embodies the alliance between tradition and modernity. Nestled on the shores of the Atlantic, this dynamic metropolis attracts visitors from around the world for a unique experience. It stands out as an economic center and is committed to modernization, with top-notch infrastructure and exceptional international connectivity through Mohammed V Airport.

Premium Hotel Offerings

With more than 22,000 available beds and 7,000 under development, Casablanca offers a variety of luxury hotels and renowned chains. Sophisticated and well-equipped conference spaces ensure a successful experience for participants.

Diverse Event Spaces

Casablanca offers a wide range of event spaces meeting all the requirements of MICE organizers. Modern and inspiring infrastructures facilitate the success of professional meetings.

Professional Expertise

Event organizers benefit from an impressive array of professional services in Casablanca. Specialized agencies provide expert assistance at every stage, ensuring exemplary logistical management and personalized solutions tailored to the specific needs of each client.

A Seaside and Cultural Metropolis

After your meetings, explore the magnificent Hassan II Mosque, wander through the alleys of Casablanca's old Medina, or relax on the beaches of Ain Diab. Casablanca's cultural scene is buzzing with events like Jazzablanca and a diverse cuisine blending Arab, Andalusian, European, and Berber influences.

Explore the unique opportunities that Casablanca-Settat can offer and plan your next business event by visiting our website www.visitcasablanca.ma

Contact the Regional Tourism Council of Casablanca-Settat; our dedicated team is ready to support you at every step with exceptional expertise. Join us at www.visit-casablanca.com/

Uganda's new tourism policy to embrace gastronomy following UN Tourism Forum insights

Lilly Ajarova, CEO of the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB), has shared her insights from the first UN Tourism Regional Tourism Forum on Gastronomy in Zimbabwe, held from July 26-28, in an interview with VoyagesAfric.

The forum provided critical insights that will shape Uganda's forthcoming 10-year tourism policy.

"One of the major things is that right now as a country - Uganda is developing our 10-year tourism policy. We have had one which is now expiring and as we are developing a new policy, one of the things that have come up that we need to include in the policy is gastronomy," said Ajarova.

The forum, according to Ajarova, was incredibly timely. "Coming for this conference were very timely because there were lots of knowledge that were shared, information that is definitely going to feed into our new policy as far as gastronomy is concerned," she added.

Uganda's culinary scene is experiencing a renaissance, with a significant increase in interest from entrepreneurs and the private sector. "We have a lot of interests now from the entrepreneurs, the private sector is developing different experiences around gastronomy. We have a lot of Ugandan restaurants that are serving the typical Ugandan delicacies in the city centre across the country; which was not the case before.

"If you wanted to taste a delicacy of an area in Southwestern Uganda, you

“One of the major things is that right now as a country - Uganda, we are developing our 10-year tourism policy. We have had one which is now expiring and as we are developing a new policy, one of the things that have come up that we need to include in the policy is gastronomy. But it wasn't taking a centre stage or a big space in how we were describing it”

needed to have travelled there but now you can actually get it in Kampala in the capital city," Ajarova explained.

The country is also making strides in agrotourism, as outlined in the newly developed guidelines. "One of the policies that we have developed in the guidelines is for agrotourism. We have shared this widely and we are seeing a lot of developments along agrotourism, where travellers can actually go to different farms with people who have worked on their farms to host international travellers. It is from the farm to the plate, from the farm to the cup, with coffee, tea where the traveller participates in the process of either picking tea or coffee," she stated.

Ajarova also highlighted the growing trend of cultural villages, where visitors can immerse themselves in traditional Ugandan lifestyles. "These are growing concepts with the farms on agrotourism. But there is also a growing trend of developing cultural villages where local Ugandan women - typical old ladies cook and get visitors to be part of the cooking, visit the farm, do the fishing, have the catch of the bird to be cooked for them in very traditional ways.

"Initially, these developments were not captured in any policy framework and now that the tourism policy is under development we will be capturing it," she emphasised.

On the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) front, Ajarova shared that Uganda has a comprehensive 5-year MICE strategy, with significant infrastructural developments underway. "For instance, there is the Speke Resort Convention Centre, which is a new infrastructure



and the development at the Source of the Nile which is supposed to be one of the key experiences for the MICE traveller," she noted.

To support the growing capacity needs, new hotels are being constructed, including global brands such as Hilton and Marriott.

"But most importantly is the human resource. A lot of training is ongoing both for the convention centre staff and also the private sector such as professional conference organisers. We are getting international experts to train them, so we have very exciting times ahead," Ajarova mentioned.

Later this year, the Uganda Tourism Board will unveil its Marketing Strategy, aiming to better position the country as a premier tourism destination.

Zimbabwe embraces Gastronomy tourism to fuel economic growth



Barbara Rwodzi, Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Zimbabwe's tourism industry is undergoing a transformative shift, as the government has placed gastronomy tourism at the heart of its strategy to propel the sector towards new heights.

At the official opening ceremony of the first UN Tourism Regional Tourism Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa, held in the picturesque city of Victoria Falls, Barbara Rwodzi, Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, outlined the country's ambitious vision.

"Under the leadership of His Excellency, President E.D. Mnangagwa, in the

“ Our strategic doctrine for growing the Tourism and Hospitality industry in Zimbabwe is Heritage-based. This is an intuitive doctrine as the Pull Factor in the Tourism and Hospitality industry is the uniqueness of peoples and cultures, fauna, flora, crops, geology (e.g., Victoria Falls- a geological wonder), landscapes, and all these normally positively connive and get expressed in the food we eat and enjoy Gastronomy Tourism ”

Second Republic, the strategic vision and aim is for Zimbabwe to attain an upper-middle-income economy by 2030 or earlier," Minister Rwodzi stated. "The Tourism and Hospitality industry is located within the matrix of chief economic pillars and economic growth accelerators of Zimbabwe, which are key for the attainment of our national strategic vision 2030."

The Minister highlighted the remarkable growth experienced by the tourism sector, with the industry surging to the number one position in the first half of 2024, recording an 83% increase in tourist arrivals. "The objective in the Second Republic is to grow the Tourism and Hospitality Industry beyond the USD 5 billion mark," she added.

A key aspect of Zimbabwe's strategy is the focus on heritage-based tourism, which places the country's unique people, culture, fauna, flora, geology and landscapes at the centre of its comparative advantage. Gastronomy tourism, as a component of this heritage-based approach, has emerged as a robust growth factor for the industry.

"Our strategic doctrine for growing the tourism and hospitality industry in Zimbabwe is Heritage-based," the Minister explained. "This is an intuitive doctrine as the pull factor in the

tourism and hospitality industry is the uniqueness of peoples and cultures, fauna, flora, crops, geology (e.g., Victoria Falls- a geological wonder), landscapes, and all these normally positively connive and get expressed in the food we eat and enjoy Gastronomy Tourism."

The Zimbabwean government has implemented a unique Tourism and Hospitality Industry Cluster Framework, which includes the Culture and Heritage Cluster, under which Gastronomy Tourism is being developed and deployed as a new, innovative and robust growth factor.

The Minister also acknowledged the pivotal role played by the First Lady of Zimbabwe, Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa, in promoting gastronomy tourism through initiatives such as traditional Cookout Competitions in all provinces and a Regional Cookout competition in 2023.

The hosting of the inaugural UN Tourism Regional Gastronomy Forum for Africa in Victoria Falls was hailed as a testament to President Mnangagwa's grand strategic vision for the tourism industry in Zimbabwe, Africa, and the wider world. The forum is expected to contribute to the development and promotion of gastronomy tourism in Zimbabwe and the African continent.



Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee (WITLAC) champions gender equality in African tourism

Despite making up 70% of Africa's tourism 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 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 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

“ 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 ”

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 initiatives in an interview with VoyagesAfriq.

“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.

Through these initiatives, WITLAC hopes to make significant strides toward achieving gender equality and empowering women in Africa's tourism sector.

Serena Hotels Africa Announces Leadership Transition

In a significant development, Serena Hotels Africa has announced the retirement of its long-serving Regional Marketing Director, Rosemary Mugambi, after an illustrious 36-year career. As Rosemary bids farewell in August 2024, the hospitality giant welcomes Maureen Okore, a seasoned marketing expert, to take the reins.

Rosemary Mugambi's remarkable tenure has been marked by dedication, passion, and invaluable contributions to Serena Hotels Africa's growth. Her legacy will undoubtedly continue to inspire and shape the company's marketing strategies.

Maureen Okore, a 5-time award-winning marketing and communications specialist, brings a wealth of experience

spanning 12 years and multiple industries. Her impressive portfolio includes stints at advertising powerhouses Redhouse Group and WPP-Scan Group, where she successfully managed local, regional, and multinational brand portfolios.

With a proven track record of executing marketing campaigns across Africa and the Middle East, Maureen is poised to leverage her expertise to elevate Serena Hotels Africa's iconic brand. Her passion for amplifying brands and extensive hospitality marketing experience makes her the ideal candidate to lead the company's marketing efforts.

As Serena Hotels Africa embarks on this transition, the company expresses gratitude to Rosemary Mugambi for her tireless service and welcomes Maureen

Okore to the team. The company looks forward to continued support from its stakeholders and partners during this exciting new chapter.

Serena Hotels is a renowned hospitality brand known for its luxurious safari lodges, camps, hotels, and resorts across Africa. The brand is celebrated for its commitment to exceptional service, sustainability, and cultural preservation.



SERENA HOTELS
SAFARI LODGES • HOTELS • RESORTS

Unlocking Africa's Tourism Potential: Key Lessons from the 7th ATLF

In 2022, the Botswanan government signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the African Tourism Partners (ATP), for convening the African Tourism Leadership Forum (ATLF), over a period of three years.

Since then, the ATLF, a platform for solution-based engagements and exchanges for the development of the African tourism industry, has successfully held, while hugely impacting Botswana as a country, its tourism, private sector participants, destinations and businesses across the continent.

This year, Botswana concluded the three-year hosting right for the ATLF, with over 600 participants from 43 countries, who graced the premium tourism event at the Gaborone International Convention Centre, the host venue for the three years of the forum in Botswana, while counting the gains.

In his keynote address at the 7th edition of the forum, Slumber Tsogwane, vice president, Republic of Botswana, was excited with the increased number of participants for the three years, which he noted has resulted in sustained growth of the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibition (MICE) sector.

"I am informed that 43 countries and over 600 participants from Africa and the rest of the world are part of this

event. I must commend the Botswana Tourism Organisation for hosting such a successful regional tourism forum with partners. Events such as this one provide a diversity of spin-offs for several sectors; hotel and hospitality industry, retail, and transport, among others," the vice president said.

Tsogwane expressed joy that Botswana is committed to establishing itself as a destination of choice for hosting MICE as a part of its economic diversification drive.

Toeing the same line, Wilhemina Makwinja, acting minister of Environment and Tourism, Botswana, emphasized the resilience of the country's tourism industry, despite challenges, particularly the death of Dumezweni Meshack Mthimkhulu, Minister of Environment and Tourism, on Monday; two days to the opening of the 2024 ATLF.

She described his death as a huge loss to Botswana Tourism and also promised to carry on with his work. Also, the global tourism community at the forum led by the UN Tourism, mourned the late minister, observing minute of silence at the opening and before major precedings.

Meanwhile, this year's theme, 'Charting a New Path Forward for Intra-Africa Travel, Tourism, and Investment', provided a fertile ground for robust discussions, charged deliberations



Slumber Tsogwane, Vice President, Republic of Botswana

on the challenges and solutions, B2B engagements for industry players and government to private engagements.

In his message at the forum delivered via video, Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General, United Nations Tourism, commended the strides made by the African tourism industry.

Emphasising the importance of intra-Africa travel, Pololikashvili commended Africa's leadership in shaping its own tourism future through forums such as the ATLF.



flights, free or easy visas, and other facilitators of robust intra-Africa travels.

As well, Elcia Grandcourt, Regional Director for Africa, UN Tourism, called for strategic investments in intra-Africa travel and tourism.

She praised the resilience of Botswana's tourism sector, noting its significant contributions to the nation's socio-economic development. "Botswana stands out as an example of resilience and innovation within the tourism sector," Grandcourt said.

Grandcourt highlighted the growth in international tourist arrivals to Africa as a proof of the continent's expanding visibility and attractiveness within the global tourism marketplace.

Excited at pulling off another successfully edition, Kwakye Donkor, CEO, ATP, the organisers, underscored the need for more open borders by removing restrictions that impede intra-Africa travel, more exchanges among the people and more fruitful collaborations between governments and the private sector to ensure win-win in policy formulations that would boost tourism on the continent.

"The pandemic taught us that charity must begin at home, in the sense that when covid came, we realized that without building our own capabilities in our own backyard for tourism, growth and development, we will not progress," Donkor highlighted.

"A good example is what is happening now with the Mbox. The narratives get twisted and it is all negativity about Africa. So, platforms like AfCTA and ATLF are for us to change this. This is the seventh edition we started from Ghana to Durban, Rwanda twice and in Botswana for the past three years, and a lot of strides have been made".

Speaking on the achievements, Donkor said, "A typical one is what I will call the Africa Tourism Chamber, that is a Pan-African body called Africa Tourism Private Sector Alliance, that is going to take the issues that are discussed here and keep advocating for them and the barriers to be removed.

"We have more than 600 industry professionals that have been connected across the continent, with over 250 of them being trade professionals; tour

operators, travel agencies, and media. All those who have been coming over the years, for the past three years, have been building networks and connections," Donkor explained.

He thanked the government and people of Botswana for the three consecutive years hosting and urged them to take advantage of the hosting to further grow tourist arrivals, boost MICE and woo more investments.

But the huge focus on youth with tailor-made panels of discussion handled by experts, attested to ATLF's efforts at securing the future of the tourism industry in Africa.

The forum also witnessed other panels of discussion, speed dating, practical sessions and exhibition.

Some of the panelists included; Aaron Munetsi, CEO, Airlines Association of Southern Africa, who spoke on how reducing taxes on flights and open borders will boost intra-Africa travel.

Others include; Elcia Grandcourt; Beatrice Chaytor of AfCFTA; Joe Motse, chairperson, Hospitality and Tourism Association of Botswana, among others.

The forum also witnessed a cultural evening and an award night where deserving stakeholders in the African tourism industry were honoured.

As tourism stakeholders look forward to the 2025 ATLF and a new venue, Botswana appreciates every participant that graced the event in the last three years.





EXPERIENTIAL TRAVEL AFRICA

For Hand-picked Africa Luxury
Travel Experiences

Discover More



We are Tanzania Tour & DMC offering authentic/immersive experiences across selected African destinations and beyond.

