

VoyagesAfric

ISSUE 040 | August 2026 Edition

Africa's Leading Travel and Tourism Magazine

Seychelles at 50 beyond the post card... pg. 16



UN Tourism SG calls for skills, AI
readiness and women's empowerment to
drive Africa's tourism future pg. 8



ISSN 2550-3405



69 CAF
UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa
Morocco, Republic of Mauritania, D.R. Congo 2026



69 CAF
UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa
Morocco, Republic of Mauritania, D.R. Congo 2026



THREE POWERFUL PLATFORMS.

One Strategic Entry into the Americas.

Connect your African product with the most influential travel buyers across North, Central and South America.

NORTH AMERICA

The Leading Africa Roadshow in the USA and Canada

- * Pre-qualified Africa specialist buyers
- * Proven 1:1 meeting format
- * High-level engagement in key cities
- * A market that consistently delivers revenue

LATIN AMERICA

High-Growth Markets. Exclusive Access.

- * Brazil | Mexico | Chile | Argentina
- * Rapidly expanding outbound demand for Africa
- * Curated hosted buyer events
- * Relationship-driven markets ready for deeper engagement

ITB AMERICAS – AFRICA PAVILION

Launch Edition. Global Visibility. Continental Reach.

- * Be part of ITB's newest platform
- * Meet buyers from across North, Central & South America
- * Position your brand at the forefront of a new global marketplace

SECURE YOUR POSITION IN THE AMERICAS

www.africashowcase.travel | ideas@africashowcase.travel

Welcome Kano



ASKY
The Pan African Airline

Contents



8 UN Tourism SG calls for skills, AI readiness and women's empowerment to drive Africa's tourism future

10 Amanda Bernstein: Africa's Tourism future must be built on people, skills and shared solutions



12 Angola emerges as Africa's new tourism investment hub as UN Tourism Chief praises reform agenda

14 Ghana Secures Hosting Rights for Landmark 70th UN Tourism Commission for Africa Meeting in 2027

16 Seychelles at 50: Beyond the Postcard

20 From Corporate Boardrooms to Luxury Hospitality: How Dr. Mati Nyazema built one of Zimbabwe's most remarkable tourism success stories

23 Aston Villa welcomes Visit Rwanda as new official Partner
Togo Grants Visa-Free Entry to All African Passport Holders

24 Africa's China Readiness Moment – Top 15 Destinations Ranked as Continent Eyes the World's Biggest Outbound Market

25 Namibia repositions Luxury around space, silence and sustainability at Africa's Travel Indaba

26 The Next 50 Years: Vesna Rakić on the Future of Seychelles Tourism

29 Fairways to Fortune: Why Africa's Golf Tourism Moment Has Arrived

30 Why Angola's New Convention Bureau Signals a Strategic Reset for Tourism Growth

44 Mona Boyd calls for Bold Investment to transform Ghana from niche to mainstream destination

34 Krystal Palace Douala: Redefining luxury and raising the bar for hospitality in Cameroon

36 AviaDev Africa 2026 strengthens collaboration to advance air connectivity across Africa

38 Zambia to Host AviaDev Africa 2027

39 Rwanda Doubles Down on Business Events Growth as Kigali Prepares to Host ICCA Congress 2026

42 South Africa's business events sector poised for strategic growth, says SANCB's Corné Koch

44 Mozambique makes IMEX Frankfurt debut as national MICE strategy nears approval

45 Sierra Leone's Tourism Ministry signs an MoU with Passporter to advance AI-Driven Tourism Marketing

46 Inside the Investor's Brain: Hamza Farooqui Calls for shift from entitlement to execution at UN Tourism CAF

48 Ghana launches e-visa platform, scraps visa fees for African travellers

49 Robben Island Leverages Heritage to Attract High-Value MICE Business

50 Sierra Leone Positions for Historic 3rd UN Tourism Africa Gastronomy Forum at CAF in Seychelles

54 Beyond the Beaches: How Eden Bleu is Helping Position Seychelles as Africa's Emerging MICE Destination

61 LZ Travel Launches the Green Journey Collection at ILTM Africa, Setting a New Benchmark for Sustainable Luxury Mobility

62 African aviation has never suffered from a shortage of ambition

63 Ethiopian Airlines commences scheduled flights to Mauritius

64 South Africa welcomes Air Europa to Johannesburg

Airlink connects Cape Town and Mauritius with new direct route

65 ASKY expands fleet to 17 aircraft with arrival of second Boeing 737 MAX 8

Emirates expands operations in Ghana with additional weekly flights

66 How Seychelles Turned Local Cuisine into a National Tourism Showcase

68 Cape Town's Reverie Social Table Builds Community One Dinner Party at a Time

70 Klein Constantia: Where 340 years of winemaking meet South African hospitality

72 Uncorking Africa's Liquid Gold: How the Cape Winelands are Redefining Luxury Tourism

74 Tourism Calendar of Events

76 Travel & Tourism Blitz



VoyagesAfriq

Travel and Tourism Magazine

EDITORIAL TEAM

Consulting Editor
Ben Ohene-Ayeh

Content Editor
Samuel Obeng Appah

Editor at Large
Francis Doku

Francophone Editor
Franck Olivier Kra

West Africa Editor
Obinna Emelike

Contributing Writers
Francis Doku
Obinna Emelike
Jenice Aidoo
Jason Amoo
Sean Mendes

Digital Content Specialist
David Hayford Dziwornu

Administration/Marketing
Symphorien Kouabile
Glaou Eddie Fortune
Michel Kouassi

Photo Credit
Gilbert Amankwah Ampofo
Prince Charles Affum
Kamal Baghirli
UN Tourism
BBC.com
CAFOnline
Ghana Football Association
GettyImages

Cover Photo Credit
Michel Denousse

Publisher
AfroViayes Media Services LTD.

Dear Reader,

Since the release of our first edition of the year, published to coincide with ITB Berlin in March—with Angola, Africa's newest rising tourism destination, serving as the event's Official Host Destination—a great deal has unfolded across Africa's tourism, aviation, arts and culture landscape.

While VoyagesAfriq has continued to bring you timely coverage of these developments through our digital platform, voyagesafriq.com, this milestone print edition once again offers deeper insights, exclusive interviews and fresh perspectives on the stories shaping our industry.

This special edition, our 40th issue, pays tribute to the Golden Jubilee of the Republic of Seychelles—a small island nation whose remarkable tourism journey continues to inspire the continent. Over the past five decades, Seychelles has demonstrated how tourism can become a pillar of sustainable national development while preserving culture and heritage.

Our cover photograph, captured by renowned Seychellois photographer Michel Denousse, beautifully portrays the traditional Moutya performance around a beach bonfire—a UNESCO-recognised cultural expression that reflects the country's efforts to diversify its tourism offering beyond its world-famous beaches. Throughout our coverage of the celebrations, we highlight memorable moments, including the re-enactment of the night of 29 June 1976, when Seychelles gained independence from Britain. The vibrant Food Festival further showcased how gastronomy tells the story of a nation's history, identity and culture.

The celebrations also coincided with the 69th UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa (CAF) meeting, where tourism ministers, policymakers, academics and private-sector leaders gathered to discuss one of the continent's most pressing priorities—human capital development. Guided by findings from a UN Tourism survey conducted across 34 African member states, the discussions focused on closing skills gaps and preparing Africa's tourism workforce for future growth. In this edition, UN Tourism Secretary-General Shaikha Al Nuwais shares

her vision for how the organisation is working with member states to build a more resilient and competitive tourism sector.

Throughout the gathering, Seychelles and Tourism, Amanda Bernstein, alongside Principal Secretary for Tourism Sherin Francis and other industry leaders, also reinforced the critical role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in driving inclusive tourism growth and creating opportunities for local communities.

This edition also shines a spotlight on gastronomy and wine tourism, two segments increasingly shaping Africa's luxury tourism offering. We speak with Chef Patron Julia Hattingh of Riviere Social Table, whose unique communal dining concept celebrates food, storytelling and connection. We also examine how wine tourism is emerging as one of Africa's most distinctive premium travel experiences.

In an exclusive interview, Vesna Rakić, the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of the re-established Seychelles Tourism Board, outlines her vision for repositioning the destination in an increasingly competitive global tourism market.

No edition would be complete without the insights of our resident aviation columnist—and self-confessed Chief Troublemaker—Sean Mendis. In his latest column, “The Fine Line Between Ambition and Delusion,” he delivers a thought-provoking analysis of the opportunities and realities confronting African aviation.

We also reflect on a decade of AviaDev Africa, which celebrated its tenth anniversary in Botswana. What began as a niche route development forum has evolved into the continent's premier platform for advancing air connectivity through meaningful partnerships between

airlines, airports, tourism authorities and governments.

Our MICE coverage captures key developments from IMEX Frankfurt, where African destinations continued to strengthen their presence in the global meetings and events industry. We also bring you a comprehensive roundup of Africa Travel Week and the latest initiatives from convention bureaux across the continent as destinations continue investing in business events as a catalyst for economic growth.

As you turn the pages of this edition, we hope you will find stories that inform, inspire and challenge perspectives. More importantly, we trust this issue reaffirms that Africa's tourism story is one of innovation, resilience and limitless opportunity—and VoyagesAfric remains committed to telling it.

Happy reading!



Your Most Credible Travel and Tourism News Source



Get Interactive & Connect with us on      #VoyagesAfric

www.voyagesafriq.com

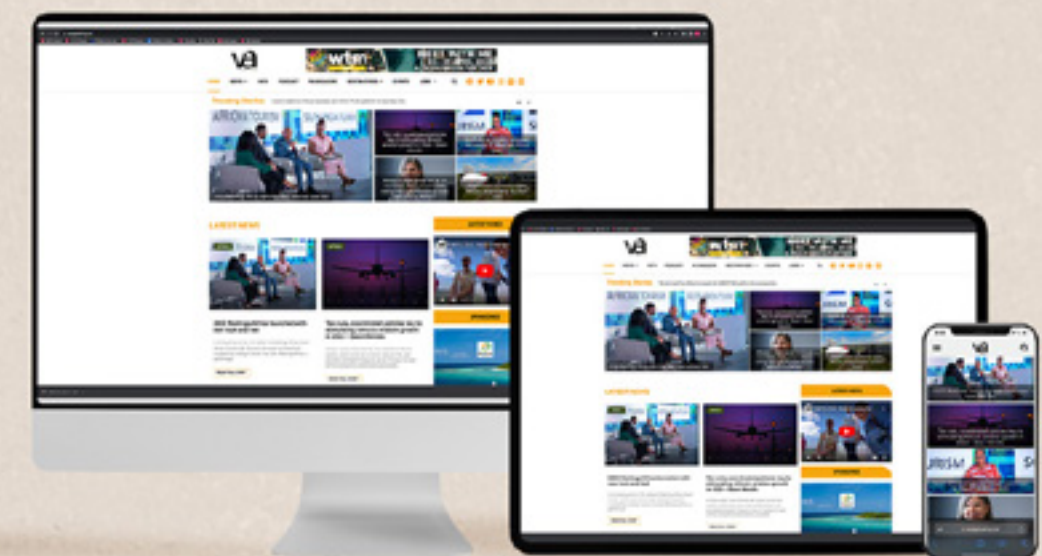


Africa's leading Travel and Tourism Magazine

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
VoyagesAfric

NMC No.
NMC/C.I39/17/3036.



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

UN Tourism SG calls for skills, AI readiness and women's empowerment to drive Africa's tourism future

UN Tourism Secretary General, Shaikha Al Nuwais has called on African governments and tourism stakeholders to place people at the centre of the continent's tourism development agenda, stressing that investment in skills, digital readiness and women's empowerment will determine the future competitiveness of Africa's tourism industry.

Speaking at the High-Level Dialogue during the 69th UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa (CAF) Meeting in Mahé on July 2, Al Nuwais said tourism must evolve into a career of choice for young Africans rather than one of necessity, urging countries to build a workforce capable of meeting the sector's growing demands.

Addressing ministers, policymakers and industry leaders from across the continent, the Secretary-General described her first visit to Seychelles as "a call to disconnect, or maybe even to reconnect back to earth," praising the island nation's commitment to preserving its natural beauty and cultural identity.



UN Tourism Secretary General, Shaikha Al Nuwais



UN Tourism SG Shaikha Al Nuwais in conversation with Dr Patrick Herminie, President of Seychelles

“ Our focus is on three priorities: skills that match real jobs, digital and AI readiness, and changing how people see tourism careers ”

She congratulated Seychelles on celebrating its 50th anniversary of independence, noting that the country's national theme, Our People, Our Identity, Our Destiny, perfectly reflects the central role tourism has played in shaping the nation's economy, identity and global connections.

According to Al Nuwais, the experience of Seychelles offers valuable lessons for the rest of Africa as destinations seek to expand air connectivity and attract new visitor markets.

She revealed that discussions with President Dr. Patrick Herminie highlighted the importance of

developing a skilled workforce to support increased connectivity and tourism growth, particularly as Seychelles expands into emerging markets, including China.

"Connectivity brings opportunity. But people turn opportunity into growth," she said, emphasizing that sustainable tourism development depends not only on infrastructure but also on investing in human capital.

Youth employment and skills at the forefront

With an estimated 72 million young people unemployed across Africa, Al Nuwais described tourism as one of the continent's greatest opportunities for job creation.

However, she cautioned that realising this potential will require governments

and industry leaders to equip young people with practical skills aligned with market needs while embracing digital technologies and artificial intelligence.

"Our focus is on three priorities: skills that match real jobs, digital and AI readiness, and changing how people see tourism careers," she told delegates.

She challenged participants to reflect on how many of them began their professional journeys in tourism, noting that the sector has the power to provide meaningful careers, foster personal growth and connect people across cultures.

"Ours must be a sector people choose not out of desperation, but out of aspiration," she added.

Empowering women to strengthen communities

The Secretary-General also highlighted the importance of gender inclusion in advancing sustainable tourism across Africa.

She commended First Lady Veronique Herminie for supporting women's

leadership through the Women in Sustainable Tourism Association, describing such initiatives as critical to building resilient communities.

"When women are supported, communities are strengthened. And when young people are skilled, destinations are transformed," she said.

As part of UN Tourism's commitment to advancing inclusion, Al Nuwais announced the launch of a Mentorship Programme for African Women, an initiative aimed at strengthening leadership opportunities for women across the tourism sector.

She acknowledged Sierra Leone's Minister of Tourism, Nabeela Farida Tunis for helping make the programme possible.

In addition, she announced that the UN Tourism Online Academy would introduce scholarships for African member states, targeting women, young people and rural communities to improve access to tourism education and professional training.

From dialogue to action

Calling for greater investment in people rather than infrastructure alone, Al Nuwais reminded delegates that hospitality is ultimately built by human interaction.

"Buildings do not create hospitality. People do," she said.

She urged African governments to carry the lessons from Seychelles beyond the islands by investing in classrooms, communities and the next generation of tourism professionals.

"The future of African tourism will not be built by chance. It will be built by choice. By believing in Africa's people. They are not waiting for the future. They are ready to build it," she added.

The High-Level Dialogue formed part of the 69th UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa meetings, which brought together tourism ministers and industry leaders from across the continent to discuss strategies for building a more inclusive, resilient and competitive tourism sector.

A family photo with the President and Vice President of Seychelles

Amanda Bernstein, Minister of
Tourism and Culture, Seychelles

AMANDA BERNSTEIN: Africa's Tourism future must be built on people, skills and shared solutions

Seychelles has placed people firmly at the centre of Africa's tourism future, with Amanda Bernstein, Minister of Tourism and Culture, calling on the continent to move decisively from dialogue to delivery on human capital development.

Speaking at the opening of the 69th UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa (CAF) meeting at the Kempinski Seychelles Resort, Bernstein framed the gathering as both a homecoming and a moment of renewed urgency for African tourism.

"On behalf of the Government and people of Seychelles, it is an immense honour and privilege to welcome you to our archipelago," she said, greeting ministers, international organisations, tourism leaders, experts and delegates from across the continent. "Bonjour et bienvenue aux Seychelles."

Bernstein reminded delegates that Seychelles was entrusted with hosting CAF 69 at the previous commission meeting in Abuja, a vote of confidence she described as deeply meaningful for the island nation. She also reflected on

history – noting that Seychelles hosted its first CAF meeting two decades ago at the same Baie Lazare location, then known as the Plantation Club Hotel.

"Today, that same site is managed by the Kempinski brand," she said, using the transformation as a metaphor for tourism's evolution and the enduring importance of people in driving that change. "It is fitting that we gather here around a theme so central to who we are – our people."

A member of UN Tourism since 1991, Seychelles has long positioned itself as a values-driven tourism destination. But Bernstein was clear that natural beauty, infrastructure and marketing alone are no longer enough.

Competing on People, Not just places

"Tourism is our largest economic sector and one of our greatest employers," she said. "Like many African destinations, we may compete on scenery and facilities, but our long-term success depends on the quality, skills and professionalism of our workforce."

That conviction, Bernstein explained, has guided Seychelles' decision to develop its first-ever Tourism Human Resource Development Strategy for 2026–2029. The strategy follows a comprehensive human resource needs assessment carried out with UN Tourism support, and in close consultation with industry players, educational institutions and government agencies.

The Minister announced that the strategy would be unpacked in detail later in the programme by the Principal Secretary for Tourism, Sherin Francis, including workforce data and the implementation platforms designed to ensure measurable outcomes.

At its core, Bernstein said, the strategy rests on a principle that resonates far beyond Seychelles: localisation is not about exclusion, but empowerment.

"Localisation is not about replacing foreign workers," she stressed. "It is about creating the conditions that allow more Seychellois to enter, remain and progress within the tourism industry – particularly into supervisory, management and leadership roles."

A Framework for Africa-wide relevance

She outlined five priority pillars underpinning the strategy: workforce planning and intelligence; education and training; localisation and career progression; leadership development and succession planning; and strategic partnerships and collaboration.

Through this framework, Seychelles is working to build a tourism workforce that is skilled, resilient and future-ready – anchored by the Seychelles Tourism Academy and reinforced by tourism clubs in schools that introduce young people to hospitality careers early.

Yet Bernstein was candid about the challenges that persist, both locally and across Africa.

"We must be honest," she told delegates. "We face difficulties attracting and retaining talent, skills mismatches, limited training infrastructure, and the ongoing challenge of aligning education systems with industry needs."

She noted that the CAF survey before delegates confirms these challenges are shared across the continent – making the meeting not just relevant, but necessary.

From shared challenges to shared solutions

What gives Bernstein confidence, however, is the emergence of practical solutions across Africa: competency-based training models, stronger public-private partnerships, digital workforce platforms and structured apprenticeship systems.

"This conference gives us the opportunity to learn from one another," she said, "and to move beyond identifying problems towards implementing solutions."



Dr Patrick Herminie,
President of Seychelles



"Tourism is our largest economic sector and one of our greatest employers. Like many African destinations, we may compete on scenery and facilities, but our long-term success depends on the quality, skills and professionalism of our workforce."

on how to strengthen human capital to boost Africa's tourism growth," he said.

Acknowledging shared challenges across the continent – including skills gaps and youth disengagement – Herminie called for collaboration grounded in practical solutions rather than headline numbers. "We must look beyond arrival figures and focus on empowering the workforce that delivers the experience," he urged.

Africa's Youth at The Centre

The Secretary-General of UN Tourism, Shaikha Al Nuwais placed Africa's youth challenge squarely at the heart of her address. Across the continent, she noted, an estimated 72 million young people remain unemployed – a reality that tourism, if properly structured, could help reverse.

"Tourism can become one of Africa's greatest job creators," she said. "But only if we train people, value them, and give them a reason to stay."

She outlined three priorities that will guide UN Tourism's engagement in Africa over the coming period: skills that match real jobs; digital and artificial intelligence readiness; and a fundamental shift in how tourism careers are perceived. "Ours must be a sector people choose not out of desperation, but out of aspiration," she stressed.

Her address set a collaborative tone for CAF 69, positioning Seychelles not as a lecturer, but as a partner willing to share lessons learned while learning from others. "Our workforce is not a supporting act," she concluded. "It is the foundation. And if we get that right, Africa's tourism future will be stronger, fairer and far more sustainable."

Delivering the keynote address, President Herminie framed tourism not as an abstract economic indicator, but as a lived reality for Seychellois communities.

"It is a great honour for Seychelles to host the 69th meeting of the UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa and to welcome our partners as we reflect

Angola emerges as Africa's new tourism investment hub as UN Tourism Chief praises reform agenda

Angola's ambitious efforts to transform tourism into a cornerstone of national development received a major endorsement as UN Tourism Secretary-General Shaikha Al Nuwais hailed the country as a rising investment destination and a model for tourism-led economic transformation in Africa.

Addressing delegates at the opening of the Global Tourism Forum in Luanda, Al Nuwais commended Angolan President João Lourenço's leadership in positioning tourism as a strategic driver of economic growth, job creation, and regional development.

Speaking before government officials, international investors, tourism executives, and industry stakeholders, the UN Tourism chief emphasised that Angola's progress demonstrates how targeted reforms, infrastructure investment, and political commitment can unlock a nation's tourism potential.

"Investment follows confidence, and confidence is growing in Angola," she declared, pointing to a series of reforms that have elevated the country's profile among global investors and travellers.

At the centre of Angola's tourism transformation is the government's



Marcio Daniel- Minister of Tourism, Angola



UN Tourism Secretary General, Shaikha Al Nuwais

National Tourism Development Plan (PLANATUR), which has mobilised more than €8 billion in investments aimed at developing tourism infrastructure and strengthening the sector's contribution to the national economy. Al Nuwais also highlighted Angola's decision to grant visa-free access to citizens from more than 90 countries, a move widely viewed as a catalyst for increased visitor arrivals and international business engagement.

Another significant milestone cited was the Luanda Ministerial Statement, an initiative designed to improve air connectivity across Africa, addressing one of the continent's most persistent barriers to tourism growth and regional integration.

Angola's growing appeal to global investors

The Global Tourism Forum itself served as evidence of Angola's growing attractiveness to international investors. Al Nuwais noted that her flight into Luanda was filled to capacity, while the forum attracted representatives from some of the world's leading hospitality brands and tourism investment firms.

"Their presence is more than a sign of

“ You reminded us that Africa remains the region receiving the least investment in tourism. And you challenged UN Tourism to help close that gap. ”

interest," she said. "It is a recognition of Angola's progress, its ambition, and the opportunities that lie ahead."

Her remarks underscored a broader shift in perceptions about Angola, a country long associated primarily with its oil wealth but increasingly seeking to diversify its economy through tourism, culture, and hospitality.

Al Nuwais recalled Angola's participation at the International Tourism Exchange (ITB) Berlin earlier this year, where the country showcased its rich cultural heritage, cuisine, music, and dance traditions. One particular moment, she said, captured the spirit of Angola's transformation.

Reflecting on a cultural performance during the event, she described



UN Tourism Secretary General hands over the Tourism Doing Business Publication to the President of Angola João Lourenço

witnessing an Angolan dancer become visibly emotional.

"It was far more than a performance," she said. "It was pride in a country, pride in a culture, and pride in a future that people believe in."

Closing Africa's tourism investment gap

A major theme of the forum was the need to increase tourism investment across Africa, which continues to receive a disproportionately small share of global tourism capital despite possessing some of the world's most diverse natural and cultural attractions.

Addressing Angola's Minister of Tourism, Márcio de Jesus Lopes Daniel, Al Nuwais acknowledged concerns he

raised during a recent UN Tourism Executive Council meeting regarding Africa's investment deficit.

"You reminded us that Africa remains the region receiving the least investment in tourism," she said. "And you challenged UN Tourism to help close that gap."

According to Al Nuwais, addressing this imbalance will remain a priority for the organization. She argued that while tourism potential is abundant across the continent, access to investment remains uneven.

"Potential is distributed widely, but investment is not. And that must change," she stated.

The UN Tourism chief outlined the organisation's commitment to bridging the gap through investment guidelines, specialized investment forums and initiatives that connect governments with private-sector investors.

Her remarks reflected a growing international recognition that tourism can play a critical role in Africa's economic diversification, particularly as countries seek new sources of growth beyond traditional extractive industries.

Building the future through tourism

Throughout her address, Al Nuwais portrayed Angola as a country moving decisively from promise to performance.

She praised the government's willingness to embrace reforms, attract international partnerships, and create an enabling environment for business. Describing Angola as "ready, ambitious,

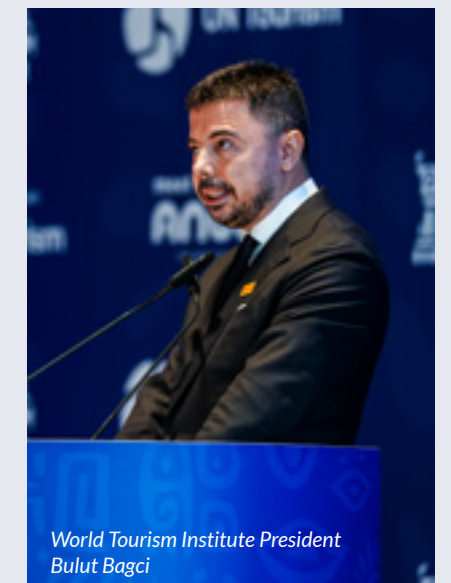
and open for business," she suggested that the country is well-positioned to become one of Africa's leading tourism destinations in the coming years.

Drawing on Angola's tourism branding campaign, "Rhythm of Life," she said that the country's story is increasingly resonating far beyond its borders.

