

AVIATION TOURISM & CONSERVATION NEWS EAST AFRICA

A daily service from Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean islands of breaking news, reports, travel stories and opinions by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang H. Thome



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Fourth edition January 2014

Africa News

AFRICA WEEK'S HOSTED BUYER REGISTRATION FOR IBTM OPENS ON WEB

(Posted 24th January 2014)



The much awaited inaugural **Incentives / Business / Travel & Meetings Expo** which will take place in Cape Town as part of the **Africa Travel Week** between 28th and 30th of April, has now launched the online registration of hosted buyers and has in this connection just released the following statement:

Start quote:

The organisers of the IBTM Global Events Portfolio have today announced that Hosted Buyer registration has gone live for IBTM Africa (www.ibtmevents.com/ibtmafrica), which is set to take place in the Cape Town Convention Centre, Cape Town (28-30 April 2014).

The Hosted Buyer Programme will provide meetings industry buyers with the opportunity to meet and do business with a number of suppliers from across the continent, with pre-scheduled appointments being mutually matched ahead of the show.

IBTM Africa will personally select 50 meetings professionals based on their business influence and buying power in the region, each of whom will be international senior decision makers from Europe, Americas, Middle East and Asia Pacific, representing corporations, associations and agencies.

Successful applicants will be able to take advantage of a number of exclusive benefits including a personal diary of approximately 36 business appointments with African & Indian Ocean MICE exhibitors, complimentary 4/5 accommodation and transfers, a substantial contribution towards international flights to Cape Town and access to a number of exclusive networking events.*

David Dodgeon, Green Route, who will attend IBTM Africa with a group of qualified international buyers commented, "Trade shows are one of the most effective ways of obtaining and securing new business. We have supported EIBTM, the flagship event of the IBTM Global Events Portfolio since the early days and we are very pleased to be bringing a group of 16 International Buyers to their new show set to launch in Africa.

"Africa provides a perfect meetings industry destination for a number of reasons. The continent offers a huge contrast in terms of culture and history and is well situated in terms of flight routes and global access."

To find out more about IBTM Africa or to register to attend as a Hosted Buyer please visit www.ibtmevents.com/hosted or email ibtmafrica@reedexpo.co.uk

End quote



Time surely for those qualified to get on line and file that application to be among the 50 lucky participants for whom the proverbial red carpet will be rolled out and who will get that special royal treatment. Watch this space.

ATTA LAUNCHES FIRST EVER AFRICA PHOTO COMPETITION

(Posted 24th January 2014)



The London based Africa Travel and Tourism Association – membership is considered quintessential for Africa's leading hospitality and safari businesses – has announced the launch of their first ever photographic competition, featuring eye candy highlights from across the African continent. Launched earlier this week, Atta is going the way of the social media to collect votes via this Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.604235596315169.1073741833.150557278349672&type=3>

The competition is also 'hashtagged' via #attaphotonewyear for those who are keen enough to follow the event until the winners are finally unveiled on the 31st of January.

Notably, and a bit of home pride is surely not misplaced here, are two pictures from Uganda included in the 11 selected by Atta, featuring a boat in the delta of the River Nile near Lake Albert (by Marasa Africa) and a second one showing one of our prized gorillas submitted by Premier Safaris of Uganda.



The winner will be able to reach the global Atta audience through a specially arranged ‘**Webinar**’, allowing the showcasing of their destination and products, potentially giving added priceless exposure. Said Atta when launching the competition: ***‘We are, as always, aiming to fulfil our mission statement with this competition by creating a positive image of Africa and creating a greater awareness of Africa as a travel destination by hosting this competition on a social networking site. We hope to increase dialogue between the experts and the general public’.***

Entrants and their captioned photographs are:

- 26 Sunset Avenue - Monkey's Wedding Sunset - bringing in the new year!
- Campi Ya Kanzi - Let's focus on the elephants; in order to save this continent.
- Flatdogs Camp - New Year always brings new life with baby elephants, baby impalas and baby birds such as these Crowned Cranes
- Great Plains Conservation - Scanning the plains for the next wave of the Great Migration.
- Marasa Africa - As the sun sets on 2013 we went for a final cruise to the Delta area of Murchison Falls National Park close to Paraa Safari lodge.
- Ol Malo - Dressed in beads and Kikoys so as to fit in, two young guests walk out with their guide Hussein to experience the walk that the Samburu school children make to school each day through the African bush.
- Premier Safaris - A vulnerable gorilla over the festive period, looking towards conservation in 2014.
- To Escape To - A New Year a New Legacy - Fulfilling the Mandela Dream.
- Turtle Bay Lodge - Turtle Bay plans to host more African themed weddings in 2014, supported by a group from the iconic Maasai tribe
- Wayo Africa - On a recent safari in the Serengeti guests Tim and Sue were joined in the Serengeti by a pride of lions with a few adult cubs who also choose to move in to camp for the season!
- Zambezi Safari and Travel Company - Its detox time - we're eating the green stuff!

All the best to all the participants who have entered their favourite picture in this inaugural event, which is expected to grow into one of Africa’s prime events in coming years as more and more participants are expected to participate once they realize there is another platform now where to showcase themselves. Visit www.atta.travel for more information about the association, how to join and what benefits members can expect.

AFRICA’S SHARE IN GLOBAL TOURISM MOVEMENTS RISES TO 56 MILLION ARRIVALS

(Posted 21st January 2014)



Arrivals to Africa in 2013 have grown by an average of 6 percent to 56 million overall an increase in real numbers by 3 million, largely aided by a gradual recovery in North Africa, where political unrest had depressed tourist numbers in 2012, and a sustained 5 percent growth for destinations in sub Saharan Africa.

UNWTO’s data for last year, just released, show an overall global travel increase to 1.087 billion tourists traversing the globe and forecasts for 2014 are held at a conservative 4 percent, likely to be exceeded but for unexpected troubles or natural disasters which could impact on the trend.

Africa is expected to once again perform above average in the coming year as the UNWTO Secretary General commented: ***‘2013 was an excellent year for international tourism. The tourism sector has shown a remarkable capacity to adjust to the changing market conditions, fuelling growth and job creation around the world, despite the lingering economic and geopolitical challenges. Indeed, tourism has been among the few sectors generating positive news for many economies’.***

UNWTO forecasts international arrivals to increase by 4% to 4.5% in 2014, again above its long-term forecast of +3.8% per year between 2010 and 2020. The UNWTO Confidence Index, based on the feedback from over 300 experts worldwide, confirms this outlook with prospects for 2014 higher than in previous years. Mr. Rifai then went on to say: ***‘The positive results of 2013, and the expected global economic improvement in 2014, set the scene for another positive year for international tourism. Against this backdrop, UNWTO calls upon national governments to increasingly set up national strategies that support the sector and to deliver on their commitment to fair and sustainable growth’.***

The 2014 regional prospects are strongest for Asia and the Pacific (+5% to +6%) and Africa (+4% to +6%), followed by Europe and the Americas (both +3% to +4%).

Good news for Africa which remains the focus of sustainable tourism development for UNWTO and the appointment last year of Elsia Grandcourt, formerly CEO of the Seychelles Tourism Board, as the organization’s Director for Africa will only add to keep the continent in the spotlight through a range of activities and initiatives by UNWTO. Watch this space.

