



## **AFRICA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION AND CAMEROON PARTNER TO INCREASE TOURISM TO WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA**

The Africa Travel Association, the leader in tourism promotion to Africa, held its 38th Annual Congress in Buea, Cameroon from October 16-20, 2013. Under the banner of "Re-Discovering Cameroon," nearly 200 international and local delegates, including tourism ministers from Cameroon, Uganda and Zimbabwe and representatives from the public and private sectors, gathered at the newly-opened Mountain Hotel to explore how tourism is one of the most promising industries across Africa and an evolving industry in Cameroon.

The Congress was hosted by the Cameroon Ministry of Tourism and Leisure under the auspices of Honorable Minister of State, Minister of Tourism and Leisure, Bella Bouba Maigari. In his opening remarks, the Minister said, "The 38th edition of ATA's Congress in Buea is taking place at a time when tourism, a sector with a strong added value that cuts across sectors, is ranked as one of the biggest industries in the world. The important role it plays in Cameroon's economy contributes significantly to improving the trade balance.

The 2013 event took place in the English-speaking Southwest part of the country with a focus on Buea, the capital of the Southwest region, and Limbe, a seaside city on the southern slopes of Mount Cameroon, one of Africa's highest peaks and largest volcanoes. Known for its rich and fertile soil, the Southwest is home to a range of plantations, including tea, palm oil, rubber and bananas.

The region is also home to the Limbe Wildlife Center. A former zoo, today it's a wildlife rescue and rehabilitation project with critically endangered wildlife species including gorillas, chimpanzees, and several species of monkeys, among some reptiles and birds. The Botanical Gardens next to the center offers tourists an overview of Cameroon's flora and fauna. Another top tourism site includes the historic eighteenth century slave trade port at Bimbia, which once

was one of the busiest slave-ship departure points on Africa's Atlantic Coast to plantations in North and South America and across the Sahara.

An ecotourism heaven!

As editors, we have a great interest in projects relating to Ecotourism and Sustainable Travel. Many things drew us to Africa and its indefatigable spirit. From our base in Vancouver, B.C. Canada, we have travelled so far throughout over many countries, in North, West, Central, East, Southern Africa, sampling everything from the lands of Sahara to Safaris, and the beautiful beaches of Africa Islands.

Africa offers an incredibly rich diversity and the best wildlife viewing in the world and it is indisputable. It offers an extraordinary scenic variety. Many delegates find that it is home to some of the friendliest and generous people in the world. Tourism as a result are the force in increasing the well-being of all Africans. Which is why, we will particularly enjoy working on Cameroon. We started the Magazine since 17 years ago so that we could help you make informed decisions, giving you a look across the continent.

Cameroon is heir to an unparalleled world heritage Sites: Dja Faunal Reserve and Sangha Trinational. There are four sites which are really worth mentioning: the Korup National Park, the Limbe Botanic Garden, Ebodje and Waza National Park.

The country which is the whole Africa in a single country has the potential to be among the tourist destinations in Africa

On behalf of our ATA colleagues, we encourage you to visit this fascinating country - The climate is superb.

As time passes, the images and voices of Cameroon have not faded one iota - they've become even more vivid in the theatre of our mind.

What we truly love about the many Cameroonians whom we have come to know - is that to a person, they "accentuate the Positive."

Cameroon should be widely recognized and it is our job to bring to you a wider scope of what the fascinating country has to offer tourists, ministers, delegates, airlines personnel, hotel groups and tour operators.

Tourism also creates personal interactions between cultures that are stimulating and that foster understanding, and we can make balanced decisions to contribute to our world.

There are new development agenda in 2014, new airlines stepping in, new routings, more operators, more new Africa cruises offering clients an opportunity to experience Africa and become acquainted with its culture and the wildlife experience.

We truly believe than if more people travelled there would be less conflict in the world. To learn more about this event, please visit: <http://www.africa-ata.org/cameroon.htm>.

#### The ATA Team

We would like to invite you to become a member of Canada ATA Chapter to represent Africa Tourism Market. ATA organization is your organization and offers many marketing and networking opportunities for African and Indian Ocean Travel and Tourism partners. Their main aim is to help you promote tourism to Africa and the Indian Ocean.

The Tour Operators promoting Africa in Canada brings together the leading Canadians Tour Operators and wholesalers for African Travel. They are dedicated to the growth and quality of travel to and within Africa from Canada by implementing joint marketing initiatives with African tourists board and suppliers. The most exciting revelation reported in various industry reports is that Africa and Indian Ocean receives more tourists than the Caribbean and South America combined.