"Today, that rhythm is being heard by investors, business leaders, and travelers around the world," she said.

Concluding her remarks, Al Nuwais offered perhaps the strongest endorsement yet of Angola's tourism trajectory.

"Angola is not waiting for the future. It is building it," she said. "One thing is becoming increasingly clear: Angola's potential is becoming reality."



World Tourism Institute President Bulut Bagci



Ghana Secures Hosting Rights for Landmark 70th UN Tourism Commission for Africa Meeting in 2027

Ghana has been selected to host the 70th Session of the UN Tourism Commission for Africa (CAF) in 2027, following a successful vote by Member States at the 69th CAF meeting held in Seychelles. The decision positions Ghana at the centre of Africa's tourism policy conversations at a moment of deep symbolic and strategic importance for both the country and the continent.

The 2027 gathering will coincide with Ghana's 70th Independence Anniversary, creating a rare alignment between national history and continental tourism leadership. The milestone event is expected to draw tourism ministers, senior policymakers, development partners, investors, creatives and private sector stakeholders from across Africa and beyond.

Presenting Ghana's bid at the Seychelles meeting, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts, Abba Dzifa Gomashie, framed the hosting ambition as part of a broader commitment to positioning tourism as a driver of sustainable development, economic transformation and African integration.

"This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity," she noted, highlighting the significance of hosting CAF's 70th session during Ghana's own 70th anniversary celebrations. "It offers a platform not only to reflect on Africa's journey but to chart a bold future for tourism development across the continent."

A Symbolic and Strategic Moment

CAF 2027 will come at a time when African tourism is increasingly being repositioned beyond arrivals and receipts, towards job creation, cultural preservation, community empowerment and skills development. Ghana's successful bid reflects growing confidence in the country's capacity to host high-level international events while offering a compelling narrative rooted in heritage, creativity and democratic stability.

Often described as the "Gateway to Africa" and geographically recognised as one of the landmasses closest to the

centre of the world, Ghana has built a strong reputation for warm hospitality, political stability and cultural depth. Delegates attending CAF 2027 will be immersed in festivals, music, dance, cuisine, traditional craftsmanship and the living histories that continue to shape Ghana and the wider African story.

Beyond celebration, the meeting will serve as a working platform for tourism policy coordination at a critical time. Issues such as human capital development, youth employment, digital transformation, sustainability and intra-African collaboration are expected to dominate the agenda.

Tourism, Identity and Global Advocacy

Hosting CAF also provides Ghana with an opportunity to amplify its leadership in heritage and diaspora tourism, an area in which the country has gained international recognition over the past decade. The 2027 session is expected to further strengthen Ghana's positioning as a hub for cultural exchange and creative industries.

According to Minister Gomashie, "Ghana will also use the opportunity to celebrate and show appreciation for your support to President John Dramani Mahama on the journey to the declaration by the UN that indeed slavery is the worst form of crime against humanity." The convergence of tourism, memory, justice and identity is expected to add depth to CAF 2027's programming and side events.

Confidence in Delivery

At the Seychelles meeting, Ghana assured Member States of its readiness to deliver a world-class event, citing its experience in hosting major international conferences, festivals and commemorative programmes. Infrastructure, security, hospitality services and organisational capacity were highlighted as key strengths underpinning the bid.

The decision to award hosting rights to Ghana was welcomed as a vote of confidence not only in the country's logistics and facilities, but also in its



“It offers a platform not only to reflect on Africa's journey but to chart a bold future for tourism development across the continent.”

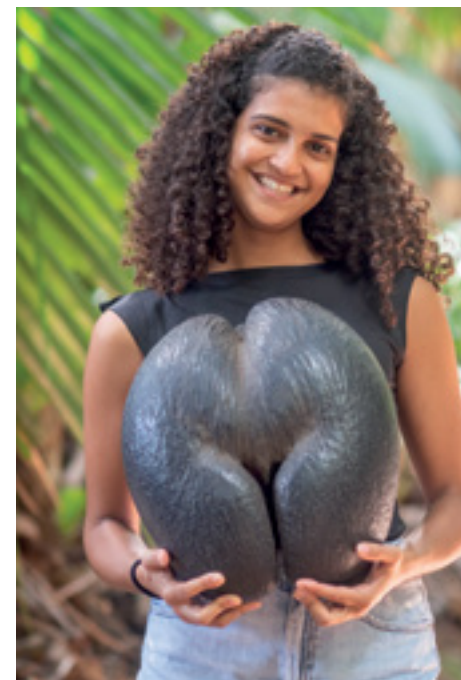
vision for tourism as a tool for inclusive growth and continental collaboration.

Looking Ahead to CAF 2027

CAF remains the principal decision-making platform for tourism policy within Africa under UN Tourism, bringing together Member States to align strategies, share best practices and strengthen regional cooperation. The 70th session is expected to be especially reflective, marking seven decades of coordinated tourism development on the continent.

As preparations begin, Ghana's hosting of CAF 2027 is already being viewed as a moment to celebrate Africa's resilience, creativity and progress — while setting a renewed agenda for tourism that places people, culture and sustainability at its core.

For Ghana, the message is clear: 2027 will not only mark 70 years of its independence — it will help shape the future of African tourism in Accra.



seychelles.com

SEYCHELLES AT 50: Beyond the Postcard

A Special VoyagesAfric Focus

There are destinations that captivate with their beauty, and there are those that leave a lasting impression because of the stories they tell. Seychelles belongs firmly in the latter category.

When VoyagesAfric travelled to the Indian Ocean archipelago to cover the country's Golden Jubilee celebrations and the 69th UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa (CAF) meeting, we expected to witness two important milestones - one marking 50 years of nationhood, the other shaping the future of African tourism. What we encountered was something far richer.

Over ten unforgettable days, Seychelles revealed itself as much more than the idyllic image that has defined it in travel brochures for decades. Beyond the powder-white beaches and iconic granite boulders lies a country that has deliberately woven tourism into the fabric of its national identity, where culture is celebrated as an economic asset, sustainability is lived rather than marketed, and hospitality is not merely an industry but a way of life.

The timing of our visit could not have been more significant. As the nation commemorated five decades of independence under the theme **Our People, Our Identity, Our Destiny**, Seychellois from every walk of life came together in celebration. The Local Food Fest transformed Roche Caiman into a vibrant showcase of Creole cuisine, music and artisan enterprise. The spectacular Independence Day Parade at Stade Linite blended military precision with cultural storytelling, culminating in a synchronised drone display and fireworks that lit up the Mahé skyline in a fitting tribute to a nation looking confidently towards its next fifty years.

Yet it was often away from the grand stages that Seychelles spoke most eloquently.

A bicycle ride through the quiet lanes of La Digue. A family lunch beneath an orange tree. A baker preserving recipes passed down through generations. Conversations with tourism leaders determined to place people before numbers. These were the moments

that revealed the true character of the islands - authentic, welcoming and deeply connected to their heritage.

Our journey also coincided with the 69th UN Tourism Commission for Africa, where ministers, policymakers and industry leaders gathered to debate the future of the continent's tourism sector. Human capital, sustainability, gastronomy, innovation and regional collaboration dominated the conversations, reinforcing the growing recognition that Africa's greatest tourism asset is its people.

There was good news for West Africa too. Ghana secured the right to host the landmark 70th UN Tourism CAF Meeting in 2027, while Sierra Leone advanced preparations to host the third UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism later this year - two significant milestones that reflect the increasing leadership of the region within continental tourism.

*A moutya dance with bonfire at the beach.
Photo Credit: Michel Denousse*



This special focus brings together the stories behind those experiences. It is not simply a record of events, but a collection of journeys, conversations and insights that capture Seychelles at a defining moment in its history.

In the pages that follow, we explore how the island nation is leveraging gastronomy to strengthen destination appeal, why La Digue remains one of the world's most enchanting islands, how Seychelles is positioning itself as a leading MICE destination, and what Africa's tourism leaders agreed upon as they looked towards a more resilient and inclusive future.

Seychelles may be one of Africa's smallest nations by landmass, but it continues to demonstrate that influence in tourism is measured not by size, but by vision, authenticity and the ability to create experiences that stay with visitors long after they have returned home.



Welcome to Seychelles at 50.





 @VoyagesAfriq

@VoyagesAfriq
 






28 June 2026

Golden Jubilee Comes Alive

National Day Parade at Stade Linite, synchronised drone display, fireworks and cultural performances celebrate 50 years of Seychelles' independence.



28-30 June 2026

Local Food Fest

Creole cuisine, music, artisan products and community tourism take centre stage at Roche Caiman, transforming the venue into a vibrant tourism village.



30 June 2026

La Digue by Bicycle

A journey through one of the world's most charming islands - cycling past family homes, heritage sites, giant tortoises, traditional bakeries and the iconic Anse Source d'Argent.



1 July 2026

Beyond the Beaches

Exploring Victoria, Eden Island, the Boardwalk, local nightlife and the evolving face of contemporary Seychelles.



2-4 July 2026

Africa Meets in Seychelles

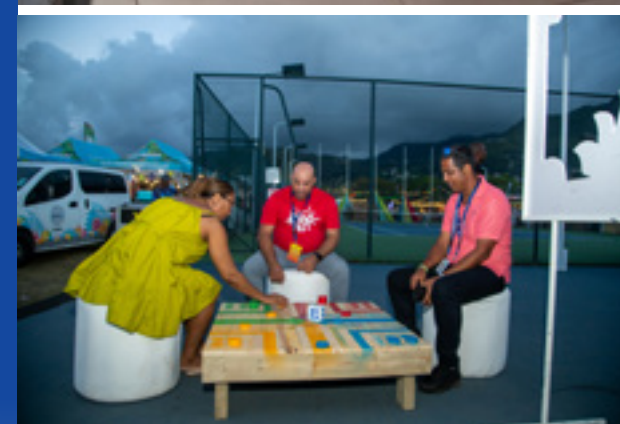
The island nation hosts the 69th UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa, welcoming ministers and tourism leaders to discuss human capital, innovation and the future of African tourism.



3 July 2026

A New Chapter for Africa

Sierra Leone is confirmed as host of the 3rd UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism, while Ghana secures the right to host the landmark 70th UN Tourism Commission for Africa in 2027.



Throughout the Seychelles Focus

- The people behind Seychelles' tourism success
- The flavours defining Creole cuisine
- Luxury with purpose - sustainability in practice
- Why La Digue remains one of the Indian Ocean's greatest treasures
- Lessons Africa can learn from Seychelles' tourism journey
- A visual diary of ten unforgettable days in paradise

Editor's Note

One Destination.

Many Stories.

One Remarkable Journey.

Over ten days, VoyagesAfriq travelled across the Seychelles archipelago to document a nation celebrating its Golden Jubilee while confidently shaping the future of African tourism. This special focus brings together the stories, conversations and experiences that reveal why Seychelles continues to punch far above its weight as one of the continent's most admired tourism destinations.

From state ceremonies to quiet village lanes, from boardroom conversations to family dining tables, every page reflects a destination where tourism is deeply woven into everyday life.

From Corporate Boardrooms to Luxury Hospitality: How Dr. Mati Nyazema built one of Zimbabwe's most remarkable tourism success stories

In the heart of Victoria Falls, where one of the world's greatest natural wonders continues to inspire travellers from across the globe, stands Mbano Manor Hotel — a luxury boutique property born from resilience, vision, and decades of tourism expertise.

Behind the five-star establishment is Dr. Mati Martha Nyazema, affectionately known across the tourism industry as "Doc Mati," a seasoned hospitality executive whose extraordinary career journey spans journalism, destination marketing, aviation, international hotel management, and finally entrepreneurship.

Speaking on the VA Tourism Podcast hosted by Kojo Bentum-Williams, Dr. Nyazema recounted the deeply personal story behind the creation of Mbano Manor Hotel — a project she describes as almost destined from childhood.

"My name is Mati Martha Nyazema and I'm the founder owner of Mbano Manor Hotel, Victoria Falls," she said. "Because of my culture, younger people don't call me by my first name, so everybody calls me Doc Mati because I do have a doctorate in tourism and business."

A childhood connection to Victoria Falls

For Dr. Nyazema, the connection to Victoria Falls began long before she entered the tourism sector.

She recalled visiting the destination as a very young girl when her late father, a



Dr. Mati Martha Nyazema

school headmaster in Harare, brought students on an educational excursion by train.

"I remember I was scared throughout because I was so young," she said with a laugh. "But growing up, I was always the only one in class who had ever been to Victoria Falls because we studied it in geography and nature study. So I think there was always something between me and Victoria Falls."

That early emotional connection would later shape the course of her life.

After earning her first degree and briefly working in journalism and national broadcasting, Dr. Nyazema transitioned into tourism, joining what is now the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority as a public relations officer.

"We were always flying to Victoria Falls, taking tourists, taking journalists," she explained. "Honestly, I think there was always something about Victoria Falls and me."

Curiosity, courage and a career across Africa

Dr. Nyazema's career path would eventually take her far beyond

Zimbabwe. After completing a master's degree in International Hotel Management in the United Kingdom, she worked for hotel groups before making what many considered an unexpected leap into aviation with British Airways.

The move, she admitted, came largely out of curiosity.

"One day I opened the newspaper and saw an advert," she recalled. "I thought, 'I think I've got these characteristics,' so I applied."

Initially rejected because her application was allegedly late, Dr. Nyazema challenged the decision directly.

"I phoned the general manager and said, 'My application was not late,'" she said. "I think by doing that, she actually interviewed me over the phone because she thought I was gutsy."

Weeks later, she was invited to interview for another position and secured a role that would become one of the defining chapters of her career.

"My life has been a little bit like that," she reflected. "Sometimes I've challenged something and it ended up working for me."



At British Airways, Dr. Nyazema eventually rose to become Area Marketing Manager for Africa, overseeing operations and communications across numerous African markets.

"You can imagine the challenge of trying to manage communications across African countries," she said. "But British Airways didn't care about excuses. They just said, 'Make it work.'"

She described the experience as transformative.

"For me, that was probably the best corporate experience ever," she said. "Working for an organisation that does things by the book, that is efficient, but also works very fast."

Her extensive experience later saw her become Managing Director of Cresta Hospitality before joining Southern Sun Hotels in South Africa, where she spent 15 years helping oversee hotel expansion projects across the continent, including in Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Nigeria.

"I was probably one of the only black executives at the beginning," she said. "But I learned so much from some incredibly powerful hoteliers."

The dream that changed everything

The inspiration to build a luxury hotel in Victoria Falls came unexpectedly during a conversation with her husband as she approached the age of 50.

"We had this thing at Southern Sun

that once you turn 50, you should start thinking about what's next," she said.

During the conversation, she casually mentioned a long-held dream.

"I just said, 'I want to open something in Victoria Falls.'"

Her husband's response changed everything.

"He looked at me and said, 'So why don't you do it?'"

Within weeks, Dr. Nyazema travelled to Victoria Falls to begin exploring investment opportunities.

"At first I thought maybe I would buy one of those small lodges in town," she explained. "But then taxi drivers started telling me there was land available."

That discovery shifted her thinking entirely.

"By day three, I realised maybe I could actually build something from scratch."

Eventually, she was introduced to a landowner and immediately recognised the opportunity.

"I said, 'Please give me 30 days first right of refusal while I see if I can raise the money.'"

Building Mbano Manor against the odds

Securing the land in 2016 was only the beginning.

Dr. Nyazema spent most of 2017 trying to raise capital for the project, initially

approaching institutions in South Africa where she had built much of her career.

"I honestly thought because I had spent almost 20 years in South Africa, funding would be straightforward," she said. "But people simply didn't want to invest in Zimbabwe."

The process forced her to rethink her strategy.

Eventually, she discovered that pension funds could potentially finance hospitality projects.

"It took months of research until I finally found the two pension funds that funded us," she explained.

In one of the interview's most dramatic moments, Dr. Nyazema revealed that the funding agreements were signed on the very day Zimbabwe's 2017 military coup unfolded.

"We literally signed on the day of the coup," she said. "The pension fund manager wanted to postpone, but I said, 'No, we are not postponing this. What is happening outside is outside. We are signing today.'"

Construction officially began in January 2018 and lasted nearly two years.

"It was intense," she admitted. "I was pushing all the way."

Despite industry norms requiring developers to secure all financing upfront, Dr. Nyazema proceeded in phases, raising money even while construction was underway.



Dr. Mati Martha Nyazema

"I broke a few rules," she laughed. "I raised money for the bricks and mortar first, then continued fundraising for furniture and fittings while construction was happening."

Then COVID-19 arrived

After years of relentless work, Mbano Manor finally welcomed its first guests in February 2020.

Weeks later, the COVID-19 pandemic brought global tourism to a halt.

"We traded for six weeks," Dr. Nyazema recalled. "Then the world shut down."

The consequences were devastating.

"I had built a team of 28 staff members," she said. "I had to lay off 20 people, some in the very month they joined."

“*I think my life has always been about curiosity. I’ve taken chances, challenged things, learned from people, and kept moving forward.*”

With international travel suspended and no guests arriving, the hotel's survival depended largely on personal savings and decades of disciplined financial management.

"My husband's pension and my pension — that's what kept us going," she said candidly.

Yet despite the enormous challenges, Dr. Nyazema remained remarkably reflective about the experience.

"The funny thing is, COVID actually forced me to rest," she said. "From 2017 to 2019, I had been running nonstop."

A story of African tourism leadership

Today, Mbano Manor Hotel has become one of Zimbabwe's most respected luxury boutique hospitality properties, attracting international travellers seeking personalised African luxury experiences.

But beyond the hotel itself, Dr. Nyazema's story has increasingly become an example of African tourism entrepreneurship driven by persistence, creativity, and belief in the continent's potential.



Her journey — from a young girl fascinated by Victoria Falls, to a senior executive in some of Africa's leading hospitality and aviation companies, and ultimately to founder of a world-class hotel — mirrors the resilience and ambition shaping a new generation of African tourism leadership.

"I think my life has always been about curiosity," she reflected during the interview. "I've taken chances, challenged things, learned from people, and kept moving forward."

And for Dr. Mati Nyazema, that journey appears far from over.



Dr. Mati Martha Nyazema

Aston Villa welcomes Visit Rwanda as new official Partner

Aston Villa has announced Visit Rwanda as the club's Principal Partner, Official Tourism Partner and Official Coffee Provider.

Visit Rwanda's branding will appear on the front of all men's, women's and academy teams' shirts, as well as in a number of other prominent spaces, in an agreement that will be the most important sponsorship deal in the history of the football club.

Alongside tourism, Rwanda has a growing reputation as a destination for business, investment, major events and sport and both parties will also collaborate on a number of initiatives focused on football and coaching as well as charitable and leadership initiatives and professional development opportunities.

Francesco Calvo, President of Business Operations, said: "This is a very exciting partnership for Aston Villa Football Club and a symbol of the club's continuing expansion and growth into international markets.

"There is a great range and depth of opportunities for collaboration, learning

and innovation and we are looking forward to working with Visit Rwanda to deliver meaningful activations through tourism, investment and sporting development."

Janet Karemera, Chief Executive Officer of Rwanda Convention Bureau (RCB), said: "This sponsorship is a powerful expression of Rwanda's ambition to engage global audiences through one of the world's most influential platforms and position our country as a destination to visit, invest and do business. Bringing together the Land of a Thousand Hills and the City of a Thousand Trades celebrates a shared commitment to enterprise, innovation and ambition.

"Building on eight successful years of raising awareness and engagement in the United Kingdom, one of Rwanda's key tourism source markets, we look forward to working with Aston Villa to expand our reach to new audiences in the UK, across Europe and beyond. Through this partnership, we aim to deepen the connection with those already considering travel to Rwanda, whether for tourism, investment or business events, all while contributing to



the long-term growth and development of the football ecosystem in Rwanda."

Supporters who have already purchased the 2026/27 home shirt in-store and online, and wish to have Visit Rwanda's branding on the front, can take their shirts into the Aston Villa stores at Villa Park and the Bullring to have this applied free of charge.

Togo Grants Visa-Free Entry to All African Passport Holders



The Government of Togo has announced a major new policy granting visa-free entry to citizens of all African countries holding valid national passports, in a move aimed at strengthening African integration and easing movement across the continent.

According to an official communiqué issued by Togo's Ministry of Security on

Monday, 18 May 2026, the exemption takes immediate effect and allows eligible African travellers to enter Togo without a visa for stays of up to 30 days.

The statement said the decision was taken by the President of the Council and reflects the Togolese government's commitment to promoting African unity, enhancing the free movement of people and goods and deepening cooperation among African states and peoples.

Authorities described the measure as part of a broader vision to position Togo as a regional hub for services, business, culture and human exchange at the heart of Africa.

The government further noted that the visa waiver demonstrates Togo's continued commitment to Pan-African ideals, continental solidarity and regional integration efforts related to mobility within Africa.

Despite the removal of visa requirements, the Ministry of Security stressed that travellers must still comply with immigration, security and public health regulations applicable at entry points into the country.

Officials also clarified that pre-arrival registration procedures remain mandatory. Travellers are required to complete an online travel declaration through the government platform, at least 24 hours before arrival in order to obtain a travel document to be presented at border posts.

The communiqué added that the visa exemption does not override laws concerning irregular entry, illegal stay, or national security measures. Relevant government agencies and border authorities have been instructed to ensure the effective implementation of the policy across land, air, and sea entry points.

Africa's China Readiness Moment

– Top 15 Destinations Ranked as Continent Eyes the World's Biggest Outbound Market

Africa's race to capture a share of the world's largest outbound travel market moved decisively into focus at World Travel Market Africa, with the release of the China Ready Index® 2026 – Africa Rankings. More than a benchmarking exercise, the rankings signal a strategic pivot across the continent – one where China readiness is fast becoming a prerequisite for competitiveness, not a future aspiration.

Compiled by the China Business Intelligence Services Network (CBISN), the China Ready Index® assesses destinations across six critical pillars – safety and service quality; visas and connectivity; destination experience and infrastructure; implementation of the China Ready Programme; marketing and Chinese promotion; and arrivals and conversions.

The 2026 rankings saw Egypt take top position, followed by Morocco, Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa, underlining North and East Africa's growing momentum in engaging the Chinese market.

The announcement was made during a standing-room-only panel moderated by Marcus Lee, CEO of China Travel Online and founder of the China Ready Programme, which now operates in 55 countries across six continents.

"Being China Ready today is no longer about marketing alone," Lee told delegates. "It is about the entire tourism ecosystem – from visa access and air connectivity to service delivery, digital integration and, ultimately, conversions."

Why China matters – and why Africa must act now

The scale of the opportunity is difficult to ignore. China recorded more than 155 million outbound trips annually before the pandemic. Yet fewer than 10 percent of China's 1.4 billion population currently hold passports, suggesting the market is still in its infancy.

For African destinations, this presents both opportunity and urgency. Long-haul distance and limited direct connectivity remain barriers – but the willingness to travel, spend and explore new destinations is firmly established among Chinese travellers.

Tanzania's blueprint for growth

Among the most compelling case studies presented was Tanzania. Director General of the Tanzania Tourist Board, Ephraim Balozi Mafuru, outlined how a Mandarin-language, in-market campaign – Amazing Tanzania – helped grow Chinese arrivals from 33,000 to over 82,000 in just two years.

Marketing in Chinese cities, on Chinese platforms and in Mandarin was non-negotiable, Mafuru said, with air connectivity identified as the next major growth lever.

Cape Town and South Africa – building for the long haul

For Cape Town Tourism CEO Enver Duminy, distance and direct air access remain South Africa's biggest constraints. However, initiatives such as Cape Town Air Access, the Trusted Tour Operator Scheme (TTOS) and the phased rollout of an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) are beginning to ease friction.

"China readiness is a journey," Duminy noted. "It's about understanding the future Chinese traveller and designing experiences that remain relevant five or ten years from now."

Zimbabwe, Botswana and the premium play

Zimbabwe's Deputy Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Tongai Mfangagwa, pointed to a 400 percent increase in Chinese arrivals since adopting the China Ready Programme, growing from 10,000 to 50,000 visitors.

Meanwhile, Goabaone Taylor, Executive Manager – Marketing, Botswana Tourism Organisation highlighted how Botswana's high-value, low-volume model aligns naturally with the premium Chinese market, particularly travellers drawn to conservation-led luxury experiences.

Getting the journey right

For Serena Hotels CEO Ashish Sharma, success lies in cultural fluency. From payment systems to pre-arrival communication and small details – such as room amenities and service expectations – every touchpoint matters.

"These details shape perception," Lee reinforced. "And perception drives



conversion."

One market, many Africas

A recurring theme was the need for African destinations to differentiate themselves in China. While many Chinese travellers still view Africa as a single destination, the opportunity lies in telling distinct, credible stories – and backing them with data, service and consistency.

"There is no single path to becoming China Ready," Lee concluded. "But the destinations that start now – and address all six pillars seriously – will be the ones that win."

Below is Top 15 China Ready Index® – Africa 2026

1. Egypt
2. Morocco
3. Kenya
4. Tanzania
5. South Africa
6. Mauritius
7. Rwanda
8. Ethiopia
9. Seychelles
10. Zimbabwe
11. Namibia
12. Botswana
13. Ghana
14. Uganda
15. Tunisia

Namibia repositions Luxury around space, silence and sustainability at Africa's Travel Indaba

In a move that signals a new chapter for Southern African tourism, the Namibian Minister of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism, Indileni Daniel, officially launched the Namibia Luxury Travel Market (NLTM) during the "Namibian Night" event at Africa's Travel Indaba 2026.