PROFLIGHT ZAMBIA RESPONDS TO FASTJET PLANS

(Posted 19th January 2014)



Proflight, Zambia’s only remaining scheduled airline flying to international destinations as well as serving domestic routes with presently a fleet of 16 single engine, twin engine and turboprop aircraft, has responded to news that FastJet was eyeing an entry into the Zambian market. Started in 1991, some 22+ years ago by former Zambia Airways Captain Tony Irwin, the airline has since grown to be the largest airline, surviving Zambia Airways and Zambezi Airlines, both of which folded.

Proflight now serves some 10 domestic and 2 international destinations, the latter being Lilongwe / Malawi and Dar es Salaam / Tanzania.

It is from there that the latest competitive challenge has emerged as FastJet will commence twice weekly flights from Dar to Lusaka come 01st November.

In response to the announcement of flights from Dar es Salaam to Lusaka by FastJet (T) and the announcement from FastJet PLC about plans to start up an airline based in Zambia, Proflight responded through their Director for Government and Industry Affairs Capt. Philip Lemba as follows: ***‘The FastJet business model is very different from the Proflight model and we feel there is demand for the affordable prices that a low-cost carrier such as FastJet can offer. Competition in any industry is good as it forces standards to be kept high in products and services. We respect FastJet’s move to provide cheap service for budget travellers and their affordable fares should be good news for the Zambian travelling public’.*** Capt. Lemba then went on to say: ***‘Our pledge to our customers is to continue offering a high level of service with safety, reliability, efficiency and friendly service as our guiding values. The service we offer allows for ease of booking using a number of distribution channels and interline partners’.***

For more information on Proflight visit www.flyzambia.com

East Africa News

VALENTINE’S DAY BECOMING A MAJOR FACTOR FOR EAST AFRICA’S TRAVEL INDUSTRY

(Posted 23rd January 2014)

BOOK NOW!

Treat your loved one this Valentines'

Valentines' weekend is the perfect time to get away with the one you love. So spend a few days together in Mombasa, Malindi, Lamu, Seychelles, Mauritius, Bangkok, Zanzibar, or Uganda with our specially discounted romantic packages.

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PACKAGING DREAMS

Hotels, resorts, safari lodges, restaurants and now airlines too are trying to cash in on Valentine's Day celebrations this year, more so as the big day falls on a Friday, making it a perfect mini getaway weekend for lovers. Kenya Airways has now joined the throng with their heart shaped campaign, inviting those keen to get away with their loved one to consider spending a few days in Mombasa, Malindi, Zanzibar, the Seychelles, Bangkok and yes, even Uganda, where 'lovers' retreats' are being organized by among others GeoLodges Uganda. Kenya Airways' is in fact offering rebated '*romantic packages*' through KQ Holidays to bring these destinations within reach of Kenyans, Ugandans, Rwandans, Burundians and Tanzanians. International airlines have notably not yet splashed out any special deals tailored for a weekend getaway, seemingly leaving this occasion to the local businesses in the aviation and travel industry.

Those keen to impress, or as someone suggested yesterday to get out of the proverbial doghouse, visit www.kqholidays.com for details or simply watch your local print media for special offers from a place near you.

QATAR AIRWAYS' BUSINESS CLASS RATED TOPS BY *BUSINESS TRAVELLER USA* AWARDS

(Posted 22nd January 2014)



Travellers from Eastern Africa, spoiled by the choices they have today when it comes to air travel, will see yet another box ticked against the name of Qatar Airways in addition to being rated for several years now by Skytrax as a 5 star airline. The 25th edition of the annual Business Traveller USA Awards ranked the airline's business class as '*Best Business Class*' and in addition got awarded for being the '*Best Business Class in the Middle East*' to. A third award at the ceremony however was the crowning achievement as Qatar Airways was for the 5th consecutive time named as '*Best Airline in the World for International Travel*'.

These awards '*Best in Business Travel*' are based on votes by readers of Business Traveller USA magazine with the results authenticated by an independent auditing company and are widely recognized as one the market's key benchmark indicators for real excellence. Readers based their voting on the strength of the airline's customer service, its route network and services.

Lisa Markovic, Qatar Airways' Country Manager for the United States of America, said on the occasion of receiving the three awards: '*There is no greater achievement than the appreciation of our passengers and we would like to thank the Business Traveller readers for choosing Qatar Airways, especially against such strong competition.*'

These awards illustrate Qatar Airways' ongoing commitment to providing 5-star service as one of the world's leading airlines for both business and leisure travellers. We are particularly proud to be acknowledged for consistently providing the world's best international travel experience for five years, running. We now look forward to improving our travel options, by expanding on our network of over 130 destinations, through the oneworld alliance'.



(Lisa Markovic, Country Manager for the United States of America, accepting the Best Business Class Award on behalf of Qatar Airways at the Business Traveller Awards 2013)

Qatar Airways was also recently named Best Business Class by Business Traveller readers in the United Kingdom and Best Middle East Airline by readers of Business Traveller Asia-Pacific. The Doha-based carrier was recognized in London, on November 5th and for the fourth consecutive year at the 22nd Annual Business Traveller Asia-Pacific Awards, held in Hong Kong.

Qatar Airways now flies to 134 destinations around the world, in Eastern Africa Entebbe, Kigali, Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro, and operates a state of the art fleet of presently 127 aircraft. New destination, among others in 2014, will be Philadelphia, Miami and Dallas/Fort Worth in the United States and Edinburgh, Larnaca, Sharjah and the new Dubai World Central as second destination in Dubai. \

Watch this space for regular and breaking news from the aviation sector in Eastern Africa.

KENYA AIRWAYS RESPONDS TO COMPETITORS SALES FLURRY WITH OWN MARKET BLITZ

(Posted 21st January 2014)



When some of the Gulf's leading airlines launched their early new year sales campaigns, promoting festivals and generally flooding the market with special fares, the usual suspects were swift in lambasting Kenya Airways – any reason apparently will do for them – for '*sitting pretty and doing nitty*' as one put it following a post yesterday on my blog. Well, KQ was swift to respond when they themselves launched their own '*The Big KQ Annual Sale*' action which will see their fares to a number of destinations drop by 25 percent for tickets purchased during the first week of February and with travel to be completed by 31st of May this year.

Connecting Africa with much of Europe, the Gulf, India and the South and Far East, Kenya Airways is one of the continent's leading carriers and presently set for sustained expansion with the delivery this year of several of the long awaited B787 Dreamliners – the first is due to join the fleet in March – at least two more B777-300ER and several B787-800NG's while at the same time set to retire their aged fleet of B767's.

The first Dreamliner is presently on the production line in Everett and the team in Embakasi, according to feedback received over the past few days, is rightly excited with the prospect to becoming Africa's second airline to fly the world's most advanced plane from April onwards.

Meanwhile though will the present sales initiative help to fill seats, helping no doubt to put Kenya as a destination back on the map and boost arrival numbers after a decline in tourism arrivals last year. For more information visit www.kenya-airways.com or go to www.magickkenya.com to learn more about the destination, the safari parks and the sun drenched beaches along the Kenyan coast.

QATAR AIRWAYS HITS MARKET WITH UP TO 30 PERCENT FARE REBATES

(Posted 20th January 2014)



Qatar Airways entered the new year in a fighting mood, offering up to 30 percent rebates on economy and business class fares, countering the current market offensive by closest rivals Emirates which is presently blitzing the East African markets with special deals for their annual Dubai Shopping Festival.