Consider travelling in Africa and learn how to sell Africa by joining the AFRICA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION CANADA AND USA CHAPTERS

Email: [airhwy@smartt.com](mailto:airhwy@smartt.com) or go to the Website: <http://www.africa-ata.org/bulletins.htm> To keep you informed of what is taking place with Tourism in Africa. Please take advantage of ATA's Headquarters Website:

<http://www.AfricaTravelAssociation.org>

#### About the Africa Travel Association (ATA)

The Africa Travel Association (ATA) is the leading global trade association promoting travel and tourism to Africa and strengthening intra-Africa partnerships. Established in 1975, ATA serves both the public and private sectors of the international travel and tourism industry. ATA membership comprises African governments, their tourism ministers, tourism bureaus and boards, airlines, cruise lines, hotels, resorts, front-line travel sellers and providers, tour operators and travel agents, and affiliate industries. ATA partners with the African Union Commission (AU) to promote the sustainable development of tourism to and across Africa. ATA's annual events bring together industry leaders to shape Africa's tourism agenda. For more information about ATA, visit [www.AfricaTravelAssociation.org](http://www.AfricaTravelAssociation.org).

## GO AFRICA GO



Africa is not known for snowy peaks and skiing holidays but several of its athletes still compete at every Winter Olympics. This year there are 4 who will represent the continent which one who nearly made it to Sochi. Among them Togo, Zimbabwe, Moroccan and Algerian.

### AFRICA AT THE 2014 WINTER OLYMPICS IN SOCHI



Sive Speelman, South African skier

By [Anouk Zijlma](#)

Despite the general [lack of snow](#) in Africa, athletes from 3 (possibly 4) African nations will compete in the [2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi](#) (7 - 23 February). It will be the first time

both [Togo](#) and [Zimbabwe](#) are represented at a Winter Olympics. The athletes are largely self-financed and share a common dream that embodies the Olympic spirit. None are expected to medal. For most of them, just qualifying for the Olympics and getting to Sochi is reason enough to celebrate.

Just ask the young Sive Speelman, a South African athlete who narrowly missed his chance to compete in Sochi. It would have been the "feel-good" story of these Winter Olympics, dashed by South Africa's own Olympic committee (SASCOC). Speelman comes from a poor background, and grew up in rural Eastern Cape, an area that does actually see snowfall most years. He would have been one of the very few black Alpine skiers to compete at any Winter Olympics. Speelman found out just a few days before the event that the SASCOC ruled he did not qualify to compete, despite being invited to Sochi by the IOC. [Read more on this story...](#)

It is the case that many African athletes fail to even get to the Olympics because of a lack of money as well as sports equipment and training facilities (no snow is of course a major setback). The athletes that do make it scrape up money to train in Europe, Canada or the US. Some put wheels under their skis to be able to train at home. Find out below who Africa's Winter Olympians are, what sports they will compete in, and check back for their results.

### **Zimbabwe**

Generations of Zimbabweans have never even seen a dusting of snow fall on their beautiful land, but there is a Zimbabwe Snow Sports Association and they have their first winter Olympian to support - 20 year old Alpine skier, [Luke Steyn](#). Steyn has had to hone his skills in the US, New Zealand and Chile. This past winter he drove all over Europe trying to compete to get enough points to qualify for Sochi. He'll be competing in the slalom and giant slalom events. Steyn is unlikely to medal, but I'm positive that sports mad Zimbabwe will be behind him all the way.

### **Togo**

[Mathilde-Amivi Petitjean](#) will be the first athlete to represent Togo at the Winter Olympics, she will compete in cross-country skiing. Mathilde was born in Africa, in Niger in fact, but her mother is Togolese. While there may be few Togolese who had heard of her before she qualified for the Sochi Olympics, she is now well known in the small West African nation (which has never seen snow). The Togolese Ski Federation apparently got in touch with Mathilde last year and asked her to compete for her mother's nation. While an excellent skier, she would not have made the French team, so she's just proud and happy to be able to compete and get experience at this level.

Alessia Afi Dipol will compete in the slalom alpine ski event at Sochi for Togo and is rumored to be the flag-bearer for the team. Alessia represented India in the past two years, was born and raised in Italy, but has switched to Togo for these Olympics. There is some confusion about her Togolese roots, as she does not appear to have a close family connection to the country!

A third Togolese athlete, Awa Tomety, still waits to qualify and potentially join her two compatriots in Sochi.

### **Morocco**

[Morocco](#) has some [ski slopes](#) and a ski team but were embarrassed by the performance of their Alpine skiers in the 1992 Olympics. Several athletes were disqualified, one kept falling down, another was lapped during the giant slalom. Since then they've been frugal in who they send. In 2006, Morocco hoped to send Africa's first female Alpine skier to the Olympics, [Sarah Ben Mansour](#), but she got injured and could not compete.

This year (2014) Morocco is sending two teenage skiers to Sochi - Adam Lamhamedi and Kenza Tazi. Adam is half Canadian, and half Moroccan. He won a gold medal in the 2012 Junior Olympics and will compete in the slalom and giant slalom events.

Kenza Tazi will compete in the women's slalom and giant slalom events. She attends a sports high school in France and competes regularly on the junior circuit.

### **Algeria**

In 2010, at the age of 17, the cross-country skier Mehdi Selim Khelifi was the only Algerian present at the games in Vancouver where he finished a respectable 84 (out of 94) in the Men's 15 km freestyle. He was still waiting to hear if he qualified for Sochi at the end of January 2014.