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East Africa News

COMPETITION AMONG GULF AIRLINES PRODUCES FIRST FAULT LINES



The announcement by Qatar Airways to withdraw from the Seychelles route, a destination they have served uninterrupted since 2004, has sent out signals to aviation observers, that this may constitute a turning point in the hitherto relentless march of the three Gulf giants towards expansion, adding new destinations on an almost monthly basis.

Erstwhile Pan Arabian carrier Gulf Air were the first to pull the plug on destinations which their accountants said did not produce enough revenue to sustain the routes, subsequently leaving from Entebbe within months of a re-launch and later last year also from Nairobi.

Also today did news emerge that Etihad was reducing their flights to Sao Paulo from daily to three times a week, at least until end October this year, during which time a thorough evaluation of loads and revenues will undoubtedly be carried out to establish if more flights should be added again.

After publishing the news of Qatar pulling out of the Seychelles in September, Capt. David Savy, current chairman of the Seychelles CAA and former long serving CEO of Air Seychelles, came back with some important observations, he permitted to share here: *'(I) would just like to enlighten you on a few issues and arm you with the facts and truth. Qatar operates an A319 seating 110 seats daily since December 2004. In fact they rushed to start a month ahead of EK who had announced commencement of services in Jan 2005. Qatar commenced with four weekly services using a narrow body A319 whilst EK commenced with 5 weekly wide-body A330's. Let us remember that at the time Air Seychelles was still operating its B767's on Europe. As I stated then and it is still true today we have far too much capacity for the number of visitors we pull in and the current hotel room occupancy. Clearly Qatar has been bleeding since commencement of operations and has decided that after 8.5 years of systematic loses it had to make a decision'*.

There is subsequently speculation now if Qatar Airways might drop other destinations with similar patterns too, and perhaps strengthen their presence on routes where high loads do produce acceptable financial returns.

Capt. Savy then went on to say, with clear reference to Emirates' recent statement that they would wish to move from 12 flights a week to a full double daily service: *'It is true to say that EK's announcement that it is moving to*

double daily with a three class service dwarfs QR's offer. EK will offer 3626 weekly seats on a wide body compared to QR offering 770 seats on a narrow body. This is a staggering 4.7 times.

Another poignant reality is that whilst we have just over 400'000 one way seats on offer into the Seychelles per annum (all airlines) only about 250'000 are being occupied. This is a dismal overall load factor of 63% and you and I know that this is way below breakeven point.

What is really happening today is that the market is stabilizing and reality is sinking in, simple as that.

Likewise the room occupancy of all hotels combined is in the mid 60's. Therefore the reality is staring us in the face. We need to create even greater demand for the destination although one must appreciate the work STB/Tourism is doing currently as well as Govt having significantly increased STB's marketing budget.

Seychelles has to become even 'sexier' with a steady stream of new properties, upgrading of existing ones and overall better service delivery. It is ironic that certain persons or sector of the trade is conveniently deflecting the blame or pointing fingers whereas the real solution lies on the ground and primarily hospitality sector.

The airline community has done their fair share and [reality is] that when Seychelles can generate more demand to fill [the] planes and [there are] more new hotels even Qatar Airways will come back. There you are Wolfgang, this is the reality. As a country we may be shining compared to other Indian Ocean islands but not bright enough to retain all existing airlines and attract others. The day we accept this as a fact and stop the blame game we can make real progress. After all the market does exist. Mauritius and Maldives receive close to a million visitors a year and Seychelles a quarter of that number! We certainly do not need that many but a bit more than currently would certainly retain airlines.

David, correctly, also pointed out that handling charges only formed a relatively smaller portion of an airline's cost when deciding for or against a destination, though Blue Panorama had cited this as one of their reasons last year when they pulled from the route after only a few months.

Another regular reader of my blog posted this comment, again worth repeating here, as after all it is now in the public domain: *'Don't think it's because of the high cost, Qatar they got money and good load factor into sez.*

With etihad in full control of air seychelles QR know it will be difficult for them to defend themselves in the future, better leave now then leave later with some insult. And now big rumors circulating that ek is going to go double daily to SEZ, with air austral, blue panorama and now Qatar maybe Ethiopian is in the queue next it will be UAE domination in the aviation sector in Seychelles'.

There certainly now are growing indications that the main Gulf carriers are taking a fresh look at load factors and frequencies to certain destinations, and rather – like in the old days when money seemingly did not matter as growth at almost any cost was deemed an acceptable strategy – cut their losses now than bleed fund urgently needed elsewhere, in places where the returns are assured.

The clock is now ticking down on Qatar Airways' flights to Mahe, and should Emirates' make good of their intention to go double daily, it remains to be seen how Air Seychelles and partner Etihad will be responding, perhaps with added flights between Abu Dhabi and Mahe in what will no doubt be a tooth and nail fight over passenger numbers and load factors, now that QR has dropped the proverbial towel into the skies.

Emirates meanwhile, in a move to further boost arrivals to the archipelago, held a joint workshop with the Seychelles Tourism Board on 28th May at the Constance Ephelia Resort, Seychelles. The workshop saw the participation of leading tour operators from UK, France, Germany, Russia, and Denmark.

'The Seychelles destination is an important one for Emirates and this explains why we regularly engage in activities to promote the archipelago across our strong network. The Seychelles is popular with Emirates clients' but we need to sustain its visibility in key markets' stated Omar Ramtoola, Emirates' Manager for the Indian Ocean islands before adding: *'With 12 weekly flights to the Seychelles, Emirates is the only airline offering three classes of travel; First Class, Business Class and Economy Class to the archipelago. We consider ourselves as a long-term partner of the tourism industry of the Seychelles. Our partnership with the Ministry of Tourism and the Seychelles Tourism Board is a very fruitful one'.*

In response did Mrs. Elsia Grandcourt, CEO of the Seychelles Tourism Board reply: *'Air accessibility is key to the development of any tourism destination and the Seychelles Tourism Board seizes every opportunity to work with partner airlines such as Emirates to continue to develop the market. The Emirates / Seychelles Tourism Board summit is happening at an opportune time. It will allow the local partners such as destination management companies and large hotels to discuss market opportunities, exchange market intelligence and consumer needs and explore special deals and business ventures/opportunities with Emirates sales and pricing managers with tour operators based in Europe. A second summit will take place in June with tour operators based in Asia and other markets. It is important for us to include the core European markets, which we want to further consolidate, and the new emerging markets, which the destination is developing, in this summit to exchange ideas and continue to work together in planning the way forward'.*

In February did Emirates and the Seychelles Tourism Board renew their Memorandum of Understanding which aims at jointly promoting the destination throughout the airline's network. Watch this space for regular and breaking news from the Indian Ocean islands' aviation industry.

Uganda News

MARIA BARYAMUJURA MAKES IT INTO THE ADWTA HALL OF FAME



(Maria Baryamujura seen here with Kitty Pope who formally proposed her for the award)

The African Diaspora World Tourism Awards (ADWTA) is the first ever awards ceremony honoring trailblazers in black culture and heritage as an influence on tourism. It is designed in appreciation of the service and dedication of leaders from around the world who have significantly impacted tourism and inspired the exploration of black culture and heritage sites around the globe. The Awards ceremony was held on 27th April 2013 in Atlanta GA, at the Atlanta Airport Marriott.