Expertise

- Tailor-made experiences
- Corporate Ultra-Luxury Travel
- Family adventure
- Filming & photographic expedition
- Hand-picked shore excursions
- Private Charter
- Celebrity private travel
- MICE

 info@experientialtravelfrfrica.com  +(255) 713 565 195

www.experientialtravelfrfrica.com

'Tourism boards should push Africa's aviation growth'

Africa's vast tourism potential remains untapped due to a lack of air connectivity, with Africa currently accounting for just 1.9% of global passenger and cargo traffic. However, aviation experts believe national tourism boards have a unique opportunity to drive new airline routes and spur economic growth.

At a recent AviaDev Africa workshop, which was hosted in collaboration with the SADC Business Council Tourism Alliance, airline executives stressed the power of tourism boards in leveraging market data and industry relationships to convince sceptical carriers of new routes' long-term viability.

"Tourism is more than just leisure. It's a critical economic activity that requires strategic thinking and collaboration across sectors," said Kojo Bentum-Williams, UN Tourism's Senior Africa Communications Expert.

Sylvain Bosc, former Chief Commercial Officer of SAA and Fastjet, stressed the importance of demonstrating sustained profitability. "Destination marketing organisations (DMOs) must sell a long-term vision highlighting the destination's growth prospects and economic impact," he said. "Creative incentives like co-marketing, reducing airline costs, and quantifying passenger volumes can be more powerful than direct subsidies," said Bosc.

Bosc noted that DMOs need to "bring new light" to data airlines already have, by offering insights into upcoming local economic developments like new mines or infrastructure projects that could drive corporate traffic. "Local insights can provide airlines with the confidence they need to invest in new routes," he said.

Natalia Rosa, Project Lead of the SADC Business Council Tourism Alliance, underscored the critical role of aviation in regional development. "Aviation is not a luxury, it's the lifeblood of a modern regional economy. Improved air connectivity unlocks a range of benefits. It streamlines travel, opens doors for



new tourism markets and strengthens regional economic ties."

Gavin Eccles, Head of Vertical at BAE Ventures, emphasised that tourism boards must be "at the table" with compelling cases backed by local market insights, travel trade ties and unique selling points that airlines often lack.

"Tourism boards should not only provide data but also offer a local perspective that airlines may not have," Eccles said, citing India's successful "Incredible India" branding that was undermined by poor connectivity.

Regional coordination

Regional coordination like aligned visa policies, joint itinerary promotion and tapping conservation funds can also help finance route development but Tim Harris, of Helm Growth Advisors cautioned, "Retaining and expanding existing airline services should be the priority before attracting new routes."

While direct subsidies face sustainability questions, Bentum-Williams said other incentives enable an "environment of

trust" for profit-focused airlines.

"There's a need to change the narrative from just paying airlines to fly routes, to creating an environment of trust and confidence," he said.

Jillian Blackbeard, CEO of Africa's Eden Tourism Association, highlighted the successful collaboration with Proflight through local stakeholder and trade backing, and building airline confidence without major incentives.

"We worked closely with Proflight and local stakeholders to ensure that routes were supported by the trade and the private sector, which helped build confidence in the airline and led to successful route development without significant financial incentives," Blackbeard shared.

Coordinated efforts leveraging DMOs' destination expertise can unlock increased connectivity, a lifeline for Africa's tourism economies that have been long-grounded by poor air links.

Source: TourismUpdate



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Westlands Business Park - Nairobi, Kenya

safaris@africanadventure.co.ke

www.africanadventure.co.ke

+254 20 522 3202 | +254 733 572 575

Strategic Route Development: Gavin Eccles Highlights the Synergy Between Tourism and Aviation



Gavin Eccles, Consulting Partner for Airline Pros International

The fusion of tourism and aviation holds the key to transforming global travel, a synergy that industry leaders are increasingly prioritizing. At the forefront of this movement is Gavin Eccles, Consulting Partner for Airline Pros International, who shared crucial insights during this year's AviaDev conference in Namibia. His focus was on the urgent need to bridge the gap between tourism boards and the aviation industry, a necessary alignment to enhance route development and destination marketing and usher in a new era of collaboration.

Speaking to VoyagesAfric on the sidelines at AviaDev, Eccles highlighted a critical shift: "the traditional siloed approach, where tourism boards, airports, and airlines operate independently, is outdated. In today's competitive landscape, these stakeholders must work together,

“Aligning marketing strategies with airline objectives is not just about promoting destinations; it's about making them accessible and appealing to travelers”. This alignment can unlock significant potential, helping tourism boards capitalize on opportunities that support both route development and tourism growth”

creating compelling business cases that attract airlines to new destinations. By leveraging airport data and tourism insights, this collaborative approach can drive significant growth”.

He further opined, "Tourism boards should not be mere observers but active participants in shaping the future of air travel. By partnering closely with airports and airlines, they can ensure that destination marketing strategies align with the strategic goals of the aviation industry, leading to mutual success”.

As the aviation industry evolves, so too must the approach to tourism. Eccles proposed the formation of Air Service Organizations (ASOs)—collaborative entities that unite representatives from airports, tourism boards, hotel associations, and convention bureaus. This model fosters a shared vision and clear roles, driving innovation and progress across the board.

He stated that, "Aligning marketing strategies with airline objectives is not just about promoting destinations; it's about making them accessible and appealing to travelers”. This alignment can unlock significant potential, helping tourism boards capitalize on opportunities that support both route development and tourism growth.

At AviaDev, Eccles also led a workshop focused on the crucial role tourism boards often referred to as Destination Management Organizations (DMOs)

play in route development. Traditionally, these discussions have been dominated by airports and airlines, leaving tourism boards on the sidelines. However, tourism boards offer valuable insights into market demand and destination appeal, which are essential for building a strong business case for airlines.

He further stated, "The goal is not to turn tourism boards into aviation experts but to enhance their strategic thinking around where and how to allocate marketing budgets. By scaling up their teams and adapting their approaches, they can not only market their destinations effectively but also ensure that these destinations are easily accessible to travelers”.

One of the most notable changes in the aviation industry is the shift from long-term planning to more flexible, short-term opportunities. This evolution presents a unique chance for tourism boards to align their marketing efforts with the strategic goals of airlines, ensuring both sectors work towards shared success in order to create demand that directly supports route development, driving growth in tourism while benefiting the aviation industry.

Eccles also emphasized the importance of marketing through airlines, noting that these partnerships not only promote destinations but also simplify the travel process for potential visitors. This strategic alignment is key to unlocking new potential, enabling tourism boards to drive growth and innovate.



KOFISI CEO highlights AI integration in hospitality and future of workspaces at AHIF



KOFISI, Africa's premier workspace provider, continues to revolutionise the concept of office environments by integrating sophisticated designs and community-focused spaces across multiple locations.

As the market leader in delivering bespoke workspaces tailored to large teams, KOFISI works closely with clients and members to create environments that best suit their business needs. The company emphasises hospitality services, integrated technology and workplace wellness.

At this year's Africa Hospitality Investment Forum (AHIF) in Namibia, KOFISI's CEO, Michael Aldridge, was interviewed by VoyagesAfric. Aldridge shared insights into the company's innovative use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the hospitality sector and recounted KOFISI's journey in embedding technology into their operations.

"When we considered the workspace engagement that occurs for an enterprise, we noted the amount of time that you're going to be spending in your workspace. In your lifetime you will be spending 90,000 hours if you live inside the spaces. We felt there was a drive towards more of a blended lifestyle environment, and when we looked at elsewhere, we noticed that the hotel construct was very applicable to most of the demands of the users inside the workspace," Aldridge explained.

He added, "And so, we've successfully managed to mirror those ideas of variety, of facility, of very intentional space that allow you to supplement your standard work experience of sitting at a desk and being able to go out and engage with colleagues or visitors in a more lifestyle-based environment. And that's been very successful in its capacity not only to retain clients, but also give people a much more stimulating sense in a day,

which leads to greater productivity in their work."

Discussing how AHIF can foster the blend of technology and human involvement in Africa's hospitality industry, Aldridge noted, "I think this is a great conference. The calibre and depth of the delegations, specifically this year, we noticed much bigger variety in types of delegations and what we are doing is, just like in a workspace, we're colliding with each other and we're sharing ideas."

He emphasised, "And I think that will lead to a large amount of collaboration in this continent which is experiencing exceptional growth. There is a chance for this continent to be able to be at the forefront of change and new systems and I think having this blend of people and ideas, a melting pot of development, is an exceptionally valuable opportunity for the entire industry."

Labadi Hotel's David Eduaful is CIMG 'Marketing Man of the Year'

David Eduaful, the first Ghanaian Managing Director of premier 5-star facility, Labadi Beach Hotel has been crowned the 'Marketing Man of the Year, 2023' at 35th Annual National Marketing Performance Awards by the Chartered Institute of Ghana (CIMG) last Saturday, September 7.

A citation following the award praised Eduaful for establishing himself as an astute achiever, a corporate personality and a go-getter.

"In the year under review, your quest to deliver outstanding values, exceptional strategic insights and exclusive leadership have seen you and your team pick the highest gong of the night. You led the team to pursue well-thought-out and customer-centric initiatives that resonated well with your patrons, thus creating a high Top of Mind Brand Awareness," portions of the citation stated.

The award organisers also recognized the Managing Director for leading Labadi Beach Hotel to accumulate nearly fifty-three million Ghana Cedis (GHC53m) profit in 2023.

Additionally, Eduaful was also lauded for the hotel's CSR initiatives "which have seen you championing projects in the fields of education, sanitation, health and youth development."

On the night, Labadi Beach Hotel was also crowned the 'CIMG Marketing-Oriented Hospitality Facility (Hotels) of the Year, 2023.'

"You strove to be a first-choice facility to stay in, work for, invest in and partner with. As a result, you have strengthened your market position and image, delivered profitability and positive returns to patrons and stakeholders through innovation and human capacity building," the accompanying citation read.



Meta's Judith Mongala on empowering Sub-Saharan Africa through technology



Judith Mongala, the Head of Government and Social Impact Partners for Sub-Saharan Africa at Meta, plays a pivotal role in driving technological innovation and empowerment across the region. In an exclusive interview with VoyagesAfric, she sheds light on Meta's initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa and the impact of these efforts on various sectors, particularly tourism.

Judith's role at Meta is multifaceted, focusing on helping government and social impact partners across Sub-Saharan Africa understand and utilise Meta technologies. "Our mission is to build trust, empower people, and create community," she explains. "This mission seeks to concisely capture the full scope of our work and the many different partners we support. It will evolve along with our organisation."

A significant part of Meta's work in the region involves aiding the recovery of the tourism sector, which has been severely impacted by global challenges. "Meta platforms are key enablers of the promotion and digitisation of key sectors," Judith notes. "We have supported tourism recovery through scaled training in partnership with UN Tourism and continue to support capacity building."

Meta's efforts are not just about immediate recovery but also about building a sustainable future for tourism in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through technology and strategic partnerships, Meta aims to create a more resilient tourism industry that can thrive in a digital-first world.

“Meta platforms are key enablers of the promotion and digitisation of key sectors,” Judith notes. “We have supported tourism recovery through scaled training in partnership with UN Tourism and continue to support capacity building.”



Beyond tourism, Meta is actively involved in initiatives that drive visibility for Africa on the global stage. One such initiative is the 'Made by Africa, Loved by the World' campaign. "This year, we put women in the spotlight with a special women's edition, highlighting the short stories of four prominent women across music, entertainment, and sports from Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, and, new for 2024, Egypt," Judith shares. "This international and Pan-African campaign celebrates Africa's growing cultural impact on the world, and its dominance in areas such as sports, fashion, and music."

The campaign also included a collaboration with 12 Tier 2 creators through the #ShareYourAfrica challenge, which aimed to celebrate what makes the continent special to those in and from the region. "We wanted to demonstrate the creativity and joy behind our products, particularly Instagram, and showcase the unique beauty of Africa."

Meta's work in Sub-Saharan Africa extends beyond technology; it is

about creating a lasting impact on the region's visibility and empowerment. By leveraging Meta's platforms and resources, Judith and her team are helping to shape a brighter future for Africa, one that is grounded in technology, creativity, and community.

As Meta continues to expand its reach and influence across Sub-Saharan Africa, Judith's leadership ensures that the company's initiatives are not only aligned with the region's needs but also contribute meaningfully to its development. "Our work is continuously evolving," she concludes, "but our commitment to Africa remains unwavering."



TBCSA CEO calls for African solutions following landmark ruling on Booking.com price parity

The removal of price parity clauses between the online travel agent (OTA) Booking.com and contracted accommodation providers in South Africa has been hailed as a significant move that will enhance price competition and promote direct online bookings.

Booking.com, the global booking giant, which holds over 50% of the revenue share in South Africa's Online Travel Agent (OTA) market, has agreed to comply with the remedial actions recommended by South Africa's Competition Commission.

These actions include removing both wide and narrow price parity terms from all contracts with accommodation providers in South Africa, as well as from any criteria for participation in Booking.com's incentive programmes (Genius, Preferred Partner, and Preferred Plus) or other membership programmes.

Reacting to the ruling, Tshifhiwa Tshivhengwa, CEO of the Tourism and Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA), expressed optimism in an interview with Voyagesafriq that the decision would have a ripple effect across the entire African continent.

"What I think we going to see happen across the Southern Africa region, and the entire continent is looking at this ruling and say, how do we protect our own establishments. Because we will live with these technology giants and there will be new ones that will be coming in. So, how do we live them and how do we make sure that while we are using them, they do not take advantage of the fact that we need to be agile in pricing.

"So, it is very important that within this ruling that the South African Competition Commission has done, other Competition Commissions across African continent take a look at this, and see how they can protect their own industry at home," he said.

Tshivhengwa believes the development should lead to the creation of a homegrown

solution tailored to the needs of the continent's hospitality and tourism industry.

He explained: "We need to have our own African homegrown technology providers that would occupy the space and be able to provide superior technology that can be used by many of these accommodation establishments and attractions to place the inventory in there. I think that's the biggest lesson we need to learn out of this. We need to adopt that technology and it needs to suit the needs of these African companies."

A wide price parity clause is a contractual term that obligates accommodation providers on Booking.com to ensure their prices are not higher than those offered on any other online travel intermediation platforms.

A narrow price parity clause, on the other hand, requires accommodation providers listing on Booking.com to ensure their prices are not higher than those offered through their own direct online booking channels, such as their website.

The Competition Commission stated: "Removing both these clauses effectively enhances price competition between OTAs and allows accommodation providers, such as hotels and guesthouses, to price lower on their own websites for online bookings. These



changes will also benefit consumers by providing lower price options online and will allow accommodation providers to innovate and develop their direct sales channels."

“We need to have our own African homegrown technology providers that would occupy the space and be able to provide superior technology that can be used by many of these accommodation establishments and attractions to place the inventory in there. I think that's the biggest lesson we need to learn out of this. We need to adopt that technology and it needs to suit the needs of these African companies”



Botswana swears in Nnaniki Makwinja as new Environment & Tourism Minister, following the passing of Dumezweni Mthimkhulu



In a solemn, yet pivotal moment for Botswana, Nnaniki Wilhelmina Tebogo Makwinja was officially sworn in on September 9, 2024, as the country's new Minister of Environment and Tourism. The appointment, conducted by President Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi, comes in the wake of the sudden and tragic passing of her predecessor, Dumezweni Meshack Mthimkhulu, on September 2, 2024.