The offer, valid for three days as far as ticket bookings and payments are concerned, allows for flights across the year though terms and conditions will apply, so anyone keen to cash in on upcoming travel would be well advised to check with their local Qatar Airways office, be it in Kampala, Kigali, Nairobi or Dar es Salaam.

QR flies daily from Doha to Entebbe and then on to Kigali, serves Dar es Salaam double daily and flies 18 times a week to Nairobi, using an Airbus A320 in a two class configuration, before then offering the luxury of their B777's, B787's and A330's when connecting to most of their intercontinental destinations out of Doha. Qatar Airways is also expecting delivery of their first Airbus A380 during the first quarter this year, adding another dimension of inflight luxury to the global skies. For more details visit www.qatarairways.com and follow the relevant links to their special offers.



Uganda News

UGANDA EXPECTS POPE FRANCIS FOR 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF MARTYRS' DAY

(Posted 22nd January 2014)



Details are emerging that Pope Francis will indeed visit Uganda, as several of his predecessors have done over the past decades, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the canonization of the Ugandan martyrs in October this year. Pope Paul VI on 18th October 1964 officially raised the status of 22 Ugandan martyrs to sainthood and subsequently a shrine was built in Namugongo, outside the capital Kampala, where every year on 03rd of June Catholics from Uganda, the region, the continent and well beyond gather for a memorial mass.

Records show that 45 Christians were murdered at the time for defying orders of a king gone mad to renounce their faith, many of them burned alive, and while only the Catholic martyrs were elevated to sainthood, the Anglican victims too are remembered on Martyrs Day in Uganda.

Uganda's tourism industry will no doubt welcome the prospect of having Pope Francis come to Uganda as his presence will bring probably thousands of additional visitors to Uganda for the event, which the Uganda Tourism Board promotes annually as religious / pilgrimage tourism.

In view of this positive development for Uganda, wannabe visitors over that period of time are advised to book their tours to the *Pearl of Africa* as early as possible to be sure of accommodation and other services, which from middle to late October will no doubt be in great demand. Details about licensed tour and safari operators can be found via the Association of Uganda Tour Operators website at www.auto.or.ug while general information about Uganda is available via the UTB website www.visituganda.com and via www.ugandawildlife.org, the official site of the Uganda Wildlife Authority.

JANE GOODALL CALLS NGAMBA ISLAND AFRICA'S BEST SANCTUARY

(Posted 21st January 2014)



Jane Goodall, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and UN Peace Ambassador, on her 80th birthday, while visiting Ngamba, pronounced Uganda's sole chimpanzee refuge as the best there is, not a mean feat considering that there are another 28 such primate sanctuaries on the continent of Africa, located in Kenya, Tanzania, DR Congo, Sudan and Rwanda among others.

Lilly Ajarova, the Executive Director of Ngamba Island, was quoted as having expressed her delight for the unexpected honours, but those who have visited the island, just half an hour by boat off the Entebbe Jetty, which is near the Uganda Wildlife Education Centre, cannot but agree with the rating and ranking Ngamba has now received from the world's foremost expert in chimpanzee conservation.

Good news for Ngamba and good news for Uganda's tourism industry which is presently showing signs of an uncertain future vis a vis growth prospects, attributed by some to a '*low season*' while others claim the country does not invest enough money in marketing *The Pearl of Africa* abroad.

There are some indications that the forthcoming 2014/15 budget may finally allocate greater resources to the tourism marketing and the sector overall, but these are mere rumours at present and only when the annual budget is being read in a few weeks time can one be certain that this will indeed be so.

Meanwhile congratulations to Lilly and her team on Ngamba for a sterling job in looking after '*homeless chimps*'.

GEOLODGES CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF SUPERB HOSPITALITY WITH SPECIAL OFFERS

(Posted 21st January 2014)



20 years and counting it is for what is today known as GeoLodges Uganda, a boutique lodge operation which took off – and it seems like yesterday really – in 1994 with their first property on the River Nile just outside the Murchisons Falls National Park, the Nile Safari Camp.

Early in my writing career, back then I provided regular material from Uganda for what was then East Africa's leading travel magazine, Travel News by Tony Clegg Butt, I visited the camp and wrote '*if it were any closer to the river it would be in the river*' as the terrace of my tent protruded beyond the bank and allowed for unrestricted views right down into the fast flowing waters of the world's longest river. The company eventually added the Jacana Safari Lodge on Lake Nyamusingire in Queen Elizabeth National Park, became '*Inns of Uganda*' before, after the RainForest Lodge had come on line rebranding as '*GeoLodges Uganda*'. The latest addition to their stable was the Equator Snow Lodge in the foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains, set just at the edge of the national park and in close range to the newly established visitor centre, from where guests can take hikes and walks or just enjoy the fresh mountain air and sights of the ice covered mountain peaks when the clouds lift.

The 20th anniversary celebrations, extending according to a well placed source across the entire year with the main event likely to coincide with the opening back then of the first camp, will kick off with a special Valentine's Night at one of my all time favourite lodges, the RainForest Lodge in Mabira where at a cost of a mere 70 US Dollars romance can be fostered under the stars – weather permitting – dinner served with candle light. With only 12 wooden cabins available at the RainForest Lodge it is almost mandatory to book immediately or else the place will

be sold out and lovers will have to settle for another weekend visit to enjoy the flair of one of Uganda's most unique lodges, set in the deep of an ancient rainforest, just 65 kilometres from the capital city of Kampala. Several past articles published here describe in detail the attractions of Mabira Forest, and the challenges this green lung for the pollution spewing Kampala is faced with, and also narrates the experiences of past visits to the RainForest Lodge, including a spot of star gazing when owner and CEO Zahid Alam was on site one night with his huge telescope, holding fort and launching into an impromptu lecture about the star systems and the Milky Way above us. That night the stars were indeed as close to give one the feeling of being able to touch them and hopefully will the love birds on Valentine's Night have a similar experience as there is nothing quite like romancing under a star studded African sky.

For more information visit www.geolodgesafrica.com or join them on Facebook via www.facebook.com/GeoLodges and Twitter @GeoLodges.

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RUNNING FOR GORILLAS ENDED YESTERDAY AT CONGO BORDER

(Posted 18th January 2014)



"800reasons" is one man's Charity Run across Uganda! Aim is to draw Your attention to extremely endangered mountain gorillas! My promise is to run as many kilometers as there are mountain gorillas left in the world.. 880 km in 21 days! www.800reasons.com is the introduction on the Facebook page of Jyri Reinikka, who after planning his journey for several months, set out at the end of December to run from the border with Kenya across Uganda, one kilometre dedicated to each of the estimated 800 surviving mountain gorillas left in Uganda, Rwanda and the DR Congo.

Yesterday he reached the Congolese border after completing his run which took him 21 days, literally running a full marathon every day for the duration. '800reasons' via this link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wkw213SbmM>

is also found on YouTube, giving a visual impression of this winning private venture in support of the gentle giants of the Virunga mountains. Uganda's conservation fraternity, undoubtedly joined by their Rwandan and Congolese counterparts, is truly thankful for this extraordinary effort and for the priceless publicity generated for the plight of this highly endangered species. Webare Nyo, Asante Sana, Thank you very much Jyri!



