

AVIATION, TOURISM AND CONSERVATION NEWS from Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean islands.
A weekly roundup of breaking news, reports, travel stories and opinions by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang H. Thome



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East Africa News

AFRAA EXTENDS JOINT FUEL PURCHASING PROJECT TILL END 2013



The AFRAA promoted joint fuel purchasing project, which the African Airline Association launched last year as reported here at the time, will continue with a new deal extending until the end of 2013. Initially underwritten by 9 member airlines which included at the time Kenya Airways, Precision Air, Ethiopian Airlines, RwandAir, Air Seychelles, Air Namibia, TAAG, Air Mozambique and Air Malawi, for the next phase at least 5 more AFRAA member airlines have expressed their desire to join the scheme and benefit from lower tariffs for the contract period. This, it was pointed out overnight, would not affect the fuel hedging deals individual airlines have put into place.

It was also learned from the same source that AFRAA, previously comprising some 32 member airlines, has during the last meeting received a further 4 membership applications and approved them, which include Starbow Airlines from Ghana, Camair from Cameroon amongst others.

A source from Nairobi conceded that the scheme had initial teething problems, in particular where member airlines are subject to exchange control regulations at home, making payments in foreign exchange difficult for some, but that eventually most of the early challenges had been overcome, resulting in an extension of the scheme and the likely participation by more airlines over and above the initial nine.

The same source also mentioned that efforts by AFRAA to have the EU's ETS suspended and turned over to global aviation body ICAO working hand in hand with IATA, were ongoing. In this connection it was learned that countries opposed to the scheme like China, Russia, India and the US were now also starting to apply pressure on the EU with thinly concealed threats to block a wider global climate deal in the next round of UN sponsored negotiations, unless the EU would suspend their ETS and return to the negotiating table.

Watch this space for regular aviation updates from Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean islands.

QATAR AIRWAYS OPTS TO DELAY A380 DELIVERIES



Information was received that Qatar Airways appears to have opted to delay the delivery of their Airbus A380 orders for the time being. Due to receive the first of these giant aircraft by Q4 in 2013, the airline appears to have decided to wait longer to allow the European aircraft manufacturer to resolve the problems of cracks found in the wings of most of the aircraft delivered and now in service, which presently is a high priority by operators and Airbus under the watchful eyes of global aviation regulators.

Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al Baker was quoted by a source at the just concluded Arabian Travel Market in Dubai as having said: *'We will defer the deliveries of our A380s until we have a clear position on the issue surrounding wing cracks which are under process of modification by Airbus'*, dealing another blow to Airbus after telling them off at the Dubai Air Show last year when he, tongue in cheek, told them to learn how to build planes, before handing them another batch of aircraft orders to put the smiles back on their initially red faces.

Meanwhile Boeing is expected to deliver the first B787 Dreamliner to Qatar Airways next month, the first of 60 such aircraft on order, which will make QR the first Gulf airlines operator of the revolutionary new plane and eventually the largest, when all of the ordered aircraft are in service. The airline presently takes delivery of a new aircraft every 15 days, comprising of both Airbus and Boeing aircraft.

The B787 will according to airline sources be showcased first at the Farnborough Air Show in the UK in June, before briefly returning to Boeing to receive some additional fittings before going into service.

Al Baker also stunned his audience at the ATM 2012 in Dubai when he announced a substantially increased rollout plan of new destinations in coming years, raising the ceiling to 170 destinations worldwide, raising hopes amongst the two key manufacturers Airbus and Boeing for additional orders of B777, B787, A320, A330, A350 and A380 aircraft in the future and for certain raising expectations of announcements at the Farnborough Air Show in June.

These developments are bound to substantially benefit travelers of Qatar Airways to and from Eastern Africa, where the airline is set to increase their present reach from currently 4 to 7 destinations by the end of the year, after adding Kilimanjaro in July, Mombasa in August and according to available information Zanzibar by November. Watch this space for breaking and regular aviation news.

BOMBARDIER ANNOUNCES AFRICA TOUR WITH THE Q400

BOMBARDIER
AEROSPACE



Canadian aircraft manufacturer Bombardier Aerospace is embarking on an Africa wide tour today to showcase its successful Q400 turboprop aircraft to potential customers on the continent. The tour will commence in West Africa before moving to Southern and then Eastern Africa for both static display as well as short test flights for invited airline executives and media representatives.

Ethiopian Airlines has 8 of these state of the art planes already in operation and a further 5 on order, and a flight simulator is expected to be installed at the Ethiopian Airlines' Aviation Academy at Addis Ababa's Bole International Airport before the end of the year, to train their own pilots and pilots due for the twice a year simulator training from other airlines in Africa.

BlueBird of Kenya for instance operates 5 Q400 and a number of other airlines across the continent too are using the aircraft for their short haul routes.

Important for the Eastern African region, the Q 400 will be on display in Nairobi from the 11th of May to present the aircraft to a number of interested Kenyan airlines, which will give them the opportunity to discuss flight economics and 'deals' with the Bombardier team on the tour. The Q400 will then proceed to Kigali for a showcasing on the 14th of May, mainly aimed at RwandAir. Rwanda's national airline operated two CRJ200 jets before ordering two brand new CRJ900 aircraft earlier this year for delivery by October 2012, but is also evaluating presently to upgrade from their single Bombardier Dash 8-100 to a larger and more economical state of the art aircraft. It is understood from usually reliable sources that the Q400 is one of the options RwandAir is looking at, besides the French built ATR, but like with the decision over the jet acquisition, where Bombardier competed directly against Embraer, the overall package deal the Canadians are likely to put together, will very likely in the end tip the scales their way. The presentation of the Q400 will be a unique opportunity for RwandAir's executives to see and 'feel' the plane hands on and for their pilots to get some insight into inflight performance and handling while the evaluation of future plane acquisitions continues.

The Bombardier Africa Tour will commence in Accra / Ghana on May 04, followed by Maputo / Mozambique on May 07, Gaborone / Botswana on May 08, Dar es Salaam / Tanzania on May 10, Nairobi on May 11 and finally Kigali on May 14.

Watch this space for breaking and regular aviation news from across Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean islands.

QATAR AIRWAYS CONFIRMS LAUNCH DATES FOR JRO AND MBA



Qatar's award winning airline used the Arabian Travel Market 2012 as a platform to confirm their planned launch of new destinations for the next six months.

Of key importance is the start of flights to Tanzania's safari gateway of Kilimanjaro near Arusha, which has been reconfirmed to take place on 25th of July. The daily flights will be an extension of one of the two daily flights between Doha to Nairobi, and is expected to boost not only seat capacity, of crucial importance to the safari sector in Tanzania, but also increase global visibility for the country through added promotions and targeted marketing across the Qatar Airways network.

This will be followed just three weeks later on the 15th of August with the launch of flights to Kenya's Indian Ocean city of Mombasa, with these daily flights routing via Dar es Salaam, adding a second destination for Kenya too. Again, tourism stakeholders in Mombasa are excited about the prospects of having the world's top rated airline commence daily scheduled flights to the coast and several have already expressed their interest to join hands with Qatar Airways to promote the destination with special initiatives.

Other destinations announced yesterday at ATM 2012 were Erbil and Baghdad in Iraq, Perth in Australia and Myanmar's capital Yangon, while in Europe Croatia's capital Zagreb will be added, to be served via Budapest.

The launch of Zanzibar, which will bring the total number of destinations in East Africa to then seven, will be in late 2012 alongside Belgrade and Helsinki.

But for now the East African tourism trade and regular travelers are counting down towards the July and August launch dates, when Qatar Airways will connect Kilimanjaro and Mombasa into their global network with daily flights on Airbus A320 equipment. Watch this space.