Mthimkhulu, an attorney by profession, had only recently taken on the role of Minister of Environment and Tourism in February 2024. His appointment followed the tenure of Philda Kereng, and his leadership was marked by a deep commitment to advancing Botswana's environmental and tourism sectors. However, Mthimkhulu's efforts were tragically cut short by his untimely death after a long battle with illness. Having previously served as Assistant Minister to the State President since 2019, Mthimkhulu was widely respected for his integrity, diligence, and vision for sustainable tourism growth in Botswana.

His passing sent ripples across the nation, marking a significant loss for the government and the environmental and tourism communities he worked tirelessly to support. Known for his legal acumen and strategic mind, Mthimkhulu was instrumental in laying the groundwork for Botswana's environmental policies, emphasizing the need for sustainable practices and the preservation of the country's natural heritage.

Makwinja's swearing-in ceremony was both a somber acknowledgment of Mthimkhulu's legacy and a moment of anticipation for the future under her leadership. A seasoned politician, Makwinja has served in the National Assembly of Botswana and held the role of Assistant Minister for Basic Education since 2019. Her experience in public service, coupled with her dedication to education and community development, has prepared her to step into the significant role of overseeing Botswana's environmental and tourism sectors.

Her appointment comes at a crucial time as Botswana continues to solidify its status as one of Africa's premier eco-tourism destinations. With a deep understanding of the delicate balance between environmental conservation and tourism growth, Makwinja is expected to champion policies that promote sustainability while enhancing Botswana's international tourism appeal.

As the new Minister of Environment and Tourism, Makwinja inherits the vital responsibility of safeguarding Botswana's rich biodiversity and cultural heritage. With a burgeoning tourism industry, which contributes significantly to the national economy, her leadership will be key in navigating the complexities of growth while protecting the country's natural resources.

In her first address, Makwinja paid tribute to the late Mthimkhulu, expressing her commitment to continuing the work he started. "It is with a heavy heart and a sense of duty that I step into this role. Dumezweni Mthimkhulu was a visionary leader, and I intend to honor his legacy by advancing the policies and projects he held dear, ensuring that Botswana remains at the forefront of environmental stewardship and sustainable tourism."

As the nation mourns the loss of Dumezweni Mthimkhulu, it also looks to the future with hope under Nnaniki Makwinja, who saw to the success of the just-concluded 7th edition of the African Tourism Leadership Forum, under an acting minister capacity.

The path ahead promises both continuity and change, as Botswana continues its journey as a beacon of environmental preservation and tourism excellence.

NTB appoints Charmaine Matheus Acting CEO

The Head of marketing at Namibia Tourism Board (NTB), Charmaine Matheus is acting as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the month of August.

The rotation, according to the Board, is part of its ongoing efforts to ensure effective leadership, while it continues with the process of appointing a substantive CEO.

A memo sent to all staff members and sighted by VoyagesAfriq on July 31, stated that "Effective 1 August 2024, Ms. Charmaine Matheus will step into the role of Acting CEO for a period of one month. This rotation is part of our ongoing efforts to ensure effective leadership while we continue with the process of appointing a substantive CEO."

Matheus takes over from Bonventure Mbidzo who the Board thanked for "his outstanding service and dedication during his tenure as Acting CEO" adding that "his leadership has been crucial in guiding the company through this transitional phase."

"His leadership has been crucial in guiding the company through this transitional phase and we are deeply appreciative of his contributions," NTB Board said in a statement.

The Board further noted, "As we welcome Charmaine Matheus to her new role, we encourage everyone to come together and offer their full support. Your collaboration and dedication are vital as we navigate this period of change and continue to drive the company forward".



The Board also assured that the process of appointing a substantive CEO is ongoing and would keep the public informed on significant developments as they arise.



Get to know the spectacular Seychelles



Mouyta Dance performed by Seychellois people



A giant Seychelles tortoise

Photo credit: Tourism Seychelles

One of the most breathtaking places and most popular tourist destinations on the planet, get to know the Seychelles ahead of the 2025 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup.

Seychelles

The name 'Seychelles' is famous the world over for its suggestion of legendary beauty, rolling from verdant peaks, through primeval forests, down to powder-soft beaches framed by timeless granite boulders, where the only footprints you'll find will probably be your own. Since time immemorial, Seychelles has charmed successive

generations of visitors with its almost surreal natural beauty, grand diversity of islands, flora & fauna, geography, people and culture, and also by its unplugged way of life still rooted in island ways and time-honoured tradition.

Geography

This unique archipelago's 115 islands, set like precious stones upon 1.4 million square kilometers of azure Ocean, are located between four and 10 degrees south of the equator and roughly 1,000 miles from the east coast of Africa. Here, 42 granitic islands cluster around the principal islands of Mahé, Praslin and

La Digue, while the coral islands, more numerous still, extend in a gleaming arc towards the shores of East Africa. These islands enjoy a glorious tropical climate all year round and, with all but its remotest, uninhabited islands lying well outside the cyclone belt, there are no extremes of weather. In this balmy, tropical heaven the temperature seldom drops below 24 degrees, or rises above 32 degrees centigrade. Against a backdrop of sublime natural beauty, safety and tranquillity, the Seychelles Islands also offer an amazing degree of diversity and the possibility of enjoying a wide range of island experiences,



activities and tropical adventures. Between 15 minutes and one hour's flying time from the principal island of Mahé, several select island getaways offer accommodation in stylish 5-star resorts or cocooned within the homely comforts of rustic, beachfront lodges.

Population

The inhabitants of the island archipelago of Seychelles are known as Seychellois and, today, the society to which they belong represents the revolution of peoples from across the globe who first began to settle the islands in 1756, as part of a French expedition. Today, with a population of some 100,000, Seychelles is a republic within the Commonwealth governed by a president who is head of both state and government and who is elected by popular vote for a five-year term of office. The nature of Seychellois society and its orderly evolution has ensured an enviable degree of ethnic integration, social harmony and political stability over many years which have all intertwined to lay a solid foundation for the economic and social growth that have been experienced in recent years. The Seychellois, who for much of their existence have been cut off from the rest of the world, have developed into an enterprising, flexible and innovative people who are very open to change and keen to be a part of the mainstream of human endeavour. Levels of religious and ethnic tolerance within society are high, and the outgoing nature of the Seychellois has ensured that they take their rightful place among the community of nations. Seychelles is an

active member of the African Union, the Southern African Development Community and the United Nations.

Sustainability

The Seychelles archipelago belongs to one of the major biodiversity hotspots in the world. Approximately 47 per cent of the country's landmass, and some 228km² of its ocean territory, are under some form of protected status. Seychelles remains committed to conservation and to the sustainable use of its biodiversity and other attributes. The beauty of the natural environment and the friendliness of the Seychellois people form the core of the Seychelles' tourism product. The Seychelles government, partner agencies and NGOs are keenly aware that careful stewardship of these key tourism

assets is essential to the sustainability of tourism and to the integrity of the island's ecosystem and social structure. This has led to the development of the Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label (SSTL), among other initiatives, in an attempt to mainstream sustainable practices throughout businesses and society in general. The country also promotes sustainable tourism through community-based initiatives. Visitors can participate in tours and activities that provide economic benefits to local communities while preserving their cultural heritage. These initiatives include cultural tours, handicraft workshops, and activities that allow visitors to get beneath the skin of the islands, it's people and way of life.

Beach soccer

Beach soccer began catching on in the Seychelles in the early 2010s, and evolved into a competitive sport in 2014. Its popularity has, thereafter, exploded. The Seychelles hosted the Beach Soccer AFCON in 2015. It proved an exhilarating tournament, with golazos galore and Madagascar stunning continental superpowers Senegal for their first title. The Seychelles were novices back then, but have improved greatly since and enjoyed some excellent results in recent years. Nowadays, you will see Seychellois enjoying the game across its islands. Given how welcoming the locals are, it's become more and more common for tourists to join in the fun. Does the planet have a more breathtaking place to play this thrill-stacked sport?

Credit: Fifa.com



A young beach soccer team in Seychelles

Park Hyatt Jo'burg sets to redefine luxury hospitality with grand October opening



Park Hyatt Johannesburg is paving the way to a new era of luxury hospitality as it prepares for its grand opening in October 2024. In collaboration with the owning company, Millat Group, the 31-key hotel is ready to mark a significant milestone in South Africa's hospitality landscape.

Nestled in the heart of the chic and vibrant Rosebank district, this iconic property redefines ultra-luxury hospitality in Johannesburg, offering an unmatched experience for discerning business and leisure travelers alike.

Hamza Farooqui, CEO of Millat Group, says, "At Millat, we believe in the

potential of South Africa as a premier travel destination and we are delighted to soon welcome the Park Hyatt Johannesburg to the Millat property portfolio in the country, which includes a Hyatt Regency in Cape Town and two Hyatt House properties in Sandton and Rosebank. With the opening of Park Hyatt Johannesburg, we are committed to showcasing the richness of our culture and the warmth of our hospitality. This hotel is not just a place to stay; it is a place to experience the best that Johannesburg has to offer."

Stephen Ansell, Managing Director, Hyatt, Middle East and Africa, commented, "We are excited for the upcoming opening of Park Hyatt Johannesburg, which will mark the third Park Hyatt branded hotel in Africa. With 31 rooms, the hotel is set to offer guests an unparalleled, personalized experience that combines modern comforts with timeless sophistication."

Park Hyatt Johannesburg is set to become the epitome of luxury and sophistication, seamlessly integrating modern comforts with timeless elegance. Inspired by Johannesburg's rich cultural heritage, the hotel's architecture is a contemporary interpretation of the elegant colonial homes of the past, centered around a magnificent Jacaranda tree. This design ethos promises an environment where luxury is personal, and every stay becomes a memorable journey.

The hotel features 31 uniquely styled rooms, which includes 26 King Bedrooms, two Junior Suites with enchanting garden views, one Wellness Suite, one Winston Suite, and one Rosebank Suite. From keyless entry systems to the finest Egyptian cotton linens, pillow and bath menus, every detail has been meticulously curated to provide unparalleled comfort and sophistication. Each suite will offer spa-like bathrooms with modern, luxurious bathtubs and showers, and private lounge areas for moments of serene contemplation. Each element, from his and hers granite top basins to the elegant finishes, is crafted to redefine the art of lavish living.

Park Hyatt Johannesburg also promises an extraordinary culinary journey. The hotel's dining experience will be a celebration of primeval ultra-taste fire cooking, where three distinct methods—barbecue grill, slow oven, and high oven—are used to create a sensory voyage of enchanting flavours. Guests can witness the artistry of chefs transforming humble ingredients into culinary masterpieces, blending nature's bounty with human ingenuity.

Park Hyatt Johannesburg promises a world where luxury is personal, and every wish is fulfilled. The hotel will cater to both business and leisure travelers, offering a unique stopover for international tourists making their way to other destinations across the globe.



Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust unveils ambitious five-year strategic plan

In a landmark event, the Ghana Heritage Conservation Trust (GHCT) has unveiled a comprehensive five-year strategic plan (2024-2028) to guide its operations over the next half-decade.

This strategic plan, the second since GHCT's establishment in 1996, reinforces the Trust's leadership in the conservation and preservation of Ghana's heritage, natural, and cultural resources. The GHCT has played a pivotal role in safeguarding significant sites such as forts and castles, driving community improvements, and managing the Kakum National Park, working in collaboration with public institutions like the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board and the Forestry Commission.

Developed with technical support from USAID Ghana, the plan outlines a detailed guideline for the sustainable management of these resources. It is designed to benefit the communities where these resources are located and to ensure their preservation and accessibility for the wider public.

The launch event, held on August 22, 2024 at the La Palm Royal Beach Hotel, drew a broad range of stakeholders, including representatives from the tourism, arts, and culture sectors, academia, traditional rulers, diplomatic missions and the media.

In her speech, Theresa Ayoade, a member of the GHCT Trustees, called for collective action to realise the strategic plan's objectives.

"As we move forward, let us remember that this strategic plan is not merely a guide for our leadership; it is a call to action for all of us. Together, we will strive to foster innovation, enhance collaboration, and drive sustainable growth, ensuring that we remain responsive to the needs of our community and stakeholders. The success of our strategic initiatives will depend on our ability to work together, leveraging our diverse strengths to achieve common goals," she emphasised.

The Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Andrew Egyapa Mercer, reiterated the government's commitment to conserving Ghana's heritage and natural resources. He revealed that \$12.6 million has been allocated for conservation efforts in 2024.

"Furthermore, the government, through Cabinet, has approved \$126 million over the next five years for the conservation of our forts and castles. This unprecedented commitment is a testament to our understanding of the importance of these monuments, not just to our nation but to the entire world," the Minister said in a speech delivered on his behalf by the CEO of the Ghana Tourism Authority, Akwasi Agyeman.

Egyapa Mercer also called for industry-wide collaboration to drive the strategic plan's goals.

"As we launch the strategic plan of the GHCT, I urge all stakeholders—government, private sector, civil

society, and indeed the greater tourism industry—to come together in solidarity to ensure the successful implementation of this plan. Our heritage defines us, and its preservation should be a collective responsibility."

The GHCT's strategic plan is anchored on seven thematic areas: Conservation and Restoration; Education and Outreach; Sustainable Tourism; Research, Documentation, and Publication; Business Development; Sustainable Financial Management; and Governance, Management, and Administration.

Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Professor Edward Marfo-Yiadom, provided a comprehensive presentation of the plan, affirming the GHCT's commitment to protecting Ghana's natural and heritage resources.

"The plan outlines our priorities and goals for the preservation and promotion of Ghana's natural, cultural, and historic heritage," said Professor Marfo-Yiadom. Our strategic plan is based on a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities facing Ghana's heritage sector, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of our organisation. It reflects our commitment to working in partnership with government agencies, civil society organisations, communities, and other stakeholders to achieve our objectives, the Board Chairman, added.



NAMIBIA:

Adventure paradise that awaits you

If you have never visited Namibia, there are many reasons this Southern African country should be on your vacation bucket list. But if you are a frequent visitor, the enthralling country is calling again for more thrills across its expansive 824,292 km² land mass and enthralling 1,572 km coastline.

Of course, from exciting city tours of Windhoek, its alluring capital city, to leisure-imbued frolicking on the beach sand of Swakopmund, its coastal city, to cultural and historical journey with the very hospitable indigenes at the country's townships and to the daredevil and energy-sapping desert safari, amid adrenaline-imbued 4x4 rides and other activities, Namibia is simply, the adventures that awaits anytime and any season.

The country is also a haven for nature lovers with rare wildlife offerings that complement the African usual.

Let the adventure begin!