(A photo of Jyri Reinikka as he ran across rural Uganda and while promoting his trip back home in Finland)

NATURE UGANDA ANNOUNCES DATES FOR NATIONAL BIRDING DAY

(Posted 18th January 2014)



Though still 9 months away, preparations are already well under way to once again celebrate Uganda's rich natural heritage and in particular the country's birdlife with another edition of the *National Birding Day*.

The 2014 event will be spread in fact over three days in October, featuring the *Big Birding Day* and the *Birding Festival*. The main birding day will again be a 24 hour event, from midnight to midnight, to spot birds or identify them by their calls and as Uganda has made 2014 the year of birding, Nature Uganda has already started drumming up support to break previous records established to prove to the world that *The Pearl of Africa* is indeed the world's top birding destinations.

Uganda has over 1.000 birds on the sighting books, both resident and migratory species and a significant number of the resident birds are endemic to the area where they are found. Bird watching safaris are among the most popular activities undertaken by visitors from around the world, apart from tracking the 14 primate species found in Uganda, the mountain gorillas, the chimpanzees, the golden monkeys and many more.

Nature Uganda is again working hand in hand with the Uganda Wildlife Authority which is expected to once more offer free entrance to the national parks and reserves under their management to participants of the Big Birding events as the organization benefits from updated bird sighting records and statistics, compiled every year by Nature Uganda after the event. Local and foreign registrations for participation can be made via Nature Uganda or by sending an email to info@natureuganda.org. Nature Uganda is also once again inviting sponsors to be part of this high profile conservation event.

For more information visit www.natureuganda.org and follow them on twitter via @natureuganda or their Facebook page www.facebook.com/natureuganda. More information about UWA can be accessed via their website www.ugandawildlife.org while country specific details are found on the Uganda Tourism Board website www.visituganda.com

Kenya News

TWO MORE POACHERS GUNNED DOWN AS WAR ON POACHING GAINS MOMENTUM

(Posted 24th January 2014)



Two suspected poachers were shot dead in an exchange of fire with game rangers at Kenya's Meru National Park, it was learned overnight. With the new wildlife law now in effect after formally publishing it in the government owned Kenya Gazette, poachers now face life prison terms and fines up to 20 million Kenya Shillings, apparently not an acceptable prospect for the two who tried to shoot their way out of being captured.

From reports received it appears that several others managed to escape though indications are that at least one of the fugitives was wounded in the gun battle.

A rhino was found injured near the scene of the shootout and is being treated for wounds on the leg sustained by a bullet.

Meanwhile were more arrests carried out country wide as the war on poaching now gains momentum, as magistrates now are under close scrutiny over rulings on bail and their eventual judgments in cases before them, to fully throw the book at the suspects when found guilty. Another arrest of a Chinese man in transit from Mozambique, who was found with blood ivory in his baggage, is now thought to be a litmus case of what sentences smugglers can now expect when nabbed in Kenya and lobbyists have already demanded that a full life sentence be applied, as well as the maximum fine, in order to deter others from using Kenya as a transit route for smuggled blood ivory coming from other parts of Africa.

Momentum is also building in Hong Kong over plans to destroy their huge stock of seized ivory by either crushing it or burning it, which would take the Chinese token action two weeks ago, when a fraction of the mainland ivory held was destroyed. The 6 ton destruction, while broadly welcomed as a step in the right direction, also prompted calls for China to stop dilly dallying and destroy their entire ivory stock, ban importation and prohibit processing and owning of ivory carvings after a given due date.

'China made a small gesture when they destroyed 6 tons of blood ivory. I think they have finally come to terms with reality that their intransigence and covert tolerance of ivory carving and possession has earned them nothing but bad publicity around the world. It was a step in the right direction but they need to join the civilized nations of this world in stopping the trade. They are without doubt responsible for the wholesome slaughter of elephant in Africa and there will be no end to expose them and publicly hang them out to dry unless they play their part in ending the elephant killings' wrote the source from Nairobi when passing the details of the Meru shootout. Bouquets for Kenya and barbs for China, until proven otherwise.

KENYA AIRPORT AUTHORITY SIGNS CONTRACT FOR 'TEMPORARY TERMINAL'

(Posted 24th January 2014)



News broke yesterday that the Kenya Airport Authority has finally awarded the tender for the temporary terminal at JKIA when it signed a contract with German company Roeder HTS.

The new temporary terminal, long talked about but finally pursued with some added vigour by KAA after the devastating fire in August last year which destroyed the entire arrival section of the main airport building, is expected to cost over 25 million US Dollars and will remain in place until the new mega terminal under '**Project Greenfield**' is ready in a few years time.

The new terminal will provide an added capacity of about 2.5 million passengers per year and will operate besides the new Terminal 4 building when that complex, adjoining the present Unit 1 of the main concourse, will finally open. Once Terminal 4 is operational Units 1, 2 and reportedly also Unit 3 – presently used for domestic flights – are due for a complete renovation and modernization while an entirely new arrivals complex will be constructed once the ruins have been demolished.

Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport is the region's main cargo and passenger hub but has been suffering from serious capacity constraints, made worse by the August 2013 fire which resulted in a series of make shift measures including tented facilities, though also prompting an accelerated pace in completing Terminal Four, and as now learned, to put up the temporary terminal. Watch this space for breaking and regular aviation news from the entire Eastern African region.

NAIROBI RESTAURANT WEEK LAUNCHES JANUARY 30TH

(Posted 24th January 2014)



Following hot on the heels of the French Food Festival at the Nairobi Serena Hotel will aficionados of good food have more reason to go out and indulge as the Nairobi Restaurant week will kick off on the 30th of January, then giving 8 days of culinary delight opportunities until the 06th of February, when the event closes. Over 50 restaurants from across the city have signed up for the food festival and set menus are available ranging from Kenya Shillings 1.250 to 1.750 per person. For this amount of money will a three course special menu be served, starter, main course and dessert and according to the information received options will be available to choose from to meet everyone's culinary taste or respect dietary restrictions.

EatOutKenya's Mikul Shah is one of the driving forces behind the Nairobi Restaurant Week and this inaugural event will surely grow from strength to strength, considering that 'only' just over 50 restaurants are participating this year out of several hundred which would no doubt qualify to be part of the event.

Some of Nairobi's top names are part of the food week such as the Mandhari at the Nairobi Serena Hotel, the Lord Delamare at the Fairmont Norfolk, the Flame Tree at the Sarova Panafric, The Thai Chi at the Sarova Stanley, all of them highly acclaimed hotel restaurants but also popular eateries like the Haandi, La Dolce Vita or the Brew Bistro Fine Dining.

For more details visit www.nairobirestaurantweek.com which gives a complete listing of all the participating venues and also explains how patrons can win some exciting prizes by filling a review card at the end of the meal. Bon Appetite!

