

ZIMBABWE has been awarded the Promising New Destination Accolade at the just-ended Outbound Travel Mark in Mumbai, India.

The award was handed over to the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority at the travel fair attracted over 750 exhibitors from 34 countries and 24 Indian federal states.

OTM is a platform for the travel and tourism industry to reach out to the travel trade, business and potential tourists.

This is the first time Zimbabwe exhibited in India. Other African countries that participated were Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania and Seychelles.

ZTA chief executive Mr Karikoga Kaseke, who is in India, said the award was testimony of Zimbabwe's seriousness to penetrate the new Indian market.

"The country is bound to benefit from the second fastest growing economy in the world with a middle class of over 500 million that has disposable income and a high propensity to travel," said Mr Kaseke.

Zimbabwe received overwhelming and positive response at the stand from high-profile Indian Operators.

Several destination marketing companies approached Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe's thrust at the fair was promotion of the national brand, "Zimbabwe -- A World of Wonders", and promoting its co-hosting of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation 2013 General Assembly.

There has also been great demand for partnerships between the Indian Tour Operators and the Zimbabwean inbound tour operators to develop the best suitable tour packages to cater to the Indian market.

The major constraint faced by the Indian market is the prohibitive Zimbabwe visa regime, which urgently needs serious review if Zimbabwe is to realise the potential presented by this huge market.

The team being led by Mr Kaseke has made significant inroads into this market.