It truly begins with the warmth at the Hosea Kutako International Airport, Windhoek, Namibia's largest airport, about 45 km to the city centre.

On getting to Windhoek, the vibrancy of the capital city echoes, while further affirming it as the gateway to breathtaking and exclusive luxury experiences ahead.

The city's unique blend of African and European cultures, with stunning German architecture and a range of gourmet restaurants and cafes indulge an average visitor.

While in the city, the sprawling Heroes' Acre war memorial commemorates Namibia's 1990 independence, the 1890s Alte Feste, a former military headquarters with historical exhibits, and Independence Memorial Museum on a hilltop in the city center and relics of colonial influences in nearby buildings like the sandstone Lutheran Christus Church take you in to the history of the country. As well, almost all major global hotel chains have their outlets in Windhoek, making accommodation options in the city very competitive. There are also malls and other recreational outfits across the city, but the one you need to see while on a visit is the Windhoek Go-Karting, which has been operational since 2010.

Visitors are enthralled with top quality go-karting experience with 14 270cc Rimo karts from Michael Schumacher's



own track in Kerpen Germany. The track has 20 Rimo Karts from Germany of which 4 are custom made. There is also a Laser Tag recently upgraded to a maze-like battlefield for young and old visitors.

The Go-Karting family entertainment centre also offers team building events, amid onsite bars and professional catering for those looking for water-based fun and more adventure in Namibia, The Walvis Bay International Airport, the second major gateway into the country, facilitates your visit, especially to Swakopmund, the major coastal city.



While in Swakopmund, the rich German history is glaring with a unique blend of history and natural diversity that promises an unforgettable experience for visitors. Obviously, the coastal city is generous with the relics and tales of its fascinating past intertwined with modern attractions.

The expansive bank of the Atlantic Ocean that stretches the length and breadth of the city offers quality leisure along the stretch. Fun is heightened on the white sands of the beach, while security is never compromised as the country is very safe.

From mild and wild swimming, snorkeling, fishing, skating, sand castle, shell hunt to beach sports, Swakopmund is all fun on the beach. But the real fun for the more adventurous is not far from Swakopmund. It really starts from the coastal city and stretches into Walvis Bay. At the bay, the die-hard fan of adventure can join the Atlantic Namibian

“ From mild and wild swimming, snorkeling, fishing, skating, sand castle, shell hunt to beach sports, Swakopmund is all fun on the beach. But the real fun for the more adventurous is not far from Swakopmund. It really starts from the coastal city and stretches into Walvis Bay. At the bay, the die-hard fan of adventure can join the Atlantic Namibian Coast Marine Dolphin Cruise to cruise farther into the ocean to spot the ocean's “Big 5”: whales, dolphins, mola mola, leatherback turtles and seals. ”

Coast Marine Dolphin Cruise to cruise farther into the ocean to spot the ocean's "Big 5": whales, dolphins, mola mola, leatherback turtles and seals.

But the most spectacular is spotting the Dolphins in an acrobatic display, singing and dancing for the visitors, while they enjoy a relaxing time at sea including refreshments and snacks. Aside from the Dolphins, other marine wildlife are easily spotted while on the cruise, even rare whales that come to mate.

On the Atlantic coastal cruise, one can admire marine life on a relaxing boat with curious seals and regal pelicans, exploring all that the Walvis Bay coast has to offer and enjoying a Namibian coffee. Also on the coastal stretch, visitors feast their eyes on pink flamingos, the majestic Dune 7, salt works, and even pink lakes.

Yet again, there is one major attraction, probably the best and not for the faint-hearted, an encounter with the Namib Desert, the oldest desert in the world, is the mother of all adventures in Namibia and probably in the whole of Africa.

With 4x4 SUV, safari in the desert pumps adrenalin more than anything you can think of.

The professional 4x4 SUV riders skillfully take visitors through some of the highest sand dunes in the world, amid bumps that can lead to vomiting, flying of unguarded personal items, among others.

But the fun is in the rough ride, occasioned by the nature-made bumps on the sand dunes. There are also safely designed kiddies tracks and something for everyone.

At Namib Desert, you will experience the awesome power of gravity on desert quad ride, dune board riding, quad bike and a nice sundowner before heading back. There are also night parties with 4X4 SUVs illuminating the dark horizons with their headlamps.

A spectacular sight in the desert is the spot where the ocean kisses the Namib Desert, a rare occurrence in the world.

Now and for wildlife lovers, Okaukuejo Airport comes handy. The airport in the Oshana Region of Namibia, serves the Etosha National Park and its

administrative center, Okaukuejo. About 90 percent of passengers on flights to the airport head to the national park because of the breathtaking games in the wildlife sanctuary.

The park, proclaimed a game reserve in March 1907, is one of the largest national parks in Africa, hence offers best sighting and closest encounter with four of the 'Big 5'.

Those who have visited will attest that Etosha's best game viewing is at the many waterholes scattered throughout the park, with large treks of zebra and springbok mingle with Oryx and bathing elephants. While in the camp, floodlit waterholes offer rare opportunity to spot rhinos, particularly, its healthy population of black rhinoceros, elephant and lion drinking from the same waterhole.

For culture lovers, a visit to Namibian rural communities commonly referred to as townships is worthwhile.

On a visit to Mondesa Township in Walvis Bay, visitors will encounter one of the most peaceful and hospitable people on earth. There, one will discover the unique culture, warmth, and friendliness of the locals. One can walk or travel around by bike and learn about the fascinating history of the township and its people, then cook traditional dishes, as well as taste them.

Pictures of a visitor-to-people encounter, especially the cooking, eating and dancing will stay longer. But do not forget to buy a souvenir to permanently preserve one's visit and support local craft to grow.

However, access to Namibia is seamless with direct and connecting international flights to its two major airports, visa is easy, while accommodation is the cheapest in the Southern Africa region, even in the most luxurious sari camps and resorts.



Newly Appointed ICCA Africa Director outlines vision for MICE industry growth



Following the appointment of Frank Murangwa, as the African Director for the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), he has shared his vision for propelling growth for the continent's MICE industry.

With a wealth of experience in transforming Rwanda into a leading MICE destination, Murangwa is now poised to bring his expertise to the entire continent, aiming to elevate Africa's standing in the global meetings industry.

Reflecting on his new role, the new ICCA Africa Chief expressed in an interview with VoyagesAfric, his enthusiasm for the journey ahead, stating that his vision is to ensure the MICE sector in Africa reaches new heights.

"It's an exciting journey for me, joining ICCA, a reputable global organisation. Having been at the forefront of positioning Rwanda as a MICE hub, I am eager to bring the same energy and vision to the entire African continent. I want to grow the continent, ensuring that association meetings benefit our communities and destinations," he remarked, highlighting the ambitious scope of his plans.

During a recent visit to Maputo, Mozambique, Murangwa shared his observations on the country's readiness to become a MICE powerhouse. He praised the government's commitment

"It's an exciting journey for me, joining ICCA, a reputable global organisation. Having been at the forefront of positioning Rwanda as a MICE hub, I am eager to bring the same energy and vision to the entire African continent. I want to grow the continent, ensuring that association meetings benefit our communities and destinations"

to developing the sector, noting the impressive infrastructure in place, including state-of-the-art convention centers and international hotel brands.

"Mozambique is on the right path," he observed. "The government has a clear vision for growing the MICE industry, particularly in Maputo, where the ecosystem is already well-developed. This positions Mozambique as a hub for meetings and events, much like Rwanda has successfully done."

Murangwa also emphasised the importance of addressing key challenges to ensure the MICE sector's success across Africa. Drawing comparisons with Rwanda, he noted that leadership and commitment are crucial. "Rwanda's success in becoming a MICE leader on the continent is largely due to the vision and leadership of the government. Mozambique, with its strong leadership, is following a similar path. However, challenges like aviation connectivity and visa streamlining need to be addressed to facilitate easier travel within the continent. These are areas where collaboration between governments, the private sector, and international organizations like ICCA is vital."

He outlined his immediate plans as ICCA's African Director, which include building on the relationships established by his predecessor and forging new partnerships. He emphasised the importance of engaging with government ministries and bodies responsible for tourism and MICE promotion, ensuring they understand the sector's potential impact on their economies.

"My role is to engage with local leadership and the private sector, fostering partnerships that will benefit the MICE industry. By working together, we can position Africa as a key player in the global meetings landscape," he explained.

The Director also highlighted ICCA's strategic initiatives designed to support the growth of the MICE sector in Africa. One such initiative is the ICA Skills program, which focuses on capacity building within the continent. "We have a program called ICCA Skills.

ICCA Skills is all about building knowledge and capacity within Africa's meetings industry. The program is tailored to the needs of the continent, ensuring that we not only develop the industry but also make a tangible impact on our communities and destinations," he stated. Through this and other strategic programs, Murangwa aims to lead Africa's MICE industry to unprecedented growth, ensuring that it becomes a vital part of the global meetings landscape.

As anticipation builds for the upcoming ICA Congress in Abu Dhabi, Murangwa highlighted the growing enthusiasm for African participation. The congress, set to be a landmark event, will see strong representation from across the continent.

"We're seeing lots of enthusiasm from the African continent for the congress in Abu Dhabi," Murangwa noted. He also introduced the new chairperson for the ICCA Africa region, James Mora from Kenya, who will be instrumental in advancing Africa's presence on the global stage. "James Mora's leadership will be crucial as we work together to elevate Africa's profile in the MICE sector," Murangwa added, underscoring the importance of the congress in showcasing the continent's commitment and progress in the industry.



10th FIKANI Tourism Fair projects Mozambique's vibrant tourism & cultural potentials



Filipe Jacinto Nyusi,
President of Mozambique

The 10th edition of the Féria Internacional de Turismo (FIKANI) Mozambique, the country's premier International Tourism Fair, has concluded on a high note, reinforcing Mozambique's position as a burgeoning tourism and cultural destination in Africa. The event, which took place from August 8th to 11th at the Mozambique-China Cultural Centre, attracted significant participation from both local and international stakeholders, making it the largest and most impactful edition to date.

FIKANI 2024, themed "Tourism: Tool for Economic Development and Social Transformation," served as a vibrant platform to highlight the critical role tourism plays in driving economic growth and improving quality of life. The fair featured over 220 exhibitors and 145 stands, showcasing a diverse array of products and services from the hotel, catering, entertainment and travel agency sectors. The event also attracted more than 6,000 visitors, including a



remarkable international presence with 37 exhibition buyers from countries such as South Africa, Namibia, Rwanda, Nigeria, Angola, Kenya, Portugal, the Kingdoms of Eswatini, and Spain.

The fair was officially opened by President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, whose unwavering support for tourism as a catalyst for economic and social transformation was a focal point of the event. In his opening remarks, President Nyusi emphasized the importance of tourism in Mozambique's national development strategy and highlighted the government's commitment to creating a conducive environment for investment in the sector.

Continuing, President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi expressed his desire to be remembered for his role in promoting Mozambique's tourism. He emphasized the importance of FIKANI as a platform that showcases Mozambique's commitment to valuing tourism's role in the economy. The President also highlighted the impact of natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism growth, while expressing optimism that initiatives like the visa waiver program and efforts to improve air travel to Mozambique will help revitalize the sector.

Throughout the event, the international exhibitors had the opportunity to explore Mozambique's tourism offerings, interact directly with local tour operators and travel agencies, and visit various tourist sites. This exposure is expected to enhance the global promotion of Mozambique as a prime tourism destination.

Vasco Manhica, President of the Federation of Tourism, shared that Mozambique's tourism sector has witnessed a 10% growth, attributing this success to the implementation of policies that make the country competitive in both African and global markets. He specifically thanked President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi for the visa waiver program, which has significantly boosted tourism by making the country more accessible to international visitors. Manhica emphasized the importance of enhancing the visitor experience and



Eldevina Materula,
Minister of Culture and Tourism

promoting the diverse range of cultural and tourism products that Mozambique has to offer.

At the closing ceremony, the Minister of Culture and Tourism, Eldevina Materula, addressed the media, reaffirming the government's dedication to adopting policies and implementing actions that continually improve the business environment. "FIKANI has once again demonstrated its role as the biggest showcase of tourism and culture in our country," she emphasised. "This year's event not only attracted significant participation but also solidified our commitment to transforming Mozambique into a top-tier tourism destination."

She also reiterated the importance of the theme "Tourism, Tool for Economic Development and Social Transformation," which aimed to raise awareness among all stakeholders, including tourism professionals, service providers, and the general public, about their roles in building and promoting the Mozambique brand.

FIKANI 2024 introduced new attractions, such as a Photo Exhibition showcasing remarkable moments in Mozambique's tourism over the past decade and the Corner Palmilhar Mozambique, which offered services and packages from air, railway, river, and land carriers. These additions highlighted the country's ongoing efforts to enhance connectivity for tourist products and further enrich the visitor experience.

Unlocking Africa's Hospitality Potential: Trends, Opportunities, and Collaborative Growth

Against the backdrop of the post-pandemic recovery, Africa's hospitality industry is not only rebounding, but is set to flourish.

The reasons for the rebound and the future of the continent's tourism industry, were put into sharp focus in this insightful conversation between Kojo Bentum-Williams of *VoyagesAfric* and Folaseto Akin-Olugbade, a seasoned investor in Africa's hospitality space.

Akin-Olugbade observed that as the world emerges from the grips of the COVID-19 pandemic, the hospitality industry, particularly in Africa, is experiencing a significant resurgence.

He acknowledged that it is impossible to discuss current trends in the global industry without reflecting on the seismic impact of COVID-19. The pandemic brought the industry to its knees, with lockdowns causing widespread disruption. However, in the aftermath, a remarkable transformation is underway.

"The hospitality sector in Africa has reopened, and we are seeing some countries returning to pre-COVID levels. Remarkably, regions like Morocco have even exceeded these levels," Akin-Olugbade noted, while highlighting the phenomenon of 'revenge travel', a global trend where people are eager to explore the world after prolonged restrictions.

This pent-up demand has fueled a shift in consumer preferences. There is a discernible move away from Airbnb-style accommodations as travelers seek out luxury experiences that offer more than just a place to stay. "People want to be pampered. They want to be taken care of. They want to relish the luxury that hotels offer," Akin-Olugbade observed.

The seasoned hospitality investor emphasized the potential for brownfield and greenfield investments in the hospitality space. "There are significant

“**The fact that ADRs are increasing is a positive sign and it shows that hospitality is back, and in Africa, it is stronger than ever**”



Folaseto Akin-Olugbade

opportunities in both brownfield and greenfield investments," she said, explaining that while her focus is typically on acquiring existing assets, the leisure space is ripe for new developments.

The uptick in ADRs (Average Daily Rates) across African markets is a clear indicator that the sector is on an upward trajectory. "The fact that ADRs are increasing is a positive sign and it shows that hospitality is back, and in Africa, it is stronger than ever," she emphasized.