Uganda News

AIRLINE COMPETITION BENEFITS TRAVELERS AS KLM JOINS THE BATTLE OF THE SKIES



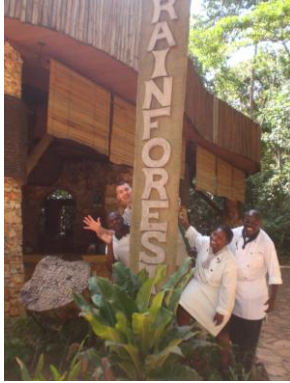
The present fare and service offensive by Brussels Airlines and announcements by Gulf Airlines like Qatar Airways and Emirates of bagging new global awards chasing each other have now also brought KLM on to the scene, making their own case to their frequent travelers why to fly with them.

The introduction of an online '**Fare Finder**' is aimed to assist clients booking on the net to get the best possible deals while fares to the United States have been set from 1.357 US Dollars, inclusive of an ever growing tax and fee burden, to New York while Washington DC and Boston sell from 1.407 US Dollars and Chicago from 1.507 US Dollars return.

At the same time are seats in the '**Economy Comfort**' section selling for a one off surcharge of 80 Euros, strangely not expressed in UD Dollars which remain the common foreign currency in Uganda, for a one way trip between Entebbe and Amsterdam, giving passengers that crucial extra legroom, especially needed on overnight flights. On line check in is now also possible from 30 hours prior to departure which allows for printing of boarding passes and the simple baggage drop off at a special counter in Entebbe, bypassing check in queues, securing a choice seat and allowing passengers to appear at the airport at their own good time.

KLM now flies 6 times a week from Amsterdam via Kigali to Entebbe, the most flights of any European airline, and on Tuesdays still offers the option to fly via Nairobi in partnership with Kenya Airways, from where the two airlines offer double daily services.

GEO LODGES UGANDA GET CREATIVE TO ENSURE CONTINUED QUALITY



(The Geo Lodges chefs on retreat at the Rain Forest Lodge in Mabira)

The Rain Forest Lodge in Mabira Forest was the venue of a Geo Lodges Uganda second Chef's Forum recently, when they brought together their kitchen masters from the Nile Safari Lodge and the Jacana Safari Lodge to meet with their colleagues and a 'guest chef' to discuss all matters related to food and menus.

Geo Lodges, emerging out of the 'New Uganda's' first post war hospitality and safari group Inns of Uganda, after a name change in 2006 alongside a major rebranding, continues to be a leader in the market and continues to seek innovative ways to offer great hospitality in some of Uganda's best locations.

Their chef's forum recently focused on the use of locally available produce and incorporating them into new creations able to set the palate of guests alight with new flavours and food combinations, sure to tickle those taste buds in the most pleasant ways.

Guest chef Martin Tilbury from the UK, reportedly a regular guest in the Geo Lodges properties around Uganda, took time out and brainstormed with his local counterparts on ingredients and food presentation, and while according to Group General Manager Emily Wissanji the 'matooke ice cream' may never see the light of day on a menu – they tried it out anyway – the 'sweet bagoya mousse' definitely will make a debut on the lodge menus soon.

At the same time it was also learned that the Nile Safari Lodge, set right at the boundary of the Murchisons Falls National Park with spectacular vistas across the meandering river on to papyrus islands and the woods on the other side, was recently refurbished and modernized, to keep it on top of the charts even after 20 years of continued operations. Visit www.geolodgesafrica.com for more information on locations, attractions and for bookings, and stand by to hear news about Geo Lodges latest addition, soon to open in the foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains.

UGANDA TO ANNOUNCE 50TH INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY PROGRAMME ON SUNDAY



With only just over 5 months to go until the 09th October, when Uganda will celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Independence from former colonial rulers Britain, the long awaited programme announcement will finally be made this coming Sunday by President Museveni.

Several leading tourism stakeholders had in recent weeks made their disappointment known with the lack of information reaching the general public and overseas markets and one regular contributor, more outspoken than others but also on condition of anonymity said: *'Honestly what took so long. We in Uganda wasted 7 good months we could have used to promote the country with this programme known in good time. I checked some of your articles on the 50th anniversary of the Tanganyika Independence Day from Britain. They had the programme ready 365 days in advance and used it to drum up support for their tourism. Kenya will have their jubilee next year and from friends in Nairobi I know they are in high gear to make their announcements when they celebrate Uhuru Day in December. Here we should have announced a programme of events for the whole year on Independence Day last year and then used it at WTM and then ITB and everywhere we got to promote Uganda. The Lonely Planet guide made Uganda their top destination for 2012 and that could have been merged with all the other things. We should have had a calendar of cultural events, Ugandan art exhibitions, special tourism events for each of our parks running for the entire 12 months. It shows me that our government simply does not understand tourism and has failed us again like they fail us every year when they give our sector peanuts for*

funds. And about our tourist board, the president said it all at the meeting the other week at state house. Late like in most things, what a shame for our country.'

When the programme is finally available be sure to find details here on what is still to come and to happen over the coming months, as the clock ticks down towards Uganda's 50th Independence Day on 09th October.

BRUSSELS AIRLINES STEPS UP SALES EFFORTS FOR EUROPE / NEW YORK

The sales team at Brussels Airlines in Kampala has notably stepped up their sales efforts four weeks ahead of the long expected launch of flights from Brussels to New York and ahead of a busy summer season when expatriates working and living in Uganda take their annual summer vacation. Special fares for return flights, from as low as 250 US Dollars, PLUS taxes, have been put on the market for travelers able to take advantage of them up to 30th June and again between 16th September and 31st of December.

It is mostly though the new link to the '**Big Apple**' which is the focus of the sales team's activities. That new route will see the introduction of a brand new Airbus A330 aircraft, featuring the latest cabin product, which will progressively be rolled out for the entire A330 fleet in coming weeks and months.



Connections to New York have been conveniently scheduled for passengers on the Kigali – Entebbe – Brussels flight as will those coming from the United States via Brussels to East Africa, opening a new one stop route from America's largest city on the Eastern seaboard to SN's East Africa destinations of Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Kenya. Watch this space.

EMIRATES ANNOUNCES UPCOMING LAUNCH OF BARCELONA AND LISBON



(A view of Lisbon from the Atlantic ocean, courtesy of Emirates via HK Strategies)

The country manager of Emirates in Uganda, Khalid Al Zarouni, earlier in the week announced that the daily nonstop flights between Entebbe and Dubai will from 03rd July offer a new European onward connection to Spain's second city of Barcelona, with the Portuguese capital Lisbon following on the 09th of July.

Both destinations will be served daily out of Dubai and connections for passengers from Entebbe, as well as from Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, are scheduled to leave Dubai at 09.15 am.

Khalid said in a media statement made available overnight: *'Lisbon has been on our European wish-list for some time. Our daily flight will link Uganda with this far western corner of Europe and our strong European route network, which is a vital trading partner with Uganda. Being the only Middle East carrier operating into Portugal will give Ugandans planning to travel to Portugal for business or leisure, a unique advantage to explore new opportunities. Lisbon was recently ranked the 7th best city in Europe for shopping by the 'Globe Shopper City Index' of The Economist Intelligence Unit. In all these countries that constitute European Union, market indices present a positive growth trend reflecting favorable market opportunities for fresh fruit and fish products. Connectivity is essential for business and for tourism and this new flight and the onward connections that it will provide will be very beneficial for the Ugandan economy.'*

The B777-200LR which will be deployed on the route to Lisbon offers a cargo uplift capacity of up to 17 tons and is configured with First, Business and Economy class cabins.

Added a regular source from the airline's Kampala office: *'Our biggest advantage remains that we operate only wide body aircraft on all our routes. This gives passengers a superior inflight experience with more space in particular in our First and Business Class cabins and even our economy class travelers have plenty of space, individual seat back screens and all our passengers can take advantage of special offers for Dubai stopovers'. And since March we now fly nonstop to Dubai which remains one of the world's best transit airports. The new destinations in Europe and to other parts of the world make us the number one international airline'.*

Watch this space for regular aviation news, covering Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean islands.