JKIA ARRIVAL BUILDING TO BE DEMOLISHED

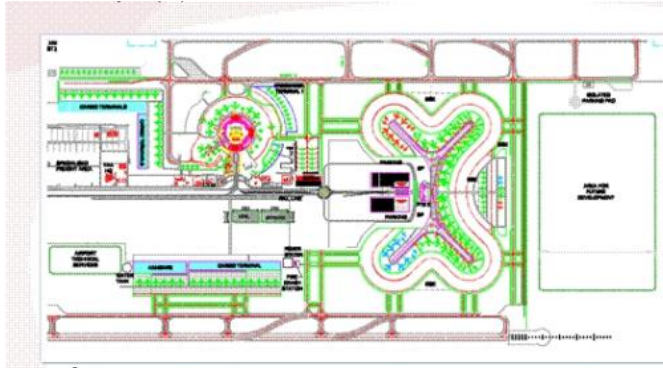
(Posted 22nd January 2014)



Details are emerging of plans by the Kenya Airport Authority to demolish the burned out arrivals building at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, which suffered irreparable damage during a major fire in August last year. KAA invited tenders earlier this week, seeking to contract a suitably qualified company to demolish the building and clear the site before then embarking on constructing a new state of the art arrival complex meeting the requirements of modern day aviation and allowing for Cat 1 ranking by the FAA, a prerequisite for eventually launching direct flights to and from the United States.

The fire, while a disaster of the highest order, which brought air traffic in and out of Kenya's and the region's most important aviation hub to a standstill for nearly two days, before traffic over gradually resumed over several days before reaching some level of normality, is now seen as a catalyst to accelerate the modernization of the airport. The construction of the long delayed Terminal Four was cranked up to around the clock work schedules and a new temporary terminal will be assembled to help process the sharply grown number of in particular transit passengers, which use Kenya Airways to fly from across Africa via Nairobi and vice versa to their final destinations. President Kenyatta in December broke ground for the new '*Project Greenfield*' which will see the construction of a second runway, new taxiways, aprons and aircraft parking spaces and most important a new mega terminal which will more than triple the airport's capacity to over 20 million passengers per year.

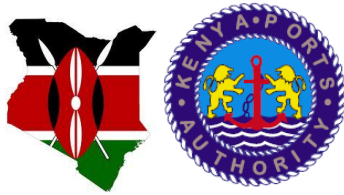
Demolition, according to a regular source from JKIA, is due to be completed by middle of this year before construction of the new arrival wing with offices and a range of other state of the art facilities will begin.



(An impression of the expanded Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi)

PLANS FOR DEDICATED CRUISE SHIP TERMINAL BACK ON FOR MOMBASA PORT

(Posted 22nd January 2014)



The Kenya Ports Authority has revived plans for a dedicated cruise ship terminal in Mombasa, aimed at tapping into the revival of cruise ship tourism in the Indian Ocean area off the African coast, following the defeat – by and large anyway – of the Somali ocean terrorists which for years have raided ships and kept cruise liners away from the region.

Probably encouraged by news from the Vanilla Island Organization's talks with the global cruise industry giants, to bring their ships back for regular visits to the various islands from the Maldives over the Seychelles to Zanzibar, Mauritius, Madagascar and Reunion has the KPA taken a fresh look so as to become part of newly emerging itineraries and bring more such vessels to Kenya in the future.

Last year saw a lull in cruise ship arrivals in Mombasa, for reasons well explained in the past, but the second call, earlier this week, by MS Nautica of Miami based Oceania Cruises in the space of a month has clearly shown the huge benefits for the local tourism industry, as many of the nearly 700 passengers embarked on road and air safaris to the Kenyan national parks, took local sightseeing excursions and spent their cash to buy local crafts, art pieces and curio items to take home with them.

The plans for a cruise ship terminal have been shelved and revived and shelved and revived for many years now but as Indian Ocean tourism destinations compete for cruise ship calls over the availability and ranking of their facilities, Mombasa will be at the tail end of being considered for port calls until such a dedicated terminal has been opened. Mauritius' Port Louis has over the past years regularly won high accolades for its port facilities, as have Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban in South Africa, where many of the cruise itineraries stop over, start or end before visiting the exotic tropical islands of the Indian Ocean.

Said a source from Victoria / Seychelles when asked to comment on the plans of Mombasa: ***'We in the Seychelles promote twin centre holidays with mainland destinations. Tourists come for our paradise beaches and then go on safari in Africa. Cruise tourism is similar because tourists can see several destinations at a go. What the entire region should do is to pool our resources to promote cruise tourism. The Vanilla Island Organization is doing just that and is attending cruise tourism trade fairs. African mainland destinations with ports like Mombasa, Dar es Salaam and all the way down to Mozambique and South Africa should join in to such initiatives because it is a very lucrative business. A single port call can generate over a million dollars for the local economy, not just through tours and excursions but also to provide provisions to the ships from fresh water to food and other essential items. I think a partnership can promote some very exciting itineraries for the global cruise lines combining safaris and our island attractions as one package'***.

Kenya's coast has taken a battering of sorts over the past 15 months with significant loss of tourist visitors and largely reduced number of charters flying to Mombasa, and the return of the large ocean liners would be a good start to halt this trend and kick start a revival for the coast's tourism industry.

BIG FAST FOOD NAME MAY BE HEADING TO JKIA AS KAA INVITES TENDERS FROM GLOBAL BRANDS

(Posted 21st January 2014)



The Kenya Airport Authority has invited tenders from international fast food brands to submit bids ahead of the opening of the new Terminal 4 which is expected to open in a few months time. According to information received from Nairobi does KAA expect some of the world's big names like Burger King, KFC, Pizza Hut and McDonalds to compete over the opportunity to establish a presence at East Africa's largest aviation hub, which is presently undergoing expansion and modernization at an accelerated pace, following the fire in August last year which destroyed the international arrivals hall and triggered some serious fast tracking. The time frame though appears tight, one source saying it almost appears to be an afterthought, considering the logistics involved in not just evaluating tenders and deciding on a winning bid but also the time then needed for a successful bidder to plan, equip, recruit staff for and then open such a restaurant.

When Terminal 4 opens, with a projected added capacity of at least 2.5 million passengers, the present concourse with units 1, 2 and 3 will be progressively refurbished and modernized to improve the passenger experience which has dragged down the perception of Nairobi being East Africa's number one hub.

Also under construction are a new temporary unit to bridge the gap between now and the expected opening by 2017 of the **Project Greenfield** under which not only a second runway and additional parking and apron facilities will be constructed but also a mega terminal which will more than triple capacity and cater for increased traffic into the middle of the 21st century.

Watch this space for breaking and regular aviation news from across Eastern Africa.

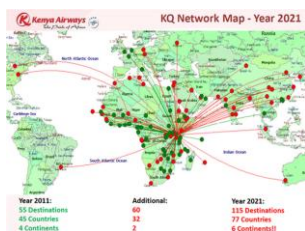
KENYA AIRWAYS' FIRST B787 DREAMLINER 'UNDER CONSTRUCTION'

(Posted 18th January 2014)



Information was received from a source at Boeing, notably NOT from Kenya Airways, that the **Pride of Africa's** first B787 Dreamliner, due for delivery in March this year, is now advancing with its assembly at the Boeing facility in Seattle.

Kenya Airways has 9 of these aircraft on firm order and holds options for at least 4 more, though all indications are that these options will be firmed up to orders soon, with more to follow.



Under the airline's ambitious **Plan Mawingo** is Kenya's national airline seeking to fly from presently 65 destinations to 115 on all continents by the financial year 2021/22, which will require the fleet to grow from presently 45 aircraft to 119 aircraft, including as many as 12 freighters.