In the Southern Africa Development Commission (SADC) region, Akin-Olugbade identified Namibia as a prime example of a country leveraging tourism to drive economic growth. With its stunning natural beauty and welcoming culture, Namibia is an attractive destination for investors and travelers alike. "Being in Namibia for the first time, I am struck by how much tourism has contributed to the economy here," she remarked. The potential for similar growth in other countries within the SADC region is evident and offering lucrative opportunities for investors.

Reflecting on the industry's future, Akin-Olugbade shared her excitement about recent developments, particularly the collaborative efforts within the sector. She spoke highly of an investors' council, a closed-door session where key players in Africa's hospitality space came together to discuss challenges and share best practices.

"We are exploring how to work more closely with governments and how the private sector can better collaborate. Leveraging shared knowledge and experiences is crucial to driving the sector forward," she said.

Akin-Olugbade also stressed the importance of educating financial institutions about the unique needs of the hospitality industry to secure better financing solutions

She praised the UCS events for fostering meaningful connections and conversations among industry stakeholders. The sharing of data, insights, and expertise has been instrumental in energizing the sector and unlocking new opportunities. As she reflected on the event, it was clear that the hospitality sector is poised for a bright future.

Folaseto is a highly accomplished investor, with over 15 years of experience in both developed and growth markets. She has been instrumental in deploying and managing investments worth over \$7 billion. Currently, Folaseto serves as an Investment Manager at Actis, a leading global investor in sustainable infrastructure that has raised US \$24 billion to date. She currently manages a leading pan-African hospitality platform, a joint venture with Westmont Hospitality Group, with 1,345 keys across seven properties in key hub markets in East, West, and North Africa.

Driving Africa's Hospitality Growth: Insights from Paul Stevens of Accor

No doubt, Africa's hospitality industry is rapidly evolving, with significant developments shaping its future. In this engaging conversation with *VoyagesAfric*, Paul Stevens, the Chief Operating Officer for the Middle East, Africa, and Turkey, Accor, sheds light on the exciting growth trajectory of the continent's tourism and hospitality sectors.

Paul Stevens begins by highlighting the remarkable progress Accor has made in sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa over the past two years. This growth, he explains, has been largely driven by a strategic partnership with a capital market manager, Casada. The success of this collaboration has set the stage for continued expansion, with Accor looking to further deepen its footprint across the continent.

However, Stevens emphasizes that Accor's vision extends beyond mere growth. The company is committed to understanding and facilitating the broader growth of the continent, he explains.

"When we look at current occupancies in our hotels, there is still a long way to go in many of our destinations," he notes. To address this, Accor is focusing on strengthening partnerships with airlines to improve airlift and working with government organizations to enhance the visa experience for travelers. These efforts, Stevens believes, will not only increase hotel occupancies but also spur further development across Africa.

Turning to southern Africa, Stevens shares insights into Accor's activities in Namibia and the broader Southern African Development Commission (SADC) region. He highlights the

“**A crucial aspect of Accor's strategy in Africa is balancing global hotel standards with a uniquely African touch. Stevens passionately discusses the company's recent overhaul of its global hotel standards, a move designed to make room for more local influences.**”

transformation of a key hotel in Namibia, which has evolved from a modest establishment into a "real princess." This transformation, Stevens explains, is part of Accor's strategy to reposition existing assets by giving them a facelift and a new market position, both locally and globally.

Namibia, with its growing flow of international tourists, offers a prime example of how revitalized hotels can drive tourism growth. "Once they stay in an international hotel, see what aspects and what infrastructure is in place, that naturally is going to grow," Stevens says. The success of such projects, he adds, will inspire further development and investment in the region.

A crucial aspect of Accor's strategy in Africa is balancing global hotel standards with a uniquely African touch. Stevens passionately discusses the company's recent overhaul of its global hotel standards, a move designed to make room for more local influences. "The old days of standardization are pretty much left behind," he asserts. Today's travelers, whether business or leisure, seek unique, authentic experiences that reflect the local culture.

In Namibia, for example, visitors want to feel connected to the local environment, not like they are in New York or Paris. Accor's approach is to ensure that every interaction, from the hotel's design to its staff, offers an emotional connection to the destination. This, according to Stevens, is key to meeting the evolving desires of today's global travelers.

Stevens also highlights Accor's commitment to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles,



particularly in Africa. The continent, with its vast, untouched natural landscapes, offers a unique opportunity to prioritize sustainability in tourism and hospitality. Stevens is proud to note that 22% of Accor's General Managers in Africa are women, reflecting the company's commitment to diversity.

At the conference where this conversation took place, sustainability was a recurring theme. Stevens believes that Africa, with its rich natural resources and relatively untouched landscapes, is in a unique position to lead the way in sustainable tourism development. This focus on sustainability, coupled with Accor's stringent ESG reporting, positions the company as a responsible leader in Africa's hospitality sector.

Stevens furthermore, reflects on the importance of conferences like the one hosted by Accor. These gatherings bring together professionals, government officials, and industry leaders to discuss the future of Africa's hospitality sector. The connections made and the ideas exchanged at such events are crucial for mapping out the future of the continent's tourism industry.

Tourism providers opting to abandon retention of legal counsel to their detriment

How do small medium enterprises and successful large corporations differ in the tourism industry? Does each entrepreneur anticipate the ever-evolving changes to rules, regulations and laws?

Consider abandoning the advice of attorneys, and not retaining legal counsel at your own peril...



Investment into multiple sectors of any given economy, is possible to be attained solely driven from tourism. New and aspiring entrepreneurs, seasoned professionals, and big business corporations each year look to invest and explore new projects, expanding their footprint and adapting their criteria for establishing themselves in an ever-changing environment where global shifts in the way we operate and do business happen more frequently than we would like to consider.

The tourism industry is no different, and the Covid19 pandemic was a clear example of how rules, regulations, and laws were swiftly adapted to adhere to the changes in the societal values which we recognized at the time. We are now capable of evolving business practices and accounting for change far more fluidly than ever before.

But beyond Covid19, we recognize that there still remains tourism businesses inept at recognizing that laws are changing continuously, that economic, judicial interpretation, coupled with legal precedents, new regulations, rules, and laws require a trained eye to be able to benefit the venture and to implement

“*But beyond Covid19, we recognize that there still remains tourism businesses inept at recognizing that laws are changing continuously, that economic, judicial interpretation, coupled with legal precedents, new regulations, rules, and laws require a trained eye to be able to benefit the venture and to implement the requirements of the laws within the business. It is imperative to ensure that whilst strategizing, negotiating and investing in the next big move, a complimentary professional panel is retained*”

the requirements of the laws within the business. It is imperative to ensure that whilst strategizing, negotiating and investing in the next big move, a complimentary professional panel is retained. Legislation adoption ensures that from birth to inception and finally to successful operation may be attained with the aid of an attorney. Retaining an attorney does not begin at litigation, but when operations commence key factors to consider are the laws applicable from contracts with labor, material suppliers, consumers, marketing, advertisements, and including the protection of personal information, and a myriad of other legislations which must be adhered to and simultaneously complied with.

Now is the time to sit up and take note, the tourism sector is a multibillion-dollar industry. It is a sector which has the capabilities to make or break down the economy in numerous countries. This sector is also earmarked to receive some of the biggest foreign direct investments globally, with big corporations and multinationals seeking to invest into projects where growth and strategic global expansion is capable of being secured.

Tourism with its multiple sectors, from accommodation providers, food & beverage, events & conferencing, logistics & travels, coupled with AI powered travel apps, plays an important role in showcasing the most appealing and diverse aspects of any country, it also is capable of increased employment rates at grass roots levels, and upliftment of communities. If these ventures are created effectively adhering to the required legislations, and operations maintained within the standards required the countries and the services providers are assured of a constant income stream.

But to the budding entrepreneur, and

investor who are each looking to enter into the same sector, on many occasions we are unfortunately witnessing an ever-increasing growing trend of a limitation on the understanding of rules, and regulations, a mere surface level interpretation, the consequence of which exposes the businesses to multiple fines, non-adherence and lack of compliance. This is further exacerbated by a growing trend in nonlegal personnel presenting AI generated contracts which fall short of protecting the interests of the entrepreneur, and least of all adherence to the myriads of legislation, and regulations as required for operating a successful venture, with a complete disregard for protection of the consumer and the eventual tourist.

With artificial intelligence and technology providing tools for innovation and reshaping the status quo of the tourism industry. The ability for tour operators to extend into digital tourism and allow for comprehensive real-time information must be factored, utilizing the correct tools and ensuring compliance is a prerequisite. There exists extensive international laws and applicable local laws within country of origin, which must be recognized at the highest levels.

Retaining legal counsel, ahead of investing and for the benefit of the businesses, allows for the prospect of ensuring that laws, regulations, and relevant accreditations are not compromised. The geographical region with which the entity is registered, recognizing the requirements, and catering to both the national and international guests. The extent of exposure in case of negligence is extensive, therefore recognizing fair and equitable solutions for both the business and the consumer is imperative.

By Safiyya Akoojee B.A, LLB, LLM
 Director Fortunatus Advisory LLC United Arab Emirates
 Director Thomson Wilks Inc. South Africa



your ultimate travel partner...

SERVICES

- VISA & PASSPORT APPLICATION
- HOTEL BOOKING
- TICKETING
- TRAVELS
- TOURS

**KENYA | SOUTH AFRICA | DUBAI
 MALAYSIA | SINGAPORE | EUROPE | USA**

+233 207 150 150 | +233 302 79442

@kayatoursgH www.kayatours.com

Essence of Africa targets quality buyers to fuel African tourism growth



As African tourism gears up for a period of renewed growth, attracting the right international buyers is becoming a top priority for the tourism industry. Essence of Africa, a new trade event set to launch this December in Kenya, is placing its bets on attracting high-value buyers to fuel this growth. This strategic focus is no surprise, considering that 64% of exhibitors consider the calibre of attendees to be a primary factor when choosing trade events.

The event's organisers are banking on the idea that quality trumps quantity when it comes to buyer-seller interactions.

They argue that high-calibre buyers bring more to the table than just potential sales. These elite buyers, they say, engage in more meaningful conversations, actively seeking new opportunities and diving deep into the offerings presented to them.

One of the key selling points of this approach is the potential for accelerated business outcomes. Proponents suggest that top-tier buyers often have the authority to make on-the-spot decisions, potentially leading to higher conversion rates and quicker sales cycles. This efficiency could be particularly valuable in an industry like tourism, where timing and market responsiveness are crucial.

Beyond immediate deals, there's a vision of fostering long-term partnerships. The organisers hope that connections made at Essence of Africa will evolve into collaborations, joint ventures, and strategic alliances that drive growth well beyond the event itself. This focus on relationship-building aligns with broader trends in the tourism industry, where sustainable partnerships are increasingly seen as key to long-term success.

However, the success of this strategy hinges on more than just attracting the right buyers. Sellers must be prepared to effectively engage with these high-value attendees. This means conducting thorough pre-event research, understanding the specific needs and priorities of potential buyers, and tailoring pitches to resonate with individual targets. The ability to showcase relevant success stories and propose innovative collaborative opportunities could make the difference between a productive meeting and a missed opportunity.

The event organisers are organising diverse networking opportunities to

connect buyers and sellers, including seminars and panel discussions. There's also a focus on facilitating discussions about industry trends and future developments, potentially opening doors for more innovative collaborations.

The outcome of Essence of Africa could have broader implications for how business connections are forged in the tourism sector. If successful, it might spark a trend towards more targeted, high-value networking events across the industry. As the event unfolds, it will offer valuable insights into the future direction of African tourism and the most effective strategies for fostering its growth in an increasingly competitive global market.

Essence of Africa, launched by On Show Solutions and Experience Africa Event (the events division of the African Travel & Tourism Association), is more than just an event—it's a gateway to Africa's future. Join us for this meetings-driven international buyer form and unlock the full potential of tourism, one interaction at a time.



AIPC brings its Academy to Africa



The International Association of Convention Centres (AIPC) has brought its flagship educational programme for the first time to the African continent. Touching on all aspects of convention centre management, it elevated a diverse group of 25 participants.

The AIPC Academy is a five-day bootcamp that introduces participants to all aspects of convention centre management, from operations to finance. It combines lectures, workshops and team building, allowing the participants to connect and learn. The event targeted upcoming talent from all departments within a convention centre. Bringing this programme to the African continent is part of the overall AIPC strategy to increase its engagement with the global community.

"Africa is clearly the continent of the future. It is expected that African economies will grow substantially due to the African Continental Free Trade Agreement allowing the participation of member countries to interact with each other, resulting in an increased need for meetings and meeting facilities.

That is why it is so important to bring educational activities, such as the AIPC Academy, to Africa using the opportunity to share the history and heritage of Africa," said Abigail Thulare, CEO of the Robben Island Museum.

Hosted by the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC), the first-ever AIPC Africa Academy took place from 19 August to 23 August 2024. The 25 participants had diverse backgrounds – from sales to finance, human capital and operations – allowing for an exchange of knowledge, covering the full convention centre value chain.

Lectures were given by global and local industry leaders, including Julianne Jammers (Managing Director, SwissTech Convention Center), Sandy Kennedy (Strategic Director, Intelligent Growth Solutions), Projeni Pather (Managing Director, Exposure Marketing) and many more, on topics such as leadership in times of uncertainty, artificial intelligence, finance and sustainability.

"Having such an amazing group of speakers willing to share their insights provided a unique opportunity for the

participants to engage directly with industry leaders and ask them questions on topics they may struggle with. Throughout the week, I have seen many of the participants undergo professional growth at a speed I've not seen before," said Taubie Motlhabane, CEO of the CTICC and Board Member of AIPC.