QATAR AIRWAYS BAGS BEST BUSINESS CLASS AWARD BY BUSINESS TRAVELLER MAGAZINE



More good news and awards for Qatar Airways were announced at the start of the Arabian Travel Market in Dubai yesterday, when the prestigious *Business Traveller Middle East* magazine revealed that the airline was voted for *Best Business Class in the World* for the second year running.

Qatar Airways is in Dubai to attend ATM 2012 and is showcasing for the first time their new cabin product for the B787 Dreamliner, once again – as seen in their B777 fleet – with a seat less per row than their closest competitors. With 60 B787 Dreamliners on order, Qatar Airways is Boeing's launch customer in the Middle East and the upcoming delivery of this revolutionary new aircraft, though years late, will change not only the aviation economics for airlines but also the inflight comfort for passengers.

The Uganda office of Qatar Airways and the airline's corporate communications department wasted no time in sending out this information, which will undoubtedly reaffirm the carriers' global standing at *The World's 5 Star Airline*, as it seeks to defend this title by Skytrax for 2012.

Voting criteria included such elements as inflight service, seat comfort including the long haul fleet's flat bed seat, ground handling of premium passengers, inflight entertainment, wireless connectivity on board and product offerings in business class, in the air and on the ground. Qatar Airways' Chief Executive Akbar Al Baker commented on this latest award: *'On behalf of Qatar Airways, I would like to thank the readers of Business Traveller Middle East magazine for once again giving their vote of confidence to us and strongly believing in our product, service, hospitality and professionalism in the air and on the ground. Our customers are true advocates of our product and it is a delight to see their support of our premium cabin across the network, whether on short- or long-haul routes for which we promise an unrivalled experience'.*

Here in East Africa Qatar Airways is already the airline with the widest coverage of destinations, presently serving Nairobi and Dar es Salaam twice a day and Entebbe and Kigali once a day, before in coming months also adding Kilimanjaro via Nairobi and Zanzibar and Mombasa via Dar es Salaam, which will at that stage get a third daily frequency, all flown on the Airbus A320.

Watch this space for breaking and regular news updates from East Africa's aviation scene.

Kenya News

NO NAME CHANGE FOR HELL'S GATE NATIONAL PARK

Kenya Wildlife Service has ruled out a name change for the Hell's Gate National Park on Mt. Longonot at the bottom of the Great African Rift Valley, following the recent tragedy when 7 youngsters were caught in flash floods during a team building exercise and drowned.

Kenya's Vice President Musyoka had earlier in the week demanded such a change, but stood swiftly accused of attempting to profiteer politically and trying to boost his flagging fortunes as a candidate for the presidential election due either late this year or early next year – no date has yet been set.

Said a regular source from Nairobi: *'The tourism sector has always known that park as Hell's Gate for its rugged scenery and challenging hikes and climbs. The vice president, with due respect, should shut up and stay out of such a tragic event, let him offer condolences but refrain from talking rubbish and asking for a name change to improve his popularity. He will never be a front runner for president, pure and simple and this was a very transparent attempt to us an accident to promote himself. We agree with KWS, that name has to remain'.*

KWS Chief Executive Dr. Julius Kipng'etich spoke on the issue when launching the countdown of the annual wheel barrow race at Hell's Gate National Park, which is aimed to raise funds for park improvements and to add more facilities and will take place on 16th June. He said: *'We don't not have such plans as the name is gazetted and in our law'.* Participants in the launch function reportedly observed a minute of silence to pay their respects to the flash

flood victims and Dr. Kipng'etich expressed his personal sorrow and condolences to the families and friends of the 7 young people who had drowned.

LAMU TRAVEL ADVISORY CHANGED SUBSTANTIALLY

It was learned overnight from a Nairobi based senior tourism stakeholder that the British government and High Commission in Kenya has significantly reduced the 'off limits' advice which was in place for visits to the ancient coastal town of Lamu.

Previously the area was up to 150 kilometres from the Somali border, reaching well beyond Lamu itself, but has now been trimmed to only 60 kilometres, to which all but essential travel should be avoided.

The Lamu tourism trade has welcomed this development and hailed the progress made by the Kenyan armed forces which have since the hit and run attacks by Al Qaida affiliate Al Shabaab last year gone deep into Somali to clear the country of militants and pirates, and is now working as part of AMISOM, the UN and AU mission to bring peace to the Horn of Africa.

Not changed in language or substance however were general advisories to British travelers intent on coming to Kenya about the general threat of terrorism in Nairobi and Mombasa in particular, something other tourism sources immediately took issue with. Said one regular contributor: *'We had a few isolated incidents since our army went after those terrorists in Somali, but nothing has happened to any tourist hotel or resort because security has been stepped up very much since then. Kenya has learned some big lessons and hotels and resorts, even restaurants, have individual additional security in place which is greatly improved since last year's events in Lamu. Of course we are telling tourists to be observant and vigilant wherever they travel on safari or on excursions from their resorts. But this is no different from what visitors to London are told also, to be observant and vigilant. Many travel advisories are only in place because the foreign offices fear legal repercussions if they do not overstate warning and visitor numbers show that tourists know about these connections. They still travel and we are grateful for that'*.

Good news nevertheless for Lamu and the nearby resorts, which will have renewed hope now that 2012 will make up for the losses sustained when tourism literally came to a standstill, and good news for Lamu and its cultural and religious festivals, which will undoubtedly be sell outs once again. Visit www.magickkenya.com for more destination information or www.kws.org for details on marine national parks and reserves along Kenya's Indian Ocean coast.

DISGRUNTLED KQ MINORITY SHAREHOLDER SENT PACKING BY COURT



As reported here two weeks ago, one Prakash Gadani, who holds some 200,000 shares in Kenya Airways, had filed a case against the now concluded share rights issue, making a number of claims when seeking to stop the transaction through an injunction. That injunction however was not granted at the time and the main hearing in the Commercial Court in Nairobi yesterday also concluded, that the petition had no merit at all, dismissing the application with costs. The court in particular dismissed the notion presented that the rights of a minority shareholder were 'oppressed' while upholding the fact that the entire exercise was conducted strictly in accordance with current laws and financial regulations, putting an end to Gadani's misguided if not selfdeluded attempt to see the tip of the tail wag the dog.

Gadani gained added notoriety when engaging in an equally losing shoutout on Twitter, where he responded to a related article by this correspondent with 'Lies, Lies', a suggestion now firmly put to rest too after the court hearing affirmed the position taken in the article, which had cross loaded from the blog post to Twitter.

The results of the share rights issue, in which all key institutional shareholders have taken up their new share allocation, will be announced on the 30th of May and the information will be immediately published here for the benefit of the readers, so watch this space.

KEMPINSKI COMES TO KENYA – AT LAST



The long awaited announcement has been made today that Kempinski has signed a management agreement with the locally incorporates Simba Corporation for a 200 suites and room hotel in the heart of Nairobi, Kenya's capital in

addition to which a luxurious safari camp will be opened on the Olare Orok Conservancy, adjoining the Masai Mara Game Reserve.

The Nairobi Kempinski will be a fully fledged 5 star luxury hotel, bringing the Kempinski pedigree at last to Kenya, after withdrawing last year from Tanzania. The new hotels, due to be opened later in 2012, will offer state of the art meeting and conferencing facilities, very 'posh' restaurants and lounges and a ballroom without the often disturbing pillars, giving functions held there that feel of open space with no obstructions between the back and front and one side and the other.

While no further information could be obtained due to the short time frame between the announcement becoming available and the time of going to press, it was ascertained that the luxurious tented safari camp will be setting new standards in terms of tent size and personalized service, location and food. To be set up on the banks of the Ntiakintia river the views from the platform terraces each tent has will offer a sweeping vista of the Mara plains and hills.

Kempinski is no stranger to Africa and has a wide portfolio of luxury hotels and resorts in their collection, notably spanning from Egypt over the Seychelles to Djibouti, Chad to Namibia with Kenya and Ghana becoming the latest Kempinski countries on the continent.