Scheduled to take place between 8–10 December 2026, this flagship initiative aims to pivot the nation's tourism strategy toward high-value, niche segments that celebrate Namibia's unique offering of vast landscapes and cultural authenticity.

A New Definition of Luxury: The "Namibian Context"

While global perceptions of luxury often evoke images of high-rise gold hotels or bustling city centres like Dubai or Paris, Namibia's leadership presented a radical alternative. During the launch, Sebulton Chicalu, CEO of the Namibia Tourism Board, challenged the traditional luxury narrative.

"We want to define luxury in our own context," Chicalu explained to the gathered delegates. "If you go to Dubai, you find great models of luxury. But in Namibia, luxury is about nature and silence. It is about being in a place where you are the only person, where the wind whispers to you, and the desert speaks. That privacy and space – that is the luxury we are launching today."

Strategic Evolution and National Development

The launch of the NLTM is not merely a marketing campaign; it is a critical component of Namibia's Vision 2030 and the Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6). Minister Daniel emphasized that tourism is a "cornerstone" of the economy and a driver for socio-economic transformation and inclusive growth.

"This flagship initiative represents a strategic evolution of our tourism offering," stated Minister Daniel. "It is designed to elevate Namibia's position within the global luxury segment, attract high-value travellers, and create a dedicated marketplace connecting international buyers with our unique, high-end products."

The Minister highlighted that the government, under the leadership of Her Excellency Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Namibia's first female President, is committed to ensuring tourism is sustainable, inclusive, and globally competitive.

Private Sector Collaboration: The High-Yield Impact

Representing the private sector, Mrs Elzanne McCulloch of the Organising Committee detailed the operational vision for the December event. Born from previous private sector initiatives, the NLTM is now a national platform that seeks to balance a "serene partnership" between the government and the industry.

McCulloch addressed the necessity of positioning Namibia as a high-yield, low-impact destination to protect its "ecological and cultural sensitivities." "We have always been a high-yield destination, and the demand for our products is currently outstripping supply," she noted. "In Paris, you might have an establishment with 700 people; in Namibia, we have the ecology to ourselves. We do things differently – we are relationship people."

According to McCulloch, the NLTM 2026 will feature:

- **B2B Training Sessions:** To sharpen the competitive edge of local operators.
- **Hosted Buyer Programme:** Connecting world-class travel designers with Namibian lodges and transport providers.
- **Awards Ceremony:** Celebrating excellence within the industry.
- **Regional Integration:** Invitations to regional partners like Botswana and Zimbabwe to foster a resilient Southern African tourism circuit.

An Open Invitation to the World

The event concluded with a "Vote of



Thanks" from Mr Olavi Hamwele, Board Chairperson of the Namibia Tourism Board, who viewed the strong attendance at Indaba as a sign of global confidence in the Namibian product.

Minister Daniel closed the formal proceedings by reaffirming that "Namibia is open for business" and invited the world to experience a destination unlike any other. "We look forward to hosting you in December 2026, where we will together redefine luxury through authenticity, sustainability, and unforgettable experiences," the Minister concluded.

With the launch of the NLTM, Namibia is setting a new benchmark for the continent, proving that in the modern travel era, the greatest luxury of all may well be the sound of silence across an endless horizon.

"We want to define luxury in our own context. If you go to Dubai, you find great models of luxury. But in Namibia, luxury is about nature and silence. It is about being in a place where you are the only person, where the wind whispers to you, and the desert speaks. That privacy and space – that is the luxury we are launching today."

”

The Next 50 Years:

Vesna Rakić on the Future of Seychelles Tourism

As Seychelles celebrates 50 years of independence and five decades of tourism, the destination is entering a new era. Following the reinstatement of the Seychelles Tourism Board, Vesna Rakić has been appointed Chief Executive Officer to lead the next chapter of the islands' tourism journey.

We sat down with Rakić to learn more about her background, explore her vision for the Seychelles brand, and discuss what the future holds for one of the world's most remarkable island destinations.

What brings you to this role at such a defining milestone for Seychelles tourism?

Vesna Rakić: Hospitality has always been in my roots. My grandmother opened one of the very first guesthouses in Beau Vallon back in the early 1970s. I grew up around her long dining table, watching her cook and share food with visitors. That planted the seed in me for tourism and that old-school Creole warmth. Over the last 30 years, I've worked across destination management, entrepreneurship, and building systems to support local tourism businesses.

I didn't necessarily plan to step into this position, but throughout my life, I've found myself placed where I'm needed. When your country calls you, you rise. Re-establishing the Seychelles Tourism Board is an immense responsibility, but I accept it with great humility and purpose. I am here to build a Tourism Board that is present, accountable, and genuinely in service of our industry partners, our visitors, and our people.

What do you hope your contribution will be, and what does success look like for the future?

Vesna Rakić: Simply put, I want to leave the industry and the country stronger, and put in place lasting structures that carry this body forward.

Success means staying true to our core values while continuing to thrive. Seychelles is a premium destination by virtue of what it is—our biodiversity, uncrowded beaches, genuine hospitality, and space for tranquility. Success by 2076 means we chose quality over quantity, protected our environment, and kept our communities at the heart of tourism—not just as participants, but as the main beneficiaries and ambassadors of our success.

How does the Seychelles destination brand evolve while staying authentic?

Vesna Rakić: The Another World brand is powerful because it is earned, not invented. We don't need to change what Seychelles is; we just need to share it through genuine, living stories.

Our Creole culture isn't a set of stage performances created for tourists—it's a living culture. It's our food, our music, our art, and our everyday island life. We want to move beyond surface-level metrics and work with trusted storytellers, journalists, and local Seychellois who can share these real experiences. A brand that is lived on the ground is always far more powerful than a brand that is just marketed on a screen.

How do you translate "higher-value, lower-impact" tourism into practice?

Vesna Rakić: Nature is our foundation—it underpins everything we do. Everything grows from it, which is why protecting nature is protecting tourism.

In practice, higher-value tourism isn't about luxury for its own sake. It's about encouraging visitors to slow down, stay longer, and experience the pure joy of simple island living while freely exploring our beautiful islands. Whether someone stays in a welcoming local guesthouse, a boutique hotel, or a luxury resort, every visitor should feel that connection. Programs like Sustainable Seychelles help us set clear standards across the board so that responsible, eco-friendly practices become the norm for our whole industry.

How will technology and AI shape destination marketing moving forward?

Vesna Rakić: By leveraging technology and AI, we will strengthen our marketing intelligence capabilities to enable data-driven decision-making, improve efficiency, and deliver more personalized marketing.

“Nature is our foundation—it underpins everything we do. Everything grows from it, which is why protecting nature is protecting tourism.”

”

Technology must never replace creativity, authenticity, human relationships, or real hospitality. My focus is using digital tools to surface the real stories of our people and places, building trust and credibility before reach.

What is your strategy regarding regional cooperation and connecting with the African continent?

Vesna Rakić: It's a very exciting time for Africa, and Seychelles is proudly an African destination with deep regional roots. Given our proximity and growing air connectivity across the continent, I want us to move much closer to the continent.

Cruise Expeditions will potentially connect down to Cape Town with development there so not restricted to Indian Ocean and eastern region solely.

What is your message to the international travel trade and local industry partners?

Vesna Rakić: To our global travel partners: you can expect a reinstated Tourism Board that shows up consistently, communicates clearly, and listens. We recognize that the private sector is the real engine of this industry, which is why our board is built alongside private sector leaders to drive practical results.

And to every Seychellois: tourism belongs to you. Whether you run a guesthouse, fish for local restaurants, drive a taxi, or share our culture, you are the backbone of this industry. Our job at the Tourism Board is to make sure tourism works for you, protects our way of life, and preserves this extraordinary destination for generations to come.



TRIBE HOTELS GROUP

@VoyagesAfriq



Fairways to Fortune: Why Africa's Golf Tourism Moment Has Arrived

As the inaugural Africa Golf Tourism Convention prepares to bring the continent's tourism and golf industries together in Gauteng this August, Africa is beginning to recognise golf not merely as a sport, but as a catalyst for tourism, investment and destination development.

There are few tourism segments that combine luxury travel, investment, hospitality, business events and sport as seamlessly as golf tourism. Globally, it is a multi-billion-dollar industry that attracts affluent travellers who stay longer, spend more and often travel outside traditional peak seasons. Yet despite boasting some of the world's most spectacular golf courses and landscapes, Africa has remained on the fringes of this lucrative market.

That may be about to change.

From 18 to 21 August, industry leaders from across Africa and beyond will gather in Gauteng, South Africa, for the inaugural Africa Golf Tourism Convention (AGTC) – the continent's first dedicated business platform focused exclusively on golf tourism. More than another industry gathering, AGTC signals a shift in how Africa positions one of its most underutilised tourism assets.

For decades, golf has quietly flourished across several African destinations. South Africa enjoys global recognition for its championship courses, while Morocco and Mauritius have successfully integrated golf into their luxury tourism offerings. Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Egypt and several Indian Ocean destinations have also cultivated niche golf markets. What has been missing, however, is a continental marketplace to connect these destinations with international buyers and investors.

Built around the theme "One Continent. Many Fairways. One Marketplace.", AGTC aims to fill that gap by bringing together tourism boards, golf courses, tour operators, airlines, hospitality brands, developers and policymakers. Its ambition is not simply to host discussions, but to stimulate trade,

attract investment and position golf tourism as a meaningful contributor to Africa's visitor economy.

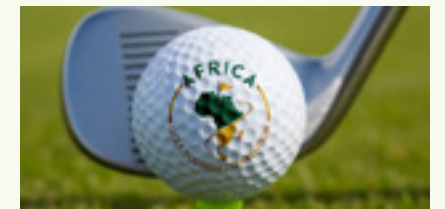
The timing is significant. As African destinations focus on increasing tourism yield rather than simply boosting arrival numbers, golf presents an attractive opportunity. Golf travellers are among the highest-spending visitors, with expenditure extending beyond green fees to premium accommodation, fine dining, transport, wellness experiences, retail and excursions for accompanying family members.

According to Neo Peete, Founder of the Africa Golf Tourism Convention, the initiative has been designed with long-term economic impact in mind.

"Africa has world-class golf courses, compelling tourism experiences and improving global connectivity, yet the continent has remained largely absent from the global golf tourism marketplace," she says. "AGTC is about building a credible, structured platform that connects African destinations directly to global buyers and investors. This is not just an event – it is a growth engine for sustainable tourism, trade and investment."

Golf tourism also complements another fast-growing segment – Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE). Around the world, golf has become an important feature of executive retreats, incentive programmes and corporate networking events. For African destinations investing in convention centres, international hotel brands and improved air connectivity, integrating golf into the visitor experience offers an additional competitive advantage while encouraging delegates to extend their stay.

Beyond the fairways, the economic impact can be substantial. Successful golf destinations stimulate demand for hotels, restaurants, transport providers, cultural attractions and retail businesses, while golf estates often attract property investment and generate valuable international exposure.



Challenges remain. Air connectivity, visa facilitation, destination awareness and coordinated marketing continue to shape Africa's competitiveness. Many outstanding golf courses remain largely unknown to international tour operators, while smaller destinations often lack the resources to market themselves effectively. These are among the issues AGTC hopes to address through partnerships, business matchmaking and industry collaboration.

The convention has already secured the backing of the Gauteng Convention & Events Bureau (GCEB). Its Head, Nonnie Kubeka, believes the initiative aligns with the province's economic development ambitions.

"Gauteng continues to demonstrate its capacity to host international sporting and business events that deliver tangible economic benefits," Kubeka says. "We believe AGTC will further strengthen this positioning while placing both Gauteng and Africa more prominently within the global golf tourism marketplace."

Ultimately, the success of AGTC will not be measured solely by attendance, but by the partnerships, investments and business opportunities it generates long after the final session closes. If Africa is serious about diversifying its tourism economy, golf deserves a more prominent place in the conversation.

The inaugural Africa Golf Tourism Convention is an important first step. Its lasting legacy will depend on whether Africa can transform exceptional golf courses into a connected tourism ecosystem that drives investment, creates jobs and elevates the continent's profile in the global golf travel market. If it succeeds, Africa's fairways could well become pathways to one of tourism's next great growth stories.

trademark
SUITES AT ENAKI TOWN

trademark

Tribes

KAYA

harVest

Jiko

BANG BANG

HERO

Why Angola's New Convention Bureau Signals a Strategic Reset for Tourism Growth



Angola has officially launched the Angola Convention Bureau (ACB), marking a decisive shift in how the country intends to grow its tourism economy – with business travel, meetings and international events now firmly at the centre of its strategy.

The bureau was inaugurated on 6 May at the Talatona Convention Centre in Luanda, bringing together around 400 delegates from government, tourism, aviation, hospitality and the international events industry. Senior ministers, investors, tourism stakeholders and international partners were among those in attendance, underlining the strategic importance Angola is placing on meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions – MICE – as a catalyst for tourism growth and economic diversification.

The launch welcomed Senthil Gopinath, Chief Executive Officer of the International Congress and Convention Association, signalling Angola's growing international ambitions within the global meetings and events ecosystem. Held under the theme Meet in Angola – The Meeting Room in Africa, the initiative forms part of a broader national strategy to leverage tourism, international investment and business travel to diversify the economy beyond oil.

When business travel leads the tourism story

The timing of the ACB launch is significant. In 2025, Angola welcomed 223,140 international visitors – a 27.9 per cent year-on-year increase. Crucially, business travel arrivals reached 59,750, overtaking leisure arrivals at 52,072.

This reversal challenges long-held assumptions about African tourism growth being driven primarily by leisure demand. In Angola's case, business travel is not only fuelling visitor numbers, but also shaping how the destination is positioning itself globally.

For policymakers and industry

stakeholders, the message is clear: MICE tourism is no longer a secondary segment. It is fast becoming a gateway sector – attracting conferences, corporate meetings and investment-related travel, while creating opportunities to convert business visitors into longer-stay tourists engaging with Angola's wider leisure offering.

Economic diversification through meetings and events

Opening the event, José de Lima Massano, Minister of State for Economic Coordination, described the Angola Convention Bureau as a critical instrument for positioning the country competitively within the international events market.

He highlighted Angola's progress in economic diversification, the growth of the non-oil sector and the rising contribution of tourism as a strategic pillar of national development. These efforts are supported by policy measures including visa exemptions for more than 100 countries, alongside sustained investment in tourism infrastructure, aviation and international connectivity.

Tourism Minister Márcio de Jesus Lopes Daniel positioned the ACB as a platform designed to attract international conferences and corporate events while delivering tangible economic returns.

"Angola is prepared to host events of international scale," he said. "The launch of the Angola Convention Bureau represents an important step in strengthening our international positioning and showcasing Angola as a modern and competitive destination for business tourism in Africa."

From MICE to 'bleisure' – extending the stay

Beyond traditional MICE tourism, Angola is also seeking to capitalise on the global rise of 'bleisure' travel – where business trips are extended for leisure, cultural and nature-based experiences.

From Luanda's Atlantic coastline and urban energy to the dramatic landscapes of Namibe, Iona National Park and Kalandula Falls, the country is increasingly positioning itself as a destination where meetings and conferences can be seamlessly combined with authentic exploration.

"Today's business travellers are looking for more than conference facilities alone," said Julia Kleber, Chief Executive Officer of the KLEBER GROUP, which manages Angola's international tourism representation and supported the

development of the ACB.

Infrastructure, access and scale

The launch of the ACB comes against the backdrop of sustained investment in tourism and transport infrastructure aimed at strengthening Angola's role as a regional hub for international events.

Key developments include the Dr António Agostinho Neto International Airport, with capacity for up to 15 million passengers annually, expanded international connectivity through airlines such as Lufthansa, Emirates, Qatar Airways and Ethiopian Airlines, as well as the planned Luanda Conference Centre, scheduled to open in 2026 with capacity for up to 3,000 delegates. These are complemented by the growth of internationally branded hotels and hospitality services.

Panel discussions during the launch examined the future of the global MICE industry, the economic impact of international events and Angola's long-term positioning within Africa's meetings sector. Speakers from ICCA, AIPEX, the hospitality industry and event specialists highlighted the multiplier effect of business tourism across accommodation, transport, food services and investment attraction.

The Ministry of Tourism also awarded certificates of intent to organisations joining the Angola Convention Bureau under the Meet in Angola initiative, signalling the formation of a coordinated national MICE ecosystem spanning transport, hospitality, catering and events.

A gateway strategy, not a side play

As Angola continues to open up to international tourism markets, MICE is increasingly viewed not as a niche, but as a gateway strategy – introducing global audiences to the country through business, before encouraging deeper leisure engagement.

This approach aligns with Angola's broader destination positioning under the Visit Angola – The Rhythm of Lifebrand, presenting the country as one of Africa's last great undiscovered destinations.

With business travellers now outnumbering leisure visitors, major infrastructure coming online and a formal convention bureau in place, Angola is making a clear statement: in its next tourism chapter, meetings and events will lead the way.

Save the Date



3rd UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa

2-4 December 2026
Freetown, Republic of Sierra Leone

untourism.int



Mona Boyd calls for **BOLD INVESTMENT** to transform Ghana from niche to mainstream destination

At the 2026 edition of WTM Africa in Cape Town, Mona Boyd, Executive Chair of Landtours Ghana, delivered a candid assessment of Ghana's tourism industry, praising the country's growing appeal while urging stronger investment, strategic marketing and deeper collaboration between government and private sector stakeholders.

Speaking to VoyagesAfriq on the sidelines of the continent's premier tourism trade show, Boyd acknowledged that Ghana's tourism arrivals continue to rise steadily year after year, but stressed that the country is still far from reaching its full potential.

"We are slowly improving. We have a lot to do," she said. "Actually, our arrival numbers are rising every year, but they haven't reached the potential for Ghana."

According to Boyd, Ghana's challenge is not only about attracting more visitors, but also ensuring the destination is adequately prepared to host them.

"But we're not ready either," she explained. "You know, we don't have enough hotel beds, we don't have enough attractions, but we are receiving what we can handle currently, and that's okay. But the state is, I would say it's like average, and we are working very hard to get to good."

The veteran tourism executive noted that Ghana's global image remains heavily tied to heritage tourism, particularly the country's role in the transatlantic slave trade narrative and diaspora reconnection initiatives. While acknowledging the success of heritage tourism, Boyd argued that the country must broaden its destination appeal and market its diverse tourism offerings more effectively.

"We need to do more marketing of the destination," she said. "Ghana has more than just heritage tourism. I mean, we have some places we can do beach, we have adventure, we have wildlife. And

the biggest tourism we have is culture."

She added that Ghana's rich cultural experiences, vibrant traditions and emerging leisure products remain largely under-promoted in key international source markets, especially the United States.

"I think we need to display all of those experiences, into the American market," Boyd stated. "You know, we don't do any marketing except for what individual tour operators do on Facebook and the social media platforms."

She expressed concern that many local tourism businesses lack the professional expertise and resources needed to market the destination competitively on the global stage.

"But they're not professionals, and most of them don't hire professionals to do that for them," she said. "So, we're not actually displaying, sometimes we're not showing Ghana in the best light. But Ghana is a wonderful destination."

Boyd maintained that Ghana does not necessarily need massive tourism infrastructure expansion beyond improving accommodation capacity in the premium segment.

"We don't really need to build out a lot except for more hotel rooms, more four- and five-star hotel rooms," she noted. "We have enough three-star, two-star budget hotels. So, I think that the big issue is continuing to get the word out."

She further emphasized that Ghana currently operates largely as a "niche"

tourism destination and should aspire to become a mainstream African tourism market.

"Right now, Ghana is a niche market," Boyd said. "And I would like to see it become a much broader market than just a niche market."

Beyond destination marketing, Boyd called for more aggressive international trade engagement by Ghana's tourism authorities. She urged government agencies to invest strategically in global tourism exhibitions and industry platforms where travel buyers and tour operators make destination decisions.

"I would like for Ghana to participate in more trade shows, and I would like for them to provide the resources to put their country on display at the trade shows," she said.

Drawing comparisons with international tourism marketing practices, Boyd referenced the United States Tour Operators Association conference as a prime example of the type of global exposure Ghana should pursue.

"If you go to a trade show like USTOA, which is the biggest market of trade people in America, it's the Tour Operators Association," she explained. "These are the people that send the tourists outside of America."

"You buy, you sponsor, and you get 30 minutes on stage to display what you have to offer to everyone — 20,000 people that's attending that trade show," she continued. "That's what I would like to happen, to do more of that kind

of investment in the country and in the industry outside of Ghana."

On the domestic front, Boyd raised concerns about what she described as a growing disconnect between Ghana's tourism authorities and the private sector operators who drive the industry daily.

"I think that there has been a dearth of collaboration with the private sector," she said. "The private sector, we're the constituency of the Tourism Authority and the Ministry of Tourism. Unless I'm on the outside, we just never hear from those."

She recalled a time when engagement between policymakers and tourism operators was more frequent and structured.

“*I would like for Ghana to participate in more trade shows, and I would like for them to provide the resources to put their country on display at the trade shows*”

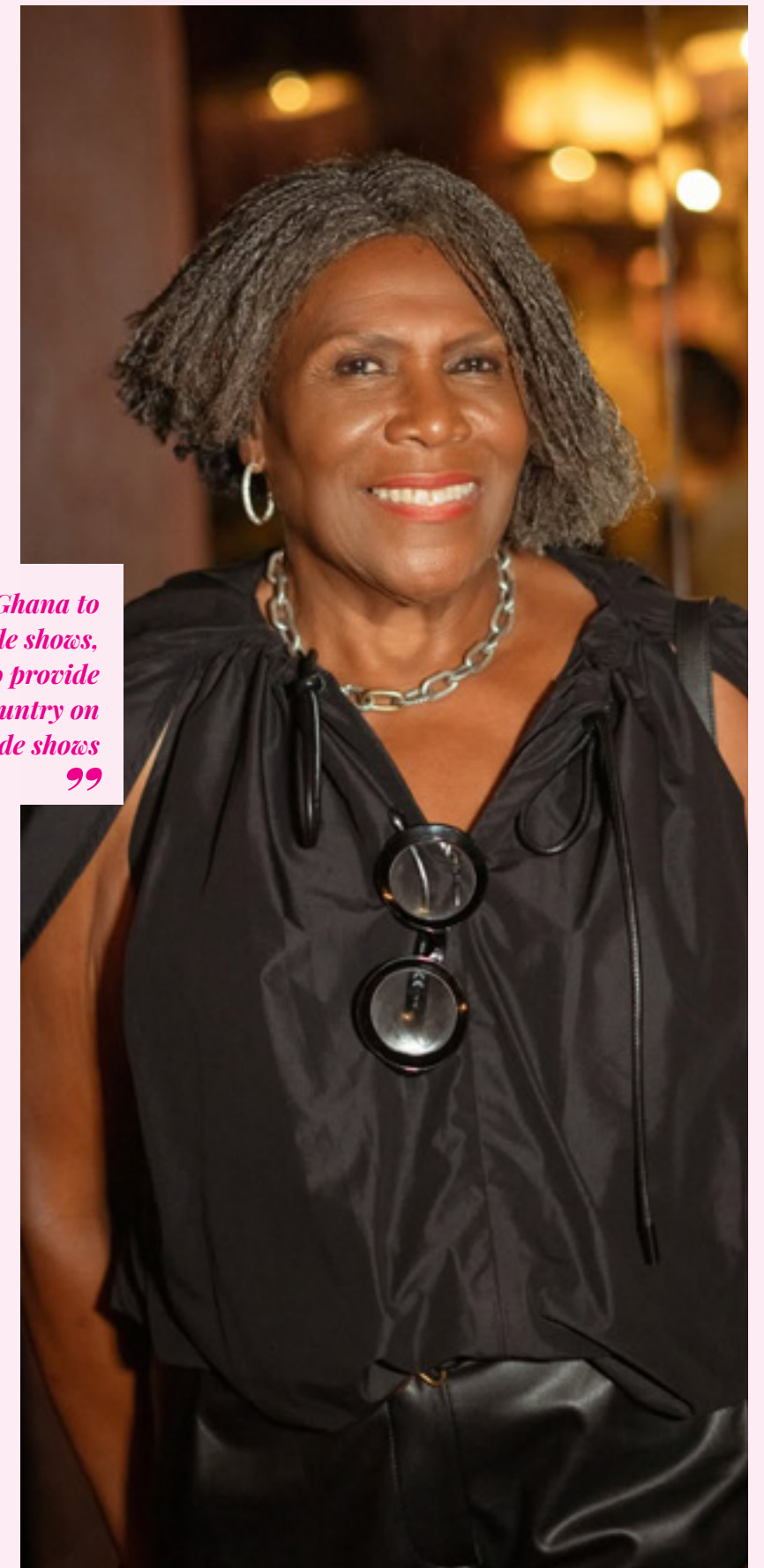
"It didn't used to be that way," Boyd said. "We used to have regular seminars and meetings and conferences. I would like to see us get back to that."

According to her, tourism practitioners remain the most important source of market intelligence and practical industry insights because they interact directly with visitors and understand evolving travel trends.

"It's the operators, the restaurateurs, the chop bar people, the tour operators, the transportation companies, the hotels — we're the ones actually doing the work on the ground," she stressed. "We know what the trends are. We know what the clients, the visitors are looking for."

Boyd concluded by warning that tourism policy development cannot succeed without consistent consultation with industry practitioners.

"In terms of formulating the policies for which direction Ghana is going to go, I don't see how they do that very well without hearing from the practitioners in the industry," she opined.