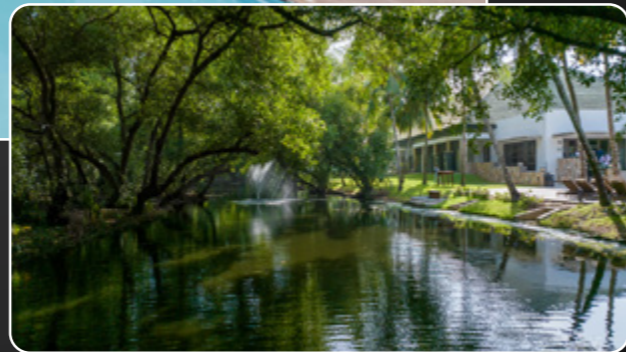
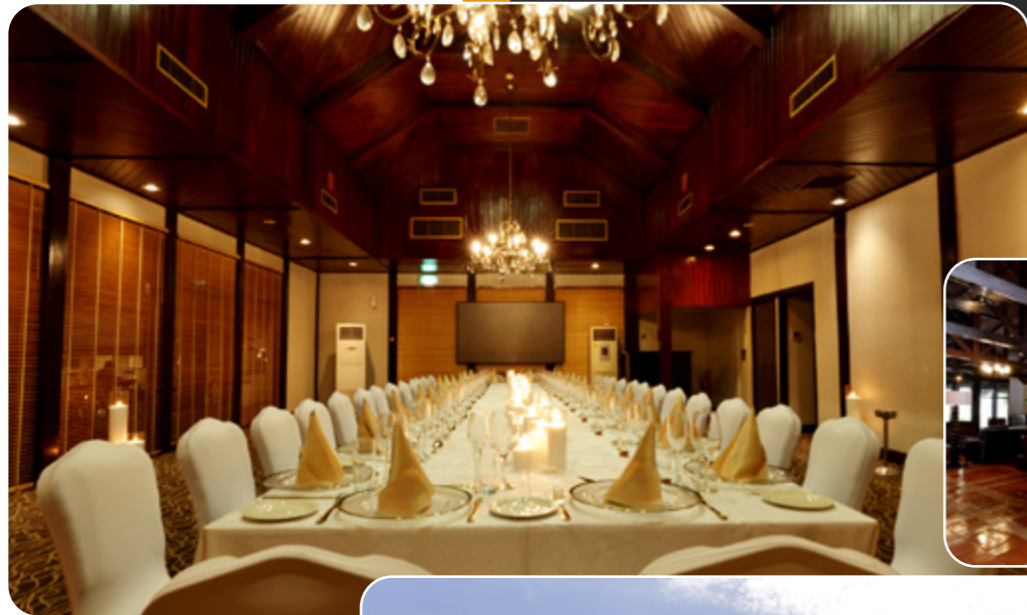
Apart from the lectures and debates, the participants also engaged in workshops and role-play, and delivered a pitch presentation that dealt with an industry challenge.

"Besides the knowledge and best practices I gained from the Academy, I now have a network of colleagues to whom I can reach out. Actually, it feels like I have been given a new group of friends in less than a week," said Zanda van Rooyen, Supply Chain Manager at the CTICC.

Given the success of this first event, the AIPC team is already planning its second, which will take place in August 2025. We are very pleased to announce that the CTICC – whose team did an amazing job in hosting the event – kindly agreed to welcome us again.

LABADI BEACH HOTEL

1st choice



AviaDev 2025 heads to Zanzibar, Tanzania

AviaDev Africa, the premier aviation development conference for Africa, is heading to Zanzibar in 2025. The prestigious event will be jointly hosted by the Zanzibar Airports Authority (ZAA) and the Zanzibar Commission for Tourism (ZCT), marking a significant milestone in the region's aviation industry.

AviaDev Africa, known for its role in driving air connectivity to, from and within the African continent, has been fostering partnerships, driving innovation, and promoting sustainable growth in the aviation sector for the last nine (9) years. The event will unite 400 industry leaders on the spice island of Zanzibar.

With its enchanting landscapes, rich cultural heritage and thriving tourism industry, AviaDev will serve as a catalyst for advancing aviation connectivity, tourism development, and economic growth in the whole region, but with a particular focus on Zanzibar. The event attracts key stakeholders, including African and International airlines, airports, industry suppliers, government officials, investors and industry experts. Over 3 days, a comprehensive programme will deliver insightful discussions, outreach activities, knowledge sharing, networking

opportunities and interactive sessions, whilst also providing attendees with the opportunity to experience the charms of Zanzibar firsthand.

AviaDev is more than a conference. It is a deal making platform responsible for catalysing multiple route development decisions, delivering economic growth, and creating jobs across the value chain.

Over the last few years, AAKIA airport traffic have witnessed increased growth of 9.2% CAGR between 2019-2023. At the end of 2023 AAKIA airport traffic stood at 2.14 million. The traffic grew by 22% in 2023 compared to 2022. The airport connects to 30 destinations and has 26 operating airlines.

Zanzibar welcomed over 638,498 visitors in 2023 which is a 16.45 increase with last year making tourism a fundamental pillar of the archipelago's economy. The destination produces frequent seasonality making it almost all round the year destination. This continued emphasis on the tourism sector as a driver of growth, provides an ideal backdrop for discussions on enhancing connectivity, infrastructure development, and investment opportunities.

"We are thrilled to announce Zanzibar as the host destination for AviaDev

Africa 2025," said Jon Howell, CEO of AviaDev. "This partnership with ZAA and ZCT reflects our commitment to driving positive change and unlocking new opportunities in African aviation. In appointing the host, we were impressed with how the stakeholders in Zanzibar share a vision and are working in alignment to ensure they achieve a sustainable level of development and growth."

"We are honoured to co-host AviaDev Africa 2025 alongside ZCT," said Seif Juma, Director General of ZAA. "This event presents a unique platform to showcase Zanzibar's aviation potential and strengthen collaboration across the industry. Together, we look forward to advancing aviation development in Zanzibar and across the African continent."

"We are excited to welcome delegates to Zanzibar for AviaDev Africa 2025," added Hafsa Mbamba, CEO of ZCT. "By co-hosting this respected event, we aim to highlight Zanzibar's position as a gateway to Africa and foster partnerships that drive sustainable growth and prosperity in the tourism sector."

AviaDev Africa 2025 continues to be the event to attend for enhancing route development to, from and within Africa.

AviaDev 2024 in pictures



Photo Credits: Nessy Hilifilwa & Oye Photography

From Nationalism to Globalism: The Evolution of African Airline Ownership



International aviation is one of the most regulated industries in the world. From safety regulations to security protocols to bilateral agreements about traffic rights, every small detail is usually subject to Government scrutiny and approval. Most notably however, even in the globalised economy of the 21st century, the airline industry's access to capital has more often than not been hampered by restrictive ownership regulations. This is particularly true in Africa where many small countries simply don't have the capital resources needed to fund a business the size of an airline.

However, recent developments indicate a shift towards more liberalized frameworks, aimed at attracting foreign investment and fostering growth. Historically, an airline needed to demonstrate "substantial ownership and effective control" by citizens of a country in order to be eligible for designation by that country to fly international routes. The Yamoussoukro Declaration of 1988 and its successor, the Yamoussoukro Decision of 1999 took the first steps towards liberalising this. Instead, these documents advocated for a "principal place of business" test, which would allow for greater cross-border ownership and investment as far as intra-African air transport was concerned. This shift in focus was designed to encourage the pooling of resources across borders, enabling airlines to benefit from economies of scale and improved efficiency. While

the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision has been slow despite initiatives like the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), it laid the groundwork for more flexible ownership regulations in several African countries and even across regional blocs.

Most recently, Qatar Airways has been at the forefront of foreign investments into African airlines, leveraging varying degrees of openness in ownership regulations across the continent. In South Africa, Qatar Airways recently acquired a 25% stake in Airlink, reflecting the country's relatively restrictive foreign ownership laws. South African regulations effectively limit foreign ownership and control of airlines to 25%, thus constraining the level of investment and control that foreign entities can exercise. In contrast, Rwanda's more liberal approach to foreign ownership has allowed Qatar Airways to negotiate for a more significant stake in RwandAir. The Gulf carrier is expected to hold a 49% share in the Rwandan national airline when that deal is finalised, reflecting Rwanda's strategic decision to attract more substantial foreign investment. This flexibility not only boosts the perennially loss-making RwandAir's financial strength, but also positions otherwise tiny Rwanda as a key player in African aviation.

Ethiopian Airlines serves as a prime example of how strategic foreign partnerships can drive growth and expand market reach across Africa. The airline has established a network of joint ventures and strategic investments in several African countries, including its flagship investment in ASKY Airlines based in Togo. Other investments include current partnerships with the Governments of Malawi and Zambia for national airlines in those countries, as well as less successful ones in Chad and Mozambique that terminated operations. These partnerships however allowed Ethiopian Airlines to extend its operational footprint and influence across the continent, while also supporting the

development of local aviation sectors in countries where independent airlines, often state backed, were unable to realise economies of scale and wound up failing at great expense to taxpayers.

The Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) also played a significant role in shaping the African aviation landscape through its investments in Groupe Celestair, which operated airlines in Mali, Burkina Faso and Uganda in the early part of the 21st century. Unfortunately, a combination of political interference and other issues didn't allow these investments to succeed in the long term, but it demonstrated the nascent potential for foreign capital injections to revitalize struggling national carriers and enhance regional connectivity.

Similarly, Chinese investment in Africa's aviation sector has been noteworthy, particularly through the involvement of the HNA Group in Africa World Airlines (AWA) in Ghana. Ghana's liberal investment rules allowed HNA Group and other Chinese partners to take a substantial stake in AWA, which in turn benefited financially from the foreign direct investment (FDI), as well as operationally from the technical expertise that HNA brought to the table. The result of this liberal policy in Ghana was a profitable airline based in Accra, which has helped drive the growth of Ghanaian aviation as one of the best performing countries on the continent.

Foreign investment and partnerships in the aviation sector are a catalyst for growth. While challenges remain, particularly in aligning national interests with regional integration goals, the direction is clear. Countries that embrace more flexible ownership rules are likely to attract greater investment, leading to stronger, more competitive aviation sectors and the corresponding benefits those bring to the wider economy. Those that instead choose to hide behind jingoism, protectionism and nationalism, do so at the expense of their own local industry. It is not difficult to guess which nations will likely be the winners in the long term.

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



Ethiopian inks an MoU with Satarem to mark a new era of Eco Friendly Travel



Ethiopian Airlines Group has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Satarem America Inc. to partner on production and use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) in Ethiopia. Satarem shall produce SAF in the country, and Ethiopian Airlines has agreed to acquire the SAF from Satarem. With this MoU, Ethiopian Airlines Group has solidified its commitment to sustainability. This

strategic partnership marks a significant step Ethiopian Airlines is taking towards a more sustainable and environmentally friendly future.

The MoU with Satarem America Inc., a leading provider of sustainable energy solutions, will enable Ethiopian Airlines Group to incorporate SAF into its operations, thereby significantly reducing carbon emissions and supporting global efforts to combat climate change. SAF is a cleaner alternative to traditional jet fuel, produced from sustainable feedstocks that can lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Regarding the move, Mr. Mesfin Tasew, Chief Executive Officer of Ethiopian Airlines Group said, "We are excited to partner with Satarem America Inc in our journey towards a greener and more sustainable future. The adoption of Sustainable Aviation Fuel is not just a business decision; it reflects our commitment to combating climate

change and investing in innovative solutions that support a sustainable industry."

This partnership with Satarem America Inc. reaffirms Ethiopian Airlines' position as a pioneer in adopting eco-friendly aviation solutions, demonstrating its commitment to maintaining high standards of environmental performance and contributing to the broader sustainability goals of the aviation industry.

As one of Africa's largest and most experienced airlines, Ethiopian Airlines has long been at the forefront of sustainability. The airline has implemented various initiatives, including fleet modernization, optimized flight operations, tree planting, and extensive recycling programs to minimize waste and emissions. The integration of SAF into its operations will further enhance these efforts, significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with air travel.

ASKY to resume flights to Pointe-Noire from October 2, 2024

ASKY Airlines has announced the resumption of flights to Pointe-Noire, Republic of Congo, starting from October 2, 2024. After a multi-year suspension, the airline is set to restore this strategic route, underscoring its dedication to bolstering economic growth across Africa and enhancing connectivity between communities on the continent.

Commitment to Economic Development and Connectivity

The reopening of Pointe-Noire aligns with ASKY's vision to promote economic and social development in Africa by providing efficient and reliable air transport solutions. This new route will facilitate trade, business opportunities,

and interpersonal relationships between countries, thereby strengthening regional integration.

With the addition of Pointe-Noire, ASKY Airlines expands its network to 29 destinations in West and Central Africa. Flights will be operated three times a week via Luanda Airport (LAD), offering increased connectivity and flexible travel options for our passengers.

Flight Schedules and Frequencies

Flights to Pointe-Noire will be operated three times per week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) with departure from Lome at 13:00pm for arrival in Pointe-Noire at 19:30pm. The return flights are scheduled on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday to depart from

Pointe-Noire at 07:10am for arrival in Lome at 11:40am. All times are in local time.

These schedules are designed to offer optimal connections with other ASKY destinations, thus facilitating travel across the continent.

Book Now

ASKY invites passengers to book their tickets now to discover or rediscover Pointe-Noire, a dynamic and growing city. Enjoy our superior service and our commitment to your comfort and safety. For more information and to book your tickets, please visit our website at www.flyasky.com or contact our local offices.

AviaDev will help improve tourism and connectivity for Namibia and Africa – Bisey Uirab



Bisey Uirab, the Chief Executive Officer of Namibia Airports Company has expressed his elation at the successful hosting of AviaDev Africa 2024 and the potential benefits the event would bring to Namibia and Africa's tourism and connectivity

"We at the Namibia Airports Company and indeed the aviation industry in Namibia are very proud of hosting AviaDev Africa 2024. AviaDev basically brings together all the key players in aviation across Africa and of course from Europe and elsewhere," said Bisey Uirab.

Namibia successfully hosted the 2024 edition of the premier aviation event with the objective of driving connectivity and tourism in Africa. The event held in Windhoek from 11th to 13th June, 2024, brought together key players in the aviation industry from across Africa, Europe, and beyond.

Organised by the Namibia Airports Company (NAC) every year, AviaDev brings together airports, airlines, tourism authorities, governments and industry suppliers, and offers attendees the ability to pre-arrange meetings, learn from industry peers and make important connections.

According to the NAC, the 2024 edition of AviaDev was attended by 408 delegates, 46 countries represented, with 75% attendance from Africa, 36

airlines participated and over 1200 pre-arranged meetings were delivered

The CEO noted that the event serves as a platform for Namibia to promote tourism and business opportunities. "What it means for us is really to showcase to the world and Africa what Namibia can offer in the first place in terms of tourism, business opportunities but most importantly our bigger aim is to develop connectivity between Namibia and the rest of the world and of course within Namibia." He added that this opportunity is crucial for encouraging Africa to visit Namibia and to open up Namibia to the rest of the world.

Uirab highlighted the collaboration with various partners, including those in the tourism sector, the Namibia Tourism Board (NTB), the regulator NCAA, and the Namibia Investment Promotion Development Board. "Everybody is on board and really it strengthens the partnership that we have developed over the past two years in terms of developing Namibia as a connectivity hub for our region," he said.

He emphasized the importance of connectivity, both within Namibia and with the rest of the world. "We need to connect Namibians within Namibia and the more we have got this conversation with Namibians and with the world, it really opens up those opportunities

for us. And it also addresses the bigger vision of the government to make Namibia a logistics hub," he explained.

The Namibia government's initiatives through the port of Walvis Bay, the port of Lüderitz, and developments in road and rail infrastructure are now complemented by a focus on aviation, Uirab observed. "That really builds to enhance all the modes of transport to position Namibia as a significant player."

According to Uirab, hosting AviaDev Africa 2024 also opens up other business opportunities for Namibia, including positioning the country as a conference hub. "We can organize conferences, we can organize conventions, bring the rest of the world to Namibia to see the beauty that we offer as a country," he said.