The world's most advanced passenger aircraft, the B787, will be playing a major role in that rollout of destinations, as it offers over 20 percent fuel consumption savings compared to the B767, which at present is still the workhorse long haul aircraft on the Kenya Airways fleet.

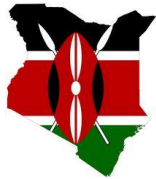
Be sure to watch this space for upcoming news as the delivery date for the B787 comes closer, updates from Boeing and hopefully from Kenya Airways too, to keep readers fully informed as the last weeks prior to delivery of the aircraft in Seattle and the ferry flight home to Nairobi tick down.



(Kenya Airways' first B787 'under construction')

BRIATORE JET HAS A MIND OF ITS OWN

(Posted 18th January 2014)



Reports have emerged from Kenya that the jet of Flavio Briatore, former F1 Renault team chief and owner of the Lion in the Sun and the Billionaires Resort in Malindi, suffered a mishap while parked at the airport of the resort town.

Local Kenyan media reports suggest – regular sources from Malindi were unavailable to comment directly – that the parked aircraft suddenly moved towards a drainage ditch, shortly after another scheduled flight from Nairobi had landed though no one has as yet attributed the jet wash of the incoming aircraft as being the cause of the 'move'. It was also not possible to ascertain if the wheel chokes, which are normally placed in front and behind a parked aircraft's wheels, had been removed or if the aircraft's parking brakes had malfunctioned. The incident happened yesterday not long after mid day and added efforts to obtain details if the plane suffered any damage during the incident also yielded no immediate responses.

Briatore was in Kenya to officially open his new Billionaires Resort in December and was according to the reports seen due to leave this weekend back to Italy.

Malindi has over the past two decades become a favourite beach destination for Italian tourists and many have purchased or build themselves holiday homes or beach side villas and a number of Italian investors opened resorts, making Italian the third most spoken language in Malindi after Kiswahili and English. The Malindi airport renovation and modernization has enabled the use of smaller jets like the Embraer 190 or Bombardiers' CRJ series, which now link the coastal town with Nairobi. The runway however presently does not cater for larger jets which could open up Malindi for nonstop flights from Europe, sparing tourists the lengthy road journey from Mombasa, the nearest international airport catering for wide bodied aircrafts landing and taking off with full loads.

Tanzania News

PRECISION AIR AND AIR UGANDA SIGN CODESHARE FOR ENTEBBE – DAR ROUTE

(Posted 21st January 2014)



Information was received yesterday that Precision Air and Air Uganda have signed a code share deal, which will see the two airlines book and sell each others' tickets and widen the choice of departures and destinations for both carriers. Passengers can now expect to fly on one ticket to and from Dar es Salaam, or Kilimanjaro, irrespective of which airline will actually operate the respective flight, effectively offering both airlines a double daily connection between Tanzania's commercial capital of Dar es Salaam and Uganda's gateway Entebbe.

No comments were available from Precision Air following the departure of Linda Chizi who until the end of last year served in a senior capacity at Precision taking care of branding and to a good part PR too. Linda moved on to Smile Communications Tanzania it is understood, a company providing at present the fastest 4GLTE internet broadband connections anywhere in Tanzania and Uganda.

It could also not be established in time for filing this report if the code share has been extended to other Precision Air destinations like Zanzibar, Mtwara, Mwanza and Mbuya among others and if Precision in turn will have access to Air Uganda flights beyond Entebbe such as Kigali or Juba.

Watch this space for breaking and regular aviation news from the Eastern African region.

NYALANDU APPOINTED MINISTER AS RHINO IS POACHED AND TOURISTS ARE ROBBED

(Posted 19th January 2014)



The first order of business for newly appointed Hon. Lazaro Nyalandu, now elevated from Deputy Minister to a full Cabinet Minister, will have to be dealing with the disturbing news from Arusha, that an Eastern Black Rhino was killed late last week in the heart of the Serengeti. The information claims that the poached animal is one of those brought into Tanzania from South Africa two years ago, and if correct would be the second of that first batch to be poached for its horns. Additionally news also broke that bandits robbed tourists mid afternoon of the 17th January in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, which together with the Serengeti forms the core of Tanzania's safari tourism.



A statement issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism late yesterday reads as follows: *'We received a report on the evening of Saturday night of 18th January, 2014 at around 00:30, on attempt of poachers who killed a rhino (black rhino) at Moru, on the Southern part Serengeti National Park. Wildlife guards who patrolled the area discovered a shot dead rhino with his horns being poached.'*

On Friday 17th January, 2014, three armed robbers possessing SMG arms, who are thought to be among the poachers, had invaded and attack a minibus of travellers at around 15:00 in the evening in Ngorongoro Conservation Area and robbed money with other different possessions.

After we received the information, the Government through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism in collaboration with Peace and Security Force, we have taken emergency measures by importing a search of poachers in all areas within the Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Conservation Area as well as areas surrounding these parks.

We have ordered inspection in any car or person who enters or exit these parks as part of the criminals hunt. We request information from any citizen who doubts any unknown visitors around their residential areas to report to the authorized authority. The reported three criminals are said to be from one of the East African Community member country, this implies that the poachers syndicate involved in killing of the rhino is large.

The government is now searching for the three criminals with all means necessary and we are asking citizens to cooperate by providing information on criminals, whenever possible, to the National Security force.

Early today morning, the Ministry has assigned Task Force (Rapid Response Team) comprising of 20 soldiers with special arms to add more force in searching for poachers and make sure they are found.

Serengeti National Park has a total of 32 rhinos (Black Rhinoceros), of which their natural habitat is in Serengeti. Among these, five rhinos (5) were brought from South Africa for a special project under the

supervision of H.E. President, Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, where one rhino was killed by poachers in December 2012.

The poaching situation in the country is getting worse day by day, the Government has been and will continue to fight against poachers and all economic sabotage through national resources.

The Government is implementing the resolutions of the National Assembly which were raised from the Natural Resources and Environment Parliamentary Committee headed by Hon . James Lembeli and has taken steps to specifically include the command of the President, by forming a Judicial Commission to investigate allegations made against the Operesheni Tokomeza . The government intends to progress with Operation once remedies against the Operesheni Tokomeza have been solved. The Ministry has taken measures by suspending 23 of its employees who are facing various charges, including corruption and helping of poachers.

Despite the reports of arrests for ivory in various locations in the country, including the incident of a reported case in the Dar es Salaam Harbour, we regret to inform the public that, early this month, Mrs. Salome Aloyce (Sinza Madukani) , Mr Rajab Omar (Kigogo DSM), and Mr. Kadili Mohammed Kisanduku (taxi driver – Mbezi Luis DSM) who were travelling to Dar es Salaam, were arrested in the Ugenza village in Mufindi, having transported elephant horns weighing 37 kilogram using a Toyota Corolla car, with registration number T 580 ABL, owned by Mr . Florian Elias of Dar es Salaam. These suspects are now detained by the police for further legal action’ .

The statement however met with immediate protestations from sections of the tour and safari operator fraternity, several regular sources writing emails, text and social media messages that it was not true that vehicles were being searched in order to net the culprits.