Krystal Palace Douala:

Redefining luxury and raising the bar for hospitality in Cameroon

In the heart of Douala—Cameroon's bustling commercial capital—a new standard of luxury hospitality is quietly but confidently taking shape. Since opening its doors in 2021, the Krystal Palace Douala Hotel has emerged not only as the city's first and only five-star hotel, but also as a symbol of ambition, excellence, and the evolving face of Central Africa's hospitality industry.

In an exclusive conversation with VoyageAfriq, Sales and Marketing Manager Shantal Tata offered deep insight into the property's journey, achievements, and bold vision for the future.

A strong start on a continental stage

For Krystal Palace Douala, the beginning was nothing short of remarkable. The hotel launched at a pivotal moment—during the Africa Cup of Nations 2021—instantly placing it on the continental map.

"It was exactly during that Nations Cup and the hotel was chosen to host all the staff of the CAN—from CAF presidents to logistics teams. This was the centre of their lodging," Tata revealed. "We had more than 80 percent occupancy at that time because they took the whole hotel. So, it was a good start for us."

This high-profile exposure not only validated the hotel's capabilities but also cemented its reputation as a trusted destination for elite guests. Since then, Krystal Palace has hosted an impressive roster of dignitaries, including presidents and ministers, reinforcing its standing as a premier luxury address in Cameroon.

The power of service and warmth

While infrastructure and luxury amenities are critical, Tata emphasised that the hotel's true strength lies in its people.

"We've been getting actually positive feedback—about 80 percent of it," she noted. "What stands out most is the warmth of our employees."

Guests consistently talk about how welcoming, helpful, and attentive our staff are."

Even when minor technical issues arise, Tata believes exceptional customer service has been key in maintaining guest satisfaction. "The fact that the customer service is there makes those things less of an issue. It's really the human touch that defines us."

Beyond monopoly: Competing on excellence

As the only five-star hotel in Douala, Krystal Palace could be seen as operating without direct competition. However, Tata offers a more nuanced perspective.

"Yes, being a five-star gives us an advantage," she admitted, "but we do have strong competition. Some four-star hotels here are very solid in terms of finishing and service."

What sets Krystal Palace apart, she explained, is its scale and comprehensive offering. "We have the rooms, the luxury, the space, and the full range of five-star services that others may not necessarily have. That complete package is what makes us unique."

A destination in itself

With 224 rooms and suites, Krystal Palace Douala is more than just a hotel—it is a multi-dimensional lifestyle destination. The property boasts nearly ten event halls, three restaurants, a rooftop lounge, and a tennis court on the eighth floor.

"We also have a fully equipped spa, which is one of the most loved facilities," Tata said.

"All guests have free access to the hammam, sauna, and jacuzzi."

Additional amenities include a gym, swimming pool, and the vibrant Ivre's Nightclub, which has quickly become a popular nightlife spot in the city. Notably, the hotel is open not only to residents but also to walk-in guests.

"You don't have to be lodged here to enjoy what we offer. You can come in for the restaurant, the spa, or even subscribe to the gym," she explained.

Among its standout features is the prestigious Mandela Suite—one of the largest in Douala—offering panoramic views of the Wouri River and the city skyline.

Balancing exclusivity with accessibility

While Krystal Palace primarily targets high-end clientele, it is also making deliberate efforts to remain inclusive.

"That's our target market—those who can spend," Tata acknowledged. "But we also want people in Douala to feel like they belong here."



To achieve this, the hotel periodically rolls out promotional offers, sometimes slashing rates by up to 50 percent. "We want people to say, 'Why not take me to Krystal?' It's for Cameroonians. It's not just for a certain class."

Weekly experiences such as the popular Sunday brunch—priced at 30,000 CFA francs—further open the doors to families and local residents seeking a taste of luxury.

Rising occupancy and digital reach

Krystal Palace's performance metrics reflect its growing appeal. While average occupancy hovers between 50 and 60 percent, peak periods tell a different story.

"Today, we are at 95 percent occupancy—one of the highest we've ever had," Tata disclosed. "April is a high season, and we're seeing strong bookings through platforms like Booking.com and Expedia."

This embrace of digital channels has expanded the hotel's global reach, attracting international travellers and business visitors alike.

Positioning within Cameroon—and beyond

Within the broader context of Cameroon's hospitality landscape, Tata positions Krystal Palace as a leading force.

"I would rate Krystal Palace as the second in Cameroon and the first in Douala," she said, referencing an existing branded five-star hotel elsewhere in the country.

But the ambition does not stop there.

A growing African hospitality brand

Krystal Palace is part of a larger vision spearheaded by its Cameroonian owner, whose portfolio already includes the

Krystal Beach Hotel in Cape Town.

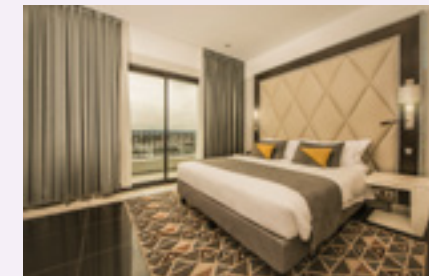
Expansion plans are well underway. A new property in Yaoundé is nearing completion and promises to surpass the Douala flagship.

"What is coming up in Yaoundé is massive—international standard," Tata said enthusiastically. "If it could be rated six or seven stars, it would deserve it."

Further developments are planned for Kribi, a coastal tourism hotspot, as part of a broader strategy to establish Krystal Palace in multiple cities across Cameroon within the next five years.

From its strategic launch during a major continental event to its rapid rise as a luxury leader, Krystal Palace Douala is redefining what hospitality means in Central Africa. With a strong emphasis on service, continuous innovation, and ambitious expansion plans, the brand is not just competing—it is setting the pace.

As Tata aptly puts it, "We are building something that goes beyond a hotel—we are creating an experience that people will always want to return to."



Growing partnership with Cameroon International Tourism Fair

Krystal Palace Douala's growing influence within Cameroon's tourism ecosystem was further underscored by its strategic partnership with the Cameroon International Tourism Fair (CITF), where the hotel played an active role during the event's 5th edition—widely regarded as its most internationally attended yet.

For Shantal Tata, the collaboration goes far beyond visibility; it represents a deliberate push to position the hotel—and Cameroon—on the global tourism map. "Krystal Palace is very proud to partner with CITF... it gave us a lot of exposure," she noted.

"We got to meet international tour operators... which is really opening our

hotel to the international level, and it's very important for our marketing." With a strong on-ground presence throughout the three-day fair, including a dedicated exhibition stand, the hotel leveraged the platform to engage directly with global industry players, many of whom later experienced its hospitality firsthand as resident guests.

Beyond the fair, Krystal Palace's commitment to tourism development is both strategic and sustained. Tata emphasised that the hotel views itself as an active stakeholder in shaping Cameroon's tourism future. "We are very much involved... Krystal Palace really wants to be part of the team that is making tourism in Cameroon come to light," she said.

This commitment is evident in initiatives such as their annual celebration of World Tourism Day, where guests are treated to curated city tours of Douala, showcasing cultural landmarks and heritage sites.

"We take our clients out... show them the different monuments, our cultural heritage," Tata explained, adding that the hotel also hosts stakeholder dialogues to stimulate industry collaboration. As Cameroon seeks to elevate its tourism profile, Krystal Palace Douala is clearly positioning itself not just as a luxury destination, but as a catalyst for growth in the sector.



AviaDev Africa 2026 strengthens collaboration to advance air connectivity across Africa

AviaDev Africa 2026 brought together more than 550 aviation and tourism professionals from 50 countries in Gaborone, Botswana, from 10–12 June, reinforcing its role as Africa's leading air route development conference. The event attracted representatives from 51 airlines, airports, tourism authorities, financiers, aircraft lessors and aviation service providers, all focused on improving air connectivity, route development and investment across the continent.

Hosted at the Gaborone International Convention Centre, the conference facilitated more than 1,750 pre-scheduled business meetings, with 79 percent of participants reporting that the route development sessions created potential new business opportunities. Unlike traditional industry conferences, AviaDev is structured around direct commercial meetings that connect airlines with airports and destinations to assess new routes, market opportunities and long-term partnerships.

This year's edition expanded its focus by bringing together a broader range of stakeholders, including governments, civil aviation authorities, investors and financial institutions, reflecting

Jon Howell, Founder & CEO of AviaDev



the growing recognition that aviation growth requires coordinated public and private sector collaboration.

A key highlight was a discussion between AviaDev Founder and CEO Jon Howell and Botswana's Vice President and Minister of Finance, Hon. Ndaba Nkosingithi Gaolathe, who emphasized that partnerships are essential to achieving the country's long-term development ambitions. He noted that governments alone cannot

drive sustainable growth, stressing that investors, entrepreneurs, communities and citizens all play a critical role in shaping Botswana's future.

Hosting AviaDev also allowed Botswana to showcase its aviation infrastructure, investment opportunities and commitment to improving regional and international connectivity, which the government considers central to tourism development, trade and economic diversification.

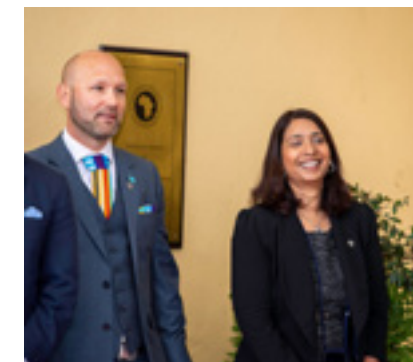


The conference also celebrated industry leadership, with Airlines Association of Southern Africa (AASA) CEO Aaron Munetsi receiving the Ato Girma Wake Lifetime Achievement Award for his decades of contribution to African aviation. Reflecting on his career, Munetsi highlighted the importance of collaboration, saying his leadership philosophy has always focused on ensuring airlines of all sizes have an equal voice while promoting collective growth across the continent.

For tourism destinations, the event reinforced the close relationship between air connectivity and tourism performance. Improved access influences visitor arrivals, investment and competitiveness, making collaboration between airlines, airports and tourism boards increasingly important.

Namibia Tourism Board CEO Sebulon Chicalu described AviaDev as a valuable platform for building relationships and engaging directly with aviation decision-makers. He said discussions around route development and increasing international flights continue to deliver tangible benefits for destinations.

Similarly, Zambia Airports Corporation Limited Managing Director Urvesh Desai described AviaDev as Africa's premier aviation gathering, providing a



unique opportunity for airports, airlines, regulators and suppliers to identify practical solutions for expanding routes and improving airport infrastructure.

A major addition to the 2026 programme was the inaugural AviaDev Finance & Leasing Forum, which examined one of Africa's biggest aviation challenges—access to capital. Bringing together airlines, lessors, financiers and investors, the forum explored aircraft leasing, financing models and investment opportunities to support fleet expansion and sustainable airline growth.

Industry participants welcomed the initiative. Tatenda Karuwa of Solus Insurance Brokers said access to financing remains critical for Africa's aviation future, while Investec's Head of Aviation Finance for Africa, Thato Matsha, noted that AviaDev's ability to bring together airlines, airports, governments and financiers makes it unique within the industry.

International participation also reflected

growing global interest in Africa's aviation market. Jonathan Pollard, Chief Commercial Officer at London Gatwick Airport, said attending AviaDev exceeded expectations and provided valuable opportunities to engage directly with African airlines as the airport seeks to expand its links with the continent.

Beyond formal meetings, delegates highlighted the value of networking opportunities that foster stronger professional relationships and future business partnerships.

As AviaDev Africa 2026 concluded, attention turned to Zambia, which will host the next edition. The conference demonstrated that improving Africa's air connectivity requires more than adding new routes—it depends on sustained collaboration between governments, airlines, airports, tourism authorities and investors to deliver commercially viable solutions that support tourism growth and wider economic development.



Zambia to Host AviaDev Africa 2027

Zambia has been confirmed as the host of AviaDev Africa 2027, with the Zambia Airports Corporation Limited (ZACL) serving as the official host partner. The announcement marks a significant milestone for the country's aviation sector and coincides with the launch of Airlift Zambia, a national initiative aimed at strengthening air connectivity, attracting new international airlines and positioning Zambia as a regional aviation hub.

AviaDev Africa is the continent's only dedicated air service development conference, bringing together airlines, airports, tourism authorities, government officials and aviation service providers to facilitate route development, air service negotiations and strategic partnerships. Previous editions have been held in Windhoek, Zanzibar and Gaborone.

At the heart of Zambia's successful bid is the Airlift Zambia initiative, which seeks to address connectivity gaps by securing additional regional and long-haul services to Europe, the Gulf, Asia and North America. In recent years, Zambia has expanded its airline network with the introduction of services by Qatar Airways, Uganda Airlines, Fastjet Zimbabwe and Eswatini Air. Local carrier Proflight Zambia has also strengthened regional links through new routes connecting Lusaka and Livingstone with Windhoek and Gaborone.

ZACL manages the country's four international airports—Kenneth Kaunda International Airport in Lusaka, Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula International Airport in Livingstone, Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe International Airport in Ndola and Mfuwe Airport. Under the Airlift Zambia strategy, these gateways will support tourism growth by improving access to destinations such as Victoria Falls, South Luangwa National Park and other key wildlife attractions.

The conference comes at a time of strong tourism growth in Zambia. International visitor arrivals have increased from approximately 1.1 million in 2022 to 2.3 million in 2025. The government aims to attract between 2.5 and 3 million international visitors in 2026 as part of



its longer-term objective of building a US\$1 billion tourism industry by 2031.

To support these ambitions, Zambia has allocated K1.5 billion (about US\$55 million) to tourism development in 2026. The funding will support infrastructure upgrades, wildlife conservation, destination marketing and the development of new tourism sites. Tourism currently contributes about seven percent of the country's GDP and employs more than 470,000 people, with further growth expected over the next decade.

Hosting AviaDev Africa is expected to accelerate Zambia's tourism objectives by giving international airlines and tourism stakeholders first-hand exposure to the country's aviation and tourism potential.

ZACL Managing Director Urvesh Desai said Zambia has the infrastructure, government support and ambition to become a stronger regional aviation hub. He noted that hosting AviaDev Africa 2027 would allow the country to

showcase the Airlift Zambia initiative directly to airline decision-makers, adding that every new route secured would strengthen tourism, trade and economic development.

AviaDev Africa CEO and Founder Jon Howell described Zambia as an ideal host, citing its impressive tourism growth despite remaining underserved by international air services. He said the country's combination of strategic vision, expanding tourism sector and untapped aviation potential made it a compelling destination for the conference.

With its Open Skies policy, visa reforms and growing reputation as a premier wildlife and adventure destination, Zambia is increasingly attracting international investment. Hosting AviaDev Africa 2027 is expected to further strengthen the country's position as an emerging aviation and tourism gateway in Southern Africa while creating new opportunities for connectivity, trade and sustainable tourism growth.

Rwanda Doubles Down on Business Events Growth as Kigali Prepares to Host ICCA Congress 2026

At this year's IMEX Frankfurt 2026, Janet Karemera painted an optimistic picture of Rwanda's meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) sector, highlighting consistent growth, expanding continental partnerships and the country's growing influence on the global business events stage.

Speaking to VoyagesAfriq on the sidelines of the trade show, the CEO of the Rwanda Convention Bureau said Rwanda's business events industry continues to thrive despite global economic uncertainties affecting the sector.

"We are very happy as a destination," she said. "With everything happening in the world, the MICE sector and business events are always hit, but we're still seeing consistent growth and we're happy with everything that's going on."

Africa CEO Forum reinforces Kigali's positioning

Karemera reflected on the successful hosting of the recent Africa CEO Forum 2026, describing it as a landmark gathering that further cemented Kigali's position as a premier meetings destination on the continent.

"This is the third time we're hosting it," she explained. "The first one was 2019, the second time was 2024, and now it was back this year."

According to her, the event brought together a broad spectrum of African and international business leaders, creating a unique blend of linguistic and regional representation.

"Our edition really attracts the best from both worlds — French-speaking Africa, English-speaking Africa and Lusophone Africa. It was really well represented," she said.

The forum attracted more than 2,800 delegates, including top executives, corporate leaders and policymakers from across Africa and Europe.

"It was really an exciting event with great speakers and content and great networking opportunities," Karemera added.

Strong start to 2026 with diversified events portfolio

Looking at the year so far, Karemera described Rwanda's performance as steady but promising, building on the momentum generated by major events hosted in 2025, including the UCI Road World Championships.

"We really ended the year on a high note," she noted. "From conferences to sports events to concerts, our destination is really diversified in terms of the types of events we attract."

She highlighted several major events already hosted or scheduled for 2026, including the Inclusive FinTech Forum, the government-backed Nuclear Financing Summit, the Basketball Africa League Finals, and the upcoming Mobile World Congress Kigali.

Karemera also emphasized Rwanda's strategy of developing homegrown event brands instead of relying solely on attracting international meetings.

"We're not just looking at attracting events, we're also creating our own events," she said, pointing to initiatives such as the Africa Coffee and Tea Expo developed with Rwanda Events.

ICCA Congress 2027 expected to elevate Africa's visibility

Rwanda's successful bid to host the ICCA Congress 2027 has significantly boosted the country's international profile within the meetings industry.

Karemera said the announcement generated heightened interest in Rwanda during IMEX Frankfurt.

"I think since we announced as the ICCA hosts next year, that's also heightened our visibility and our destination," she said.

She promised that the congress would go beyond promoting Rwanda alone.

"We're not just showcasing Rwanda, we're showcasing our continent," Karemera stressed. "We're going to be working with the Africa Chapter ICCA to really showcase our destinations and what Africa has been silently building."



She added that the event would combine "content, culture, MICE conversations and events conversations" while demonstrating Africa's growing sophistication in hosting global meetings.

Rwanda welcomes Africa's rise in ICCA rankings

Karemera also celebrated Africa's improving performance in the latest International Congress and Convention Association rankings, where Kigali remains among the continent's leading meetings destinations.

"We're happy, of course," she said. "Kigali is consistently number two, with Cape Town right above us."

She welcomed the emergence of new African destinations such as Kenya and Uganda in the continental rankings, describing it as evidence of Africa's growing competitiveness.

"If we all work together, if people record events properly and take note of what's happening in their industry, they'll be able to showcase what we have and show that we're competitive," she said.

Collaboration over competition

A major theme throughout the interview was continental collaboration. Karemera stressed that Rwanda has consistently shared knowledge and expertise with other African destinations seeking to develop their MICE industries.

"There are so many countries that we've gotten calls with to help them understand how we've grown," she revealed.

She cited partnerships with South African

cities including Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, as well as growing cooperation with Angola, Kenya and Uganda.

"The more cities we have on the continent, the more work we're able to all do together," she said.

Calling out bias against African destinations

Karemera also addressed persistent stereotypes and unequal scrutiny faced by African destinations when bidding for international events.

"We're asked this every single time when we're bidding — how safe is Rwanda?" she said. "Yet the information is out there that Rwanda is one of the safest countries not just on the continent but globally."

She argued that African destinations are often subjected to tougher standards than counterparts elsewhere.

"For some reason with Africa, it's always a question about whether you actually

have the infrastructure," she noted. "Sometimes you find yourself spending more time answering and proving yourself than actually doing the work."

Karemera said awareness campaigns such as Visit Rwanda are helping to change perceptions and attract more international attention to the continent.

ICCA Hub helping build African talent

On capacity building, Karemera highlighted the importance of the ICCA Hub established in Rwanda, describing it as a critical tool for training and upskilling African meetings professionals.

"For the longest time, there was an ICCA Hub in Europe and Latin America, but Africa was missing out," she said.

She explained that the initiative is already benefiting professionals from across the continent, including participants from Zambia, Kenya and Uganda.

"It was important for us to have the right information because when we go to bid,

we're competing with others who have been in this sector for over 20 years," she said.

Karemera added that international trainers visiting Rwanda are often surprised by the progress African destinations have already made.

"They also learn about the new markets," she noted. "How are you an expert in markets you've never been to?"

Ambitious revenue target ahead

Looking to the future, Karemera disclosed that Rwanda aims to generate \$229 million from the MICE sector by 2029.

"I have a lot of work to do. We have a lot of work to do as a destination," she said.

Still, she remains confident that through collaboration, consistency and strategic event development, Rwanda can continue strengthening its position as one of Africa's leading business events hubs.

Sierra Leone Unveils New Conference Centre to Power Its MICE Ambitions

For much of the past three decades, international perceptions of Sierra Leone have been shaped by conflict rather than opportunity. Today, however, the country is writing a different story - one driven by investment, infrastructure and a growing ambition to become a significant player in Africa's tourism and business events landscape.

The commissioning of the President Julius Maada Bio International Conference Centre in Lungi is perhaps the clearest symbol yet of that transformation. Developed by Turkish construction firm FB Group, the state-of-the-art conference complex represents one of the country's most significant investments in business tourism infrastructure and signals Sierra Leone's intention to compete for major regional and international meetings.

Its debut as the venue for the 69th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS

Authority of Heads of State and Government taking place on 19 July 2026 could hardly have been more symbolic. Hosting West Africa's highest political decision-making body in a brand-new, purpose-built facility sends a powerful message: Sierra Leone is no longer simply participating in regional diplomacy - it is positioning itself to host and shape it.

A New Chapter for West African MICE

The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) sector has become one of the world's most valuable tourism segments, generating billions of dollars annually and supporting hotels, airlines, restaurants, transport providers and countless small businesses.

Within West Africa, destinations such as Accra, Abuja and Dakar have traditionally dominated this market, thanks largely

to their established conference infrastructure and accessibility.

Sierra Leone now has a credible platform to join that conversation.

Located adjacent to the recently modernised **Freetown International Airport** in Lungi, the conference centre addresses one of the country's longstanding logistical challenges. For years, delegates arriving in Sierra Leone had to undertake a ferry or water taxi crossing to Freetown before reaching their hotels or conference venues. While the journey across the Sierra Leone River Estuary remains one of the country's most memorable visitor experiences, it also presented logistical complexities for organisers of large international events.

The new facility changes that equation.

International delegates can now step off an aircraft and arrive at a secure, world-



class conference venue within minutes. For event planners, that simplicity represents a significant competitive advantage.

The complex has been designed to international standards, featuring a 1,500-seat plenary hall, high-security presidential meeting facilities capable of accommodating Heads of State and their entourages, a 500-seat banquet hall, multiple breakout rooms and exhibition spaces, as well as landscaped recreational areas. Plans for an adjoining five-star hotel will further strengthen the destination's ability to host large-scale meetings and conventions.

Beyond Conferences

The real value of the development extends well beyond conferences.

Globally, business travellers are among tourism's highest spenders, often spending significantly more than leisure visitors on accommodation, dining, transport and experiences. More importantly, many return later with their families after discovering a destination during a business trip.

That presents Sierra Leone with an enormous opportunity.

Once conference sessions conclude, delegates have easy access to some of West Africa's most spectacular coastal scenery, from Tokeh and Bureh to River Number Two Beach. Nature enthusiasts can explore the Western Area Peninsula National Park or visit the renowned

Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, while those interested in history and culture can discover Freetown's rich heritage and vibrant creative scene.

In this sense, the conference centre becomes far more than a meeting venue. It serves as a gateway - converting business visitors into leisure travellers while generating demand for hotels, restaurants, tour operators, transport companies and local artisans.

This integration of business and leisure tourism has become one of the defining characteristics of successful destinations worldwide, and Sierra Leone appears keen to embrace that model.

Repositioning a Nation

Perhaps the conference centre's greatest significance lies in what it communicates about Sierra Leone itself.

Modern infrastructure does more than provide functionality. It shapes perception.

In international investment circles, quality airports, convention centres and hospitality facilities project confidence, stability and readiness for business. They tell investors and event organisers that a country is prepared to host global conversations and facilitate international commerce.

President Julius Maada Bio captured this aspiration succinctly when he noted that Sierra Leone is creating infrastructure that matches its ambition

- attracting investment, hosting high-level dialogue and showcasing the country's capabilities.

Hosting the ECOWAS Summit as the conference centre's inaugural event reinforces that message. It reflects a nation increasingly confident in its institutions and determined to position itself as a constructive regional leader.

Combined with the upgraded airport and planned hospitality developments, the conference centre also signals the emergence of Lungi as more than simply Sierra Leone's aviation gateway. It is evolving into an integrated business and tourism precinct - an emerging aerotropolis where aviation, hospitality, commerce and investment converge.

For Sierra Leone, this is about far more than a new building.

It is about changing perceptions, diversifying the economy and creating opportunities that extend well beyond the conference hall.

If supported by sustained investment, effective destination marketing and continued improvements in tourism infrastructure, the President Julius Maada Bio International Conference Centre could become one of the catalysts that firmly positions Sierra Leone on the map as one of West Africa's emerging MICE destinations.

For a country determined to redefine its global image, that may prove to be its most important meeting yet.

South Africa's business events sector poised for strategic growth, says SANCB's Corné Koch

South Africa's business events industry is entering a phase of strategic expansion, with a renewed focus on regional inclusion, sustainability, targeted international bidding and stronger partnerships across the tourism value chain.

This was the assessment of Corné Koch, Convention Bureau Officer at the South African National Convention Bureau (SANCB), during an interview with VoyagesAfriq on the sidelines of IMEX Frankfurt in Germany.

Just six months into her role, Koch described the experience as "wonderful, but very busy," noting that she stepped into office during one of the bureau's busiest periods, dominated by preparations for key trade platforms.

"I started in a place where we were planning our annual two trade shows, so that makes it hard to focus on other things outside of just managing the trade platforms," she explained. "But it's been a wonderful journey."