Looking ahead, the NAC CEO sees several short to long-term opportunities arising from this event. "We have created awareness about Namibia amongst all its delegates. There was a question earlier in the day as to who is here for the first time and there were quite a number of people who were here for the first time. There was a follow-up question which said who wants to come back, and the response was overwhelming," he shared.

"We want to attract more airlines to come to Namibia so that we can use Windhoek, our international airport, as a distribution hub where we get wide-body airlines and from here we distribute travellers within the rest of the subcontinent," Uirab explained.




This will require significant improvements in airport infrastructure, including expanding runways and terminal facilities. "We should probably fast-track the development of the third terminal that we have been wishing to put up for a long time," he added.


He highlighted the broader impact of these developments. "There are many opportunities that are coming up, but not only for us as the airport company. It opens up other industries as well. As I said, the tourism industry will be great and more and more people will come and do business in our country," he said

THE GAMBIA
THE SMILING COAST OF AFRICA

Discover a bird lovers utopia, where fishing villages and nature reserves are within easy reach of the glamorous Atlantic resorts, eco-lodges and wildlife parks.

Visit now

visitthegambia.gm
 [@gogambia](#)
 [@visitthegambia](#)
 [@visitthegambia](#)


Gambia Tourism Board
The Smiling Coast of Africa

João Pó Jorge Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award at AviaDev 2024

AviaDev, the premier African aviation development conference, has announced João Pó Jorge, former Director General of LAM Mozambique and the current Chair of AFRAA (African Airlines Association) and Chair of AASA (Airlines Association of Southern Africa) as the recipient of the Ato Girma Wake Lifetime Achievement Award for his outstanding contributions to the aviation industry. Each year, the Award winner is nominated by and voted for by the esteemed members of the AviaDev Advisory Board.

The Award was presented during AviaDev 2024 in Windhoek, Namibia, alongside a one-on-one interview with Ato Girma Wake and 2023's recipient Rodger Foster, CEO and Managing Director of Airlink.

João Pó Jorge's career spanning decades in the aviation sector has been marked by his formidable leadership and dedication. As the former Director General of LAM Mozambique, he spearheaded transformative initiatives, shaping the

trajectory of the airline and elevating its status on both regional and international fronts.

Under his leadership, LAM Mozambique achieved remarkable milestones, including expansion of its route network, modernization of its fleet, and enhancement of operational efficiency. João's strategic foresight and commitment to excellence have not only propelled the growth of LAM Mozambique but have also significantly contributed to the advancement of the aviation industry in Mozambique and beyond.

Recognizing his achievements and impact, Jon Howell, CEO and Founder, AviaDev said, "We are delighted to present João with the Ato Girma Wake Lifetime Achievement Award, which is a testament of his remarkable legacy and influence in the aviation community. His leadership style, integrity and relentless pursuit of excellence have set a benchmark for aspiring professionals and industry leaders alike."

Receiving the Award, João expressed his gratitude, stating, "I am deeply honored and humbled to receive this prestigious accolade from AviaDev. I would like to acknowledge the collective efforts of the dedicated teams I have had the privilege to work with throughout my career. I am

"We are delighted to present João with the Ato Girma Wake Lifetime Achievement Award, which is a testament of his remarkable legacy and influence in the aviation community. His leadership style, integrity and relentless pursuit of excellence have set a benchmark for aspiring professionals and industry leaders alike."

immensely grateful for their support and commitment. This award reaffirms my vision of advancing the aviation industry and underscores the importance of collaboration and innovation in achieving sustainable growth and success."

Ato Girma Wake commented, "João Pó Jorge's dedication to advancing the aviation sector in Mozambique and beyond has been truly commendable, and this Lifetime Achievement Award is a well-deserved recognition of his outstanding achievements."

AviaDev continues to serve as a platform for fostering collaboration, driving innovation, and celebrating excellence in the aviation sector. The Lifetime Achievement Award acknowledges individuals whose remarkable achievements have made a lasting impact on the industry, inspiring future generations of aviation leaders and innovators.



João Pó Jorge



Jon Howell, CEO of AviaDev presenting the award to João Pó Jorge in the company of Roger Foster

South African Airways Launches New Route to Lubumbashi

South African Airways (SAA) will launch a new service with five flights per week from OR Tambo International Airport (JNB) to Lubumbashi International Airport (FBM) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), starting 1 November 2024.

Lubumbashi, the second-largest city and the mining capital of the DRC, is a base for many of the country's biggest mining companies. It is the top copper

producer in Africa and the fourth-largest globally. It also produces half of the world's cobalt, most of which comes from Katanga Province. Lubumbashi is an important link in a chain known as the Lobito Railroad Corridor, which transports mining products from the interior to the Atlantic port of Lobito.

With the global surge in the demand for and the production of electric vehicles, the corridor's importance is constantly



growing, along with the city's importance as an economic hub for the DRC.

Virgin Atlantic to resume flights to Accra, Ghana after 12-year hiatus

Virgin Atlantic has announced its return to Ghana after a 12-year break, with daily flights scheduled to Kotoka International Airport in Accra starting from May 2025.

This marks the airline's first service to Ghana since 2013, introducing a significant new option for travellers between the UK and Ghana.

The resumption of flights is set to provide much-needed competition on a route that currently offers limited choices. The UK is home to the third-largest Ghanaian diaspora in the world, and this new service aims to meet the

increasing demand from those looking to visit friends and family.

Additionally, approximately 10% of passengers are expected to connect through London onto Virgin Atlantic's service to New York JFK, further enhancing the connectivity options for travellers.

The daily service, launching on 1 May 2025, will operate on a Boeing 787 Dreamliner. The aircraft will feature Virgin Atlantic's Upper Class, Premium and Economy cabins, including Economy Delight, Classic and Light options, along with an onboard bar for passengers.

In addition to passenger services, Accra is anticipated to be a key cargo route for Virgin Atlantic. The airline will offer 30 tonnes of capacity on each flight, facilitating the transport of goods such as fresh produce between Ghana and major markets in the UK and US.

This move is expected to strengthen ties between Ghana and the UK, providing more options for travelers and boosting trade between the two nations.

The Accra flight is part of Virgin Atlantic's three new destinations; with the rest being, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and Toronto, Canada.

Airlink to launch Cape Town-Gaborone flights in 2025

The flights will operate on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Departures from Cape Town International Airport are scheduled for 10:50am, arriving at Gaborone's Sir Seretse Khama International Airport at 1:00pm. The return flights will leave Gaborone at 1:45pm and land in Cape Town at 4:00pm.

"As Botswana's capital, Gaborone is an important regional destination for business. The city is home to thriving minerals, resources, automotive and tech sector companies and hosts the Southern African Development Community headquarters. It is also an important leisure tourism gateway to many game lodges and the Gaborone Game Reserve.

"Alongside Cape Town's economic expansion, we are seeing rising demand for travel between the two cities and Airlink is ideally placed to connect them with a convenient direct service. It also enables customers travelling via



Cape Town on our various international partner airlines to seamlessly connect onwards to Gaborone on a single ticket and vice versa for customers travelling from Gaborone," says Rodger Foster, Airlink CEO and managing director.

Airlink will operate the route with its modern 44-seat Embraer E140 Regional Jets.

Airlink flights on the Cape Town-Gaborone route will operate on the following schedule:



Gambia Showcases Artistic Excellence at International Handicrafts Fair in Portugal

The Gambia, renowned as the Smiling Coast of Africa, proudly presented its rich and diverse arts and crafts at the International Handicrafts Fair in Lisbon, Portugal recently. The prestigious event, served as the platform of excellence for promoting the cultural, economic, and tourist identity of national and international territories.

The International Handicrafts Fair is an event dedicated to supporting regional development and celebrating local cultures. Through the presentation of material and intangible cultural heritage including handicrafts, gastronomy, natural resources, and cultural and tourist activities, the fair seeks to spotlight micro, small and medium national companies, entities, and official bodies.

Exhibitors at such fairs also feature a wide array of artistic craft articles, items for personal use, souvenirs, decorative and gift items, housewares, home textiles, furnishings, floral decorations, and related products. This diverse showcase offers unique opportunities for cultural exchange and commercial networking, fostering the development of global partnerships

The Gambia's participation highlighted its vibrant crafts sector, which is



characterized by a rich mosaic of traditional and contemporary art forms. The country's artisans showcased exquisite handcrafted items, each reflecting the deep cultural heritage and creativity of the Gambian people. The delegation believed that their participation not only enhanced the visibility of Gambian crafts but also contributed significantly to the development of a buoyant arts sub-sector. By engaging with global counterparts,

Gambian artisans hoped to gain valuable knowledge, exchange innovative ideas, and tap into an extensive international network.

The fair attracted a broad spectrum of exhibitors and visitors, including those with interest in artistic craft articles, housewares, home textiles, furnishings, and souvenirs. This extensive profile underscored the event's role as a vital conduit for cultural and economic exchange.

Young photographers spotlight Zimbabwe's culinary riches in UN Tourism contest

The UN Tourism Youth Photo Contest, titled "A Journey through Zimbabwe's Gastronomy," successfully showcased the nation's rich culinary traditions through the lens of young photographers.

The competition, designed to promote Zimbabwe as a gastronomic destination, also aimed to stimulate interest in gastronomy tourism by highlighting traditional dishes, cultural heritage, and unique culinary techniques.

The contest provided a platform for Zimbabwean youth to express their perspectives and capture the essence of the country's gastronomic heritage. Open to amateurs aged 14 to 24, the competition was launched on 10 June, with a four-week open call for submissions. The event attracted over 70 visual entries, each offering a unique glimpse into Zimbabwe's vibrant food culture.

The evaluation criteria focused on relevance to the photo category, creativity, originality, artistic quality, technical skills, image clarity and the cultural significance and narrative aspect of the photographs. Among the entries, two outstanding winners emerged in the Gastronomic Artistry Photo Category, which celebrated the aesthetics and creativity of food, whether it be restaurant dishes, street food or homemade delights.

The first prize was awarded to Nokutenda Tombindo for his striking



First prize Winner Nokutenda Tombindo receives certificate from UN Tourism Secretary General

photograph titled "Maguru (Tripe)." Tombindo's image beautifully captured the essence of maguru, a beloved Zimbabwean delicacy, featuring tripe complemented by the vivid green of rape, a leafy vegetable.

Tombindo explained, "Maguru is a dish deeply rooted in our culinary tradition. The earthy tones of the tripe, juxtaposed with the vibrant greens of the rape, bring the dish to life.

"Participating in the contest allowed me to deeply connect with my passions for culinary arts and tourism management. I met fellow African participants who shared these passions. Gastronomy is integral to my identity and character, reflecting Zimbabwean youth's culture

and pride, and offering a sense of who we truly are."

The second prize went to David Sadindi for his evocative work titled "Family Meal (Sadza nemufushwa)." Sadza nemufushwa is a traditional supper dish commonly enjoyed by rural residents. It consists of sadza, Zimbabwe's staple food, and mufushwa, dried vegetables such as rape or spinach, often served with a piece of meat.

Sadindi shared his experience, stating, "Participating in the contest was a transformative experience. Gastronomy is more than just food; it's a bridge for youth to explore cultures, foster creativity, and spark innovation. It empowers us to share stories and connect with our roots through every dish we create."

Both winners were honoured with an invitation to attend the First UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa, held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, recently. In addition, they received certificates of recognition from the UN Tourism Secretary-General and a monetary prize from the Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

The contest not only celebrated Zimbabwe's culinary arts but also empowered its youth, providing them with a platform to express their creativity and cultural pride through the art of photography.



David Sadindi, the second prize winner

Discover Malawi with Sunbird



Discover Malawi with Sunbird

Experience the beauty & charms of Malawi and its people with Sunbird Hotels and Resorts.

FOR BOOKING AND ENQUIRIES

- +265 111 773 388 / +265 885 996 521
- centralres@sunbirdmalawi.com
- sunbirdtourismmw
- sunbirdtourism



FIRST BATCH OF 64 EVENTS ENDORSED FOR 2024 DECEMBER IN GH

A total of 64 events and activities have been officially endorsed for the first batch of this year's "December In GH" celebration. Now in its sixth year, "December In GH" has solidified its position as Ghana's premier tourism attraction during the final quarter of the year, drawing thousands of visitors to participate in a wide array of events from November through to early January.

Speaking at the unveiling ceremony held yesterday at the Osu Castle Gardens, Deputy CEO – General Services of the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), Ben Anane Nsiah, emphasised the campaign's significant impact. He remarked that "December In GH," which was "deliberately crafted as part of the Year of Return and Beyond the Return," has achieved remarkable successes for the country's tourism and hospitality sectors.

According to Mr Anane Nsiah, the campaign harnesses Ghana's "cultural vibrancy" in areas such as music, food, and arts to attract people from all walks of life to Ghana during the festive

season. He highlighted that within the hospitality and accommodation space, for example, five-star hotels experience a 99.6% occupancy rate, with the average length of stay by visitors increasing to 17 days during the "December In GH" period.

Looking ahead to this year's celebration, Mr Anane Nsiah assured attendees that 2024 would bring "another grand, interesting celebration that will propel and project Ghana the way we want it."

GTA CEO Akwasi Agyeman, who unveiled the endorsed events, explained that the Secretariat and the Steering Committee of Beyond The Return had received 95 submissions during the open window for endorsement. Following a rigorous and thorough vetting process, 64 events were selected, while the remaining submissions were advised to address specific challenges that caused them to fall short of the selection criteria.

Mr Agyeman noted that the criteria were based on the credibility of the events, alignment with the pillars of Beyond The Return, and the capacity of event

organisers to effectively execute the events, particularly concerning security, venue, and other logistical provisions.

Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Andrew Egyapa Mercer, also addressed the gathering, reaffirming the Ministry's commitment to supporting "December In GH." He stressed the significance of the initiative to Ghana's tourism fortunes, noting that it was a major contributor to the \$3.8 billion in tourism revenue generated last year.

"December In GH is 'a big deal,'" Mr Egyapa Mercer stated, underscoring the need for all stakeholders to collaborate in making it even bigger and more successful. "For us," he added, "December In GH is more than just a festive season; it celebrates everything Ghanaian—our culture, music, food and hospitality. It's a celebration of the indomitable spirit and heritage of our country."

The Beyond The Return Secretariat is currently accepting event submissions for the second batch, with the submission window remaining open until 16th September.



Tourism Calendar of Events

Tourism Calendar of Events

September 18-20 2024
TBCSA Tourism Leadership Conference
 Venue: Suncity, Northwest, South Africa
 Contact: Email:
 About:

October 2-4 2024
Magical Kenya Travel Expo (MKTE)
 Venue: Nairobi, Kenya
 Contact: +254745760615 Email: contactus@mkte.co.ke
 About: Discover the heart of Africa's tourism renaissance at the Magical Kenya Travel Expo (MKTE), where the wonders of Kenya come alive. This premier travel trade event showcases the diversity of Kenya's tourism offerings, from its world-renowned wildlife safaris and pristine beaches to its rich cultural heritage and vibrant urban experiences.