The Awards recognised those leaders in two parts: '*Who's Who*' and '*Hall of Fame*' in Black Culture and Heritage Tourism. The '*Who's Who*' category recognized professionals who have done outstanding work in various cultural and tourism fields. The '*Hall of Fame*' category was for notables who have made legendary contributions that have significantly impacted black culture and heritage tourism development.

Maria Baryamujura, founder & CEO of Community Based Tourism Initiatives (**COBATI**) a local tourism NGO in Uganda, was among those inducted into the inaugural African Diaspora World Tourism Awards **Hall of Fame**.

Maria was recognised for her '*outstanding contributions and dedicated service in Cultural Heritage Tourism*'.

Maria's name had been formally submitted by Kitty Pope, after receiving the nomination from this correspondent who felt that Maria deserved this level of global recognition for her outstanding work in the tourism, conservation and community service fields in Uganda. Other notable honourees included the former Prime Minister of the Bermuda Dr. Ewart Brown,

The official African Diaspora World Tourism Awards gala ceremony took place in Atlanta, Georgia, USA and were hosted by multi Emmy Award- winning Monica Kaufman, TV personality. Prior to this event, there was an Africana Extravaganza of cultural performances and an exhibition of a Travel Expo. The awards event pre-kicked by the screening of Bob Marley's granddaughter Donisha's new Travel documentary **Rasta: 'A Souls' Journey'**.

Kitty Pope, co- publisher and publication editor of AfricanDiasporaTourism.com, is the creator and executive director of African Diaspora World Tourism Awards. These awards are produced by AfricanDiasporaTourism.com in association with the A.D King Foundation, a non-profit organisation recognising the commitment, contributions and legacy of the late civil right activist and philosopher, Reverend Alfred Daniel King, brother of late Dr Martin Luther King, Jr.

Maria Baryamujura has been at the forefront of tourism development in Uganda for the last 30 years, with a passion for promoting tourism and sustainable environment for community development. Maria's work has been recognized locally and internationally. She is an **Ashoka Fellow** since 2006. She was a Finalist in the World Bank Development Marketplace 2000 Innovative Competition, and a recipient of Award of Excellence from the Government of Uganda in recognition of her contribution to tourism and women empowerment in Uganda. Maria's work was also recognized by the Commonwealth Business Council /Africa Magazine in 2008 in the category of '**Leader in Social Innovation**' for promoting business initiatives that can contribute to the success of the African economy. Maria received an Award '*For outstanding contribution to improving the lives of others for a better Uganda*'. She was nominated by the New Vision readers among Ugandans Making a Difference through taking initiative in tackling their communities' problems in different spheres through social projects.

As a founder of COBATI, Maria has created a niche as a capacity developer for communities to come up with innovative ideas that generate income through sustainable tourism. Her field of specialisation is community based tourism with a focus on poverty reduction, environmental conservation and rural women empowerment. She is an advocate for increased awareness of players in the tourism sector and of the opportunities that can be generated if Uganda and Africa in general, provided market driven programs that protect the environment, preserve cultural

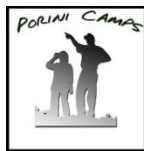
heritage and contribute to sustainable economic development. Her work entails working with rural communities especially to preserve and protect the environment and their cultural heritage.

Maria has trained rural communities in the sustainable use of Natural resources and in generating income through homestead tourism, handicrafts and improving household environment to a level at which rural homesteads can host tourists seeking to interact with nature and culture.

Her unique model of community tourism revolves around households and communities, and their environment. It is centered on conservation, sustainable use, improved livelihoods, education and good leadership. It also promotes responsible tourism practices and attracts travelers who are mindful about local people's livelihoods, environment and culture. Her current work promoting tourism and cultural heritage within the Nubian community in Bombo is supported by the MTN Uganda Foundation. Maria is a Trustee of Uganda Wildlife Education Center and Board member of Greenwatch Uganda. Warmest congratulations to Maria for this outstanding accomplishment.

Kenya News

PORINI CAMPS LAUNCH MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



... in the Wilds ...



One of Kenya's leading sustainable tourism businesses, Gamewatcher Safaris and Porini Safari Camps, have just announced the launch of '*... in the Wilds ...*', their dedicated e-newsletter now sent to their faithful clientele from all around the world on a monthly basis, through which a wealth of information will be shared, from extraordinary game sightings to safari tidbits and more.

Now in business for over 20 years, no mean achievement in Kenya's competitive safari business, Gamewatchers have grown from strength to strength and have since then steadily filled their trophy cabinet with awards, recognizing their efforts to be truly green in their operations, of their camps and the safari company too. Key awards are listed below to show, just how persistent the rating of the camps and safari operations has been:

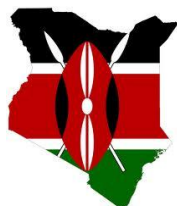
- 2012 - Conservancy of the Year - Ol Kinyei
- 2011 - Eco Rated Facility of the year - Porini Amboseli Camp
- 2011 - Best Tour Operator of the Year
- 2010 - Most Responsible Tour Operator
- 2009 - Eco Warrior Award for best accommodation
- 2008 - Best for Conservation of endangered species or protected

Gamewatchers / Porini were pioneers in establishing conservancies adjoining to key national parks and game reserves, like Amboseli and the Masai Mara, involving local landowners who have turned their back on cattle and goat rearing and have embraced tourism as the main source of their income. As a result has the vegetation recovered, have wild animals, previously either competing with cattle for food sources or being driven off by the herders, returned en masse and often days now do the conservancies hold more game than then parks themselves.

The camps, which close every year from mid April until the end of May, will reopen today, after the break has been used to carry out maintenance, refurbish where needed and spruce the camps up to shine for another year.

For more details visit www.porini.com where readers can easily sign up to receive the newsletter to their inbox every month.

CONSERVATION LOBBY BEATS THE ODDS TO HALT NATIONAL PARK LAND GRAB



Dr. Paula Kahumbu and her co-plaintiffs EAWLS and ANEW have yesterday made a permanent mark on environmental protection in Kenya, when the National Environment Tribunal ruled in their favour over the suspected encroachment of the so called Southern Bypass into the Nairobi National Park. The case was filed nearly a year ago, when it became evident that the contractor made preparations to carve out a route through the park land, something which was patently against existing law and regulations.

Information received, while on the road in Rwanda, tells the story of resistance against a mudslinging and intimidation campaign, of determination to see the case through and of unmitigated joy when the judgment was rendered today.

Dr. Paula in fact requested that the mail she sent to her supporters be shared as widely as possible, and as all details of the case are mentioned, here is the full text of her mail:

Today the National Environment Tribunal made its ruling on the Southern Bypass case. This case has been dragging on for a year now.

The short story is that WE WON! What this means is that the EIA license issued by NEMA to the Kenya Highways Authority has been revoked for the section of the road that is between Ole Sereni Hotel and Carnivore. To get a new license they must comply FULLY with the laws of Kenya.

Today we dealt a blow to the impunity that is destroying our wilderness areas.

This is what happened in more detail.