She stressed the importance of South Africa's flagship tourism trade shows not only for the country's positioning, but for the African continent as a whole.

"We need them in South Africa for our positioning of our sector and our industry, but also for the continent, because we're very focused on using those also to grow more tourism into South Africa and the continent as well," Koch said.

MICE sector showing steady momentum

According to Koch, the South African meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) sector is experiencing healthy momentum, buoyed by seasonal demand and a gradual strengthening of international and domestic activity.

"My overview is that we're very fortunate this time. The time I started is kind of the high season for MICE in South Africa, because we are in our summer season," she said, pointing to strong hotel occupancy levels and a

busy conferencing calendar.

While the market is growing steadily, Koch acknowledged that there is still significant work to be done in attracting more international association meetings and diversifying the size and spread of events hosted across the country.

"There's still lots of work to do to attract more international meetings," she noted. "You are looking at the large conferences, but they don't always come along, so your focus would be on the domestic market, the frequency of those, even attracting the smaller events."

A major part of SANCB's strategy, she revealed, is to decentralise business events away from traditional urban hubs such as Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban toward smaller towns, regional destinations and township economies.

"The other focus is to push events out into the regions, outside of city centres, because they also have great facilities," Koch explained. "There's a lot of work happening on that level through the Bureau, through working with the regions and the provinces, to make sure that there's a sustainability factor in the MICE market."

She added that SANCB has established incentive mechanisms to encourage organisers to stage meetings outside the main metropolitan areas.

"We do have an incentive programme that we support, those event planners, to actually move a business event outside of the main centre into what we call the villages or the townships, or the smaller dorps in South Africa."

Recovery and growth indicators encouraging

Koch pointed to encouraging tourism figures as evidence that South Africa's tourism and events industries are stabilising and growing.

"We've reached the 10 million mark, which is on par with what was before the pandemic," she said, referencing international arrival statistics recorded



Corné Koch, Chief Convention Bureau Officer at the South African National Convention Bureau (SANCB)

in December.

She further disclosed that between January and March this year, South Africa recorded a 1.9 percent increase in arrivals compared to the same period last year.

"Our numbers are looking good compared to last year this time," she said. "Year on year, the numbers have been growing."

However, she cautioned that the industry still needs more robust data collection to fully understand the wider business events market and unlock stronger growth opportunities.

Sustainability beyond the environment

On sustainability, Koch argued that the conversation around business events must go beyond environmental considerations to include economic empowerment and long-term business viability.

"I think we've just scratched the surface

still," she admitted. "I'm not very happy still that we've reached what we think we can reach for."

She revealed that following Africa's Travel Indaba, SANCB and partners commissioned a benchmarking study to evaluate the sustainability impact of events and exhibitions.

"You're always thinking exhibitions are wonderful platforms, but they aren't very good for the environment," she said. "So, we have to try and give some ideas and toolkits to visitors to look into practices like that."

Koch also emphasised the importance of supporting small businesses and tourism entrepreneurs through trade show participation and incubation programmes run by South Africa's Department of Tourism.

"Sustainability in my mind is not only just environmental sustainability," she stressed. "We're talking about business sustainability, because you can't invest in supporting and then you don't change."

The SANCB official noted that organisers regularly follow up with

"The other focus is to push events out into the regions, outside of city centres, because they also have great facilities"

participating SMEs to determine whether attendance at trade exhibitions translates into actual business conversion.

ICCA rankings strengthen destination positioning

South Africa's continued presence in global association meeting rankings was another highlight for the bureau at IMEX Frankfurt.

Koch welcomed the latest rankings, which continue to place South Africa among Africa's leading business events destinations, while urging stakeholders to contextualise the results carefully.

"We are always very fortunate to come up in those rankings," she said. "It really helps us with our marketing efforts internationally a lot."

She noted that the rankings often focus on international association meetings and therefore do not fully capture the diversity of meetings taking place across the country.

"We see meetings in the Kruger National Park, in Paarl, in Stellenbosch, and that is for us important in how we position South Africa going forward."

Cricket World Cup presents major tourism opportunity

Looking ahead, Koch expressed optimism about the tourism opportunities tied to the upcoming ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, which South Africa will co-host alongside Zimbabwe and Namibia.

She said preparations are beginning to gather momentum, with SANCB set to work closely with organisers and regional partners.

"It's a whole-of-tourism approach," Koch explained. "We are going to be working closely with the local organising committee for Cricket World Cup."

She added that South African tourism

authorities are already aligning content and marketing campaigns to target key source markets expected to travel for the tournament.

"There will be alignment in terms of influencing the narrative, the content, and having bespoke campaigns to particular markets that we know would come out for the Cricket World Cup," she said.

Investments and partnerships shaping future growth

Koch also highlighted several major tourism investments expected to strengthen South Africa's attractiveness as both a leisure and business events destination.

Among them is the upcoming Club Med development on South Africa's south coast, which she described as "a major economic incubator" capable of driving both leisure and MICE travel.

She additionally referenced a multi-billion-dollar redevelopment investment into Cape Town's iconic V&A Waterfront precinct.

"These investments place focus on South Africa as a destination," she said. "So we can use that to influence MICE."

Koch stressed that SANCB is also revisiting partnerships with airlines, tourism associations and private sector stakeholders to maximise return on investment and improve accessibility into the destination.

He identified India and China as particularly important aviation and tourism growth markets.

"You have to start looking at those airlines that are not coming here yet. India, China – very important for us to have those links," she said.

Despite global geopolitical uncertainties and disruptions affecting air travel, Koch maintained that South Africa's competitive advantage remains rooted in the destination experience itself.

"We are still promoting what you can get in South Africa that you can't get in other destinations," she concluded. "That is the food, the people, culture, and your connection to the continent through South Africa as well."



Mozambique makes IMEX Frankfurt debut as national MICE strategy nears approval

Discovered on the Indian Ocean, Mozambique is an emerging and accessible destination for business events, offering modern hotels, quality conference venues and a growing professional support services industry. From the vibrant capital of Maputo to the pristine beaches of Vilanculos and the historic charm of Ilha de Mocimboa, Mozambique delivers unforgettable experiences beyond the boardroom. Ocean adventures, diverse wildlife, natural beauty and rich cultural heritage combine to create memorable and inspiring high-impact programmes for meetings, conferences and incentive travel.

Mozambique has made its first-ever appearance at IMEX Frankfurt, using the global meetings industry marketplace to signal its formal entry into the international MICE arena and to begin laying the foundations for a national convention bureau.

Speaking on Day Two of IMEX Frankfurt 2026, Fredson Bacar, Secretary of State for Tourism, said the country's participation marked a strategic turning point as Mozambique prepares to operationalise a newly developed national MICE strategy.

"This is the very first time that Mozambique is participating in this mega-event for the MICE industry," Bacar said. "Our main objective is to establish critical linkages for our new proposals."

Fredson Bacar, Secretary of State for Tourism- Mozambique



According to the Secretary of State, Mozambique's national MICE strategy has already been completed and is expected to receive formal government approval next month. Once approved, the country will move to officially establish its first Convention Bureau – a process that is already underway.

A Convention Bureau in motion

Bacar confirmed that preparatory work has begun, including stakeholder engagement, capacity building and technical training across both the public and private sectors.

"We are working closely with consultants and involving a wide range of stakeholders – hotels, venues, airlines, municipalities, event organizers, technology providers and other private sector service providers," he said. "The Convention Bureau will be the lead institution integrating all these actors."

Mozambique has also taken an important institutional step by becoming a member of the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), enabling the country to access global data, expertise and networks while identifying the types of international meetings best suited to its destinations.

With that framework taking shape, Bacar said IMEX Frankfurt was proving

invaluable as a learning and relationship-building platform.

"IMEX allows us to acquire knowledge from different sectors and learn from countries with extensive experience in this industry," he noted.

Building African and global partnerships

During the first two days of the show, Mozambique's delegation has already held meetings with several established convention bureaus, including those from Portugal, Uganda, South Africa, Rwanda and Brazil, with hosted buyers and event organizers from South Africa, Mexico, Spain and others, these engagements are now translating into concrete cooperation plans.

"We are preparing proposals for Memorandums of Understanding with Uganda and Rwanda," Bacar revealed. "We already have a tourism development agreement with Rwanda, so our immediate focus is on elaborating the specific action plans to bring that agreement to life."

The emphasis on partnerships reflects Mozambique's intention to grow its business events sector through regional and South-South collaboration, rather than competing in isolation.

"Our presence here opens minds, creates

stronger destination awareness and lets the global market know that Mozambique is officially open for business events," he said.

Events already secured

While the Convention Bureau is still being finalised, Mozambique has already secured several major meetings that will anchor its early MICE pipeline.

In September 2026, the country will host a high-level travel technology summit (Africa TravelTech Summit and Expo), focused on emerging and high-tech sectors. In 2027, Mozambique is set to collaborate with Portugal on a major congress for travel and tourism agency associations.

Beyond association meetings, the government is also targeting corporate events, particularly those linked to Mozambique's growing oil and gas, agriculture and other economic sectors.

"This is the very first time that Mozambique is participating in this mega-event for the MICE industry. Our main objective is to establish critical linkages for our new proposals."

"We are starting discussions with major corporations connected to oil and gas," Bacar said. "We want to build a specialised structure to attract niche corporate events because we believe the MICE industry will generate significant economic returns for the country."

FIKANI set for October relaunch

The Secretary of State also confirmed that Mozambique's flagship domestic tourism expo, FIKANI, will take place in October

this year, with a fundamentally new model.

"We are completely changing the vision behind FIKANI," he said. "It will no longer be an event organized strictly by the government."

Under the new approach, the private sector will take the lead in organizing, promoting and delivering the event, while the government shifts into a regulatory and enabling role – a move aligned with global best practice for business events.

"This is a business event, so the promotional and organizational execution belongs in the hands of the private sector," Bacar added.

As IMEX Frankfurt continues, Mozambique's debut appearance is being closely watched as another example of an African destination moving deliberately from strategy to structure – and from aspiration to action – in the global meetings industry.

Sierra Leone's Tourism Ministry signs an MoU with Passporter to advance AI-Driven Tourism Marketing

In a major step towards positioning Sierra Leone as a leading tourism destination in Africa, the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Passporter Limited, an internationally recognised digital tourism company, to pilot an AI-powered destination marketing platform.

The partnership supports the Ministry's vision of transforming tourism into a leading economic diversification sector by strengthening Sierra Leone's digital presence, improving destination visibility, simplifying travel planning, curating tourism packages, and generating valuable tourism data to inform policy and investment. The three-month pilot will introduce, for the first time, intelligent trip-planning software, big data analytics, and dedicated digital marketing and advertising tools for Sierra Leone's tourism sector.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Hon. Nabeela Farida Tunis, emphasised that artificial intelligence and data-driven marketing are reshaping the global tourism industry, and Sierra Leone must embrace these innovations to remain competitive. She noted that while the investment is



significant, the long-term gains in visitor arrivals, tourism revenue and sector growth are expected to far outweigh the initial costs. She further announced plans to engage tourism and hospitality businesses to support the project's expansion beyond the pilot phase, recognising them as the primary beneficiaries.

Passporter CEO Diego Rodriguez Royo explained that the partnership followed a recommendation from UN Tourism, reflecting the company's successful work

across Africa, Asia and South America. He said the pilot will integrate Passporter's AI Trip Planner into the Ministry's website, increase Sierra Leone's visibility across key international markets, and build local capacity by training Sierra Leoneans to manage and further develop the platform.

The MoU was signed on behalf of the Ministry by Fatmata Milda Carew, General Manager of the Sierra Leone National Tourist Board, and by Diego Rodriguez Royo, CEO of Passporter Limited.

Hamza Farooqui

Inside the Investor's Brain: Hamza Farooqui Calls for shift from entitlement to execution at UN Tourism CAF

At the 69th Meeting of the UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa (CAF), held at the Kempinski Seychelles Resort in Mahe, Seychelles, one of the most compelling interventions came not from a policy podium but from an unfiltered fireside conversation with Hamza Farooqui, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of South Africa based Millat Group.

In a session aptly titled Inside the Investor's Brain, Farooqui challenged African tourism leaders to confront a hard truth: the continent's tourism promise will remain unrealised unless governments abandon entitlement-driven thinking and create environments where private capital can thrive through meritocracy, policy certainty and regional cooperation.

Speaking with Linh Vu, Special Adviser to the UN Tourism Secretary-General, Farooqui offered a rare, ground-level investor perspective on what it truly

takes to build globally competitive tourism assets in Africa – without leaning on state guarantees or development finance cushions.

Moving beyond State dependence

Opening the conversation at the Kempinski Seychelles Resort, Farooqui laid bare the financing reality behind his group's luxury hospitality portfolio. Millat Group's projects, he explained, have been funded entirely through equity and conventional commercial debt, deliberately bypassing government-backed Development Finance Institutions (DFIs).

"We don't have a government DFI lending to our business," Farooqui said. "And that's an important message. No one is coming to change the fortune of Africa. African entrepreneurs need to emerge. And tourism Ministers need to understand that you must pick winners, not losers."

He warned that heavy reliance on state-led capital often undermines both discipline and delivery in tourism development. "When sponsors say, 'Government will fund it', that formula breeds entitlement," he argued. "Entitlement breeds complacency. And where there is complacency, there is no meritocracy."

Luxury, Data and the African Proof Point

Pressed by Vu for performance data, particularly from Millat Group's experience operating under the demanding standards of the Park Hyatt brand, Farooqui offered hard metrics rather than marketing rhetoric.

He explained that while a Revenue Generation Index (RGI) of 100 indicates market parity – and 110 reflects strong outperformance – one of his flagship properties exceeded benchmarks so dramatically that it raised red flags at global headquarters.

“Effective immediately, all holders of African passports travelling to Ghana for business or tourism will apply for visas exclusively via the new online e-Visa platform, and they will pay no visa fee”

"At one point, the data coming into Chicago showed an RGI of over 1,200 per cent," he recalled. "They had to ask, 'What is this?'"

The hotel, he noted, consistently achieved premium seasonal rates between US\$500 and US\$700 per night, competing directly with – and outperforming – established luxury brands such as Four Seasons.

"This validates the thesis of right-sizing," Farooqui said. "Luxury is a viable segment in Africa. If you get the product right, capitalised correctly and underwritten properly, the market responds. But you must choose right."

Re-centering Tourism in National Economies

Farooqui's most pointed critique was reserved for how tourism ministries are

positioned within government. "One of my biggest pain points is that tourism ministries are treated as peripheral," he said. "They should sit at the heart of the economic cluster."

He urged Ministers to assert their convening power with heads of state and central economic agencies, arguing that tourism's cross-cutting impact on jobs, infrastructure, skills and foreign exchange places it firmly at the centre of development planning.

Rather than chasing fragmented initiatives, he advised ministries to focus on a tight investor checklist: credible sponsors, structured capital and absolute policy certainty.

"Find three or four things you can truly manage," he said. "Once you build confidence around those, capital will follow."

The case for Pan-African Corridors

Looking beyond South Africa, Farooqui emphasised that Africa's greatest tourism opportunity lies in cross-border collaboration, not national isolation. "Africa is the strategy," he said. "South Africa is just where we started."

He noted that long-haul travellers rarely visit a single destination, pointing to how guests at Park Hyatt properties

often use South Africa as a gateway to Zimbabwe's Victoria Falls and neighbouring countries. "If Ministers stay in silos – 'me and mine' – we will fail our people," he warned.

Vu observed that with 17 Ministers and 27 Member States present in Seychelles, the CAF platform offered a rare chance to dismantle these silos and translate attendance into tangible regional outcomes.

Selling Africa to Global Capital

The session ended with a light but telling challenge: how would Farooqui pitch Africa to BlackRock Chairman Larry Fink in a 90-second elevator ride?

His answer was characteristically blunt.

"If you want real growth, real people and real opportunity, Africa is where the story is," he said. "If global capital continues to reduce Africa to sovereign bonds and opportunistic plays, it is doing itself – and the world – a disservice."

Closing the dialogue, Farooqui drew a parallel between governance and hospitality.

"Politics, like tourism, is a service business," he concluded. "If we commit to unconditional service, we can transform this sector – and this continent."

Hamza Farooqui and Linh Vu

Ghana launches e-visa platform, scraps visa fees for African travellers

Ghana has officially launched its first electronic visa (e-Visa) system, marking a major shift in the country's travel and immigration regime as the government moves to position the West African nation as a more accessible destination for tourism, trade and investment.

The new platform, unveiled by President John Dramani Mahama in Accra on Africa Day, allows travellers to apply for visas entirely online without visiting Ghanaian embassies or consulates. The initiative is expected to significantly reduce paperwork, shorten processing times and simplify entry procedures for visitors.

A key highlight of the new policy is the waiver of visa fees for all African passport holders travelling to Ghana for business or tourism.

"Effective immediately, all holders of African passports travelling to Ghana for business or tourism will apply for visas exclusively via the new online e-Visa platform, and they will pay no visa fee," President Mahama announced at the launch ceremony.

The launch forms part of the Mahama administration's broader "Ghana Open for Business" agenda, which seeks to

modernise public services and deepen Ghana's attractiveness as a regional hub for commerce, conferences and leisure travel.

Foreign Affairs Minister Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa said the new digital visa system was developed in response to longstanding complaints from travellers and international partners about delays and cumbersome application processes under the previous system.

According to him, Cabinet approved the reform as part of wider efforts to modernise Ghana's immigration architecture and improve investor confidence. He noted that the new online platform aligns with President Mahama's vision of creating a more efficient and welcoming environment for international visitors.

“Effective immediately, all holders of African passports travelling to Ghana for business or tourism will apply for visas exclusively via the new online e-Visa platform, and they will pay no visa fee”



H.E. John Dramani Mahama,
President of the Republic of Ghana

Under the new arrangement, visa applications can now be completed electronically, eliminating the need for physical paperwork, courier submissions and lengthy embassy appointments. Officials say applicants who submit the required documentation online should receive visa decisions within 48 hours.

The e-Visa system is also expected to strengthen Ghana's push for deeper continental integration at a time when African countries are increasingly looking to ease mobility across borders under initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the African Union's Agenda 2063 framework.

The visa-free waiver for Africans, first announced by President Mahama in April during a bilateral meeting with Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa, has been widely interpreted as a symbolic and practical step toward promoting intra-African travel and economic integration.

The launch on Africa Day adds symbolic significance to the reform, underscoring Ghana's longstanding pan-African identity and its efforts to ease movement across the continent. Ghana joins a growing number of African countries leveraging digital visa systems to attract tourists, investors and conference delegates in an increasingly competitive global travel market.



Robben Island Leverages Heritage to Attract High-Value MICE Business

At Africa's Travel Indaba 2026 in Durban, one of South Africa's most recognisable heritage attractions made a compelling case for why history should not only be preserved but also leveraged as a driver of tourism growth and business events. Robben Island Museum used the continent's premier travel trade show to showcase new visitor experiences while repositioning itself as a destination that seamlessly blends heritage, leisure tourism and high-value incentive travel.

Speaking to VoyagesAfriq on the sidelines of Indaba, Siphuxolo Mazwi, Senior Manager for Marketing and Tourism at Robben Island Museum, said the annual trade show remains one of the museum's most important platforms for reaching new international markets and broadening perceptions of the iconic site.

"Robben Island tells the story that shaped the liberated South Africa we live in today," Mazwi said. "Indaba gives us a space to tell that story differently - not only to leisure tourists, but also to corporates, incentive planners and buyers looking for experiences with depth and meaning."

Bringing new stories to Life

This year's participation also allowed the museum to introduce new attractions designed to enrich the visitor experience. Among them are newly installed statues and a memorial wall bearing the names of former political prisoners, additions that deepen the interpretation of one of Africa's most significant heritage sites.

"People came to our stand wanting to hear about what is new on Robben Island - new ways of engaging with the history, the memory and the legacy," Mazwi explained. "The story continues to evolve."

The museum believes these additions will encourage repeat visits while giving international travellers fresh reasons to explore a destination already synonymous with South Africa's democratic journey.

Beyond Leisure Tourism

While Robben Island continues to

attract visitors eager to understand South Africa's history, the museum is increasingly targeting the meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) market.

Mazwi said organisations are seeking experiences that go beyond traditional meeting venues, creating opportunities for Robben Island to offer leadership retreats, executive programmes and purpose-driven incentive travel.

"When companies bring their teams to Robben Island, it is not simply a guided tour," she said. "It becomes a leadership and resilience masterclass."

A defining element of these experiences is the opportunity for delegates to interact with former political prisoners, whose personal stories provide valuable lessons in leadership, perseverance and reconciliation.

According to Mazwi, organisations increasingly want incentive programmes that inspire reflection and strengthen organisational culture rather than reward travel centred solely on luxury.

Tailored experiences for every Group

Rather than offering fixed incentive packages, Robben Island works closely with destination management companies and corporate organisers to create bespoke programmes.

"We do not offer one-size-fits-all packages," Mazwi said. "Depending on whether the focus is leadership, resilience, unity or reflection, we tailor the experience to suit each organisation."

Beyond its association with the anti-apartheid struggle, the island's history encompasses indigenous resistance to colonialism, military defence during the Second World War and centuries of social transformation, allowing organisers to build programmes around a variety of themes.

Expanding Global Reach

Indaba also proved valuable in expanding Robben Island's international reach. Mazwi revealed that the museum established new relationships with



buyers from across Africa as well as emerging Asian markets including China, Japan, South Korea and India.

"These relationships are important because they help us tell the story of Robben Island and South Africa in markets that are still discovering the richness of our destination," she noted.

Recent engagements with diplomatic missions, universities and international organisations further highlight the museum's growing role as a venue for leadership immersion, education and cultural dialogue.

Heritage With Contemporary Relevance

As African destinations seek to diversify their tourism offerings and attract higher-value visitors, Robben Island is demonstrating that heritage can be far more than a leisure attraction.

By combining authentic storytelling with leadership development, educational experiences and bespoke incentive programmes, the museum is broadening its appeal to both leisure travellers and the global business events market.

For South Africa, the approach illustrates how iconic heritage assets can evolve beyond their historical significance to become powerful tourism products that generate economic value while ensuring the stories that shaped the nation continue to resonate with new generations of travellers.



UN Tourism Secretary General Shaikha Al Nuwais and
Sierra Leone's Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs

Sierra Leone Positions for Historic 3rd UN Tourism Africa Gastronomy Forum at CAF in Seychelles

Sierra Leone has reaffirmed its readiness to host the third edition of the UN Tourism Africa Gastronomy Forum, using the 69th Meeting of the UN Tourism Commission for Africa (CAF) in Seychelles as a strategic platform to consolidate partnerships, align policy priorities and demonstrate preparedness for the continental event.

Led by the Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Mrs Nabeela Farida Tunis Sierra Leone's delegation joined tourism ministers, senior government officials, development partners and private sector leaders from across Africa to deliberate on the future of tourism development on the continent. The forum is scheduled to take place from 2 to 4 December, 2026.

The UN Tourism Africa Gastronomy Forum has quickly emerged as a flagship thematic platform within Africa's tourism calendar. The inaugural forum was hosted in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe in 2024, followed by the second edition in Arusha, Tanzania in 2025. Sierra Leone is now preparing to host the third edition, marking a significant milestone

in the evolution of gastronomy tourism in Africa.

Importantly, the upcoming forum will be the first to be held since the appointment of Shaikha Al Nuwais as Secretary-General of UN Tourism, adding further strategic weight and institutional significance to the event.

Gastronomy, Human Capital and Tourism's Future

Discussions at CAF in Seychelles focused heavily on human capital development, sustainability, innovation and policy coherence — core pillars that align closely with Sierra Leone's vision for the gastronomy forum.

According to Minister Tunis, the Seychelles meeting provided a critical opportunity to deepen engagement with UN Tourism officials and African counterparts on how gastronomy can be leveraged as a driver of skills development, job creation, cultural preservation and inclusive growth.

"Gastronomy sits at the intersection of culture, tourism, agriculture and the



creative economy," she noted. "Our objective is to ensure that the forum goes beyond celebration of cuisine to focus on people — chefs, farmers, entrepreneurs, young creatives and communities — who are central to tourism's future in Africa."

Sierra Leone's preparations for the forum are expected to emphasise culinary education and training, women and youth participation, local value chain development, and the integration of food culture into destination branding and tourism storytelling.

By hosting the third edition, Sierra

Leone aims to build on the momentum established in Victoria Falls and Arusha, while introducing new perspectives rooted in West Africa's culinary heritage and community-based tourism experiences.

At CAF, the Sierra Leone delegation held a series of engagements to outline its readiness across logistics, venues, stakeholder coordination and programme development, while drawing lessons from previous host countries.

The broader CAF deliberations also examined Africa's tourism resilience in the face of global shocks, climate change, skills gaps and evolving traveller preferences — reinforcing the relevance of specialised platforms such

as the gastronomy forum in diversifying Africa's tourism offer.

Minister Tunis expressed appreciation to Seychelles for hosting the CAF meeting, praising its organisation and hospitality, as well as the contributions of fellow African ministers whose insights enriched the discussions.

She also commended UN Tourism for its leadership in advancing thematic tourism development across Africa, noting that the Africa Gastronomy Forum has become an important vehicle for collaboration, knowledge exchange and continental positioning.

As Sierra Leone advances preparations to host the third Africa Gastronomy



Forum, outcomes from the Seychelles CAF meeting are expected to shape final programming and partnerships — ensuring the event delivers lasting impact for African tourism stakeholders and host communities alike.