October 3-5 2024
First UN Tourism Africa-Americas Summit
 Venue: Punta Cana, Dominican Republic
 Contact: Email: info@unwto.org
 About: UN Tourism, along with the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic, has the pleasure to invite the Members of the Commissions for Africa and the Americas to the celebration of the "1st UN Tourism Africa & Americas Summit", to be held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, from 3 to 5 of October 2024.

October 17-20 2024
54th AASA Annual General Assembly
 Venue: Rhebokskloof Wine Estate, South Africa
 Contact: Email:
 About:

October 20-24 2024
63rd ICCA Congress
 Venue: Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
 Contact: Email: registration@iccardworld.org
 About: The 63rd ICCA Congress will take members to one of the world's most modern, vibrant capitals - a destination renowned for its hospitality, courtesy, and state-of-the-art facilities: the city of Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates. ICCA will bring the world of international meetings and events together to share, inspire, and discover new ways to make what we do matter more.

October 29-30 2024
Africa Associations Summit 2024
 Venue: Dar er Salaam, Tanzania
 Contact: Email:
 About: The Africa Association Summit (AAS) is the annual event for Association management professionals in Africa. The Summit focuses on knowledge sharing, networking, and showcasing best practices in the sector.

November 5-7 2024
WTM London
 Venue: Excel, London
 Contact: +44 (0)20 8271 2171 Email:
 About: World Travel Market London is home to the world's travel trade - the most influential travel and tourism event globally. WTM London brings together the international leisure travel community; providing inspiration, education, sourcing, and benchmarking to travel professionals while providing exhibitors a place to do business and showcase their services to the international press.

October 29-31 2024
Women in Tourism Regional Congress
 Venue: Freetown, Sierra Leone
 Contact: Email:
 About: The primary objective of WITLAC is to promote women's empowerment and leadership in the tourism sector. The Committee is committed to promoting UN Tourism Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines by implementing gender-inclusive strategies for tourism businesses at the regional level.

November 21-23 2024
IBTM Barcelona 2024
 Venue: Barcelona, Spain
 Contact: +44 20 8271 2127 Email:
 About: IBTM World is engineered to give you a year's worth of profitable leads in just three days

December 2-4 2024
9th UN Tourism World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism
 Venue: Bahrain
 Contact: Email: info@unwto.org
 About: The UN Tourism World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism was created with the aim of promoting the exchange of experiences between experts in tourism and gastronomy, to identify good practices and to promote gastronomy tourism as a factor of development of destinations.

Nov. - Dec. 27-1 2024
Botswana Travel and Tourism Expo (BTTE)
 Venue: Kasana, Botswana
 Contact: +267 391 3111 Email: marketing@botswanaturism.co.bw
 About: A 3 (three) days Tourism Expo which provides an opportunity for the global tourism industry to meet on a one-on-one basis with Botswana tourism industry counterparts to trade and agree on future exciting packages for our global tourists.

December 2-4 2024
Essence of Africa
 Venue: Sarit Expo Centre, Nairobi, Kenya
 Contact: +27833088839 Email: hello@eoatravel.com
 About: Essence of Africa, curated by On Show Solutions and Experience Africa Events, is a private sector-led initiative focused on expanding the potential of tourism across Africa by bringing together the right global buyers and committed local sellers.

May 1-4 2025
FIFA Beach World Cup, Seychelles 2025
 Venue: The Seychelles Island
 Contact: Email:
 About:

June 11-13 2025
8th AviaDev Africa
 Venue: Golden Tulip Zanzibar Airport, Tanzania
 Contact: Email: mala.patel@thebench.com
 About: AviaDev Africa is the premier platform dedicated to growing connectivity to, from, and within the African continent. Bringing together airports, airlines, tourism authorities, governments, and industry suppliers, AviaDev offers attendees the ability to pre-arrange meetings, learn from industry peers, and make those important connections.

Travel & Tourism Blitz



Tourism Seychelles Impresses at North America Roadshow 2024

Tourism Seychelles left a lasting impression at the Seychelles Roadshow 2024 in North America, held from June 18th to 21st. Represented by Mrs. Natacha Servina, Senior Marketing Executive, and Ms. Rolira Young, Marketing Executive, the team successfully showcased the beauty and allure of Seychelles to key travel industry stakeholders across the region.

The roadshow featured participation from notable local partners, including Mr. Joao Alves, representing Eden Bleu Hotel, Mr. Jason Britter, representing Constance Group, Mr. David Germain from Creole Travel Services and Ms. Jordyn Erasmus from Blue Safari Seychelles.

The dedicated roadshow targeted four prominent cities in the USA: San Diego, Los Angeles, Orange County, and Arizona. Each city saw participation from 25-30 agents, totaling 100-120 agents across North America.

Speaking about the event, Mrs. Servina noted the positive feedback from partners, especially regarding the turnout and organisation of the roadshow.

"North America continues to show an increase in arrival statistics. During the workshops, the interest was high, and our presence was highly appreciated by the trade, which learned quite a lot about Seychelles and are now more confident and willing to include Seychelles in their portfolio," said Mrs. Servina.

The primary goal was to boost the visibility of Seychelles in the North American market by equipping agents with the knowledge and confidence to promote and sell Seychelles as a premier travel destination.

Ethiopian Airlines unveils exclusive Silver Lounge at Bole Int'l Airport

Ethiopian Airlines, the leading aviation group in Africa, is pleased to announce the inauguration of the Silver Lounge, an exclusive facility dedicated to ShebaMiles Silver members. Strategically positioned within the Addis Ababa Bole International Airport, the Silver Lounge offers a serene and engaging environment where passengers can unwind and enjoy entertainment amenities.

The Silver Lounge, spanning an impressive 810 square meters, is designed to offer a serene oasis for travelers. It features a variety of amenities tailored to meet the needs of diverse clientele, including dining areas with an array of buffets and services, comfortable seating areas for relaxation, a designated smoking room, a delightful kids' corner for younger guests, ample storage room, and additional facilities to enhance the passenger experience. The lounge's capacity allows it to accommodate up to 200 guests during peak hours, ensuring a seamless and stress-free travel experience.

"We are pleased to open the doors to this

magnificent lounge, which symbolizes our continuous efforts to elevate the standards of hospitality in the skies and on the ground," said Mr. Mesfin Tasew, Chief Executive Officer of Ethiopian Airlines Group. "The Silver Lounge is more than just a space; it is an embodiment of our vision to further enhance the travel experience of our guests and solidify Addis Ababa as a leading aviation hub in Africa."

The Silver Lounge is a symbol of the airline's relentless pursuit of excellence and its unwavering dedication to providing its guests with the highest levels of comfort, convenience, and luxury. The airline's commitment to providing superior travel experience is further exemplified by the availability of multiple lounges throughout the airport terminals, catering to the diverse needs of its clientele. Passengers holding Cloud Nine, ShebaMiles Platinum, Star Alliance Gold, and Silver memberships have the privilege of accessing these lounges to rejuvenate during their transit through Addis Ababa.

Protea Hotels by Marriott Strengthens Footprints with Two New Openings

To celebrate its 40th birthday, Protea Hotels by Marriott announced the opening of its first property in Angola while further strengthening its portfolio in South Africa with a new property in Pretoria. The newest additions – Protea by Marriott Luanda and Protea by Marriott Pretoria Hatfield – will offer business and leisure travellers the chance to experience the vibrant local cultures and warm hospitality, along with exceptional accommodation, modern amenities and world-class service.

Protea Hotels by Marriott, part of Marriott Bonvoy's distinguished portfolio of over 30 extraordinary brands, has grown significantly since its founding in July 1984. Starting with just four hotels in South Africa, the brand now boasts over 60 properties throughout South Africa and eight other African countries, including Botswana, Malawi, Namibia,

Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and now Angola. This extensive footprint across primary and secondary business centres and desirable leisure destinations makes Protea Hotels by Marriott a popular choice for travellers exploring Africa.

Sandra Schulze-Potgieter, Vice President of Premium & Select Brands, Europe, Middle East, and Africa, Marriott International, said, "This month we celebrate four decades of exceptional service and genuine African hospitality. What better way to commemorate this milestone than by further strengthening Protea Hotels' legacy with our first hotel in Angola and the ongoing expansion of the brand in South Africa. Both properties will combine contemporary comfort with a deep appreciation for local culture and heritage, offering guests a unique and enriching stay."

Seychelles Tourism Department announces Richard Mathiot as New Director of STA



The Tourism Department announces the appointment of Richard Mathiot as the new Director of the Seychelles Tourism Academy (STA), effective 1st September 2024. Mr. Mathiot, who has been serving as the Interim Director since June, will now take on the role permanently.

Mr. Mathiot brings a wealth of experience and dedication to his new role. As a former Principal Lecturer at STA, he has dedicated 20 years to educating students in the Food and Beverage programmes, as well as mentoring students in the Advanced Diploma in Hospitality Management, preparing them for their year at Shannon College.

A distinguished chef, Mr. Mathiot has honed his culinary expertise internationally, with experience in Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Barbados, Ethiopia, Dubai, and in the region. His notable roles include serving as an Executive Chef and culinary trainer at Paradise Sun and working with Air Seychelles while based in Holland. Additionally, he has proudly represented Seychelles in various international culinary competitions.

Initially inspired to join the military, Mr Mathiot was encouraged by his father to pursue his passion for hospitality. Despite initial struggles to find direction in the field, the persistent support of his educators led to success and opportunities for advanced training abroad. This experience sparked a deeper ambition to teach hospitality rather than just work in the industry. Although his path included periods of stepping away from the industry to explore other avenues, he ultimately achieved his goal.

Reflecting on this new chapter, Mr. Mathiot expressed a deep sense of gratitude and purpose. "I would like to develop and give back to the place that helped me grow from kitchen staff to Director," he shared.

With a clear roadmap and a dedication to fostering both personal and institutional growth, Richard Mathiot aims to work closely with the tourism department and the board of directors to revitalise the academy and prepare it to meet the evolving demands of the tourism industry.

Novaturas opens New Route to The Gambia!



In an unprecedented move, Novaturas, a leading tour operator in the Baltic States, has announced the launch of package tours from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia to The Gambia, marking a historic first in Gambian tourism. This pioneering initiative makes Novaturas the sole major tour operator in the region to offer scheduled flights and early booking services to this West African gem.

Located on the sun-kissed coast of West Africa, The Gambia is a treasure trove of vibrant culture, breathtaking landscapes, and warm hospitality. With Novaturas' expertly curated packages, travelers from the Baltic States can now immerse themselves in the country's rich heritage, explore its stunning beaches, and experience the warmth of Gambian hospitality.

In partnership with Turkish Airlines, Novaturas ensures seamless and comfortable travel to Banjul, The Gambia's capital. With scheduled flights and carefully selected accommodations, travelers can focus on creating unforgettable memories in this African paradise.

To make the most of this incredible opportunity,

Novaturas offers early booking services, allowing travelers to secure their spot and tailor their trip to suit their preferences. With expert guidance and support, Novaturas ensures a hassle-free and enjoyable travel experience.

This initiative is expected to have a positive impact on both the Baltic and Gambian tourism industries. For The Gambia, the influx of visitors from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia will contribute to the growth of the local economy, supporting businesses ranging from hotels and restaurants to tour operators and artisans. For the Baltic States, this partnership with The Gambia offers residents a new and exotic destination to explore, enriching their travel experiences and broadening their horizons.

This groundbreaking strategy marks the beginning of a new era in Gambian tourism, opening doors to a previously untapped market. Novaturas' commitment to innovation and excellence paves the way for a surge in tourism, fostering economic growth and cultural exchange between The Gambia and the Baltic States.

Qatar Airways Invests in Airlink to Boost African Network

Qatar Airways Group has acquired a 25% stake in Southern Africa's premier independent regional carrier, Airlink. The announcement is a continuation of the multi award-winning airline's ambition to further develop its operations across the African continent.

The investment in Airlink – which flies to more than 45 destinations in 15 African countries – will enhance a code-sharing partnership between the two airlines. The deal will bolster Qatar Airways' Africa growth strategy and cement its role as a key driver to the continent's economic success.

On the announcement, Qatar Airways' Group Chief Executive Officer, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer, said: "Our investment in Airlink further demonstrates how integral we see Africa being to our business' future. This partnership not only demonstrates our confidence in Airlink, as a company that is resilient, agile, financially robust and governed on sound principles, but also in Africa as a whole, showing huge potential that I am delighted we are able to help start realising."

Airlink Chief Executive Rodger Foster said: "Having Qatar Airways as an equity partner is a powerful endorsement of Airlink and echoes our faith in the markets we currently serve and plan to add to

our network. This transaction will unlock growth by providing efficiencies of scale, increasing our capacity and expanding our marketing reach. By bolstering Airlink and its business, this investment will strengthen all of the existing airline partnerships Airlink has nurtured over the years."

The partnership between Qatar Airways and Airlink seeks to align both carriers' loyalty programs - Qatar Airways Privilege Club and Airlink Skybucks.

Qatar Airways currently flies to 29 destinations in Africa, and there's been strong growth in the market with new destinations added to the Qatar Airways network on the continent since December 2020. Abidjan, Abuja, Accra, Harare, Kano, Luanda, Lusaka, and Port Harcourt are the African cities newly added to the extensive Qatar Airways network, while Cairo and Alexandria were resumed.

About Qatar Airways

A multiple award-winning airline, Qatar Airways reclaimed the title of 'World's Best Airline' in 2024 and for an unprecedented eighth time at the 2024 World Airline Awards, managed by the international air transport rating organisation, Skytrax. Qatar Airways has been the World's Best Airline in 2011,

2012, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2024. The airline continues to be synonymous with excellence, also taking home, 'World's Best Business Class', 'World's Best Business Class Airline Lounge', and 'Best Airline in the Middle East'. As leaders in industry innovation and digital adoption, Qatar Airways was also recently voted the 'World's Best Airline Website' by World Travel Tech Awards.

Qatar Airways was the first Airline in the Middle East to be certified to the highest level of IATA's Environmental Assessment (IEnvA) programme, based on recognised environmental management system principles (such as ISO 14001). As an inaugural signatory to the Buckingham Palace Declaration in March 2016, Qatar Airways became the first airline globally to be certified to the industry standard for the prevention of illegal wildlife trafficking in aviation.

Qatar Airways currently flies to over 170 destinations worldwide, connecting through its Doha hub, Hamad International Airport, the 'World's Best Airport', as voted by Skytrax in 2021, 2022, and 2024. In 2024, Hamad International Airport also received the 'Best Airport in the Middle East' accolade for 10 consecutive years, as well as 'World's Best Airport Shopping' for the second year in a row.





The Seychelles Islands