Last February EAWLS, ANAW and I took NEMA and the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) to court over the intention to construct a 5 km section of the Southern Bypass through Nairobi Park which is in breach of the NEMA license for the highway which had certain conditions. Our main concern was that if they built the road according to their plans which included 5 km inside Nairobi National Park, they would violate condition 2.2 that the road must not encroach on gazetted national parks (Nairobi National Park).

KENHA agreed to the conditions but our meetings with them and their own maps and plans revealed that they had no intention of adhering to the condition.

We challenged NEMA because they issued a conditional license but was doing nothing to ensure that the condition was being adhered to.

In their response both NEMA and KENHA tried to have case thrown out and accused us of trying to frustrate the government's work of building infrastructure. In their argument NEMA stated that "The appellants' appeal is insincere, mischievous and influenced by ill motive" "It is complete misadventure and misrepresentation of facts" and "It is in the interest of the public that the appeal fails"

The four judge panel was unmoved by such accusations and ruled UNANIMOUSLY that the condition had been violated because they "intended to breach the condition 2.2"

In its ruling the NET judges ruled that:

"NEMA ought not to have licensed construction of the whole by-pass if it deemed it likely to affect the park and the biodiversity there in irreparably". It ought to have sought alternative road designs

Stated that the EIA expert for KENHA, Professor Kibwage who "not only conducted the EIA but also had advisory responsibilities regarding a national by-pass knowingly misleading NEMA the responsible agency, amounts to unbecoming and unacceptable conduct."

The Tribunal also faulted KENHA "The Tribunal also notes that KenHA accepted NEMA's EIA license condition 2.2 knowing that it would be impossible for it to comply with it "

The Tribunal found that" the appellants (Dr. Paula Kahumbu, ANAW and EAWLS) were concerned about their environment here constituted by wild flora and fauna and their habitat were permitted by law to seek redress in the Tribunal against NEMA's approval of the project".

In its Orders, the Tribunal stated that it unanimously allows the appeal, in part, and hereby

1 a) varies the terms of the EIA Licence number 0008121 issued by NEMA to KENHA on 18th February 2011

The segment of the proposed by-pass between Ole Sereni Hotel and Carnivore Restaurant is excluded from the Licence and read construction thereon stopped unless KENHA fully complies with all legal requirements for acquisition of part of the Nairobi National Park

b) stops construction of the by-pass in the contentious area until Nema fully complies with both substantive and procedural provisions of law in supervising any future EIA processes for the area under contention in this appeal including requirements for the project proponents submission to it of requirements for the project proponents

submission to it of alternative site, alternative road design and technology for the contentions segment of the by-pass as required by Regulations of the EIA and Audit Regulations and parliamentary approval for de-gazettement of the part of the park. If it's excision is deemed necessary before approving and licensing construction of a section of the by-pass in that area.

So many of you were part of this campaign and supported us in cash, kind and with encouragement. To me this ruling is a very loud announcement that it is not only our right but our duty to protect our environment using the laws that we have enacted in Kenya. It is a victory not only for the animals and the park, but also for every Kenyan who feels helpless about the deterioration of our environment. This victory is proof that things are changing in Kenya and there is reason to hope, dream and take action.

Thank you all for believing in us. Please do not be shy about spreading this mail.

Congratulations to Dr. Paula Kahumbu, to the East African Wild Life Society and to ANEW who have shouldered the burden of the suit, spent their time and resources and faced up to a storm of outrage whipped up by the opposing side. Kudos for the plaintiffs and barbs for the defendants for their intention to brazenly break the law and then foulmouth those who 'dared' to stand up for what is not just their right but entirely right. Watch this space how the process of the Southern Bypass is now changing vis a vis timeframes and routings as and when updated details are available.

KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE ROLLS OUT NATIONWIDE ANTI POACHING BATTLE



Following the publication of details that another four rhinos were poached over the past two weeks, 21 overall this year already in Kenya, and at least 117 elephant butchered for their tusks – at least that is the officially confirmed figure which conservation sources claim could be substantially higher – has KWS earlier this week commenced a country wide manhunt for poachers. Compared to 2012, when 30 rhinos and 384 elephant were according to KWS statements killed, the upwards trend of the 2013 figures available until now shows that the menace from across Kenya's southern borders and beyond has now firmly taken a hold in the country.

Major operations are now underway, hand in hand with other security organs, to hunt down the killers of 11 elephant massacred in the Tsavo area, where authorities blame illegal herdsmen who are at last being pursued now.

A year ago did this correspondent witness the presence of large herds of cattle inside Tsavo, and the camp manager immediately reported their presence to the relevant KWS offices, but according to reports nothing was done at the time and only now has the bitter truth sank in that the lucrative tourism industry could take a serious knock if KWS is not getting a handle on the poaching. In neighbouring Tanzania has a parliamentary report from mid last year put poaching of elephant at 30 a day, though opposition figures have since claimed that the real number may be significantly higher than that, and there, as in Kenya, have the alarm bells been sounded that, should the global syndicates trading in rhino horn and blood ivory not be stopped, it could have a similar economic impact on the tourism industries of the range countries as the piracy of recent years off the African coast impacted on the entire region. Parliament in Nairobi passed a motion last week asking the Kenyan government to add more rangers and increase financial penalties and introduce longer prison terms, while at the same time laying the blame squarely on the door step of China, where skyrocketing demand for ivory has fueled the poaching crisis in Africa.

For now though, as KWS and other security organs are combing the parks and pursuing suspects involved in the illicit trade, it is good luck to them, as they again put their lives on the line to protect Kenya's priceless wildlife heritage.

KENYA AIRWAYS SET FOR DOUBLE DAILY TO ELDORET



Information from Nairobi has confirmed Kenya Airways' intention to commence double daily services between Nairobi and the Western Kenyan town of Eldoret, effective 02nd June.

Currently KQ operates 11 times a week on the route and the addition of three more flights on Monday, Tuesday and Sunday will bring the number to 14.

The airline uses Embraer jets on the route and offers both business class and economy class on all services.

The move signals Kenya Airways continued and almost relentless drive to effectively cover the domestic services from Nairobi to Mombasa, Kisumu, Eldoret and Malindi with enough departures to offer their clientele the choice of multiple daily flights, except for Malindi which has a single frequency per day, all aimed at increasing market share. Frequent flyer miles are rewarded on domestic flights too, giving KQ a competitive advantage over their local rivals which lack similar incentive and loyalty schemes. Visit www.kenya-airways.com for more information on schedules, fares, for bookings or to sign up to the '*Flying Blue*' frequent flyer programme.

KENYA POWER PLUNGES COUNTRY INTO DARKNESS



Kenya Power

Kenyan businesses were left reeling yesterday when the country was hit with the worst power outage since 2000, lasting for several hours before, very gradually, electricity supply was restored.

Political pundits immediately raised the question if foul play was involved in this major incident, which will cost the business community hundreds of millions of Kenya Shillings in damages and lost revenues.

Only days ago had Kenya Power, almost in a '*in your face*' announcement shocked Kenyans when the company said it would halt new connections, ostensibly in reaction to Deputy President Ruto a week earlier denying Kenya Power an increase in tariffs. Such claims will no doubt be investigated swiftly, and the top brass of Kenya Power can brace themselves for a major political and society backlash, already '*enjoying*' a reputation from which the bottom seems to have dropped out. KP shelved the current uniform connection fee and will only, according to a source from Nairobi, resume connections when allowed to charge cost recovery based fees, expected to be substantially greater than the present fee.