Hyatt Announces Plans for Grand Hyatt Victoria Falls The Kingdom

Set to open in late 2027 after an extensive refurbishment of the building, Grand Hyatt Victoria Falls The Kingdom will be the second Hyatt branded hotel in Zimbabwe

Hyatt Hotels Corporation announced last week that Grand Hyatt Victoria Falls The Kingdom is expected to open in late 2027 following the signing of a management agreement between a Hyatt affiliate and an affiliate of Albwardy Investments LLC. Located in Zimbabwe's Victoria Falls, home to the world-famous waterfall of the same name, the hotel will become the second Hyatt branded hotel in the country.

Originally built in 1966 and redeveloped in 1999, the property will undergo an extensive renovation and design transformation in line with the Grand Hyatt brand, creating a captivating destination within a destination that celebrates both the iconic and intimate moments through thoughtful details and grand experiences. The hotel will give World of Hyatt members and guests the opportunity to visit and stay in another renowned leisure travel destination. Upon opening as Grand Hyatt Victoria Falls The Kingdom, World of Hyatt members will be able to earn and redeem World of Hyatt benefits.

Nestled in the heart of Victoria Falls, which is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and locally known as Mosi-oa-Tunya or "The Smoke That Thunders", the future Grand Hyatt Victoria Falls The Kingdom will offer a distinctive gateway to one of the world's most iconic destinations. The location of the hotel will place guests within a vibrant and compact tourism hub, with only a five-minute walk to the Victoria Falls rainforest and easy access to regional safari circuits, guided tours, restaurants and cultural experiences.

"We are delighted to collaborate with Albwardy Investments to bring the Grand Hyatt brand to Victoria Falls," said Ludwig Bouldoukian, Regional Vice President, Development, Middle East and Africa, Hyatt. "With its landmark location just moments from the Victoria Falls rainforest, this property represents a truly exceptional setting. This signing marks a significant milestone in Hyatt's continued expansion across Africa, reinforcing our commitment on growing our brand presence in the region and providing World of Hyatt members more travel choice in inspiring destinations."

"We are proud to collaborate with Hyatt on plans to introduce the Grand Hyatt brand to Victoria Falls," said Mr.

Ali Albwardy, Chairman, Albwardy Investments. "As one of the destination's most established hospitality landmarks for more than 60 years, the property holds significant heritage and potential within Zimbabwe. Through its transformation under the Grand Hyatt brand, and with plans to reopen in late 2027, we aim to create an elevated hospitality experience that celebrates the culture, energy and significance of Victoria Falls, further reinforcing our commitment to Africa's hospitality sector."

The property is expected to feature 245 thoughtfully appointed guestrooms and an extensive range of facilities, including 1,800 sqm (19,375 sq ft) of meeting and event space, three dining venues, a spa and fitness center and a grand lobby lounge. The hotel will offer a dynamic mix of culinary, leisure and wellness experiences along with welcoming service that creates an elevated experience for all guests. As the closest hotel to the entrance of the Victoria Falls national park on the Zimbabwean side of the border, the property is ideally located near the area's key attractions. It is also a short 20-minute drive from Victoria Falls International Airport, making it well suited for leisure, events and business travellers alike.

Cameroon International Tourism Fair Soars to New Heights as Global Interest Surges in Limbe



The fifth edition of the Cameroon International Tourism Fair (CITF), held from 19–21 March in Limbe, has been hailed as a resounding success, marking a turning point in the event's ambition to position Cameroon as a leading tourism destination in Central Africa. Organised by Flora Travel and Tours and led by its CEO, Agatha Iyok, the fair recorded an unprecedented surge in international participation and industry engagement.

In an interview with *VoyagesAfriq*, Agatha reflected on the journey of CITF, describing the milestone fifth edition as the result of years of persistence, strategic networking, and unwavering belief in Cameroon's tourism potential.

A vision realised through persistence

From its inception, CITF has aimed to attract international tour operators to experience Cameroon firsthand and become ambassadors for the



destination. However, achieving that vision has not been without challenges.

"That has been our objective from the very beginning... but it has been very difficult to convince international tour

operators to be part of this event," Agatha revealed. "I think the consistency really helped... before I could even open my mouth to invite them, most of them had already said yes."

That consistency has now paid off. From hosting just one international delegate in earlier editions—and none in the fourth—the 2026 fair welcomed approximately 43 international delegates, a dramatic leap that underscores growing confidence in the event.

Agatha attributed this breakthrough to years of building relationships across global tourism expos: "The networking that I've built from the first edition to this fifth edition helped these tour operators to be part of this event."

Beyond the fair: Experiencing Cameroon firsthand

A key highlight of this year's CITF was the immersive experience offered to international delegates, who participated in four days of familiarisation (FAM) tours following the event. These excursions allowed buyers to explore Cameroon's diverse attractions—from coastal landscapes to cultural heritage sites—deepening their understanding of the destination.

The strategy aligns with CITF's core mission: to let visitors "live the experience" and return home as advocates for Cameroon tourism.

Passion and purpose driving success

At the heart of CITF's growth is Agatha's personal passion for tourism, which she describes as all-encompassing.

"I speak tourism, I eat tourism, I breathe tourism, I sleep tourism... everything around me is tourism," she said. "For me to succeed, I have to think big, dream big, act big, and pray big."

She also emphasised the role of faith and resilience in overcoming obstacles: "It has not been an easy ride... but I believe this is my purpose. That is the force pushing me."

Empowering the next generation

One of the standout features of the 2026 edition was the strong involvement of young people, particularly students from the University of Buea. Their participation reflects a deliberate effort by CITF organisers to nurture future tourism professionals.

"The youth are the owners of the future," Agatha noted. "We are trying to teach them entrepreneurial skills so they can

be job creators, not job seekers."

She highlighted the emergence of tourism studies within academic institutions as a positive step, while stressing the need to shift perceptions about the industry's potential: "They don't know that tourism is a vibrant industry where they can find satisfaction and opportunity."

Limbe: The ideal host city

Despite suggestions to rotate the event to other destinations, Iyok remains firmly committed to Limbe as CITF's home.

Describing the city as "Cameroon in miniature," she pointed to its unique blend of attractions: proximity to Mount Cameroon—the highest peak in Central and West Africa—historic sites like Bimbia, black sand beaches, rainforest ecosystems, and the iconic Limbe Botanic Garden.

"Limbe deserves CITF... it has everything that represents Cameroon in one place," she affirmed.

Positive feedback and continental ambitions

Feedback from delegates has been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing a desire to see CITF evolve into a flagship tourism event for Central Africa.

"Everyone wants CITF to be very successful... it represents promoting inter-African travel," Iyok said. "I see Africa fighting for Africa. Africa is rising."

This pan-African spirit is expected to fuel

future growth, as participants commit to bringing more partners and expanding the event's reach.

With momentum firmly on its side, CITF is already setting its sights on an even larger edition next year. Notably, the fair will now be held in March going forward, moving away from its traditional November schedule.

"I already see it big... everyone is willing to bring another person. It's come one, come two, come all," Agatha said enthusiastically.

Cameroon: "Africa in Miniature"

For Agatha, the success of CITF ultimately reinforces Cameroon's unique identity as "Africa in miniature"—a destination offering the continent's diversity within a single country.

Reflecting on the experiences of international buyers, she admitted that even she had underestimated some of the country's assets.

"This event has proven to me that some of the things you were ignoring are what you can use to position Cameroon," she said, citing destinations like Kribi, Mount Cameroon, and Limbe's coastal attractions.

Her message to the world is clear:

"Cameroon, a single destination—you see all of Africa."

As CITF continues to grow in stature, it is fast becoming not just a tourism fair, but a powerful platform redefining how Central Africa engages with the global travel industry.



Beyond the Beaches:

How Eden Bleu is Helping Position Seychelles as Africa's Emerging MICE Destination

For decades, Seychelles has occupied an enviable place on the global tourism map. Crystal-clear waters, powder-white beaches, granite boulders and secluded luxury resorts have made the Indian Ocean archipelago synonymous with romance and leisure.

But tucked away on Eden Island, just minutes from Seychelles International Airport and the capital, Victoria, a different tourism story is quietly unfolding.

It is a story about boardrooms instead of beaches, conferences alongside cocktails, and a determined effort to convince the world that Seychelles can be just as successful hosting business events as it is honeymooners.

At the centre of that story is Eden Bleu Hotel.

"We were the first hotel dedicated to the corporate market in Seychelles," says General Manager Manuel Policarpo, who has led the property since 2016.

For the Portuguese hotelier, whose hospitality journey has taken him through Portugal, Angola, Mozambique and now Seychelles, the past decade has been about changing perceptions.

"It has been hard work because everybody connects Seychelles with leisure, sunshine and beautiful beaches," he tells *VoyagesAfriq*. "When we attended international trade shows, we spent more than half of our time explaining that we are not a beach hotel or a resort. We are a business conference hotel."

That message, however, is beginning to resonate.

A Destination Growing Beyond Leisure

According to Policarpo, international buyers are increasingly recognising that Seychelles offers much more than idyllic holiday escapes.

"In recent years it has become much better because we are getting more international conferences," he explains. "People now know they can choose Seychelles as a MICE destination."

The hotel's location has become one of its strongest selling points.

Positioned on the exclusive Eden Island development, Eden Bleu sits barely ten minutes from the international airport and five minutes from Victoria, giving delegates quick access to government offices, financial institutions, restaurants and leisure attractions.

For organisers, that accessibility is complemented by purpose-built facilities rarely associated with island destinations.

The hotel's ballroom accommodates between 250 and 280 delegates and is complemented by four fully equipped boardrooms fitted with interactive touchscreen technology. Flexible partitioning allows simultaneous events to run within the same venue, while a large in-house catering operation supports everything from executive meetings to gala dinners and state functions.

"We tailor-make every event," Policarpo explains. "Whether it is lawyers, sustainability organisations, government meetings or corporate conferences, we adjust the facilities, the technology and the service according to the client's needs."

He believes the hotel's service standards are comparable with established international business destinations.



Manuel Policarpo, General Manager, Eden Bleu Hotel

"We compete with destinations like Dubai and some places in Europe because we have the facilities and the service at the same level."

Building Confidence in African MICE

Perhaps more significant than the bricks and mortar is the investment in people.

While many hotels train staff primarily for leisure tourism, Eden Bleu has built its operational culture around business events.

"Our focus during training has always been based on the business and conference market," Policarpo says. "Our staff understand the requirements of conferences, exhibitions and corporate meetings."

That specialisation has earned recognition beyond the hotel itself.

Its kitchens regularly provide outdoor

catering for major functions, including government events and services for other hotels, demonstrating both scale and operational capability.

"It is recognition from the local authorities," he notes. "We are prepared to offer those services whenever they are needed."

Selling Seychelles to the Meetings World

Winning business, however, requires more than facilities.

It requires visibility.

That is why Eden Bleu has invested heavily in specialist MICE trade shows, including IMEX Frankfurt and regional industry exhibitions in South Africa.

Policarpo believes this strategy has also influenced national thinking.

"In the beginning, MICE was not really part of the tourism portfolio," he says. "Now Seychelles Tourism is also targeting this opportunity. I think it is great for the destination."

He credits the growing partnership between the hotel and Tourism Seychelles for helping reposition the country beyond its leisure image.

The country's visa-free entry policy and expanding air connectivity have strengthened that proposition.

"Today we have direct flights to Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Paris and Frankfurt," Policarpo says. "We are already hosting many events from SADC and other African countries. It is easy for delegates to come."

Rebecca, a member of Eden Bleu's



"Whether it is lawyers, sustainability organisations, government meetings or corporate conferences, we adjust the facilities, the technology and the service according to the client's needs"

commercial team, says strong collaboration with Destination Management Companies (DMCs) has become another competitive advantage.

"Our DMC partners create the tailor-made leisure programmes while we focus on the corporate facilities," she explains. "They organise regular site inspections so they understand our product and can confidently sell it."

She believes closer collaboration across the tourism value chain will become increasingly important as Seychelles seeks larger international meetings.

"There should be more information sharing among industry partners, especially around major MICE trade shows, so everyone understands the opportunities available."

The Next Chapter

Despite optimism, Policarpo acknowledges that the meetings industry remains vulnerable to global events.

Flight disruptions and geopolitical tensions affected bookings earlier this year, causing several conferences to be cancelled.

"The business has started picking up again," he says. "But today you cannot predict anything. Sometimes you are 80 per cent occupied and finish the day full. Other times you are fully booked and things change overnight."

Yet his long-term outlook remains positive.

With new internationally branded hotels entering the Seychelles market and conference capacity steadily increasing, he believes the destination is approaching a tipping point.

His advice is straightforward: continue investing in specialised MICE promotion, deepen collaboration with industry partners, and mobilise Seychelles' overseas diplomatic missions to help market the country as a business events destination.

"We have become a big tourism family," he says. "The hotels, the DMCs and Tourism Seychelles work together. That is our strength."

For visitors, the reward extends well beyond the meeting room.

"They can spend two or three days at a conference and then stay longer to discover the islands," Policarpo says. "That is something many destinations cannot offer."

For a destination long celebrated for leisure, that may prove to be Seychelles' strongest business proposition yet.

Africa Travel week 2026 wrap up

WTM Africa 2026 reports strong growth

WTM Africa 2026 has recorded its strongest edition to date, reinforcing its status as Africa's leading B2B travel trade exhibition. Held from 13–15 April at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, the event attracted record participation from exhibitors, buyers and international delegates, reflecting growing global confidence in Africa's tourism sector. Organised by RX Africa as part of Africa Travel Week, WTM Africa continued to strengthen its role as a key marketplace for connecting inbound and outbound travel businesses, fostering high-value commercial partnerships and driving tourism growth across the continent. The 2026 edition attracted thousands of travel professionals, including tour operators, travel agencies, destination management companies, tourism boards, and hospitality brands. With over 6,000+ industry professionals typically attending, the event delivered a powerful mix of networking opportunities, pre-scheduled meetings, and knowledge-driven sessions.

A key highlight of WTM Africa 2026 was its strong focus on business generation and market expansion. The event enabled exhibitors to launch new products, enter emerging markets, and build strategic alliances, while buyers gained direct access to a diverse range of destinations and suppliers from across Africa and beyond.



Namibia pushes MICE, sustainability agenda at WTM Africa

Namibia is sharpening its global tourism strategy with a renewed focus on business travel and sustainability, as the Namibia Tourism Board (NTB) showcases its offerings at WTM Africa. Speaking to VoyagesAfric on the sidelines of the event, Head of Marketing for NTB, Charmaine Matheus, underscored the country's strategic pivot towards the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) segment, describing it as a central pillar of Namibia's tourism growth agenda.

"One of the key areas that we are looking at and of course positioning the destination strongly is our MICE sector," she said. "Namibia has launched the Namibia Convention Bureau and we are looking very strongly at increasing travel to Namibia, business travel to Namibia, specifically uplifting the MICE sub-sector of Namibia." Matheus noted that the establishment of the Namibia Convention Bureau marks a significant step in formalising and expanding the country's appeal to business travellers, as Namibia seeks to diversify beyond its traditional leisure tourism base.



Labadi Beach Hotel Targets Intra-African Growth and MICE Opportunities at WTM Africa

Labadi Beach Hotel used this year's WTM Africa as a strategic platform to deepen market engagement, strengthen buyer relationships and position itself more strongly within Africa's growing leisure and business travel ecosystem. Speaking at the event, George Ayisi, Head of Sales at Labadi Beach Hotel, said the decision to participate in WTM Africa was informed by the hotel's recent experience in European markets and the need to build closer ties within Africa. "We started by looking into the European market and attended ITB in 2023 and 2024. The impact we got there was very positive, and that informed our decision to be part of WTM Africa," Ayisi explained. "We realised that we also needed to come closer to the African market, especially South Africa, which is one of our key source markets as a hotel."



Africa Travel week 2026 wrap up

Ghana Tourism Authority Wins Best Stand Personnel Award at WTM Africa

Ghana's strong showing at WTM Africa in Cape Town was crowned with industry recognition, as the Ghana Tourism Authority received the Best Stand Personnel award at this year's event. The award acknowledges the professionalism, preparedness and engagement of the Ghana Tourism Authority team throughout the exhibition, where the country mounted a coordinated destination marketing and trade engagement campaign aimed at reinforcing Ghana's leadership position in West African tourism. Speaking after the announcement, Ekow Sampson, Deputy CEO in charge of Operations at the Ghana Tourism Authority, said the recognition reflects deliberate planning, teamwork and a clear destination narrative. "We at the Ghana Tourism Authority are proud to have received this year's Best Stand Personnel award at WTM Africa. We came prepared, we came to set up and then showcase our brand as the leading tourist destination in West Africa," Sampson said. "It is an opportunity for us to work hard to maintain that feat and also project our image as the best West African destination," he added.



Botswana showcases its tourism offerings at WTM Africa

The Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO) participated at this year's World Travel Market (WTM) Africa in Cape Town held from the 13th – 15th April 2026. As one of the leading global platforms for the travel and tourism industry, WTM Africa provided an opportunity for destinations to showcase their offerings, engage with international buyers, and strengthen strategic partnerships. BTO's participation underscored its continued commitment to positioning Botswana as a premier tourism destination, renowned for its pristine wilderness, rich cultural heritage, and sustainable tourism practices. During the exhibition, BTO hosted a delegation of key industry stakeholders, including tour operators, hospitality providers, and other tourism partners, who will collectively market Botswana's diverse tourism experiences.



Africa Travel Week Announces 2026 Media Awards Winners

Africa Travel Week (ATW) has announced the winners of its 2026 Media Awards, honouring the journalists, photographers and content creators bringing Africa's travel and tourism stories to global audiences. Now in its third year, the ATW Media Awards received a record number of entries – over 170 across five categories: Sustainability Feature Award, Visual Tourism Award, Tourism News Award, Destination Feature Award and the Young Talent Award. All were evaluated by a world-class judging panel comprising wildlife photographer and Canon ambassador Ellie Rothnie, Kojo Bentum-Williams of VoyagesAfric, Barry Nield of CNN Travel, Divia Thani of Condé Nast Traveller and Tom Hall of Lonely Planet. "These awards exist to shine a light on the storytellers who shape how the world sees Africa," says Olivia Gradidge, Marketing Manager (WTM Africa & ILTM Africa) at RX Africa, the host and architect of Africa Travel Week. "The quality of entries this year reflects the depth of talent working in African travel media, and we congratulate every finalist and winner."



Africa Showcase Takes African Tourism Suppliers Deeper into Europe's Growing Markets



Elke Menz, Elke Menz Tourism Consulting



Gérald Amoudruz, World of Destinations



Lidia Martinuzzi, Africa Showcase's Southern Europe market partner



Paddington Tucker, Travel Advance

Europe is not one tourism market, and for African suppliers, understanding the differences between source markets can be just as important as reaching them. Africa Showcase is creating that access by connecting African suppliers, DMCs, DMOs and travel specialists with buyers across three distinct European regions: Central and Eastern Europe, Southern Europe and the Nordics.

The opportunity varies from market to market, but the underlying demand is clear: European travellers are looking for Africa, while buyers are seeking fresh products and experiences to meet changing consumer interests.

CEE: Three markets with room to grow

Paddington Tucker of Travel Advance, Africa Showcase's CEE and Mitteleuropa market partner, identifies Poland, Czechia and Romania as markets with considerable potential. "Recent disruption of travel to Asia and the Middle East has made Africa more topical as a holiday destination," Tucker says.

Poland's economy has reached the US\$1 trillion mark, with the country set to become a G20 member. African destinations are already seeing growth from Poland, whose travellers are typically active and keen to experience as much as possible during their holidays.

Czechia offers a different opportunity. Its travellers are known for adventure and off-the-beaten-track travel, opening possibilities for lesser-known African

destinations. Czechs also rank among Europe's higher spenders on foreign travel relative to disposable income.

Romania is emerging as another market to watch. Economic growth and the recent lifting of visa restrictions to South Africa have created an opportunity to build stronger trade relationships and connect Romanian travellers with Southern Africa.

Southern Europe: Established demand, evolving tastes

Italy and Spain already have a strong appetite for Africa, but Lidia Martinuzzi, Africa Showcase's Southern Europe market partner, says the product demand is broadening. "The greatest opportunity for African suppliers lies in delivering authentic, personalised

experiences rather than simply luxury accommodation," Martinuzzi says.

Safari remains important, while travellers increasingly seek culture, conservation, culinary and wine experiences, wellness, marine activities and personalised itineraries. FITs, honeymooners and small groups dominate.

South Africa and Namibia continue to perform strongly, while Botswana remains highly aspirational for luxury travellers. Kenya and Tanzania benefit from popular safari-and-beach combinations with Zanzibar, the Kenyan coast and Seychelles.

Connectivity is also expanding, with Air Europa operating three weekly non-stop flights between Madrid and Johannesburg, creating another direct



gateway to Southern Africa.

Elke Menz of Elke Menz Tourism Consulting says France remains one of Europe's leading long-haul leisure markets for Africa, but success depends on maintaining strong trade relationships. "The Southern Europe-Africa Showcase in Paris gives African destinations direct access to around 40 carefully selected travel agents and specialist tour operators who may not attend major African trade shows such as Indaba, ITB or IFTM Top Resa. Africa remains underrepresented at IFTM, with limited national tourism board presence and most African stands occupied by individual DMCs. The Showcase therefore helps raise visibility, build commercial relationships and provide

real-time market intelligence to refine products, pricing and sales strategies for the French market."

Nordics: Selling Africa through experience

In the Nordics, Gérald Amoudruz of World of Destinations says the market is defined more by quality than size. "The Nordic outbound market has always stood out for its quality rather than its size," he says. Travellers from Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland increasingly seek authentic cultures, local engagement and responsible tourism.

They also tend to stay longer, travel throughout the year and spend strongly on high-quality experiences. For African

businesses, that makes sustainability, community involvement and genuine experiences increasingly important components of the offer.

This is where Africa Showcase's proposition becomes particularly relevant. The platform does more than place African businesses before European buyers; it creates opportunities to understand what each market wants, how buyers sell it and where new products can fit.

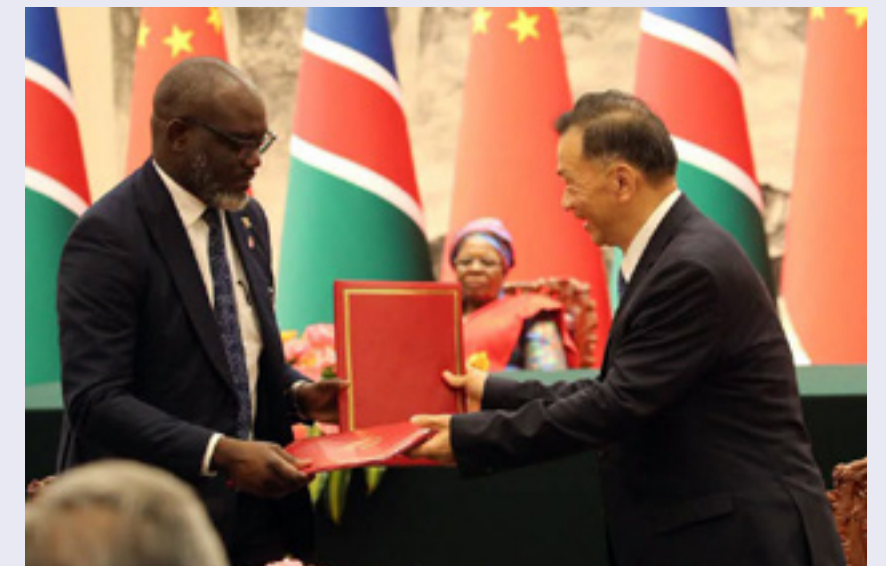
Across CEE, Southern Europe and the Nordics, Africa Showcase is opening more doors for African tourism businesses to build relationships, expand their distribution networks and convert Europe's growing appetite for Africa into new commercial opportunities.

Namibia Tourism Board and China Media Group sign strategic tourism cooperation agreement

The Namibia Tourism Board (NTB) and China Media Group (CMG) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at strengthening tourism cooperation between Namibia and the People's Republic of China through strategic media collaboration, destination marketing, and cultural exchange.

The agreement was signed during the State Visit of His Excellency President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah to the People's Republic of China, marking another significant milestone in the growing bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Memorandum of Understanding establishes a framework for collaboration between NTB and CMG in promoting Namibia and China as tourism destinations. Areas of cooperation include the production of tourism programmes, joint promotional campaigns, exhibitions, media exchanges, tourism-related projects, and initiatives that foster greater cultural understanding between the two nations. The agreement further provides that specific projects will be implemented through separate project agreements, ensuring that each initiative is clearly defined, costed, and mutually agreed upon.



The China Media Group is one of the world's largest multimedia organisations, with an extensive international audience across television, radio, digital platforms, and social media. The collaboration is expected to provide Namibia with increased exposure within the Chinese market while supporting the country's efforts to diversify source markets and attract high-value international visitors.

The MoU is valid for an initial period of one year and reflects the commitment of both organisations to work together in promoting sustainable tourism

development while respecting each party's mandate and applicable laws. The agreement does not create financial obligations for either party, with any future projects to be negotiated and approved independently.

As global tourism continues its recovery and expansion, the Namibia Tourism Board remains committed to forging meaningful partnerships that position Namibia as a premier tourism destination offering authentic experiences, exceptional hospitality, and endless opportunities for exploration.