‘Maybe those are their plans but for Saturday, the day after the robbery and the night when the rhino was poached, there were no controls and yesterday morning, Sunday, my drivers also confirmed that they met no such controls when entering and leaving the conservation area or the Serengeti gate. The ministry should not make statements without ensuring that what they say is reflected on the ground. They have to learn that criminals are highly mobile and unless immediate dragnets are put into place, with aerial and ground pursuit, they are getting away’ said one of the Arusha based sources while another wrote: *‘Rubbish all. They are all sitting on their a**** instead of doing their jobs. When the first of those imported rhinos was poached not long after it arrived there was an outcry. TANAPA and the ministry promised these animals would be protected 24/7. Where were those guards last weekend when the poachers shot the rhino, cut the horns and vanished. Gunshots are heard from afar but it is obvious that there were no rangers nearby at all. Instead of sacking Kagesheki they should have listened to him how to go about anti poaching. I gather Kikwete [President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania] is about to appoint a new minister but unless there is fundamental change at the top and in the mindset, there will be no change you or I can see’* .

Indeed it was confirmed late on Sunday that a cabinet reshuffle has taken place in Dar es Salaam and that the four sacked ministers, including Amb. Khamis Kagesheki, have been replaced, as was the Finance Minister who had passed away on January 01st after a long illness. Lazaro Samuel Nyalandu, until yesterday serving as Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, was made a full minister and will now have to face the music over these latest incidents. Other tasks awaiting him are the formation of a new wildlife authority, the restructuring of the way how tourism is marketed in Tanzania and perhaps most challenging, the resumption of anti poaching operations over which his predecessor was put to the political knife.

At this stage it can only be a warm welcome to Minister Nyalandu and time will tell how he will fare in this ministry which over the past two years saw two full ministers sacked. Watch this space.



(The newly elevated Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Hon. Lazaro Samuel Nyalandu)

TANZANIA REJECTS OFFER TO JOIN COMMON EAST AFRICAN TOURIST VISA SCHEME

(Posted 19th January 2014)



Tanzania's latest snub towards the Coalition of the Willing came late last week when officials called the recently launched common tourist Visa for Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya a '**security risk**' and a threat to its economy, reasons immediately dismissed as laughable and a blatant attempt to discredit the fast tracking of a number of objectives, where the entire East African Community of five members failed to make progress over a number of years. ***'The Tanzanians have dragged their feet for too long, they are spoilers and just envious of the success of others where they have failed They are trying to dictate the pace of things or rather, throwing spanners in the works of increased cooperation'*** blasted a regular source in Nairobi when the news broke of the rejection, while other cooler heads still tore into the reasons offered by Dar, though using more diplomatic language.

'They only understand harsh measures' said a source from Kigali before adding ***'When they slapped Rwandan trucks with high transit fees and we answered like with like by raising fees for Tanzanian transporters, they quickly rescinded their little scheme to extort us. They behaved very uncivilized when they expelled thousands of people, many of them in fact Tanzanians, to Rwanda last year and stole a lot of these people's property. Let 2014 be the year when they declare where they stand and either pull alongside the majority in the East African Community or else leave. The EAC is no place where those unwilling are holding everyone else back, it is no longer a place where the slowest and most reluctant can dictate the speed of things and it is no longer a place where anyone who wants out is kept by force'***.

Meanwhile has a source from Arusha also commented on the rejection of the common Visa project by arguing: ***'Tanzania on her own is getting 50 dollar for each Visa they issue. Why now should they settle to get a much smaller part by sharing the 100 dollars with three other countries. If those are happy to get only 30 for an entry instead of 50, that is ok for them but our tourist numbers have gone up and we expect more this year, so why let go of such important revenue. We Tanzanians pay through the nose when we need a Visa for Schengen [The European Union's common Visa scheme] or the UK or the US so 50 dollars for them is even cheap. Admittedly we also have internal issues because Zanzibar may also start to claim get a share from a common Visa but in principle the main issue is the loss of revenue. I don't think our officials really meant to highlight that there is a security risk when the first entry Visa is issued in Kigali or Entebbe for instance, that may have been a bit of a lapse'***.

This latest spat is seen in some quarters as a continuation of the confrontational if not outright divisive developments of last year, when the formation of the Coalition of the Willing by Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda ruffled Tanzania's feathers after the three signed wide ranging cooperation agreements for a common customs clearance pact, to be undertaken at the port of Mombasa, agreed on the Common Tourist Visa and the use of ID cards for citizens to cross borders and launched a new standard gauge railway system which will connect Mombasa with Uganda and Rwanda, leaving out Tanzania – by choice – and Burundi – reportedly as a result of intense diplomatic and economic pressure brought to bear by Tanzania on them.

A Ugandan regular source, who participated in the some of the meetings to introduce the common Visa for Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda, added his own voice when saying: ***'It is not correct to say that the three are closing out Tanzania and Burundi. In fact the door is open for them to come on board. In all the meetings it was made clear that the two are part and parcel of the EAC and therefore no one should antagonize the two partners. They might not be ready to join now but can join when they are ready'***. However that plays out in 2014, as with many other cases time will tell which way the EAC is heading and how successful the CoW will be in actually implementing their fast tracked projects, as political declarations – from experience – are never quite the same as what is happening on the ground. Watch this space.

Rwanda News

RWANDA'S PRESENCE AT WEST AFRICAN BUSINESS FAIRS '**VITAL TO GROW TRADE AND TOURISM**'

(Posted 23rd January 2014)



When the Rwandan business community participate in the upcoming regional trade fair in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, it will be one of several they will attend across the year in West Africa.

Aided by regular flights from national airline RwandAir, which now flies to Brazzaville and Libreville, Lagos and Accra and will launch flights to Douala on 30th of March, the Rwandan business community has been making use of the cargo capacity available on such flights to export a range of goods to these Western African destinations. At the same time, no trade fair will be complete without ***The Land of a Thousand Hills*** showcasing the country's tourism attractions, investment opportunities and seeking to meet the demand for goods in Rwanda from such countries and it is evident that the decision in late 2012 to stop cumbersome Visa processes for citizens of the member states of the African Union and grant Visa on arrival since January last year has been successful in supporting trade and tourism links. It is such a holistic approach which has over time increase commerce and travel and is benefitting RwandAir as an airline of choice when travelling to Kigali, or via Kigali to the rest of East Africa and to such places like Johannesburg and Dubai. Said a regular source from Kigali while passing the trade fair participation details on: ***'We like to leave nothing to chance. When the country attends tourism fairs, everybody on the stand is also an ambassador to promote investments and trade and the same is happening here now. When our exporters attend commerce trade shows, they always use it as a platform to also promote travel, to Rwanda and by RwandAir. We are succeeding because we are united in one purpose, to build Rwanda'.***

A statement, not just befitting but also explaining how nearly 20 years after the genocide, which was driven by tribal hatred which the then regime perpetrated and promoted, the country has made such a miraculous recovery by providing that crucially important enabling environment for all Rwandans to prosper in whatever they do. None other than President Paul Kagame in fact earlier this week, while speaking in Davos / Switzerland at the World Economic Forum, reaffirmed Rwanda's secret of success and strength of purpose when he was quoted to have said that a sound national vision, discipline and a resilient mindset were the cornerstones of the country's rise, often described like that of the proverbial Phoenix from the ashes. Watch this space.