Business associations as well as consumer protection organizations immediately denounced the long outage with befitting words over the cost impact of the grid failure, which forced businesses as well as all the country's airports into using their backup generators. Port operations in Mombasa were grounded as were many of the country's hospitals, few of which have generators and fewer which can afford to buy the expensive fuel to keep the engines running for extended hours. City hoteliers and resorts along the Kenya coast too complained as they were also forced to run generators to keep aircondition and refrigeration units running.

Mombasa and Coast Tourist Association chairperson Mohammed Hersi, who is also the Regional Manager for Sarova Hotels, in charge of the 5 star Whitesands Resort and Spa and the Taita Hills and Salt Lick lodges, tweeted his upset over the incident as follows:



1. NTV Kenya @ntvkenya9h

NATIONWIDE POWER [#blackout](#) disrupts business as [#KenyaPower](#) blames technical hitch on the grid; says addressing the matter

Retweeted by [Mohammed Hersi](#).

[Expand](#)

- [Reply](#)
- [Retweet](#)
- [Favorite](#)
- [More](#)

2.



Mohammed Hersi. @hersimohammed9h

#ConnectedKe conf getting ruined by lack of power. @KenyaPower technicians get arrested by council guys for repairing lines without a permit

Tourists in hotels and restaurants were left wondering what happened when the power went just around 2 p.m. as many were still having their lunch, and speculated, together with the staff serving them, what had befallen the country, only to learn later on of a nationwide outage.

The new government of President Uhuru Kenyatta is expected to react sharply and take action against the state owned, monopolist power distributor to show that inefficiencies and incompetence will no longer be tolerated. Meanwhile has Kenya Power and its management been sufficiently ridiculed in the social media through comments made on Twitter and Facebook, enough to have their ears ring for the rest of the year.

KISUMU COUNTY ALLOCATS TOURISM 25 MILLION IN FIRST BUDGET DRAFT



The Lake Victoria Tourism Association has warmly welcomed the Kisumu county's first ever budget draft, which foresees that tourism related activities will receive funding to the tune of 25 million Kenya Shillings.

The LVTA CEO Anthony Ochieng was quoted over the weekend to have said: *'Fundraising for conducting tourism activities has been a major challenge in our association. With support from the county government we are keen on doing more business to promote tourism in the region. Some of the activities are hosting beauty pageants where winners will become tourism ambassadors who will promote the sector in the Western circuit. We will also hold the Nyamgondho food and jazz festival in July, a cultural fete and tourism expo will be held in October, among others'*, signaling a new spirit of cooperation with the new devolved government organs to finally make tourism happen for real in Kisumu and surrounding areas.

Kisumu county governor Jack Ranguma on the occasion also announced that the county government was seeking at least 80 acres of lake front land for investors keen to put up resorts and hotels. The Kenya Tourism Board has in the recent past also shifted attention away from the more traditional tourism attractions in an effort to boost a new Western Kenya tourism circuit, especially now that Kenya Airways offers up to four flights a day between Nairobi and Kisumu, from where a range of lesser known but nevertheless interesting parks, monuments and of course the village of the Obama ancestors can be visited.

Plenty to see in Kenya for sure and new areas to be discovered in what the locals call #TembeaKenya – so put on your travelling pants and hiking boots and get going.

LEOPARD BEACH IS JOINED BY SWAHILI BEACH IN ANNUAL TRIPADVISOR RECOGNITION



Two of Kenya's leading beach resorts, the much acclaimed Leopard Beach Resort and Spa and the nearby Swahili Beach – the latter the first new hotel opened in December 2011 for over 15 years at the Diani Beach stretch of the south coast – have just received their *TripAdvisor* recognition for outstanding services, the *Certificate of Excellence 2013*. Mike Round Turner, who is heading the team at the Swahili Beach, in his communication spoke of a difficult few months, the sector has been going through but expressed his confidence that the future was looking up and shaping up with improved advance bookings. He said: *'Bookings are looking strong and for the first time in months the tour operators are talking positively'*, a sentiment shared by several other hoteliers this correspondent was in touch with in recent days.

Meanwhile, across at the Leopard Beach Resort and Spa things are also looking up, as – following the time critical rebuilding of the sections of the resort damaged by a fire almost exactly a year ago – the focus has now shifted back

to the new villas. Construction of the 28 forest and pool villas was halted during the rebuilding of the main resort but has now resumed in full swing and the first phase of forest villas are expected to be open in September this year. When fully operational, the 2 and 3 bedroom villas will add a further 73 rooms to the resort, which has been enjoying growing patronage from around the world and established itself as a regular contender for '*Best*' among Kenya's beach resorts. Notably will the coast's first fusion restaurant also open at the time, with some of the staff already being trained in Thailand, to be ready to work their magic in the kitchen. Named '*Lemongrass*' the restaurant will serve the guests staying at the villas but also for patrons from outside the resort, complementing the existing *Chaine des Rotisseurs* restaurant in the main resort complex.

In related news it was also learned that the Diani beach road, which connects all the resorts, has been re-carpeted with a new solid layer of tarmac, though it is still lacking paved sidewalks where tourists can safely stroll along to visit the shops and boutiques, as it does street lighting, a crucial element for those wanting to walk after dark. Still, good progress with the resorts and congratulations to the two recipients of the *TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence 2013*.

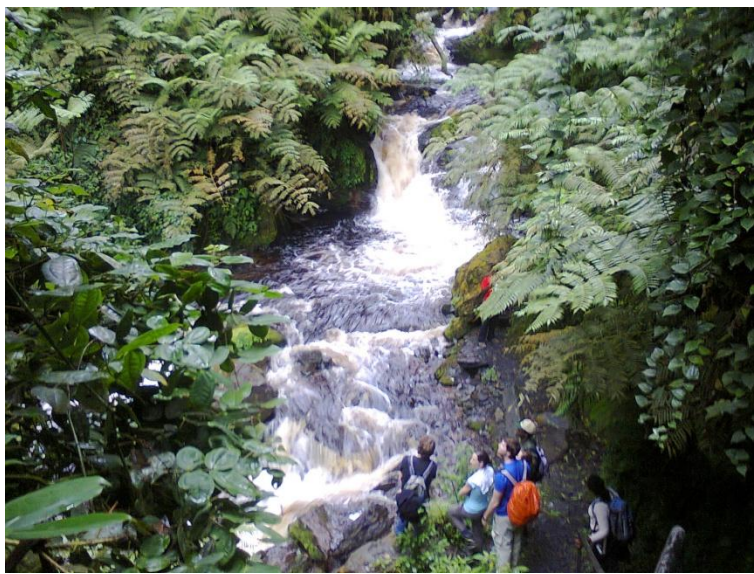
Rwanda News

NYUNGWE, A RETURN TO THE ENCHANTED FOREST



Few places fuel my imagination as does the Nyungwe Forest National Park, with over 1.000 square kilometres the largest still intact montane forest in Eastern and Central Africa. It's unique location, adjoining Burundi's Kibira Transfrontier National Park, makes it part of Africa's largest continuous protected forest area. The park's importance as a water tower is increased by the fact that it is home of the continent's main water divide, from where the ultimate headwaters of both the River Nile and the Congo River spring. It is here that, depending on which side of the ridge the rain falls, it will drain into either the Congo or the Nile basin. And rain does fall aplenty across the forest, with annual rainfall in excess of 2.000 mm, making it one of the wettest places in Africa.