20-22 OCT 2026

ZANZIBAR



LZ Travel Launches the Green Journey Collection at ILTM Africa, Setting a New Benchmark for Sustainable Luxury Mobility

Luxury travel in Africa is entering a decisive new phase – one where sustainability is no longer an add-on or a future ambition, but a defining standard of delivery. That shift came into sharp focus at ILTM Africa with the launch of The Green Journey Collection by LZ Travel, a structured, data-led framework designed to place environmental responsibility at the centre of luxury ground mobility.

Unveiled during Africa Travel Week in Cape Town, the Green Journey Collection formalises an operational philosophy that has long guided LZ Travel's approach – eco-conscious luxury built on technology, accountability and measurable impact. Rather than positioning sustainability as a marketing narrative, the company has embedded it into how journeys are planned, executed and evaluated.

"From the very beginning, LZ Travel has always been about eco-conscious luxury travel," says Motheo Modisane, Co-Founder and Director. "We already offset carbon emissions for all the travel we do and partner with organisations such as Justdiggit to plant trees. The Green Journey Collection is about taking what we have been doing and elevating it to the next level."

At the heart of the initiative is technology. Every vehicle in LZ Travel's fleet is fitted with AI-enabled software that tracks distance travelled, fuel consumption



and routing efficiency in real time. This allows emissions to be calculated accurately and offset using verified data, rather than industry averages or estimates.

"We track every kilometre that every car drives," explains Ryno Terblanche, Director at LZ Travel. "That allows us to calculate CO₂ emissions per vehicle and offset them properly. It's not a guess – it's measured, fleet-wide data."

The same system also optimises routes, reducing unnecessary mileage and emissions at source. "Our AI selects the shortest and most efficient routes from A to B," Terblanche adds. "Guests

arrive safely and on time, using the least possible fuel. Sustainability is built into how we move people."

Beyond emission tracking, sustainability is reflected in operational detail. Single-use plastics have been removed from vehicles in favour of glass water bottles, while gifting and amenities are produced from recycled plastics recovered from oceans and landfills. The company's approach also extends to social impact, with a focus on local employment, skills development and community partnerships.

Looking ahead, the Green Journey Collection signals a clear transition towards low- and zero-emission luxury mobility. The introduction of electric vehicles – beginning with a BMW iX3 – marks the first phase of a broader fleet evolution.

"The luxury experience remains unchanged," Modisane notes. "What changes is the footprint."

As LZ Travel showcased the Green Journey Collection during Africa Travel Week, the message was clear – sustainable luxury mobility is not a compromise, but a refinement. And Africa is ready to define its own standards.



The Art of Not Doing Stupid Things



Some may even call it hubris.

Every country wants a national airline, and every national airline must fly to London, New York, Dubai and more recently Guangzhou. It doesn't matter if economics or common sense dictate this isn't possible. After all Dubai and Singapore did it. Or at the very least, Ethiopia did.

Every month brings a fresh wave of announcements. New airlines are launched amid much fanfare but no actual aircraft. Huge orders are signed with the financing details left to someone else to figure out. Long-haul routes are unveiled, notwithstanding safety blacklists and technical shortcomings. Governments promise new national carriers. Airports announce expansion plans. Media trumpets the next great thing.

Yet for all the attention given to action, African aviation rarely spends enough time discussing the value of restraint.

Sometimes the best decision is not to launch the route.

Sometimes the best decision is not to order the shiny new aircraft.

Sometimes the best decision is not to sign the memorandum of understanding.

And sometimes the most effective strategy is to focus on better executing what already exists rather than chasing what might be possible.

The industry's tendency to reward announcements rather than outcomes has created a culture where activity is often mistaken for progress.

Uganda Airlines personifies this roller coaster ride perfectly. In the first half of 2026 alone, it has been through a grounding of its entire longhaul fleet (boo), a wetlease of a new medium-haul narrowbody (yay), the firing of its CEO (boo), the hiring of a new CEO (yay), the return (yay) and re-grounding (boo) of its brand new Airbus 330neos, and finally the signing of an agreement to buy 10 aircraft from Boeing (the jury is out on whether this is a yay or a boo). If a Korean soap opera had so many plot twists, its viewers would say it was unrealistic. Yet, here we are normalising dysfunction and even praising it in some quarters.

Air Zimbabwe, reduced to a grand total of zero operational aircraft of its own due to various ills plaguing the airline and the country, has announced non-stop service between Harare and London with barely two weeks notice. Not Johannesburg, not Nairobi, not even Masvingo or Kariba in their own country. London. Ten and a half hours in a wet-leased Spanish-registered Airbus burning 6 tons of jet fuel every hour. It may have been wiser to round up the currency notes and set fire to them. At least that way, the average Zimbabwean taxpayer could stay warm in the harsh southern winter.

All over the continent, we have examples of routes that leave experts scratching their heads when trying to evaluate them using logic. Air Peace from Lagos to Antigua on the last Saturday of every month. TAAG from Luanda to Guangzhou only on Tuesdays. Air Tanzania to Moscow. Air Cote D'Ivoire to Johannesburg via Lagos on an Airbus 330. When viewed from a commercial standpoint, these routes make no sense. But so many African airlines are living the Instagram influencer lifestyle - image is more important than reality. After all, someone else is usually footing the bill.

Infrastructure projects are another area where countries fail to learn from the carcasses of white elephant projects littering the continent and seek to outdo each other with the latest temples of pointless opulence. The newly announced Mbarara Airport in Uganda has been announced with plans to become the world's 11th largest in

the next decade. It will feature two of the longest runways in Africa at 5.5 kilometers each (about a kilometer longer than any other major airport on the continent) and even a special reserved "VIP runway" which mere mortals on scheduled flights shall not be permitted to soil. Never mind that this would require approximately 4000% growth from air traffic levels in the entire country today. The official press release says it will achieve this by targeting flights seeking to refuel while flying between Brazil and China. This isn't ambition, it is delusion.

This is not an argument against ambition.

Africa needs ambitious airlines.

Africa needs network expansion.

Africa needs investment in infrastructure.

What it does not need is ambition divorced from reality.

The airlines that have achieved sustainable success on the continent have generally followed a different path. Rather than attempting to transform themselves overnight, they have grown methodically. They have focused on strengthening domestic and regional networks, improving operational performance and ensuring that growth is supported by market demand.

In many cases, the decision not to pursue an opportunity has been just as important as the opportunities that were pursued. Progress in aviation is often measured in years rather than months.

For years, the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) has been criticised for moving too slowly. Critics point to the countless declarations, pilot programs and summit speeches that have promised a more connected continent. Yet perhaps this is precisely where patience matters. Opening African skies requires governments to surrender protectionist instincts and suspicions that have persisted for decades. It is not glamorous work, but incremental progress by Adefunke Adeyemi and her team at the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC)

“All over the continent, we have examples of routes that leave experts scratching their heads when trying to evaluate them using logic.”

towards genuine liberalisation may ultimately prove more valuable than another grand declaration.

Likewise, Afreximbank's efforts to support the creation of African aircraft leasing capability may lack the glamour of a ribbon-cutting ceremony or a presidential aircraft unveiling. Building a viable indigenous leasing platform

requires patient capital, technical expertise and long-term commitment. It is painstaking work. Yet if successful, it could do more to strengthen African aviation than many of the grand announcements that dominate conference agendas.

Across the continent, the most important developments in aviation today may not be the ones generating the biggest headlines.

A regulator quietly removing a market access restriction.

An airline choosing not to launch an unproven route.

A carrier deferring fleet expansion until demand catches up.

A financial institution laying the groundwork for long-term aviation financing.

These actions rarely make front-page news. Yet they often create more lasting value than the announcements that dominate the front pages.

Sometimes the wisest decision is recognising that doing nothing today creates the opportunity to do something better tomorrow.

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 Airlines commences scheduled flights to Mauritius

Ethiopian Airlines is pleased to announce the inauguration of its new passenger service to Mauritius, marking another milestone in the airline's continued expansion across Africa. The new route, which commences operations today, 12 July 2026, will be operated three times weekly, enhancing connectivity between Mauritius and Ethiopian Airlines' extensive global network.

The launch of the service underscores Ethiopian Airlines' commitment to strengthening air transport links within Africa and facilitating seamless travel between the continent and the rest of the world. By connecting Mauritius to Addis Ababa, the airline's strategic hub,

travelers will benefit from convenient access to destinations across Africa, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas.

Known for its rich cultural heritage, vibrant tourism industry, and growing economy, Mauritius represents a strategic addition to Ethiopian Airlines' African destinations. The direct service between Addis Ababa and Mauritius is expected to provide travelers with greater convenience while supporting stronger trade, tourism, and people-to-people relations between the two countries.

Commenting on the new service, Ethiopian Airlines Group Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Mesfin Tasew, said: "Mauritius is a destination of remarkable beauty, rich culture, and growing economic importance. By establishing a direct link between the country and our vast global network, we are pleased to offer convenient travel options to our passengers while bringing the world closer to Mauritius. As a Pan-African airline, Ethiopian will continue



to serve as a catalyst for enhanced air connectivity between Africa and the rest of the world."

Passengers traveling on the new route will enjoy Ethiopian Airlines' award-winning hospitality, modern fleet, and seamless connections through its hub in Addis Ababa, providing convenient onward travel to destinations across Africa, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas.

The launch of this new service underscores Ethiopian Airlines' ongoing efforts to expand its network and contribute to the development of air transport, tourism, and economic integration across the African continent.



South Africa welcomes Air Europa to Johannesburg

South Africa's Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille has congratulated Air Europa on the launch of its inaugural direct flight between Madrid and Johannesburg, marking another important milestone in strengthening South Africa's global air connectivity.

Flight UX157 touched down at the OR Tambo International Airport this morning. The new route will operate three times a week, creating greater travel opportunities between South Africa and Spain while strengthening access to the broader European market.

Minister de Lille said the new route is a strong vote of confidence in South Africa's tourism sector and economic growth prospects.

"The launch of the route comes as

government continues to implement the Cabinet-endorsed Tourism Route Development Marketing Plan, which seeks to expand direct air access to South Africa through coordinated route development, strategic destination marketing, and collaboration with provincial partners," said Minister de Lille

The Department of Tourism remains committed to improving ease of access, strengthening international airlift, and creating an enabling environment that supports sustained tourism growth, investment, and job creation.

Next month, Brazilian carrier LATAM Airlines will commence three weekly direct flights

between São Paulo and Cape Town. Originally planned for September, the airline has accelerated the launch due to increased passenger demand, once again reflecting growing confidence in South Africa's tourism market and the strength of travel between Latin America and South Africa.



Airlink connects Cape Town and Mauritius with new direct route

Airlink, Southern Africa's premier airline will launch twice-weekly direct Cape Town – Mauritius flights from 02 October 2026.

Bookings are now open for flights on the route, which will be Airlink's first to the Indian Ocean island.

Mauritius's legendary beach resorts, golf courses and visa on arrival system for citizens of over 140 countries, continue to make it popular with tourists.

At the same time, the island nation's thriving sophisticated economy, which spans IT, financial services, textile manufacturing as well as traditional sugar farming and fishing – along with its tax and offshore business incentives – has transformed it into a key investment and trade centre.

Airlink will operate its brand new, state-of-the-art Embraer E195-E2 flagship aircraft on the new Mauritius service. They accommodate 124 passengers (12 business class and 112 economy) with only window and aisle seats – there are no middle seats on any Airlink flights.

"Our new flagship aircraft, the E195-E2, makes it possible for Airlink to conveniently connect Cape Town with Mauritius. Cape Town is also an important source market and connecting hub for leisure and business travel wanting to travel to the island while avoiding the hassle and additional time connecting in Johannesburg," said de Villiers Engelbrecht, Airlink CEO.

Cape Town is Airlink's second hub with domestic and regional flights as well as long-haul connections with Airlink's

partner airlines from around the world.

Airlink's schedule for the route is being designed so that leisure travellers will be able to maximise their holiday time and for corporate travellers to enhance their business itineraries without disruptive middle-of-the-night or pre-dawn departures or arrivals.

Onboard Airlink flights, customers will be treated to complimentary meals and refreshments. Airlink's cabin configuration provides generous leg-room. All Airlink customers are also entitled to a 15kg sporting equipment allowance, in addition to 20kg free luggage allowance for discounted economy class tickets, and 30kg allocated for full-fare economy travellers.



ASKY expands fleet to 17 aircraft with arrival of second Boeing 737 MAX 8

ASKY Airlines has expanded its fleet to 17 aircraft following the arrival of a Boeing 737 MAX 8, registered ET-BCK, at its Lomé hub in Togo on 16 July 2026. The latest addition forms part of the airline's plan to increase capacity and support higher flight frequencies to major destinations across its network.

The aircraft is the second fleet acquisition by ASKY this year, following the arrival of ET-BCJ on 5 July 2026. The additions mark a significant step in the airline's fleet expansion programme announced earlier this year.

ASKY had outlined plans to grow its fleet to 17 aircraft to strengthen operations and enable daily services to key stations. The arrival of ET-BCK completes that

target, providing additional capacity to support the airline's growing network requirements.

The newly acquired Boeing 737 MAX 8 is configured with 160 seats, including 16 Business Class seats and 144 Economy Class seats. The aircraft brings additional capacity while maintaining the efficiency and performance associated with the 737 MAX family.

Headquartered in Lomé, Togo, ASKY operates as a regional carrier connecting destinations across West, Central and Southern Africa. Since commencing operations, the airline has focused on building an intra-African network that links key markets across the continent.

The expanded fleet will provide ASKY with greater operational flexibility as it works towards increasing frequencies on major routes and improving service availability across its network.

Fleet growth remains a key component of airline development, allowing carriers to respond to passenger demand, optimize schedules and strengthen their market presence. For ASKY, the addition of ET-BCK supports its continued efforts to expand capacity and enhance its regional operations.

With the integration of its latest Boeing 737 MAX 8, ASKY will now focus on deploying the additional aircraft across its network in line with its operational plans.

Emirates expands operations in Ghana with additional weekly flights

Emirates, the world's largest international airline, is expanding its operations in Ghana with the introduction of four additional weekly services between Dubai and Accra from 12 July 2026. This reaffirms the airline's long-term commitment to Ghana and supports the country's growing demand for travel and global connectivity.

The new service will complement Emirates' existing daily operation and the sustained growth in air travel demand to and from Accra, which continues to experience high seat occupancy year-round. From 12 July, Emirates' direct service, operating as EK789, will depart Dubai at 03:30hrs*, arriving in Accra at 07:40hrs*; the return flight, EK790, will depart Accra at 10:25hrs*, arriving in Dubai at 22:40hrs*. Operated by a Boeing 777-300ER, these flights

will operate on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

The new service is optimally timed to connect travellers from Accra to key commercial and tourist hubs including Beijing, Seoul, Sydney, Perth, Mumbai, Singapore, New York JFK and Jeddah. The newly added service will also offer travellers a more convenient option to connect to Accra via Dubai, mainly from points such as Delhi, Boston, Los Angeles and gateways across Germany and the UK.

Salem Almana, Emirates' Country Manager, Ghana, said "For more than two decades, Emirates has proudly connected Ghana to the world. The introduction of this additional service demonstrates our continued confidence in the Ghanaian market and our commitment to supporting the country's

growing travel needs. Beyond providing greater convenience for our customers, this expansion will strengthen business, tourism and trade links between Ghana and key markets across our global network, while contributing to the continued growth of Ghana's aviation sector. Through Dubai, travellers will enjoy seamless access to close to 140 destinations worldwide, while visitors from around the world will have even greater opportunities to experience Ghana."



How Seychelles Turned Local Cuisine into a National Tourism Showcase



In Seychelles, food is far more than sustenance. It is memory, identity, storytelling and, increasingly, one of the country's most compelling tourism assets.

That philosophy came vividly to life during the Local Food Fest, one of the centrepieces of Seychelles' Golden Jubilee celebrations marking 50 years of independence. Over four days, the Roche Caiman Sports Complex was transformed into a vibrant culinary village where traditional flavours, music, culture and community converged to celebrate the nation's Creole heritage while showcasing the evolving role of gastronomy in tourism.

Far from being just another food festival, the event demonstrated how a small island destination is successfully leveraging its culinary traditions to deepen visitor experiences, support local businesses and strengthen cultural preservation.

From the moment visitors entered the festival grounds, they were greeted by the aromas of freshly grilled seafood, slow-cooked curries, cinnamon, vanilla and locally grown spices. Colourful stalls lined the venue, each presenting a different interpretation of Seychellois cuisine, while live performances, family activities and cultural displays created an atmosphere that was distinctly local yet warmly

welcoming to international guests.

The festival attracted thousands of residents alongside visitors from across Africa and beyond, many of whom were already in Seychelles for the country's independence celebrations and later the 69th UN Tourism Regional Commission for Africa meeting.

A Celebration of Seychellois Flavours

Some of the country's leading hotels and hospitality brands participated alongside independent restaurants, beverage producers and community food businesses, reflecting a collaborative approach to promoting the national cuisine.

Participating exhibitors included Constance Ephelia Resort, Hilton Seychelles, Canopy by Hilton, DoubleTree by Hilton, Story Seychelles, Coral Strand, Savoy Seychelles Resort & Spa, Mango House Seychelles, Minor Hotels, Val Riche Seychelles, East Indies, Koko Sey, Maison Morengo, Del Place, Pop Sey, Kafe Kreol & Laila, Inside Seychelles, H.H. Farm, Zil Kreol Brewery, Takamaka, Vallée des Fruits, Foutaleza, the Seychelles Tourism Academy and the Seychelles National Heritage Resource Centre.

Together, they offered an impressive

journey through the country's culinary landscape, from freshly caught fish and octopus curry to grilled lobster, smoked tuna, breadfruit dishes, tropical desserts and locally brewed beverages.

The emphasis throughout was unmistakable: authentic ingredients, traditional recipes and locally sourced produce.

Tourism Beyond the Beach

For Seychelles, the Local Food Fest represented far more than a cultural celebration. It illustrated how gastronomy has become an increasingly important pillar of the country's tourism strategy.

Speaking during the festival, Principal Secretary for Tourism Sherin Francis noted that visitors are increasingly seeking authentic cultural experiences alongside the destination's world-famous beaches and natural beauty.

Food, she explained, provides one of the most accessible ways for travellers to connect with the people, history and traditions of Seychelles.

That philosophy aligns with a growing global trend where culinary tourism is becoming one of the fastest-growing segments of international travel, encouraging visitors to spend more

time in destinations, support local producers and engage more deeply with communities.

Throughout the festival, chefs prepared meals in front of guests, explaining ingredients and cooking techniques, while vendors enthusiastically shared stories behind family recipes passed down through generations.

The experience transformed dining into cultural immersion.

Recognising Culinary Ambassadors

The final day of the festival concluded with a ceremony recognising the contribution of every participating exhibitor.

Principal Secretary Sherin Francis, joined by Minister for Tourism and Culture Amanda Bernstein, presented certificates of appreciation to all participating vendors in recognition of their role in preserving and promoting Seychellois culinary heritage.

Each participant also received a specially

curated cookbook titled Sun, Sea and Spice: The Magic of Seychelles Creole Cuisine, a publication celebrating the country's rich gastronomic traditions and documenting recipes that have become central to its cultural identity.

The gesture reinforced the government's commitment to preserving traditional cuisine while encouraging the hospitality industry to continue innovating around local ingredients and authentic experiences.

A Model for African Gastronomy Tourism

As African destinations increasingly diversify their tourism offerings, Seychelles is demonstrating that gastronomy can become a powerful destination differentiator.

The Local Food Fest showcased how culinary heritage can generate economic opportunities for hotels, restaurants, farmers, beverage producers, artisans and small businesses while creating memorable visitor experiences that extend well beyond the beach.

Whether it is lawyers, sustainability organisations, government meetings or corporate conferences, we adjust the facilities, the technology and the service according to the client's needs

With the country fresh from celebrating its Golden Jubilee and welcoming tourism leaders from across the continent, the festival also offered a timely reminder that Africa's competitive advantage lies not only in its landscapes and wildlife, but equally in its people, cultures and cuisines.

In Seychelles, every plate tells a story. And at Roche Caiman, those stories became one of the most memorable chapters of the nation's 50th anniversary celebrations.

**BIGGEST
EVENT
FOR
2026**

**One Nation
Reggae
Festival
vol2**

SAVE THE DATE
25 - 30 NOV 2026

Cape Town's Reverie Social Table Builds Community One Dinner Party at a Time

Chef Patron Julia Hattingh is redefining the restaurant experience at Reverie Social Table in Cape Town, South Africa, where shared tables, seasonal menus and conversation take precedence over conventional fine dining. Rather than focusing solely on food, Hattingh has built a concept that brings together strangers over a curated dining experience, creating a space where connection is as important as cuisine.

Founded more than a decade ago, Reverie Social Table has evolved from Hattingh's ambition of opening her own restaurant into a hospitality concept centered on people, community and local producers. The restaurant hosts communal dinner parties where guests often arrive without knowing one another, the evening's menu or the wines they will be served.

For Julia, the journey into hospitality began with a desire to pursue a different path from the corporate career her parents had envisioned.

"I was a fat kid and I loved to eat," she recalls with characteristic humor. "Other than that, my parents wanted me to go into corporate and I desperately didn't want to do that, so I decided to go into cooking instead."

That decision eventually led her through chef school and into some of South Africa's leading kitchens, where working alongside accomplished chefs deepened her passion for the profession.

Today, Reverie offers an experience that differs from the traditional restaurant model. Guests share a communal table, often meeting complete strangers while enjoying dishes that change frequently according to seasonal availability. Hattingh says the menu evolves by roughly one dish each week, while the accompanying wine selection changes every four to six weeks through partnerships with small wine estates.

The restaurant also works closely with independent producers, sourcing seasonal ingredients that reflect both locality and quality.

"You don't know what you're going to be eating, you don't know what you're going to be drinking, and it's a dinner party," Hattingh explains. "You can't say that for many restaurants."

While Cape Town has become internationally recognized for its vibrant culinary scene, Hattingh believes Reverie occupies a distinct space within the city's hospitality landscape.

"Reverie is just something different," she says. "Cape Town is known as a very clicky city, so we are trying to champion not being clicky."

Supporting independent businesses has become another defining element of the restaurant's philosophy. As larger hospitality groups continue expanding with multiple venues, Hattingh has deliberately maintained a smaller, more personal operation.

"There are a lot of big names in the business now that have multiple venues, so showing a more personalised approach and a personalised experience is important to us."



Julia Hattingh



At the heart of Reverie's concept is the belief that dining can foster meaningful human connection.

"It's the amazing people who choose to come," Hattingh says. "It's a conversation starter. It's a place to connect with people from different walks of life and different cultures. In this day and age, it makes you a bigger person and a more fulfilled person just being able to connect with somebody who has a very different life from you."

Over the past ten years, Hattingh says her vision for the restaurant has continued to evolve.

"Our ethos has definitely changed over the last ten years into something that I'm very proud of. It's very much a focus on ingredients, a focus on people and a focus on community."

She is equally clear about her ambitions for the business.

"It will never be a multi-million rand enterprise, and I'm quite happy with that, as long as the people coming in have an amazing experience and I'm able to support my team."

Operating an independent restaurant in Cape Town, however, comes with significant challenges. Hattingh describes competition as "tough as nails," pointing to the dominance of larger hospitality operators and what she views as an industry that still reflects elements of an "old boys' club."

She also acknowledges that Reverie's concept is not immediately understood by every guest.

"Some people come in with a very incorrect impression of what it is that we do," she says. "Most of the time it works really well. Sometimes you need to add a little bit more wine, and every now and then it doesn't. That keeps us on our toes."



Reverie's approach reflects a broader movement within contemporary hospitality, where travellers increasingly seek authentic, locally rooted experiences rather than conventional dining. Across Africa, restaurants are becoming cultural spaces that celebrate local ingredients, showcase regional producers and create opportunities for genuine interaction between residents and visitors.

For destination cities such as Cape Town, concepts like Reverie contribute to the diversity of the visitor economy by offering experiences that extend beyond sightseeing. They encourage longer engagement with local culture while supporting independent suppliers, small wine estates and local food systems.

As culinary tourism continues to gain

"You don't know what you're going to be eating, you don't know what you're going to be drinking, and it's a dinner party"

prominence across the continent, establishments that combine gastronomy with storytelling, community and cultural exchange are helping shape a more experience-driven visitor economy. Reverie Social Table demonstrates that, in an increasingly competitive restaurant sector, memorable hospitality can be defined as much by the people gathered around the table as by the meal itself.

Klein Constantia:

Where 340 years of winemaking meet South African hospitality

Nestled against the eastern slopes of the Constantiaberg mountains in Cape Town's celebrated Constantia Valley, Klein Constantia is far more than a wine estate. It is a living chapter of South African history, where centuries-old vineyards, world-renowned wines and warm hospitality come together to create one of the country's most memorable visitor experiences.

During the International Luxury Travel Market (ILTM) Africa 2026, delegates were treated to an unforgettable luncheon hosted at the estate, offering many international buyers and media their first taste of Klein Constantia's celebrated hospitality. Speaking to VoyagesAfric on the sidelines of the event, CEO Pascal Asin shared the remarkable story behind one of South Africa's oldest and most prestigious wine farms.

A legacy spanning more than three centuries

Klein Constantia's story began in 1685, when Dutch Governor Simon van der Stel established his vast Constantia estate on the fertile slopes beneath the Constantiaberg Mountains. Over the centuries, the property evolved into one of the world's most respected wine estates, becoming internationally renowned for its flagship dessert wine, Vin de Constance.