This correspondent was an invited guest at the grand opening of the Kempinski Seychelles Resort and has extensively covered that fine property, in a TripAdvisor review as well as through articles published by eTurboNews.com/Africa and will provide regular updates on progress made on the two Kenyan properties now going into their final construction phases before opening. Watch this space for breaking news and regular news updates from East Africa's and the Indian Ocean islands' fast expanding hospitality industry.

EMIRATES SKY CARGO NAMED AS CARGO AIRLINE OF THE YEAR



(Picture courtesy of Emirates via HK Strategies, Nairobi)

The annual Cargo Airline of the Year Awards, held at London's Lancaster Hotel, once again crowned **Emirates Sky Cargo** as the cargo kings of the world. The airline was named as **Best Cargo Airline in the World 2012** but also for the 24th time in a row captured the **Best Cargo Airline in the Middle East** trophy.

Notably for Eastern Africa, where the airline operates three dedicated cargo flights a week between Dubai and Nairobi, in addition to the uplift capacity on the double daily passenger services through under-floor pallets, did **Emirates Sky Cargo** also once again receive the **Best Cargo Airline in Africa**. Air cargo operations also extend to Entebbe and Dar es Salaam, Emirates' other two East African destinations, from where mainly fresh chilled fish fillets, meat products, fresh produce and flowers are shipped daily to Dubai and beyond.

The airline presently operates 4 B777F, 2 B747-400F and 2 B747-400ERF, serving 12 cargo only destinations and a further 123 global destinations for exporters and importers via their hub in Dubai. Available information also confirmed that a further 5 B777F are on order and will join Emirates' growing fleet in due course.

KENYA AIRWAYS RELEASES Q4 RESULTS



While everyone is now waiting for the announcement of the results of the share rights issue by Kenya Airways and their financial advisory team, due to be made public on the 30th May, the airline has yesterday released their financial results for the fourth quarter of their financial year.

Notably did the main target area for expansion over the next decade under **Project Mawingu**, the Middle and Far East and India, record a capacity growth of 3.6 percent in terms of capacity, while North Africa, mainly due to the introduction of the second daily flight to South Sudan's capital Juba, grew by 4.2 percent.

The picture is more mixed in Eastern Africa, where overall the capacity reduced due to the combination of Kigali and Bujumbura flights.

Domestic flight capacity reduced in particular on the Mombasa route where capacity optimization reduced the number of seats on the market while Kisumu in particular, now served up to 25 times a week, showed an increase of over 20 percent. Here passenger numbers continue to grow by 4.2 percent with a cabin load factor of 73.5 percent, a rise by 9.7 percent year by year and a clear indication that Kenya Airways' return to the domestic market, covering Mombasa, Malindi and Kisumu out of Nairobi in a new market strategy has paid off handsomely. The new flights to Eldoret are expected to continue that trend on the domestic market.

Overall passenger numbers, compared to 2011, grew by 5.2 percent to 832.366 for the quarter, with the Southern African region leading in growth by over 20 percent, with an equally improved cabin load factor across the network of 68.1 versus 66.7 last year.

Cargo tonnage sold also rose by 4.1 percent to 14.909 tons for the quarter on the back of higher demand and renewed focus on the cargo business, which will see a dedicated fleet of freighters come on line under the **Project Mawingu** is expected to accelerate this trend in coming years, as Kenya Airways is set to join Africa's big league on air cargo uplift, now that Nairobi has become Africa's largest cargo hub. The following graph, courtesy of KQ's corporate communications department, shows which way the fleet planning for the cargo division is going, covering both long haul and regional / continental routes with a mix of wide body and narrow body cargo aircraft.

Watch this space for the most up to date information on East African aviation developments.

Kenya Airways The Pride of Africa		Freighter Fleet Requirement									
	Base Year	YR1	YR2	YR3	YR4	YR5	YR6	YR7	YR8	YR9	YR10
	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21
B747F		1	2	2							
B772F					3	4	5	6	6	7	7
B734F		2	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
TOTAL	0	3	5	6	8	9	10	11	11	12	12

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Tanzania News

STIEGLER'S GORGE HYDRO PROJECT TO GO AHEAD, NGELEJA AFFIRMED ON THE DAY PRIOR TO BEING SACKED



(Stiegler's Gorge as seen from the air by www.africanbushpilot.blogspot.com / soon gone forever?)

The Tanzanian government will remain under the spotlight over their planned assaults on the environment even after the cabinet reshuffle last Friday, which amongst others also saw Energy and Minerals minister William Ngeleja sacked from his position alongside 6 other cabinet and two deputy ministers. Only the day prior did he during a visit to Rufiji Valley Development Authority reaffirm his previous stand that the Stiegler's Gorge project would go ahead by hook or crook, notwithstanding the fact that the Selous Game Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, requires consultations and approvals from UNESCO before any commercial activity can commence. Notably is the same ministry also on the warpath with the environment over plans to mine for Uranium inside the Selous Game Reserve, equally subject to UNESCO granting approvals. The story was first told here early last year, prompting vehement denials from official Tanzania, only to be exposed as a pack of misleading statements when later in March the truth emerged in full, after the ministry of energy and minerals owned up to the fact that plans from the 1970's had indeed been revived and that discussions with project consultants from Brazil had advanced considerably at the time already.

Tanzania's energy sector has an appalling record over maintenance of the nationwide grid network and the existing hydro electric power stations, where past omissions of upgrading the equipment in time, and keeping it in operating order, have come to haunt the entire country with frequent power cuts and the notorious '*load shedding*' a phrase invented by the power companies in East Africa to belittle and gloss over their inability to keep supply constant. Analysts in Tanzania claim that if the existing plants would undergo regular heavy maintenance and turbine upgrades, the additional power generated from the existing stations would be enough to keep the country lit up. The same sources also claim that the country has done far too little to explore and exploit geothermal energy, where in comparison neighbouring Kenya is set to exponentially increase this ultra green and carbon neutral source of energy by great multiples in coming years. Wind-power too has not found its way into any serious implementation stage nor have the significant gas deposits found in Tanzania been translated into cheap energy production, largely – according to energy analysts – because the sector is riddled with massive corruption and lacks vision and leadership, probably one of several reasons the minister was sacked following pressure by parliamentary committees which had exposed the rot in government.

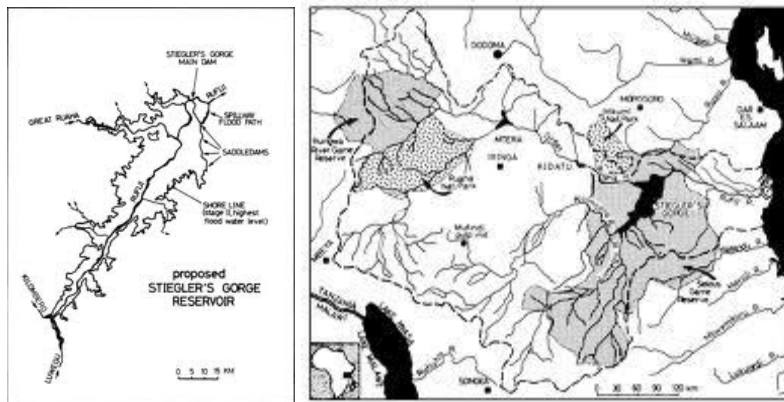


(Architectural impression of the proposed Stiegler's Gorge Dam and Power Station)

The planned power station, set right in the heart of the photographic zone of the Selous Game Reserve, would cause extensive flooding behind the proposed dam and the impact on the game reserve's core tourism area is feared to be of such proportions that the expected benefits will be largely outstripped by the negative impact the power station will have on the environment. In average about 100 metres deep and over 8 kilometres long the Stiegler's Gorge, in particular at the lower sections, is a popular area with tourists taking boat excursions on the Rufiji river, or else come there for picnic meals within the spectacular setting seen only from the bottom of the gorge itself. Lodge operators, several of which have put up costly investments by constructing lodges and safari camps along the gorge, but also the safari operators are understandably concerned about the government's plans. Yet, none have until now openly opposed the Tanzanian government, known for its vicious backlashing against all and sundry perceived as anti government when voicing opposition to the official positions taken, then turning on the heat with accusations of being anti development, anti Tanzania and going as far as referring to such critics as a fifth column funded by foreign interests.