Nyungwe, made a fully fledged national park in 2004, has since then attracted an ever growing stream of visitors, who come to enjoy Eastern Africa's first, and still only canopy walk. It was built at the same time as the Uwinka park reception centre, conveniently located on the main road through the park from Huye to Rusizi, formerly known as Butare and Cyangugu. The canopy trail through and above the treetops, some as high as 70 metres, is about 200 metres long and, the hike from and back to Uwinka included, takes approximately 3+ hours to complete.



(One of the Nyungwe trails takes visitors along the Kamiranzovu Trail to the waterfalls of the same name)

But, as previously explained, Nyungwe is much more than just the canopy walk. A network of trails has since been opened up, accessible from both the Gisovu side and the Gisakura side of the forest. From short trails, like observing one of the many Colobus colonies which take often less than an hour to hikes from 4 to 8 hours and the multi day hike across the entire forest, the variety and availability of easier and more challenging hikes now draw adventurers, forest lovers and seekers of solitude to Nyungwe. Besides the canopy walk, another 8 trails are now open and the 3 to 4 day Congo Nile Divide Trail has basic camping sites available where hikers can spend the nights. Arguably the toughest hike is the climb up to Mt. Bigugu, which depending on physical fitness, weather and trail conditions can take between 6 to 10 hours and takes those successful to the peak at 2.950 metres, the highest point of Nyungwe. Once inside the forest visitors find a rich biodiversity, over 310 species of birds, many of them endemic, 13 species of primates, about 140 species of orchids, over 240 species of trees and 1.068 identified species of plants, including 250 endemic to the Albertine Graben.



Accommodation is available as far as Rusizi, less than an hour from the forest, or even the more distant Huye, but closer by does the Rwanda Development Board's Tourism and Conservation Department offer basic overnight services at their Gisakura park sub-headquarters. Visit www.rwandatourism.com for more details about guiding services, available campsites and budget accommodation at Gisakura. A short drive from there is the Nyungwe Top

Hill View Lodge, which offers a spectacular vista from the top of one of the taller hills, while the 5 star Nyungwe Forest Lodge, owned by Dubai's Istithmar World and operated by Shamwari is definitely my personal favourite. Set at the very edge of the forest, inside the Gisakura tea plantation, the 22 villa rooms and 2 suites face the forest, which, when the lodge was built was the regulatory distance away but has since silently crept up towards the villas as if either to embrace them or engulf them, some of the branches just feet away now from the balconies. Visitors arriving during a hot afternoon are greeted with iced towels while those like me, arriving after nightfall when the temperatures have dropped into the chilly range, get hot towels to wipe the dust and the sweat of the journey. The cold fruit juice is happily replaced by a cup of steaming tea, a harbinger of the hospitality one can expect while at the Nyungwe Forest Lodge.



It is here that all creature comforts are met, and after a long hike into the forest await scented baths, hot showers with a water pressure putting many a city hotel to shame, a fully fledged Spa where sore muscles can find cure and then followed by fine cuisine and attentive service. Generously designed lounges with big open fire places invite for afternoon tea and of course those quintessential pre- and post dinner aperitifs and digestives. Coffee table books are available to leaf through and the lodge's boutique has many of those available for sale, to take these priceless memories home and show off a little to friends and acquaintances, and give them the taste to visit too, if for no other reason but to get even. I am yet to enjoy staying at the Nyungwe Forest Lodge for more than one night at a go, but that is something I have promised the General Manager Jerry Were to take care of during a future return to the *'Enchanted Forest'*.

Getting to Nyungwe is made easy by RwandAir's double daily flights from Kigali to Kamembe, which take just half an hour, and the lodge will arrange pick up and drop off, with one of their 4x4's, at a cost of course. For those with plenty of loose change in their pockets, there is a helipad right near the lodge and flights by helicopter are available from Kigali's Kanombe International Airport. Most visitors though at present still arrive by car from Kigali, a 225 km drive which, depending on the number of stops enroute to take pictures, or pay a much recommended visit to the National Museum in Huye, can be anywhere between 4 ½ hours to a full day.

This trip was jointly organized by the partners in the Ereka Group, namely www.newdawnassociates.com, www.eagle-ride.com and www.victoria-international.com with support from www.rwandair.com, www.rwandatourism.com and hospitality partners like www.serenahotels.com, www.nyungweforestlodge.com, among others.

Previous articles about Nyungwe can be accessed via these links:

<http://wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2012/06/23/nyungwe-the-enchanted-forest-waiting-to-be-discovered-and-explored/>

<http://wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2012/04/22/nyungwe-forest-lodge-the-gateway-to-the-enchanted-forest/>

<http://wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2011/07/26/rwanda-conservation-news-a-visit-to-the-enchanted-nyungwe-forest-national-park/>

Madagascar News

2ND INTERNATIONAL TOURISM TRADE FAIR SET FOR MAY 30 TO JUNE 01



Next weekend will see the second edition of the Madagascar International Tourism Fair take place in the island's capital of Antananarivo, which has already since its inception received the full support of other Vanilla Island partners as a key event on the annual calendar of mutually promoted activities to promote tourism to the islands. 'Showground' will be the Hotel Carlton in the capital, where a significantly higher number of attendees are expected this year. Madagascar is in fact hoping to make this fair **THE** Indian Ocean Tourism Fair of the Vanilla Islands regional body. Madagascar has been enjoying increased interest again and the island's tourism industry is hoping that this event, combined with other high profile activities like the co-hosting of the Seychelles' Carnival International de Victoria will spur a revival for the sector. Madagascar had been hit hard by the fallout of political unrest in recent years, boycott calls and the suspension from the African Union while the many attractions the island has to offer were largely laying idle.

The Vanilla Islands of Mauritius, La Reunion, the Seychelles, Comoros, and Madagascar will all be present in a show of solidarity and to showcase their very own unique attractions to the press and tour operators present. Alain St. Ange, the Seychelles Minister of Tourism and Culture and current President of the Indian Ocean Vanilla Islands Regional Organization and Didier Robert, the President de la region La Reunion, the Organization's Secretary will both be leading their respective Tourism Board's delegation to this Madagascar tourism event. Also expected is Pascal Viroleau, the CEO of the Vanilla Islands and Derek Savy, who is set to be working with Pascal Viroleau as soon as necessary funds are unblocked. A Vanilla Islands meeting will also be held during this International Tourism Fair in Madagascar. For more information visit <http://www.madagascar-tourisme.com/en>

Seychelles News

MASS TOURISM? WHAT MASS TOURISM?



