



ATA 33RD CONGRESS BRINGS THE WORLD TO TANZANIA,

Congress Profile by Jerry W. Bird

To say that Arusha has undergone an amazing transformation in 10 years is an understatement, as we learned by participating in ATA's Annual Congress, then staying an extra 3 weeks, getting to know the community more fully. Thanks to the Karibu Fair, Leon H. Sullivan Summit, Miss Arusha Contest and Rotary Club, who welcomed us at their superb events. Hats off to Wayne Keefer and the East African All Suites Hotel staff, who made us feel so completely at home. Outside the large AICC complex we visited one of the finest Trade Shows in almost 14 years covering ATA events. Not only were the fashions and fabrics superb, but Africa's tourism industry was fully represented. We came often and made some impressive purchases.

Inside the AICC a varied program kept the delegates in their seats, with topics such as "A Decade of Progress: Showcasing Tanzania," "Africa's Competitive Edge," "Tourism as an Investment Tool," "Packaging Africa," "Africa's Accommodations," and much more. During the gala evenings, delegates enjoyed Fashion Shows by Hilu Bara (top right) of Arusha, and Chief Margaret Fabiyi of Nigeria. ATA Host Country Day included a visit to the famous Ngorongoro Crater and the Media Tour featured a visit to Arusha National Park.

"Bringing the World to Africa and Africa to the World: Africa's Competitive Edge in Tourism"

Those of us who were at the Arusha International Conference Centre in May, 1998, when Tanzania hosted its first Africa Travel Association World Congress, were in for a pleasant surprise. In one brief decade, Arusha has made a remarkable transformation from a quiet village near Mt. Meru and Kilimanjaro, to a booming city with a growing list of amenities. On an even broader scene, Tanzania's Tourism sector has forged ahead by leaps and bounds, setting an example for all of Africa - and earning a favorable spot at the top of the economic ladder - as the country's number one employer and money earner. Revenue from tourism is expected to top one billion dollars (U.S.) by year end, replacing agriculture as Tanzania's leading economic contributor.

What's equally astounding is the fact that the United States has gained international recognition as the leading single source of tourism trade to this fascinating country. With that backdrop, little wonder Tanzania was selected to host the ATA 33rd Annual Congress, which proved to be a truly world-class affair with delegates and guests from

over 40 countries in attendance. Marking the importance of this event on the national scene, proceedings were opened by Tanzania's President H.E. Jakaya Kikwete, and closed by Zanzibar President Hon.

Amani Abeid Karume.

New ATA President

Among the many high profile persons taking part in the event was Hon. Shamsa Selengia Mwangunga, Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, who was recently named ATA President. The Minister referred to Arusha as "gateway to the world's

finest wildlife areas. Trends indicate that tourists are searching for destinations with unspoiled natural tourist attractions, rich cultures and adventures. These trends, coupled with the friendly and warm hospitality make Africa the most ideal destination for this millennium. This year's theme of Bringing the World to Africa and Africa to the World has come at the right time. During your stay in Arusha you will have an opportunity to visit some of our spectacular tourist attractions, including the visit to Ngorongoro Crater. When you arrive back home you will be our good ambassadors to your countries."





LAND OF KILIMANJARO, ZANZIBAR AND SERENGETI

Partners in Tourism

ATA Executive Director Edward J. Bergman emphasized the close ties between the ATA and Tanzania - a partnership that has gained momentum since the Association's first visit in 1998. Bergman paid tribute to the tremendous effort by Tanzanians, stating that travel and tourism to Tanzania is booming. He noted that in recent years, Africa has become the leading region in terms of growth in international tourist arrivals, averaging seven percent growth annually since 2000. He expects Africa's position to continue in the same direction due to improving infrastructures, advances in technology and communications, a growing private sector, more direct long-haul flights, and an expanding choice of tour and travel experiences.



Land of Contrasts

President Kikwete called Tanzania a land of many contrasts, pride of African heritage, rich and diverse natural and cultural resources. He stated that close to 25 percent of the land has been set aside for conservation of wildlife and forests. This vast area includes the Serengeti National Park, where the annual migration of wildebeest draws visitors from near and far. Picturesque Mt Kilimanjaro, the Roof of Africa, is the

only permanently snow capped peak in the tropics and is the highest mountain on the continent. On Arusha's doorstep is the Ngorongoro Crater, world's largest intact caldera forming a natural enclosure for a wide variety of wildlife. With the Olduvai Gorge, and the 3.6 million year-old-human foot prints at Laetoli, all adjacent to it, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area is indeed the Cradle of Mankind and the crater is the Eighth Wonder of the World. President Kikwete mentioned the spice island

of Zanzibar, the ultimate paradise in the Indian Ocean, with clear waters, unspoiled beaches, and historical heritage. Throughout Tanzania, there are game reserves, archaeological, historical and cultural sites, plus unexplored pristine southern and western parks, each offering an uncompromising and unique experience."

President Kikwete said that tourism has provided more than 250,000 jobs, and according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, the need for more employment in the area is so huge that out of 4325 jobs the ministry advertised only 225 had been filled. He said, "The number

and size of protected areas have expanded, and their ecological values are still intact. Tourism and tourism related investments are also growing steadily and the opportunity for further growth is still available. These improvements have been made possible by our sound political and economic policies as well as programs and plans that are specifically tailored to engender fundamental transformation and modernization of the tourism sector in Tanzania through harnessing existing potentials sustainably,"

Who Attended?: Over 300 tourism industry experts from Africa, the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia. Tourism ministers, tourism board heads, hotel and airline executives, travel agents, tour operators and business executives from Angola, Belgium, Benin, Bermuda, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malta, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, the U.S., Zambia and Zimbabwe



Photos on this page by Dean Mac Kasasa, Mugwete Goufrani and Nick Gosling. For more information visit: www.africa-ata.org/tanzania.htm