It is now wait and see if the new minister for energy and minerals Prof. Sospeter Muhongo will take a fresh look at the entire complex question of how Tanzania can, and more importantly should stay powered up, by using renewable and sustainable sources of energy, repairing and upgrading the existing grid and power stations of else remaining on the warpath with the environment the same way his sacked predecessor went about.

Watch this space for the next chapter of this long running saga as the battle of the Selous continues.



(Two maps showing the location and extend of the planned flooding areas behind the proposed dam)

MAIGE SACKED FROM TOURISM AFTER SERIES OF GAFFES

Tanzania's controversial tourism minister Ezekiel Maige has finally bitten the proverbial political dust, after a series of gaffes, misleading international organization like UNESCO over the Serengeti highway plans, denying climate change and the shrinking ice caps on Mt. Kilimanjaro, declaring the planned Uranium mining in the Selous as entirely safe and free of dangers and mocking the Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki, following the public burning of 5 tons of blood ivory last year in Manyani.

Maige, who was at least once overheard to asking someone 'who is this guy', referring to the embarrassing stories told about him here since his appointment after the last general election in November 2010, when he took over from his junior ministerial position in the same ministry after his predecessor did not make it back to parliament, became a liability for the Tanzanian tourism sector and the last straws for the parliamentary committees were his silence, inactivity and indecisiveness when scandals over wildlife exports and hunting concession allocations emerged, something also reported here to his apparent annoyance.

Tanzania has in the past underperformed vis a vis the country's enormous tourism potential and much of this deficit is attributed to the lack of creative and visionary marketing, but also the ongoing decampaigning of the destinations over unresolved issues like the Serengeti Highway, the planned soda ash mining on the shores of Lake Natron, the withdrawal of an application to have the Eastern Arc Mountains listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, the ongoing attempts to mine Uranium in the Selous and convert the Stiegler's Gorge to a hydro electric power plant but as much for a laissez faire attitude over the almost sacred Stone Town in Zanzibar, when plans emerge to construct a high rise hotel in the middle of that UNESCO World Heritage Site. Add the uncertainty over the Coelacanth habitat in the Tanga Marine National Park, where the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism under Maige became a willing accomplice to have a new deep sea harbour constructed right in the heart of that park, it all added straw after straw until the back of the donkey finally broke.

President Kikwete yesterday announced a long overdue cabinet reshuffle by sacking 6 ministers from their positions over various levels of alleged misbehaviour, allegations over misuse and misappropriation of funds and parliamentary moves to censure them. In addition two deputy ministers too were also sacked while two other ministers under fire by parliament were moved to different positions and out of the immediate firing line.

New tourism minister is Hon. Khamis Kagasheki who previously served as deputy minister.

Also sacked was Transport Minister Omar Nundu, who displayed an almost frightening lack of understanding of the aviation sector in the past. He campaigned prominently to throw good money after the bad one already lost for Air Tanzania, but the recent exposures of deals gone bad and leaving government with multi million US Dollars guarantee liabilities from the airline, concealed until the point when the parliamentary committee dug up those buried skeletons finally rang in his departure too.

At this time it may also be appropriate to reproduce added information at hand here over the scandals at Air Tanzania to give the readers a better understanding why that airline ought to be wound up and aviation left to the private sector in Tanzania and that either gross negligence, gross incompetence or deliberate attempts to defraud were at the core of that deal:

According to the excerpts available from official audit report by the Controllor and Auditor General (CAG) for the year 2009/10 that was presented to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Public Accounts (PAC) it is recommended that all officials who caused the delay for the

submission to the Cabinet should be put to task.

Following the continual deterioration of the ATCL (Air Tanzania Corporation Ltd) its steering committee held a meeting on 1st March 2010, and came out with the conclusion that to maintain the Airbus contract is uneconomical because of the following:

- (i) The Company has no maintenance facility for Airbus aircrafts*
- (ii) It has no back up aircraft engine or competent engineers or pilots to support the operation of the Airbus*

It needs about TShs 13.9 billion in 8 months to operate it, noted the CAG report to the Parastatal Organisations Accounts Committee (POAC) that has never been made public.

The report affirms: Nevertheless the committees' recommendation to send the matter to the Cabinet for decision was implemented after nine (9) months while losses were accumulating without any action taken.

Furthermore, whereas the ATCL report dated 14th December 2010, indicated that the aircraft was found painted in Air Guinea livery during inspection in September 2010, the statement of accounts submitted by Wallis Trading Inc. showed the lessor continued to bill ATCL and by 30th January 2010 the debt stood at TShs 322,671, 841,580 as detailed below, it further said.

The details show that TShs 21,516,217,580 was for unpaid leased costs, Sh300,960,000,000 for maintenance cost and TShs 195,624,000 for maintenance supervision costs. This cost is enough to acquire two brand new aircraft of the same generation at the cost of \$100million per plane.

The CAG also noted that the submitted report is not the requested one issued by those inspecting the aircraft and recommended it for lease. The management was still required to provide the requested report.

On January 22 2012 it was reported that CAG had recommended legal action against government officials involved in the ATCL signing of the leasing agreement. It was done prior to approval of the government guarantee, contrary to Government Loans Guarantees and Grants No 30 of 1974 as amended in 2003, as the guarantee was issued retrospectively seven months after the flawed agreement was signed.

Background on the lease deal:

ATCL leased the A320 from Wallis Trading Inc. for a period of six years (72 months) but the plane remained in ATCL hands for 48 months, 41 of which it was grounded for major technical maintenance in France.

The flawed agreement stipulated that the leasing charges would remain the same whether the plane was flying or grounded for any reason.

An aviation analyst commented publicly on this in November 2010 but who understandably preferred to remain anonymous said it was inconceivable that the lease rate of \$370,000 per month remained the same when the plane

was operating and during maintenance, as non-operational lease charges would have gone down as to \$30,000 a month. There would be no chargeable effects on the plane as it would not be in operation.

The Airbus lease in October 2007 was in line with preparations for what was expected to be a divestiture of ATCL, which was to be partly sold to Chinese company Sonangol, which however never signed a formal contractual agreement with the Government thought it had pledged to buy ATCL not less than five Airbus aircrafts by 2012 as part of the proposed privatization scheme.

In line with an eagerly awaited ATCL take-over by Sonangol, the ATCL management rushed to lease A320 from Wallis Trading, a company said to have a close working relationship with Sonangol, headed by influential Hong Kong businessman, Sam Pa.

By the time ATCL entered into the lease agreement in October 2007 the aircraft was due to go for major technical maintenance, known as C Check But that fact was only established after the agreement was hastily penned down, leading to the aircraft to be grounded in France for seven months.

On its return from technical maintenance in May 2008, the plane remained in the air for seven months until December 2008 when was re-grounded for maintenance and never flown ever since, until it was formally released by ATCL in October 2011 two years before expiration of the lease agreement though the leasing bills remained as if the plane had continuously operated throughout the agreed period of lease.

Observers of Tanzanian politics described the sacking of 8 ministers and deputies as nothing short of a political earthquake and noted that parliament had asserted its controlling powers over government, compelling President Kikwete and the key decision making organs of the Chama Cha Mapinduzi ruling party to act or else risk a wider vote of no confidence, something still hanging over the current Prime Minister for his delaying tactics. It remains to be seen how the new faces in the key ministries will reshape policies and bad decisions taken in the past by Maige and Nundu to hopefully reverse in particular the ongoing assaults on the environment and parks. For now though it is a warm welcome to the new minister of transport Dr. Harrison Mwakyembe and Ambassador Khamis Kagasheki in Natural Resources and Tourism and better fortunes and better understanding of tourism and aviation compared to their shamed predecessors. Watch this space.