Local media reports about the Seychelles being turned in to a '**mass tourism destination**' met with acid comments to this correspondent, all suggesting that the writer had absolutely no clue about the concept of mass tourism, what mass tourism constitutes and what in stark contrast the Seychelles' tourism industry did differently to remain an exclusive and continued upmarket destination. One regular source, not wanting to be drawn in by name into the ongoing public spat between government officials and the media house in question, had this to say in a mail received earlier in the day: ***'Seychelles has only just exceeded the 200.000 arrival mark. We cautiously project a growth for the current year of about 4 percent. The Maldives last year received over one million tourists and no one in his or her true mind would suggest that the Maldives are a mass tourism destination. The same is true for Mauritius. They had arrival below the million mark but again, who would call Mauritius a mass tourism destination. Mass tourism destinations in the understanding of the tourism industry would be the Spanish Mediterranean coast line, or some of the islands like Majorca or Gran Canaria. Las Vegas is a mass tourism destination and so are some of the North African resort cities along the Mediterranean. Mass tourism is based on very large numbers of visitor arrivals, using special tourist charter flights to these destinations and the main market segment is drawn from the middle to the lower end of the global market.***

None of those criteria apply to the Seychelles. As you know, we have a dual approach how to market our country. One is the high profile, high visibility, luxury end of the market and that is what we are mostly known for around the world. Secondly we promote our indigenous properties, bed and breakfast, guest houses, self catering, holiday apartments and holiday villas, mostly owned by Seychellois. Often those have just a few rooms but others may have 20 or 30 rooms. That marketing concept we call 'Affordable Seychelles' and it is aimed at for instance the African market but also certain segments from Europe or the Gulf. None of our holiday packages are cheap, as the word mass tourism suggests. When we say affordable, it is still in comparison a few times more expensive to

come to Seychelles and stay in a B&B or guest house or self catering resort than flying from any points in Europe to Spain for instance. Spain too has very upmarket properties but the bulk of their business takes place in the mass market. We discussed many times about the cap which one day may come into place. That figure, and it has not been determined at this point in time, may be anywhere between 300.000 visitors to maybe 350.000 visitors. The final number will be determined by several factors, among them sustainability. We require matching amounts of water, ability to generate electricity, have trained staff and so forth. To call such numbers mass tourism is ludicrous and reveals an ulterior agenda. The Seychelles government must provide a business environment which can create jobs. If we would not do that, the same people would cry wolf for failing to generate new jobs for young people. Striving towards full employment for Seychellois must be taken seriously. We are expanding STA with the aim to train young people who want to start a career in tourism, in hospitality. There can be no compromise in working towards that end. There is no mass tourism to Seychelles, there never will be mass tourism to Seychelles. Growing numbers yes, but never to anywhere near a point where the word 'cheap' might have to be used. This debate is bound to raise issues, is bound to get emotional but those are the facts. Let's stop to mislead the public, let's stop to turn tourism into a political issue. It is not going to happen and the present new projects are going to be vetted fully to make sure our environment does not suffer. Let me remind you, the same things were said when the Constance Ephelia was built. It is too big some said. It will destroy the mangroves said others. Now look at the mangrove forests and how they prosper because they are protected and cared for. Life is a compromise in so many ways and we will find compromises for the new projects too so that we can grow as a destination. But not by dropping our most important assets, our crystal clear waters, our pristine environment and our commitment to a green future'.

A storm in the proverbial tea cup or, as has been suggested, a deliberately created spat to make political capital out of it? It is clearly hard to tell what exactly the motives for this campaign are, but the majority of feedback from a significant number of contacts across the islands, appears clearly leaning towards a well regulated upsizing of resort beds across the islands. Only four contributions were opposed to new resorts and one of them was honest enough to say that increased competition is the main factor, not the other issues which have been pushed to the fore. And the figure of 400.000 which is floating about, that one is the number of seats on all the combined flights to Mahe taken together, as was ably pointed out a few days ago by the Chairman of the SCAA Capt. David Savy. Perhaps a mix up in how this figure is to be seen and interpreted? I suggest his comments are re-read to more fully appreciate the relationship between airlines and destination, between the number of seats on offer and those taken up, called load factor. That said, next opportunity, when back on the islands, I will take the time to talk to more people and see if indeed this is the situation as described here or else if there is perhaps a silent majority opposed to new resorts, and by prolongation to new jobs too. Time will tell, so watch this space.

ALAIN ST. ANGE GETS ANOTHER TERM AS VANILLA ISLAND COOPERATION PRESIDENT



Madagascar, La Reunion, Mayotte and the Comoros have during the just concluded annual meeting of the Vanilla Island cooperation proposed, and subsequently voted, that Seychelles' Minister for Tourism and Culture, Alain St. Ange, should serve a second term of office for the organization.

St. Ange's mandate was due to run out next week and on the basis of a rotating chairmanship or in this case presidency, a member from another Vanilla Island was due to take over. The four though would have none of this, considering the immense personal effort and initiative St. Ange has in recent years put into the Vanilla Island concept, and upon a short consultation, re-elected him. Notably was Mauritius absent from the ministerial meeting, prompting industry observers to speculate over a continued lukewarm attitude towards intense cooperation and joint marketing of each others' attractions.

The meeting resolved, among other issues, to push ahead with key areas of mutual interest and concern, such as:

- * Air access within the Indian Ocean zone and particularly markets such as China

- * Vanilla Island branding and visibility at tourism trade fairs starting with Top Resa in Paris and ITB Asia in Singapore
- * The next ministerial meeting to be held in the Comoros
- * The inclusion of Maldives as a fully member within the organization as from the organization's next Ministerial meeting
- * The inclusion of affiliate members Rodrigues of Mauritius, Nosy Bay of Madagascar, Praslin & La Digue of the Seychelles at the next Ministerial Meeting
- * Drafting of a charter of sustainable tourism practices for the region

The extraordinary meeting was attended by Mr. Didier Robert, President of the Conseil Regional de La Reunion, Tourism Minister of Madagascar Mr. Jean-Max Rakotomamonjy, Tourism & Culture Minister of the Seychelles Mr. Alain St.Ange, Mrs. Hissane Guy of the Comoros Tourism Authority and Mr. Michel Ahmed of the Mayotte Tourism Authority.

Speaking to gathered press after his re-election as the President of the Vanilla islands, Minister Alain St. Ange of the Seychelles said that he was humbled by the support received by the other members states. ***'Their resolve in supporting my leadership and their unity in wanting to see our regional organization work for the benefit of our respective island economies, of our tourism industry and for the well being of our people was really appreciated. We are now set to the consolidation of our Vanilla Islands'*** the Seychelles Minister, Mr Alain St.Ange said.

The cooperation has since its formal launch put together an annual calendar of events, the islands agreed to support to the fullest extend and participate fully in the promotion of such events across the islands.

Mauritius's already suspect stand vis a vis the Vanilla Island organization may have taken a further knock, according to one source in Port Louis, when it became known that the Maldives will be admitted to the organization as a full member, in particular as the rivalry between Mauritius, erstwhile the number one in the Indian Ocean region for tourism arrivals, had to make way for the Maldives. It was also the Maldives which scooped the most awards and recognitions at the recent World Travel Award Ceremony, held in the Maldives for that matter, inspite of a relentless campaign by the CEO of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority Karl Mootoosamy, to be crowned *'best tourism board'* from among all the Indian Ocean island destinations. The failure to accomplish that objective seems to have returned the embattled head of MTPA into a lager mentality, which while presently speculation is nevertheless supported by the fact that Mauritius was absent on ministerial level for the most recent meeting. Congratulations to Minister St. Ange and watch this space for continued reports and breaking news from the Indian Ocean islands.