Asin believes the estate's history remains one of its greatest assets.

"As I said, this estate is 341 years old. It was one of the first wine farms in South Africa. So they arrived in Cape Town and they moved to Constantia to plant vine and they created this sweet wine called Vin de Constance 340 years ago."

The natural sweet wine, produced from Muscat de Frontignan grapes, quickly gained favour across Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries. Its naturally high sugar content allowed it to withstand long sea voyages, making it a favourite among royal courts and aristocratic households.

The Wine that captivated an Emperor

Few wines can claim a place in world history quite like Vin de Constance.

Among its most famous admirers was French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, who continued to enjoy the wine during his exile on the remote island of Saint Helena in the South Atlantic.

Asin recounts the remarkable story.

"And because it was such a sweet wine, it was easy to travel. And all the kings of the world drank that wine in Europe. But it became very, very famous when Napoleon was in exile on Sant'Elena on the islands. And he had to choose his wine. And the first port to get access to wine was Cape Town. And he decided to

"We're one of the kind, one kind of farms that people are not much aware of it. So we want to open the doors. We want to show to the world that we have been there since 340 years and before the others."

drink Vin de Constance. And he had an allocation of one bottle a day. So for about seven years in exile, he drank every day a bottle of Vin de Constance."

Today, Vin de Constance remains one of the world's most celebrated natural sweet wines, earning international acclaim while preserving a tradition that stretches back more than three centuries.

Opening the doors to the World

Although Klein Constantia enjoys an enviable reputation among wine connoisseurs, Asin believes many international travellers have yet to discover the estate.

"South Africa, I think, is becoming a place to be. People want to visit South Africa. And there's so many things to still discover. And we're one of the kind, one kind of farms that people are not much aware of it. So we want to open the doors. We want to show to the world that we have been there since 340 years and before the others."

That vision goes beyond wine. Klein Constantia has developed into a destination where visitors can immerse themselves in the beauty of the vineyards, learn about centuries of winemaking tradition and experience South African hospitality at its finest.

Hospitality sits at the heart of the Klein Constantia experience.

Visitors can enjoy guided vineyard



walks, cellar tours and curated wine tastings before settling in at the estate's acclaimed restaurant, where seasonal ingredients and local flavours complement the wines produced on the property.

For Asin, creating memorable experiences is just as important as producing exceptional wines.

"So what we do today is try to expose the farm. And we do three things extremely well. In fact, we do hospitality. We've got an incredible restaurant with Chef Garth. And of course, we've got a tasting room and tour around the farm. So we are about hospitality. And we want to make sure that we give incredible experiences to our people from overseas, but also local, who are coming to the wine farm at Klein Constantia."

The estate's location within the Constantia Wine Route also places it within easy reach of Cape Town's city centre, allowing travellers to combine vineyard experiences with beaches, mountains, culture and world-class dining.

Among the world's best

Klein Constantia's commitment to quality has earned widespread international recognition.

Its wines consistently receive outstanding ratings from critics, while the estate itself has been recognised among the world's leading wine destinations.

Asin points to one accolade in particular.

"First of all, we've been ranked in the top 50 wine farms in the world. We are number one in Africa and number six in the world. So that's everything."

The estate continues to build on that reputation under the guidance of winemaker Matt Day, whose work has helped position Klein Constantia among the leading producers of cool-climate Sauvignon Blanc and premium Muscat de Frontignan wines.

A complete Cape Town experience

For international visitors, Klein Constantia represents far more than a wine tasting.

Its location in Cape Town places guests within one of the world's most diverse tourism destinations, where natural beauty, gastronomy, heritage and adventure exist within a relatively compact area.

Asin believes that combination is difficult to match anywhere else.

"Why did you come here in the Western Cape and Cape Town and in this wine farm? Because you've got access to everything. You've got nature. You've got beautiful restaurants. You've got value for money. You've got a sea. You've got culture. You've got music. So Cape Town as a whole, with Clément Constantia, can offer a 360 experience that is really difficult to get around the world."

For many visitors, a day at Klein Constantia naturally complements visits to Table Mountain, the Cape Peninsula, Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden and the vibrant culinary scene that has made Cape Town one of Africa's premier tourism destinations.

Excellence and sustainability

While heritage attracts visitors, maintaining world-class standards

remains central to the estate's future.

Asin credits the estate's long-serving winemaker for maintaining that pursuit of excellence.

"The second thing is my winemaker, Matt Day, who's been with us for 18 years and is all about excellence. We want to make the best Sauvignon Blanc and Muscat de Frontignan in the world. That's what we want to do."

Equally important is the estate's commitment to responsible farming and environmental stewardship.

Klein Constantia practises dry farming wherever possible, allowing vines to rely primarily on natural rainfall while encouraging deeper root systems and preserving water resources. Much of the surrounding landscape also forms part of the ecologically significant Cape Floral Kingdom.

Asin sees environmental responsibility as inseparable from producing exceptional wines.

"Also what we do is balance between nature and agriculture. So we are on a dry farming and we try to look after nature as much as we look after the farm. So yes, that's what we do."

Beyond the vineyards, the accolades and the centuries of history, Asin believes the defining characteristic of Klein Constantia is something uniquely South African.

"And I will add one thing, people. People are absolutely incredible in this country in terms of hospitality. And that's what we try to create as well, is to promote locals with local people, local chefs, local dishes. So that's all about what we are. That's Africa and that's very important."



Uncorking Africa's Liquid Gold:

How the Cape Winelands are Redefining Luxury Tourism

By Francis Doku

South Africa's iconic wine estates are demonstrating that wine tourism extends far beyond exceptional vintages. Through regenerative farming, culinary innovation, cultural exchange, and pan-African collaboration, the Western Cape Winelands are reshaping luxury travel while positioning wine as one of the continent's most compelling tourism assets.

The narrative of South African wine has traditionally centered on award-winning vintages and historic estates nestled against dramatic mountain backdrops. Today, however, that story is evolving. Across the Western Cape, wine has transcended its status as an agricultural product or a simple tasting experience to become a powerful driver of cultural exchange, sustainability, and economic opportunity, placing South Africa at the vanguard of Africa's luxury travel renaissance.

At ILTM Africa 2026, VoyagesAfriq engaged with leaders from four of the Cape's most celebrated estates: Spier, Creation Wines, Quoin Rock, and Klein Constantia. While each estate maintains a distinctive identity, their perspectives converge on a central theme: the future of African wine tourism lies in creating authentic experiences that celebrate people, place, and purpose.



Annebelle Schreuders, Managing Director of Spier Hospitality

Beyond the Cellar Door

The Cape Winelands have emerged as one of South Africa's premier tourism destinations, blending dramatic landscapes with acclaimed gastronomy and luxury accommodations. For the custodians of these historic estates, the vineyards are where agriculture meets hospitality and heritage intersects with innovation—a medium through which Africa shares its story with the world.

As global travellers increasingly seek authentic, immersive experiences over traditional sightseeing, the region's wine estates are responding by creating destinations where visitors connect not only with exceptional wines, but also with local culture, sustainability and the communities behind every bottle.

Building a Pan-African Wine Community

Annebelle Schreuders, Managing Director of Spier Hospitality, views wine as a vital connector across the continent. While Spier is renowned for its commitment to art, sustainability, and regenerative farming, Schreuders believes the estate's greatest impact is the growing community of African travellers and professionals who now view South Africa's wine country as an integral part of their own narrative.

"At Spier, we have lots of African guests from all over Africa that come and stay with us and engage with us and partner



Carolyn Martin, Marketing Director of Creation Wines

with us," she told VoyagesAfriq.

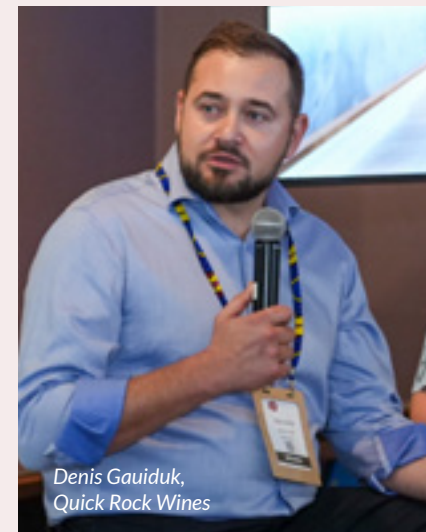
This relationship extends beyond tourism. While Spier exports to several African markets, Schreuders emphasizes that building knowledge and elevating standards across the continent is the primary objective.

"We export a lot of our Spier wines to a few African countries, and it's important to us that the rest of Africa is able to deliver excellence when it comes to wine," she explained. "Bringing people into these experiences and sharing these experiences with our partners, and making sure our winemakers are available in these different markets, in these different countries, to share their knowledge, is really important."

Spier's philosophy reflects a broader shift in African tourism where collaboration supersedes competition. By nurturing expertise and fostering cross-border relationships, estates like Spier are helping cultivate a distinctly African wine culture built on shared excellence.

Where Wine, Nature and People Meet

In the Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge, Creation Wines has earned international acclaim by transforming wine tasting into a holistic sensory journey. For co-founder and Marketing Director Carolyn Martin, wine tourism is about discovering the profound links between culture, agriculture, and community.



Denis Gaiduk, CEO of Quoin Rock Wines

"What I think is so incredibly exciting is that there is a wine culture developing in South Africa with the rest of Africa in terms of developing sommelier culture," she said.

Martin highlights the rising prominence of African sommeliers, partially inspired by the documentary "Blind Ambition," which tracked the ascent of Zimbabwean sommeliers on the world stage. She also notes the vibrant momentum in countries like Kenya, where wine appreciation and professional training are flourishing.

For Martin, this emerging sommelier culture does far more than educate consumers about wine. It reconnects them with agriculture itself.

"People are understanding the culture of agriculture through that sommelier culture," she observed. That understanding is critical because, in her view, wine tourism should never be confined to cellar tastings alone.

"One must think about wine tourism beyond a wine farm," Martin said. "Wine is a living ecosystem. It's about the environment. It's about the people. It's about how do we create this regenerative leadership."

Ultimately, she believes every bottle tells a story of the land and the people behind it.

"Imagine that you go to a restaurant and you can't drink a great bottle of wine and someone can't explain that to you. How sad would that be that you can't enjoy that cultural exchange?"

Her words capture a growing movement within African tourism - one that sees wine as an experience rooted in people, place and purpose, rather than simply a luxury product.

The New Language of Luxury

While Creation Wines focuses on emotional and educational connections, Quoin Rock Wines illustrates how evolving traveller expectations are redefining the concept of luxury itself.

Located on the Simonsberg Mountain, the estate has been transformed under CEO Denis Gaiduk and his family, merging avant-garde winemaking with striking architecture and world-class gastronomy.

"Luxury tourism, wine tourism are growing," Gaiduk said. "We see several distinctive offerings on the market. One is regenerative farming and the people who are looking for a more organic side of winemaking. And from another side,



you've got the tourists who are looking for the experiences."

For the modern luxury traveller, wine alone is insufficient. Culinary mastery, bespoke service, and evocative storytelling have become essential components of the visitor journey.

Gaiduk has witnessed a noticeable evolution in dining preferences over the past decade.

"About 15 years ago, we had a demand in the molecular cuisines, theatrical experiences," he reflected. "But nowadays, people want what we call a relaxed fine dining. They're still looking for finesse, but at the same time, they don't want to have 12 courses, 14 courses."

The emerging generation of affluent travellers, he added, values authenticity over extravagance.

"We see the younger travellers looking for more relaxed experiences as well, and they're looking for emotional connections."

This trend aligns with a global shift toward "quiet luxury," where genuine, personal experiences are valued more than overt displays of extravagance.

Opening the Doors to Centuries of Heritage

The balance between history and innovation is perhaps most vivid at Klein Constantia. Established in 1685 and famed for its legendary Vin de Constance, the estate remains one of South Africa's most storied destinations.

CEO Pascal Asin is dedicated to making this legacy more accessible. "South Africa is becoming the place to be," he notes. "There is still so much for people to discover here."

Recognizing that heritage estates can sometimes feel imposing, Asin's goal is to ensure Klein Constantia remains

welcoming to a diverse audience, bridging the gap between centuries of tradition and modern hospitality.

"We are one of the kind of farms that people are not much aware of. So we want to open the doors. We want to show to the world that we have been there for 340 years, before the others."

That invitation is delivered through what he describes as three pillars of hospitality: exceptional food, immersive wine experiences and genuine warmth.

"We try to expose the farm, and we do three things extremely well: hospitality, an incredible restaurant with Chef Garth, and of course, our tasting room and tours around the farm," Asin explained. "We want to make sure that we give incredible experiences to our people from overseas, but also the locals who are coming to the wine farm."

For Klein Constantia, heritage is not something to be admired from a distance. It is something to be experienced, shared and continually rediscovered.

A Vintage Future for African Tourism

Despite their varied approaches, these estates share a unified vision: wine tourism as a catalyst for sustainable agriculture, cultural preservation, and deeper pan-African connection. Together, they prove that wine is not just a product, but one of Africa's most sophisticated ambassadors.

As the Cape Winelands attract a growing number of both continental and international visitors, the region is redefining the luxury narrative. These estates have become hubs where business intersects with leisure, and heritage meets innovation.

The lesson for Africa's tourism industry is clear: competitive advantage lies in crafting experiences that are unmistakably African—rooted in authentic storytelling, extraordinary landscapes, and genuine warmth.

The Western Cape's vineyards are doing exactly that. Every bottle poured, every vineyard walked and every story shared is contributing to a richer narrative about Africa as a destination of sophistication, creativity and world-class hospitality.

The message from the Cape Winelands is unmistakable: Africa's finest vintage is no longer found only in the glass. It is found in the experiences, connections and memories that linger long after the last sip.

Tourism

Calendar of Events

@VoyagesAfriq

Sept.

2-4
2026

Africa Tourism Leadership Forum

Venue: Limpopo, South Africa

Contact:

About: The Africa Tourism Leadership Forum is Africa's leading platform for travel, tourism, hospitality, and aviation stakeholders to network, exchange insights, and shape strategies for intra-African travel and tourism development.

Sept.

9-12
2026

Sanganai Hlanganai World Tourism Expo

Venue: Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Contact:

About: Sanganai/Hlanganani – World Tourism Expo is an esteemed annual tourism trade fair organized by the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority. Renowned for showcasing the most diverse and exceptional tourism offerings across Africa, the event attracts international visitors, industry stakeholders, and global media.

Sept.

12
2026

UIM E1 World Championship

Venue: Luanda, Angola

Contact:

About: Angola joins as E1's second race location on the African continent, and the first in Southern Africa. The new round of the Championship sits alongside other iconic host cities on the calendar, including Monaco, Miami and Lake Como.

Sept.

21-25
2026

Africa Showcase Central Eastern Europe

Venue: Bucharest-Warsaw-Prague

Contact: ideas@africashowcase.travel

About: AFRICA SHOWCASE is where real business begins – where passionate African travel suppliers and quality international buyers meet. Whether you're selling or buying Africa, our travel trade events open doors to new opportunities, trusted partnerships, and a deeper understanding of our extraordinary continent.

October

20-22
2026

Essence of Africa

Venue: Zanzibar, Tanzania

Contact: media@eoat.travel

About: Essence of Africa is a private, sector-led initiative designed to connect international buyers with African tourism suppliers. The event features pre-scheduled meetings, networking events, educational seminars, and familiarisation trips, providing a comprehensive platform for business development and collaboration.

October

27-28
2026

TBCSA Tourism Leadership Conference

Venue: Suncity, South Africa

Contact:

About: The Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) Tourism Leadership Conference will return in October 2026, bringing together tourism leaders, businesses, and stakeholders from across the sector.

@VoyagesAfriq

Tourism

Calendar of Events

Nov.

8-11
2026

65th ICCA Congress

Venue: Panama City, Panama

Contact: registration@icaworld.org

About: Join associations, industry leaders, event professionals, and destination experts for 4 days of connection, insight sharing, and meaningful collaboration across the global business events and meetings industry.

Nov.

3-5
2026

WTM London

Venue: Excel, London

Contact: +44 (0)20 8271 2171

About: World Travel Market London is the premier global marketplace for travel professionals to discover, source, and purchase new ways to see the world. Travel powers the world. How will you use your TravelPower?

Nov.

17-19
2026

IBTM Barcelona

Venue: Barcelona, Spain

Contact: +44 20 8271 2127

About: Join the event planners shaping what's next for business events. Meet the people, ideas and businesses that can help you solve challenges, unlock new opportunities and deliver more impactful events.

Nov.

28-30
2026

Seychelles Fashion Week

Venue: Mahe, Seychelles

Contact:

About: Seychelles Fashion week aims to bring Fashion lovers to a paradise in the middle of the Indian Ocean from all continents with tremendous creativity and culture, thus making the Seychelles Fashion Week melting pot Culture through Fashion.

Nov.

25-30
2026

One Nation Reggae Festival

Venue: Freetown, Sierra Leone

Contact:

About: The festival is designed to build a creative bridge connecting Africa and the Caribbean, featuring a lineup of legendary artists and homegrown talent.

Dec

2-4
2026

3rd UN Tourism Gastronomy Forum for Africa

Venue: Freetown, Sierra Leone

Contact:

About: UN Tourism and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone will organize the 3rd UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa, on 2-4 December 2026 in Freetown, Republic of Sierra Leone. The upcoming Regional Forum will convene destinations and international experts to explore the transformative potential of Gastronomy Tourism.

Travel & Tourism Blitz

X f i y @VoyagesAfrica

IATA Board appoints Saadia Zahidi as Director General

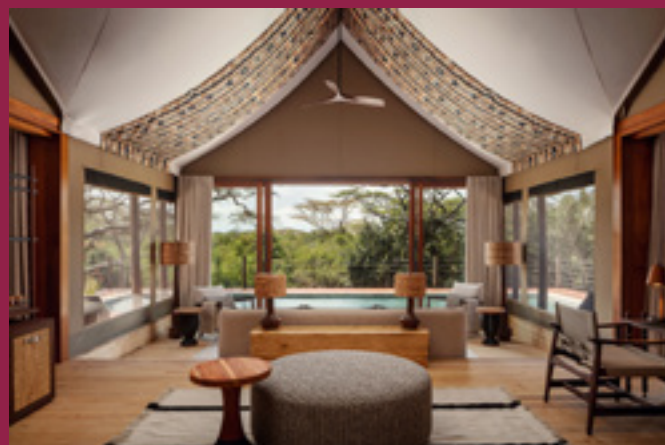


The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced that Saadia Zahidi has been appointed by IATA's Board of Directors to the position of Director General from 1 November 2026. Zahidi will be IATA's ninth Director General and the first woman appointed to hold the position.

She joins IATA from the World Economic Forum (WEF) where she is a Managing Director and Member of the Managing Board. Willie Walsh, IATA's current Director General, concluded his duties on 31 July 2026. The IATA Board of Directors has appointed Sandrine Le Borgne, IATA's Chief Financial Officer and Senior Vice President for Corporate Services, as Interim Director General for the intervening period.

JW Marriott unveils a mindful sanctuary in Kenya's Solio game reserve

JW Marriott has opened the JW Marriott Mount Kenya Rhino Reserve Safari Camp in Kenya's Solio Game Reserve, offering a wellness-focused safari experience that combines luxury, relaxation and wildlife immersion. Located between Mount Kenya and the Aberdare Ranges, the camp encourages guests to reconnect with nature while exploring one of Africa's premier conservation areas. The 45,000-acre private conservancy is renowned for rhino conservation and supports one of the continent's largest populations of black and white rhinos, alongside lions, leopards, zebras, waterbuck, Thomson's gazelles and abundant birdlife. Guests can enjoy guided sunrise and afternoon game drives, night safaris to spot elusive nocturnal wildlife such as servals and caracals, or unwind at camp around the fire pit after a day in the bush.



Sierra Leone Suspends US\$25 Airport Security Fee at Freetown International Airport



The Government of Sierra Leone has announced the temporary suspension of the US\$25 Airport Security Fee charged to passengers at Freetown International Airport, effective Monday, July 6, 2026. In a public notice issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the government said the suspension follows a ministerial directive and will remain in effect until further notice. According to the ministry, the decision was taken as the existing contract framework governing the fee collection undergoes a comprehensive review. Authorities said the temporary measure is intended to facilitate the completion of an ongoing independent Special Audit by the Audit Service Sierra Leone (ASSL) and to assess the feasibility of introducing a more seamless and integrated collection system aimed at reducing inconvenience for travellers.

Travel & Tourism Blitz

@VoyagesAfrica X f i y

Seychelles boosts summer air connectivity



Seychelles is set for a stronger summer tourism season as three key international airline partners, Qatar Airways, Turkish Airlines, and Aeroflot, resume or expand services to the destination earlier than in previous years. The return of these services, beginning this week with Qatar Airways on 16 June and Turkish Airlines on 17 June, significantly enhances global connectivity and visitor access during the traditionally quieter summer months. Qatar Airways is the first of the three carriers to resume operations to Seychelles this summer, with its return to Seychelles International Airport at Pointe Larue marking the start of an expanded summer schedule. From 16 June 2026, the airline will operate four weekly flights on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, further strengthening Seychelles' links through Doha and providing convenient connections to more than 150 destinations worldwide.

EASA approves TAAG's Boeing 787 operations to Europe



The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has authorised the operation of TAAG – Angola Airlines' new Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner on commercial services to the European airspace, as part of the standard certification and technical oversight process applicable to airlines operating flights to destinations within the European Union. This authorisation enables the integration of the new aircraft into the airline's European operations, marking another milestone in TAAG's fleet modernisation programme and reinforcing the carrier's commitment to safety, regulatory compliance, and operational efficiency. In the initial phase, the Boeing 787-9 will be deployed on the Luanda-Lisbon-Luanda route, TAAG's principal connection to the European market, enhancing the passenger travel experience and strengthening the airline's competitiveness on this strategic route.

Botswana Appoints Abigail Lillian Khumoyame as Permanent Secretary for Environment and Tourism

The Government of Botswana has appointed Ms. Abigail Lillian Khumoyame as the new Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, marking a significant leadership transition for one of the country's key ministries overseeing environmental sustainability and tourism development. In an official announcement, the Ministry said Ms. Khumoyame will provide strategic leadership and oversight across the Ministry's departments, parastatals and operational units. Her appointment is expected

to strengthen institutional coordination while advancing Botswana's environmental management agenda, eco-tourism development, and the conservation of the country's natural heritage for future generations. The Ministry described Ms. Khumoyame as a distinguished and multi-skilled expert in environmental science, development practice and academia, with extensive expertise in sustainable natural resource management and community livelihood enhancement.



imEX



LAS VEGAS
2026

america.imexevents.com

Because being in the room matters



Because trust matters, go where real people do real business—by design. Where you can turn months of sourcing into one, two or three days of focused meetings. Let's go find your event people. Register now.

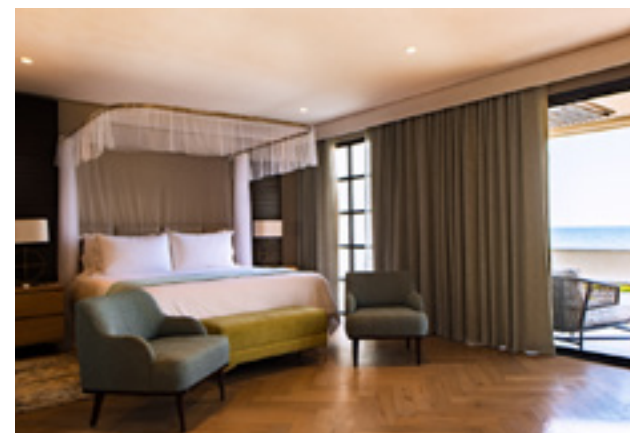


imEX LAS VEGAS
OCTOBER 13-15 2026

www.sunbirdmalawi.com



SCAN ME



Discover Malawi with Sunbird Hotels and Resorts

Escape to **any Sunbird Hotel or Resort**, where every moment is crafted to create unforgettable memories. **Book your reservation today** for memories that will last a lifetime.

FOR BOOKING AND ENQUIRIES

☎ 0111 773 388 / 0885 996 521
✉ centralres@sunbirdmalawi.com
f sunbirdtourismmw
📷 sunbirdtourismmw
X sunbirdtourism





EXTRAORDINARY Destination

A land of breathtaking contrasts, endless horizons and unforgettable experiences.
to vibrant cultures Namibia invites you to explore a destination unlike any other.
From the world's oldest desert to the wild Atlantic Ocean, from extraordinary wildlife

Timeless Landscapes
Sossusvlei
Ancient. Majestic.
Inspiring.

Wildlife Like Nowhere Else
Etosha National Park
Close to Nature

Wild. Raw. Magical.
Skeleton Coast
Nature's Masterpiece

Luxury. Adventure. Authenticity.
Unforgettable Journeys Await.

Why Visit Namibia?



Safe & Stable
One of Africa's
most peaceful
and secure
destinations.



**Conservation
Leadership**
Committed
to protecting
nature for future
generations.



**Diverse
Experiences**
Safari,
adventure,
culture, luxury
and so much
more.



**Warm
Hospitality**
Friendly
people, rich
cultures and
unforgettable
connections.



**Growing
Together**
Strengthening
ties with Africa
and the world
for a brighter
future.

www.visitnamibia.com.na

Experience the soul of Africa.
Inspire your journey. Enrich your life.
Namibia Awaits You.
Come. Explore. Be Inspired.
Plan your journey today!



Namibia Tourism Board