NGO'S TURN INTO ACCOMPLICES FOR CRIMES AGAINST THE ENVIRONMENT

7 NGO's based in Arusha seem to have had a sudden change of mind, and a change of financial fortunes by the look of it, as they did a U-turn and are now advocating to build a tarmac road across the Serengeti.

Brand new, state of the art, websites, developed by whom and paid for with what money is now the big question, are indicative that they have found sponsors with deep pockets, willing to underwrite their activities for just as long as the organizations in question do actually support the Tanzanian government's position that the road must be build, by hook or crook.

A short while ago did Germany conclude a 23.5 million Euro financing package for Tanzania, aimed to promote the building of the highway around the Southern part of the Serengeti National Park, where it reaches a multiple in terms of populations and will avoid the migration routes of the wildebeest and zebras.

In the same breath was it also learned that the hate whisperers in Tanzania are once more fueling anti Kenyan sentiment, this time against ANAW, which has brought a suit against the government in Dar es Salaam before the East African Court of Justice, dealing the powers that be several blows, first by having objections against the case being heard by the EACJ in Arusha thrown out by the appellate division of the court and then having the court publicly reaffirm that they are entirely competent under their setting up statute to hear such cases. At that stage the Registrar of the East African Court of Justice delivered a sound slap in the face of official Tanzania when he stated

that the court invited more such cases in the future by parties aggrieved and not getting the justice they were seeking within their national judiciary system.

The social media networks, in particular via the 46.033 member strong '*Stop the Serengeti Highway*' campaign on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pages/STOP-THE-SERENGETI-HIGHWAY/125601617471610?ref=ts> and via www.savetheserengeti.org are full of buzz and commentaries on this scandalous behaviour, where principle, morals and ethics were sold for the proverbial 30 silver coins, as Judas got for his betrayal of Jesus.

In the latest development it was learned that the Tanzanian government has now employed delaying tactics before the East African Court of Justice, when the government council earlier in the week stated that government was *not yet ready and prepared to proceed*, shedding light on some suggestions made to this correspondent that the Tanzanian government is attempting to create facts on the ground, or else try and mobilize fresh support for their ill begotten plans to build a highway across the Serengeti's migration route in total disregard of not just the injunction by the EACJ but also against world opinion. Watch this space as the assault on Tanzania's environment continues and the *Corridor of Destruction* further gains shape.

Rwanda News

TRUKISH AIRLINES SET FOR 16TH OF MAY INAUGURAL FLIGHT TO KIGALI



The long awaited arrival by Turkish Airlines in Kigali is now set for the 16th of May, i.e. in less than two weeks from now. Flights will initially connect Istanbul / Turkey with Kigali / Rwanda three times a week and the airline is going to use a B737-800 on the route.

Turkish Airlines' arrival has been broadly welcomed by Rwanda's tourism stakeholders, who have in the past been advocating for more airlines to come to Kigali, adding not only seat capacity into the market but also supporting destination marketing with their own sales and promotion activities across their respective networks.

In recent weeks did several Turkish business delegations come to Rwanda to explore opportunities for trade and investments, a critically important area for Rwanda's economic future, but it is mainly the tourism industry which is set to benefit as travelers intending to visit the *Land of a Thousand Hills* will now be able to have wider choices.

Presently Kigali is served by RwandAir, the country's national airline, Air Uganda from Entebbe, Kenya Airways from Nairobi, Ethiopian Airlines from Addis Ababa, South African Airways from Johannesburg in conjunction with Bujumbura, Qatar Airways from Doha, Brussels Airlines and KLM, making the new arrival a much awaited and on the day a much celebrated event.

NEW LIBYAN GOVERNMENT MAY TRY TO REGAIN CONTROL OF UMUBANO HOTEL

As the evaluation of the value of the former Laico property in Kigali by PriceWaterhouseCoopers is nearing completion, indications have emerged that the new Libyan government may wish to regain control of the hotel. The Umubano Hotel was during the sanctions period against the former Gadaffi regime taken over by the Rwandan government and then eventually put on the market for sale, pending a formal evaluation of its market value. The Libyan government through their Laico hotel management and ownership company held 60 percent of the shares in the hotel, with the Rwandan government holding the balance of 40 percent, but in view of the failure at the time by Laico to undertake the committed renovations and upgrading, eventually repossessed the property for breach of contract.

Information from Kigali now says that the Libyans are likely to make a bid for the full acquisition of the hotel as the new government seeks to restore market confidence in their ability to fulfill undertakings and strengthen existing investments, not just in the hospitality industry but also in banking, insurance, housing construction and telecom companies, the previous regime had invested in across Africa. The buyers will acquire the property fully under the terms set by the Rwandan government for the divestiture of the Umubano Hotel and require a pedigree in hotel management as well as the financial ability to modernize and completely refurbish the hotel immediately after a purchase deal has been concluded. The bidding process is expected to go underway again before the middle of the year and new owners should be in place by late 2012.

ROSETTE RUGAMBA GRADUATES FROM ASPEN'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP COURSE



(Aspen Leadership Initiative Network's African graduates)

Rosette Chantal Rugamba, well remembered for her time at the helm of ORTPN and then as Deputy CEO in charge of Tourism and Conservation at the Rwanda Development Board, has last week graduated as a Fellow of the Aspen Leadership Initiative alongside an impressive name list of other graduates drawn from all over the Eastern African region. Rosette, who set up Songa Africa after leaving RDB two years ago, expressed her delight over her achievement, which she said *'was not just for me but also for my country Rwanda'* when she was nominated as a fellow of ALI back in 2010.

The fellowship comprises four seminar spread over a two-year period. During the seminars, fellows engage in Socratic conversations on various issues reading from classical and contemporary texts under the careful watch of expert moderators. The themes of the seminars include a study of leadership styles and a search for the fellow's own moral compass and appreciation of how it affects their exercise of authority; a search of the Good Society (going back in history to understand the evolution of human societies, the political, cultural and spiritual structures that underpin them, sources of strength and instability, etc.); a look at the challenges of leading in an era of Globalisation, understanding the challenges leaders are facing in today's fast changing, connected and increasingly interdependent world defined by rapid technological, economic and societal changes and finally a study of the balance between self and society, encouraging fellows to think about their own legacies.

The Fellows also commit to carrying out a high-impact Leadership Project of their own choosing and design vetted and approved by their peers.

The 2010 Fellows whose class is aptly named "UWEPO" meaning "presence" in Kiswahili, were named as:

Stella Kilonzo, Chief Executive of Capital Markets Authority of Kenya, Magnus Mchunguzi, Vice President Commercial & MD of Ericsson South Africa, Awel Uwihanganye, Managing Partner of Tetea Uganda; David Mpanga, Partner, Kampala Associated Advocates; Dr Laila Macharia, Principal of Scion Real, Kenya, Richard Mugisha, Managing Partner, Trust Law Chambers of Rwanda; Leslie Rance, Head of Corporate and Regulatory affairs at British American Tobacco, Southern Africa Region, Andrew Rugege of Rwanda is Africa Regional Director of ITU and ITU Rep to the UN ECA in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Winnie Ouko, Managing Director, Lattice Consulting Limited of Kenya, Mugo Kibati, Director General, Kenya Vision 2030 Delivery Secretariat; Pauline Mbayah, Director, ATMS Foundation, Johannesburg, South Africa; Jeremy Awori, MD and CEO, Standard Chartered Bank Tanzania Ltd, **Rosette Chantal Rugamba, Founder, Songa Africa of Rwanda**, Davith Kahwa, Founder, President & CEO, Equip Advisory Group (Pty) Limited of Tanzania, Frederick Kitaka-Mutebi, Co-Founder & Director of Finance, Quality Chemicals Ltd of Uganda and Rehmah Kasule, Founder and CEO of Century Marketing Uganda.