QATAR AIRWAYS ANNOUNCES PULL OUT FROM SEYCHELLES



Tourism industry sources reacted with shock and incredulity when news broke over the weekend that Qatar Airways, presently serving Mahe with a daily flight, using an Airbus A320, will be ceasing operations into the archipelago come September this year.

Sources on the island, probably for fear of repercussions when being associated with named quotes on this sensitive subject, were swift to point to the significantly higher cost of ground handling at Mahe's international airport, which has in the past driven other airlines away, the last being Blue Panorama from Italy which left after investing heavily in promoting the route after Air Seychelles had pulled out of Italy in early 2012.

'It is an open secret that several airlines have complained in the past about the very high cost of ground handling in Mahe. This adds a lot of extra cost and in comparison with other similar destinations we are very expensive. It is something which has to be discussed if we are to try and keep Qatar Airways here. Losing a daily flight is not sending a good message to the market. Qatar is expanding fast to other destinations and they were offering a one stop service to Mahe from their network. This is negative publicity when we need it the least and we should try to find out what really made Qatar make this announcement. Maybe there is more to it than meets the eye' said one of the regular sources when discussing the development.

Others were equally reluctant to be drawn into the discussion, expressing regret and hope that something could be done to keep Qatar Airways in the skies over the Seychelles.

'Perhaps if Qatar pulls out, Emirates can step in and go to a full twice a day service, or Air Seychelles and Etihad could add more seats? I only hope that it has nothing to do with Qatar finding the partnership between Air

Seychelles and Etihad was their main issue they had besides the cost of handling. Because if that has played any role in their decision it might reflect badly on other airlines thinking of coming here. It is a fine line we have to walk here, promoting tourism requires airline partners, and if there is even a slight notion that some partnerships are favoured over others, that could have a big impact on our marketing’ said another, expressing some worries which had come to the surface before. Three months and counting now for the exit of Qatar Airways, in what must have been a difficult decision for the airline otherwise set to expand and add destinations, not drop them. Watch this space for regular and breaking news updates from the Indian Ocean aviation industry.

VANESSA JULIETTE TAKES PRESIDENT’S CUP IN RACE FOR BEST STUDENT AT STA



The annual graduation at the Seychelles Tourism Academy on Friday afternoon, during which 198 students graduated from their respective courses, turned into THE event in the young life of Vanessa Juliette, when she was announced to be the winner of the President’s Cup.

She received her award at the International Conference Centre from the country’s Vice President Danny Faure, in the presence of the Minister of Tourism and Culture Alain St. Ange, STA Principal Flavien Joubert, government officials, academy staff, family and friends.

STA, which is presently undergoing a complete transformation in what will upon completion be a state of the art training facility for vocational and tertiary courses, is also partnering with the Shannon College and has MoU’s in place with hotel schools in Shanghai, Muscat and Valetta / Malta. Principal Joubert was quoted in details sent to this correspondent to have remarked: *‘My message to you is be determined to work hard to prove that you can do the job efficiently, be passionate about your career, and whatever you do to work your way up the ladder at promoting everyday activities, be positive, maintain a good self esteem. Always be very presentable, and well groomed. Always provide services with a smile.’* He was reportedly visibly pleased when he announced that pass rates for the courses started at 80 percent levels, rising to 100 percent for two courses, a remarkable accomplishment and evidence for the high standards of teaching, as well as for the commitment of the students sitting exams.

Said the source, remaining unnamed for not being the official spokesperson for the organization: *‘Our best students will have the opportunity for further studies, either here or at Shannon. Those who performed very well can hope for selection when the next batch of students is selected to study for diplomas and degrees. Tourism is growing in Seychelles and STA is providing the skills for young Seychellois to start a career in the sector. When trained, they can take up new job openings in new resorts or replace expatriates when their contracts come to an end. When you next come back to the campus you will see how much progress has been made in construction. We are on course to complete phase one according to the revised schedule and our students will then have the best facilities available anywhere in the Indian Ocean if not the entire Africa’.*

All graduates received their certificates from the Seychelles Tourism Academy but also from the London based City & Guilds, widening the acceptance of their qualifications to the global hospitality and tourism industry.

Congratulations to Vanessa and all the other students, on completing their courses and excelling. *Seychelles*, truly *Another World*.

AND in closing the usual dose of reads from further down south, courtesy of Gill Staden’s *Livingstone Weekly*

Cycling for Development

During the week the US Ambassador to Zambia, Mark Storella visited Livingstone to promote tourism for development. He was joined by several celebrities and the Minister of Tourism, Sylvia Masebo, who is also becoming quite a celebrity for Zambia. Mark Storella brought his bike with him and the celebrities followed suit, I would guess, somewhat reluctantly to cycle from the Falls Resort to the bridge and then into Livingstone. At the Victoria Falls Bridge they met up with Bruce Wharton, US Ambassador to Zimbabwe who had also brought his bike.



Altogether they cycled to Livingstone, stopping at the Livingstone Museum for a tour and a break. The calendar for the Ambassadors was full of people to see and places to go for the rest of the day. One of them was a visit to Chief Mukuni's Palace along a dirt road. I asked John Kapumpa, Livingstone City Council who was one of the cycling party, if they were going to cycle to Mukuni Village. *I sincerely hope*

not, he told me.

UNWTO Petition

Last week I printed an article from Ian Manning who has petitioned all members of the UNWTO to boycott the meeting in Livingstone because of the government's seeming approval of mining in the Lower Zambezi National Park. This week, according to the Post, Wylbur Simuusa, Minister for the Environment, has dismissed the petition saying it is false and unpatriotic.

Ian Manning no longer lives in Zambia, having been deported many years ago. Ian is a dedicated conservationist who had tried to empower communities to set up trusts to protect their traditional land so that they could earn an income from it. Ian now lives in South Africa but continues to be a thorn in the side of Zambia's government by writing.

In response to Ian Manning's petition, Wylbur Simuusa:

Some of the allegations made in this petition are unfortunately not true. Firstly, the proposed copper mine in the Lower Zambezi National Park was rejected by the Zambia Environmental Agency (ZEMA) and is in the process of being appealed. The petition suggests that there is a statutory limit on the period in which judgment should be delivered. This is not so, there is no statutory limit and a more careful process is underway to determine whether this decision to preserve the eco-tourism potential of the valley will at the same time be releasing some of the wealth trapped underground in Zambia for the benefit of its extremely poor population. It is not true that the minister in charge of the environment or indeed the Zambian government has failed to make a decision on the issue.

One appeal meeting has been held and another one is scheduled following further submissions made. Everyone can rest assured that there will be no shortcuts and no compromise with environmental standards whether the mine goes ahead or not. The petition also alleges that the tar road is being built through the Lower Zambezi National Park minus the environmental impact having been properly evaluated. This is totally untrue. Extreme care has been exercised with the 8000 kilometres of the new roads planned in the Link Zambia programme.

Can mining and management of a game reserve be done at the same time in the same place? As pressure increases for the exploitation and extraction of minerals and other resources, as a nation we need to settle this question, especially that the conflict exists not only in the Lower Zambezi National Park but in other protected areas of Zambia where there are abundant minerals and other resources. The Zambian government is at a loss to understand the boycotting of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation Conference, which will have a beneficial effect on the management of our superb wildlife and natural resources. We will urge everyone not to sign the petition because it seeks to cure mischief

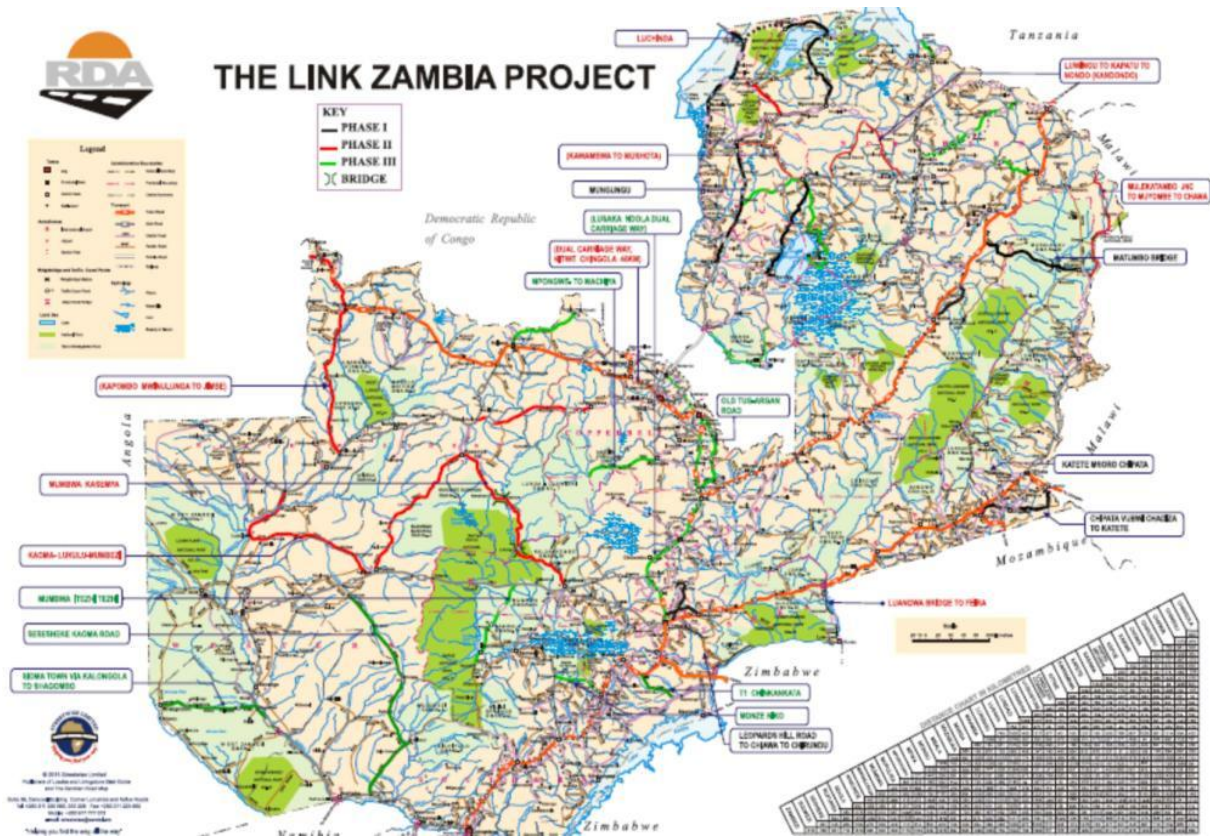
that does not exist. If you have already signed, we are not sure whether the organisation will allow you to withdraw your support as they and we, as the Zambian government, expect to see you in Livingstone.

Link Zambia 8000

There are a few documents on the internet about the new roads which are to be constructed under the Link Zambia 8000 project. I have taken out bits which you may find interesting.

For 2012 there were several roads on the list which were already being worked on and included Livingstone City Roads and Kazungula Bridge

The next section was on roads which are to be started in 2012



THE SIAVONGA CANOE CHALLENGE 2013

The Siavonga Canoe Challenge is an event designed to promote Siavonga as a tourist destination and create an exciting spectator event drawing many tourists to the town.

The first Siavonga Canoe Challenge took place in 2008 and attracted 18 teams from all over Zambia. The event was a resounding success and as a result it was decided to make this an annual event for Siavonga.

The event was adopted by Zambia Breweries in 2009 and renamed the MOSI Canoe Challenge 2009. This event attracted 22 teams and substantial media coverage including ZNBC, Radio Phoenix, Muvi TV, and several National news papers.



In 2010 the event was combined with the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the building of the Dam Wall (Lake Kariba) and it was adopted by MTN and called the MTN Canoe Challenge 2010. Again, this was a resounding success and attracted almost a thousand visitors to Siavonga and increased media coverage. Due to logistical reasons and the unavailability of canoes (many borrowed from tour operators in Livingstone) the event was unable to be staged in 2011 and 2012.



However, we are proud to announce that the Siavonga Canoe Challenge is back thanks to the support of Gwabi River Lodge and Drifters Safari's who have offered the use of their Canoes.

Siavonga Canoe Challenge 2013 will take place on Saturday 15th June 2013.

The cost for the entry of a team is KR3,000



The money will be used for logistical costs, charity donations (KR10,000) and to help promote Siavonga as a Tourist Destination.

This is a non profit making event and any money left over after costs and charity monies are paid out will go to the Siavonga Tourism & Business Development Association to help promote the town of Siavonga.

You are invited to sponsor this event by entering a team of paddlers to compete.



In return for entering a team, your company will receive a huge advertising boost by being able to display banners and posters at Start and Finish Line at Eagles Rest Beach and at the Prize Giving Dinner. The mass media such as ZNBC, Muvi TV, Phoenix Radio, National News Papers and International Magazines will be covering the Event. The exposure your Company will receive will be considerable and you will also help to promote Siavonga as a tourist destination. The event is also a great team building exercise for your staff members that will create camaraderie and team spirit.



In order to involve the local community, each team will consist of 3 paddlers, two nominated by you and one local member of the community selected by your team on the day. The local member of the team will not only provide additional energy and stamina, but also provide local knowledge of the route and of Siavonga.

Whilst the event is a canoe race, the first home is not necessarily the winner. The teams will race from Eagles Rest Beach to Lake Kariba Inns where they will begin to search for hidden objects and other

information from clues given to them at the start of the race. The teams will be awarded points for the time taken to complete the course and also for the number of clues solved.

Included in your team entry fee is camping space at Eagles Rest for your team members (they will need to bring a tent and bedding), two breakfasts, one lunch, two dinners, and a t-shirt and cap printed with your company name.

We hope that you will consider entering a team for this great event and help us to promote Siavonga. In addition, if your Company would like to adopt the Canoe Challenge, as did Zambia Breweries and MTN for the 2009 and 2010 events, then you may do so by offering an additional amount as sponsorship. We will run this sponsorship as an auction and the Company with the highest bid will be allowed to adopt the event and advertise it as the "Your Company Name" Canoe Challenge 2013.

In view of the time frame, the closing date for adoption bids will be the 30th May 2013. This will enable us to change the advertising to promote your Company as sponsor.

Should you wish to enter a team or become a major sponsor, please complete the Entry Form attached to this letter and Email it to the Association at stba@siavonga-zambia.com