Speaking at the ceremony at the *Fairmont Mt. Kenya Safari Club* in Nanyuki over the last weekend, Dr. Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank was quoted to have said: *'The majority of African countries attained independence from their colonial rulers long before most of you were born. Half a century later, there is broad agreement Africa is turning the corner, building a new momentum. My view is that the challenge of the leadership now is how to sustain the momentum. It is for this reason that I am very pleased to be here to bear witness to a process of leadership development that gives me hope of a better future for our continent. I want you to know that in me and the institution I lead, ADB, you have a partner you can call upon whenever in need and please do so without hesitation. Our support for and partnership with the Africa Leadership Initiative (ALI) East Africa emanates from our firm belief in that tackling the leadership problem in Africa is key to the successful turnaround of our continent's fortunes. I wish you all the best and look forward to engaging with you individually and collectively in the days and months ahead.'*

Capacity building at its best and at a level where truly the future of Africa's economic development can be shaped to the better, this correspondent's sentiment echoed also in the opening address by ALI's East Africa Chapter Chairman Ali Mufuruki when he said: *'We selected you to join this program because we believed that each and*

every one of you has within them the qualities of a great leader. Our purpose was and remains that of helping you to recognize and come to terms with that reality and the implied responsibility. This programme was designed to equip you with the tools you will need to face up to the responsibility of leading and by that I mean leading well. We have brought you together in this group so that you know you are not alone and have unlimited access to a vast network of resources you can rely on for useful feedback and wise counsel, a network of leaders whose values you share. So let's go and do the work that awaits us with the confidence that derives from knowledge and the urgency the work demands'.

Africa Leadership Initiative (ALI) East Africa Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in June 2006 to roll out ALI Fellowship classes in East Africa. From 2008-2015, the ALI-EA Foundation Limited aims to identify, strengthen and motivate 180 East Africa ALI Fellows, with 45 each coming from Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya.

The launch of the ALI-EA Foundation set the pace for a passionate search for a new generation of leaders in East Africa, not just leaders who have achieved impressive levels of personal success, but enlightened and values-based leaders working together to build the “good society.”

The Africa Leadership Initiative (ALI) is designed to capture the energy, talent, and the resolve of an emerging generation of leaders in Africa, who have already realized a certain level of personal success, to inspire them to move from success to significance and from thought to action by engaging in the foremost challenges facing their countries and their times.

ALI is a collaborative effort of five partner organizations in Africa and the United States – The Aspen Institute (United States), CETA Construction Services (Mozambique), the Databank Foundation (Ghana), Infotech Investment Group LTD (Tanzania), The Letsema Foundation (South Africa), – to foster values-based, action-oriented leadership in Africa.

Congratulations to Rosette and all the other graduates and all the best for their future and for the future of Africa. Visit www.aspeninstitute.org for more information.

South Sudan News

YAMBIO CRASH INJURES PASSENGERS AND CREW

Several passengers and the pilot sustained injuries when an aircraft contracted by the UN's World Food Programme crashed upon a bogged landing attempt in the Southern Sudanese town of Yambio, while coming from the South Sudanese capital of Juba.

According to information received the plane hit a drainage channel after touching down, apparently well away from the centre of the airfield, and then spun out of control. It could not be ascertained who the owners of the plane are which was on charter by WFP and operated regular flights within a number of locations inside South Sudan, where vast distances and a poor road network make flying a necessity in order to reach distant locations.

Amongst the passengers were reportedly two Ugandan diplomats, one of whom was airlifted by helicopter to the Northern Ugandan city of Gulu where he is undergoing treatment for a broken leg and other injuries. This information was confirmed by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kampala, Mr. James Mugume, in a press release issued late last night.

An aviation source from Juba also confirmed overnight that an accident investigation will go underway in the morning, when a team of investigators will be sent to the site to collect physical evidence and interview eye witnesses of the accident.

Mauritius News

Seychelles News

SEYCHELLES PUBLIC TRANSPORT CORPORATION GETS 10 MORE BUSES



Public transport on the islands of Mahe and Praslin is vested in the Seychelles Public Transport Corporation, which provides up to 60.000 Seychellois [out of a total population of about 87.000] on a busy day with the means to get to school, to work, to do the daily shopping or to see friends across the two islands. Earlier in the week did China make good of a promise made during the last state visit by President James Michel in 2011 and handed over a gift of 10 brand new buses to the company, aimed to boost capacity and operate more services. Present at the handover ceremony were Transport and Internal Affairs Minister Joel Morgan, Foreign Minister Jean-Paul Adam and the Chinese Ambassador to the Seychelles Shi Zhongjun, besides SPTC board members and senior management. This welcome addition to the SPTC fleet comes ahead of the planned introduction of ‘*park and ride*’ for the capital Victoria, which although the smallest capital in the world with only just over 20.000 inhabitants is suffering increasingly of traffic congestion, something the use of busses into the city from points on the periphery is hoped to alleviate in the future.

While quintessential for Seychellois citizens, who do not travel by car, the bus company is also a convenient way to see and explore the two islands for tourist visitors, for a single trip fee of 5 Seychelles Rupees or about 40 US Cents. Marketing of the archipelago has in recent years paid more emphasis on ‘*Affordable Seychelles*’ and the tourist board has been working hand in hand with Seychellois investors in guest houses, bed & breakfast establishments, holiday villas and self catering cottages, to promote this segment abroad to a wider audience. Those are tourists who could not afford the top class resorts and pay several hundred Euros a day in a 5 star hotel, but can still come to the islands for a holiday of a lifetime by using guest houses or self catering resorts.

As personally seen once again during a recent visit to the Seychelles, bus stops are conveniently located near or even in front of such hill side or beach side guest houses, allowing tourists to walk the short distance to the bus stop and catch a ride to the city, or to other parts of the island, anytime between 05.30 a.m. when services start in the morning until at least 07.30 p.m. in the evening. This permits ‘*self made*’ day excursions at a cost of next to nothing, avoiding the often costly self drive car hire charges or the expensive use of taxis.

Establishments like the ***Chalet Anse Forbans*** in fact provide, as do many others it was discovered, their guests with printed bus schedules, which incidentally are also available via this link: www.sptc.sc/html_pages/schedule.html and actively help guest to spend the day touring Mahe. Guest house owners are often even including tips where local restaurants or take aways are located where self catering guests can eat at very affordable prices of as low as 50 Seychelles Rupees for a take away box feeding two, all aimed to make their visitors stay within their budget, and thus ensuring regular repeat visits, where tourists can experience the *Seychelles, Another World* at a price they can afford. Visit www.seychelles.travel for more information on *Affordable Seychelles* including an extensive list of available guest houses, self catering establishments – often located right at a beach or just across the road from the beach – bed & breakfast accommodation and holiday villas and apartments like on ***Eden Island***. Watch this space.

BEAU VALLON TO GET FACE LIFT, BECOME MORE USER FRIENDLY



(Courtesy of Google Maps 2012)

One of the Seychelles’ best known beaches, Beau Vallon Bay Beach, is set to get spruced up and made more user friendly, following a meeting between Ministers Alain St. Ange, Tourism and Culture and Joel Morgan, Transport and Internal Affairs, the CEO of the Seychelles Tourism Board Elsie Grandcourt and private sector stakeholders led by the Seychelles Hospitality and Tourism Association.

Proposals were discussed last Saturday to make the entire area, along the beach but also the key roads, more ‘friendly’ for tourist visitors, with more lights to illuminate the paths and roads at night and walk ways and improved landscaping to beautify the area during the day.

Several key beach resorts and restaurants are located along the wider Beau Vallon Bay, such as the *Meridien Fishermen's Cove*, the Berjaya *Beau Vallon Resort and Casino* or, a little further up the coast, the *Hilton Northolme*, besides a number of Seychellois owned guest houses and Bed & Breakfast establishments with easy access to the sweeping beach from one end of the bay to the other, amongst them the *Bord Mer Guest House*. Also located on this stretch of beach are the *Boathouse*, a famous Creole specialty restaurant and the *Al Mare* right at the beach, where the freshest seafood is served either outdoors on the terrace or indoors.

Said a regular source upon making enquiries as to the thrust of the meeting: *'Stakeholders with business interests in the Beau Vallon and Bel Ombre area are very keen to see improvements made to this part of Mahe. It has been proposed to put up life guard stations along the beach and increase patrols by police, maybe even with an extra police outpost in a strategic place. The entire area can be made look much better through gardening and landscaping measures. A lot of tourists like to walk, so sidewalks could be created where possible or boardwalks put up. Attractive shop fronts and boutiques will attract buyers and restaurants with outdoor seating in comfortable surroundings with a look over the ocean will be in demand by visitors enjoying drinks or meals. Seychelles is rebranding and so every part of the island must play a part in that, to get a fresh look which repeat tourists will appreciate. And we need to keep such areas completely safe for our visitors, and our local residents too. The initiatives by the tourist board and in particular the Minister are moving us in the right direction and those with a stake in business now can voice their issues and concerns.'*

Similar meetings have been held in the recent past at regular intervals also on the islands of La Digue and Praslin, aimed to capture the sentiments and input from the private sector and it seems that this level of consultative interaction is yielding results with major initiatives like the Victoria beachfront upgrade and now the creation of a 'Golden Mile' along the Beau Vallon Bay Beach area. Watch this space.

AND in closing today once more some worthwhile stories taken from *'The Livingstone Weekly'* by Gill Staden, who reports from Livingstone / Zambia and covers Southern Africa as I do cover Eastern Africa.

Maaze Island

Kariba Bush Club has, over the years, been stocking two of their islands with animals. Impala, bushbuck, warthog, waterbuck, eland, puku; elephant come and go.

The two islands are Maaze and Mashape. There is nothing dangerous on the islands except a few snakes so they are ideal places to stay overnight. And that is the reason why they are erecting a small camp on Maaze Island so that visitors can enjoy the environment.

While I was staying there the other week we went over to Maaze to have a look. The boat took us over the calm water from Kariba Bush Club, skirted around the island and then into the bay. There we all disembarked, wading through a bit of water and had a look around. The camp consists of a boma, kitchen and six en suite tented chalets. It is going to be a very special hide-away when it is all finished. (May sometime). It is a place for walks around the island, fishing in the bay and relaxing. I must go and try it out when it is all complete.



We potted back over the lake watching the fishermen as they set out on their night's work, arriving back at the lodge just as it was getting dark.



The evening was a quiet one as everyone was planning for their drive home the following day. We all took our time in the morning but after breakfast we slowly all drifted away from the lodge to take the 4-hour trip back to Livingstone.

At the moment the Club is home for some of the workers at the Maamba Mine which is being prepared for digging out the coal, so the bar is a popular spot for them in the evenings. (They are due to leave in May when the mine will be ready for operations.)



There are two goats which are constant visitors to the camp, so watch out for anything which is left lying around – one of them ate some papers I was reading ... a week before I arrived one had got into a handbag and eaten the money inside ...

New Border between Binga and Namafulo

I had heard many years ago that Zimbabwe and Zambia were considering a border across Lake Kariba. So, when I saw a sign to Namafulo Border Post I was excited to think that it had actually happened.

However, on asking how the new border was going, I was told that it wasn't. The sign is there, that is all. According to gossip, the government is waiting for a boat which can be used to cross the lake. Also gossip says that they are thinking of using one of the pontoons at Kazungula when the bridge is constructed.





If government wants to supply a boat, the people will wait for many years. I just do not understand why government needs a boat. Once the border is manned, private boats will provide the transport. And the people, who own boats on the lake, know the lake and its moods. They will provide a safe service, as much as it can be guaranteed.

I am not sure where the border post is, because Namafulo is not marked on any of my maps. But it has to be across from Binga and there is a road to the place I have marked on the Google Earth map.

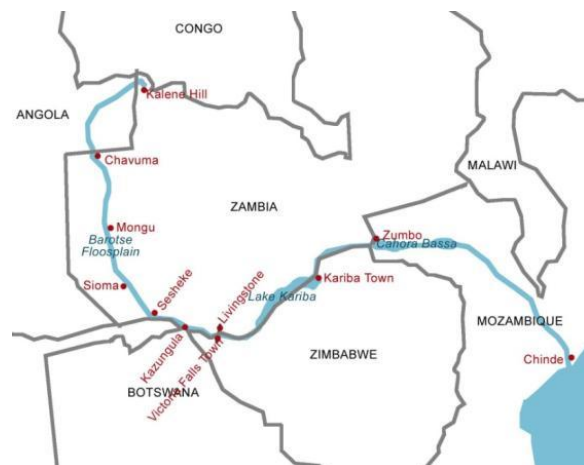
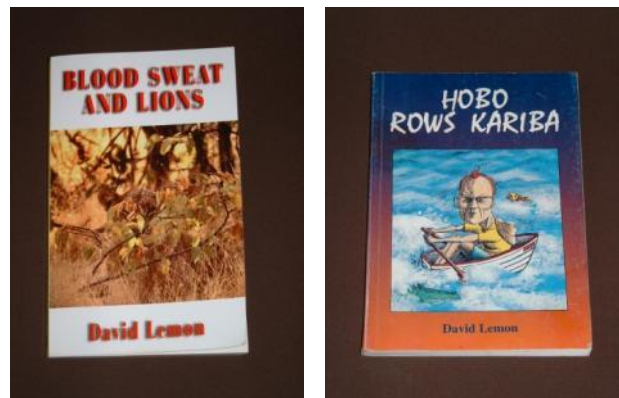
A Stroll along the Zambezi River

David Lemon has done all sorts of intrepid expeditions. He has cycled from Nairobi to Cape Town. He has rowed the length of Lake Kariba - there and back again, and he has walked the southern shore of Lake Kariba from Kariba Town to Binga. Now at 67 years of age, David is on another adventure - to walk the length of the Zambezi River.

David arrived with lots of media attention in Zambia last week and must now have started his long stroll of the Zambezi which he expects will take him about 10 months. The reason for the walk is a personal challenge and also to bring to the world's attention the plight of the African elephant which he fears may be heading towards extinction.

I am not sure how much we will hear of his journey as he walks the length of the Zambezi; he does not seem to be the sort of person who seeks media attention.

David has written several books, mostly on the environment and about his strange exploits. His row of Lake Kariba is written up in a book called 'Hobo'. His walk along the shore of Lake Kariba is described in 'Blood, Sweat and Lions'. According to his website, www.elephantlemon.com, David reckons he has finished his book-writing days and intends to concentrate on 'scribbling'. I really hope he has time to do some scribbling during the trip.



The Zambezi River is 2,700 km long although we seem to have a bit of a problem with its length. On Wikipedia it gives the length of the Zambezi as 3,540 km. I have checked and it is not. (This is a bit of a

problem with information on the internet – it is sometimes wrong. I checked with the Bradt Guide and other good texts and all say it is 2,700 km long.) Even on David's website he states it is 2,400 miles. So, if someone meets up with him on his trip, maybe they can tell him that he has over 800 km less to walk.

David was born and brought up in Zimbabwe, but like many Zimbabweans they have left home. He now lives in England. I will leave you with a bit of text from his website:

My business card describes me as an Author, Journalist, Public Speaker, Adventurer and General Labourer, but with choice I would describe myself as an 'Elephant Man.' I was privileged to have been brought up in some of the remoter parts of Southern Africa which gave me the chance to study, learn about - as well as from - and generally enjoy these wonderful beings in their natural surroundings.

What tends to upset me somewhat is that though elephants are heavily persecuted in my own country (Zimbabwe) and are in real danger of extinction, nobody seems to care. I try to do my bit with my writing and public speaking but don't feel that I am making any progress. ...