RWANDA EXCELS AT UTRECHT TOURISM FAIR

(Posted 22nd January 2014)



Several companies from ***The Land of a Thousand Hills*** were participating in the Utrecht tourism trade show where they were able to showcase Rwanda's tourism attractions to some 140.000 show visitors, many of whom flocked to the Rwandan stand to learn more about the country, watch the display of the traditional dancers and enjoy a cup of Rwandan tea or coffee, getting a taste what to expect when coming for real.

KLM now flies daily between Amsterdam and Kigali, before continuing to Entebbe, which has opened the global market for Rwanda and allows tourists, and business visitors, to fly any day of the week to Kigali.

This year will be the 20th anniversary of the Genocide of 1994 and the entire country is gearing up towards the day when the mass slaughter of the innocent started. From that day onwards Rwandans will be commemorating every single day of the 100 days the killings lasted before the Rwanda Patriotic Front finally expelled the last of the killers who ran under the cover of tens of thousands of refugees into the Congo.

Those killer militias, until today, continue to pose a clear and present danger to the new Rwanda which has since risen like the Phoenix from the ashes as the Congo's regime and the UN's so called peace keeping troops in Eastern Congo have tackled ALL but those FDLR militias, lending credibility to allegations that they are in fact covertly cooperating with them to pursue their own hidden agenda vis a vis Rwanda.

Be that as it may, the country has seen a remarkable revival in economic terms as well as in terms of reconciliation, and double digit growth figures over the past years have seen tourist numbers rise year after year and the tourism sector become a cornerstone of economic development and empowerment of the local communities. For more information visit www.rwandatourism.com or check out www.rwandair.com for details of how to fly to Rwanda.

Ethiopia News

ETHIOPIAN SET FOR DAILY SHANGHAI FLIGHTS

(Posted 19th January 2014)



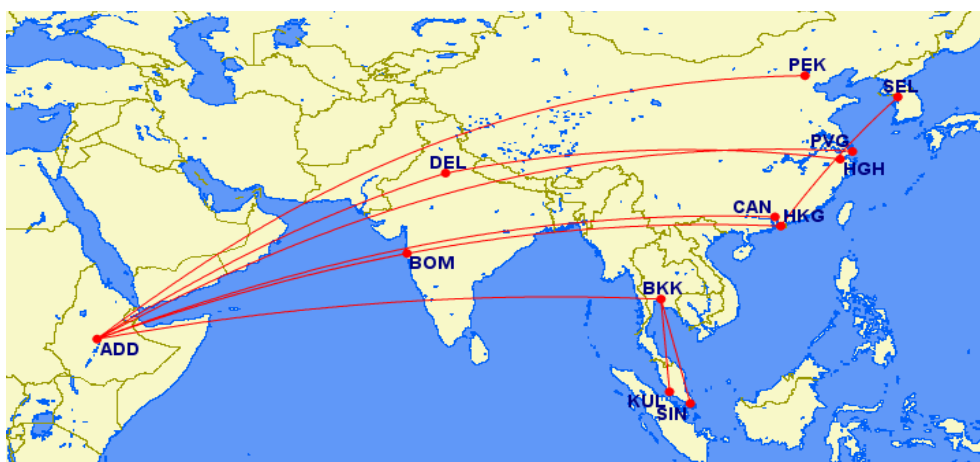
Ethiopian Airlines will commence daily flights from Addis Ababa to Shanghai as Africa's largest airline seeks to capitalize from increased passenger and cargo traffic from Africa to China and vice versa. ET was a pioneer in flying to China with flights to Beijing before progressively adding other destinations like Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Hangzhou.

Effective 29th of March will a B787 Dreamliner leave ADD at 23.30 hrs local time, arriving in PVG at 15.15 hrs the next day before returning back to ADD the following morning at 06.35 hrs, giving passengers connecting into the airline's extensive Africa network convenient onward connections.

This will bring Ethiopian's total China destinations to 5, making it one of the world's airlines with the most destinations and flights to China and certainly Africa's leading carrier to the Far and South East, where it also serves Seoul via Hong Kong, and Kuala Lumpur and Singapore via Bangkok.

Ethiopian was Boeing's launch customer in Africa for the B787, and while like other launch airlines in Asia, America, the Gulf and Europe affected by the early problems of this aircraft, which led to a global grounding for several months last year, is now taking full advantage of having already 5 of these birds flying and taking delivery of 5 more under their current order of 10.

As one of Africa's three members of global industry leader Star Alliance, the other two being Egypt Air and South African Airways, Ethiopian is the airline of choice for most of the connecting alliance traffic to Africa via Addis Ababa, for the convenience of offering the most destinations on the continent, many, especially in Eastern Africa served twice a day. Watch this space for breaking and regular news from the aviation industry in Africa.



(Ethiopian route map from Addis Ababa to China, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore)

Vanilla Island News

Mauritius News

LACK OF WARM WELCOME FOR SURFERS ONE REASON WHY MAURITIUS UNDERPERFORMS

(Posted 21st January 2014)



'Mauritius It's a pleasure' goes the slogan but reality on the ground appears to be rather different, especially when it comes to surfers wanting to test their skills and running foul of locals, as the following blog story tells.

Mauritius Tourism is underperforming according to a number of sources from Port Louis for a number of reasons, a key one being the MTPA running out of ideas and vision of how to return to promoting the core values which saw Mauritius once upon a time as the undisputed tourism leader among the islands. The island therefore could do with a boost to climb up the ranking ladder among Indian Ocean competitors, where the Maldives over the past two years have overtaken the once mighty Mauritius in terms of tourism arrivals, while Sri Lanka has been coming up fast in the race for the runners up spot, which would, should Mauritius lose more ground, relegate them to third spot. The story by one Graham Taylor who writes the Bomb Surf Blog, makes for stark reading and should perhaps serve as a reminder that tourism needs to be embraced by all segments of the local community, as one single hostile act, and here is the talk of several with the threat of physical violence, can truly damage the destination's reputation beyond repair. I am reproducing this blog because it highlights the otherwise well known fact that tourism and the behaviour of locals apparently violently opposed to 'foreigners', aka tourists, surfing their favourite spots are declared enemies of each other. Unless tourism promoters get the backing of their local people and bring them on board, there is likely to be a precast fault line emerging sooner or later, as is shown here, to the detriment of the reputation of the destination, ready to kill the goose which lays those golden eggs. Food for thought as the saying goes, at least for those with eyes to read the writing on the wall.

Trouble in Paradise - Bad Experience With Mauritian Localism

By Graham Taylor - the Bomb Surf Blog

We are reproducing this blog because it highlights tourism and local needs. This is often forgotten when the Tourism Authorities cannot involve the people and see only the business community. This blog speaks for itself and is food for thought.

The blog writes:

I am relaxing on a lounge under a thatch umbrella at a luxury resort on a tropical island watching perfect waves peeling along the coral reef about 500 metres off shore. The wind is offshore and everything is perfect to want to go surfing yet I have an uneasy feeling in my stomach and I for once do not want to venture into the water. I cannot recall ever having had such a feeling before in my 48 years of surfing life. During this time I have surfed in many different locations on this planet. What is going on here? I decide to follow my intuition on this one, here is why.

On a beautiful sunny offshore day at One-Eye in Mauritius I disembark from my boat at the same time as two other surfers do from theirs. We paddle towards an empty line up with good three to five foot lefts running down the reef into the deep water of the reef pass. The two guys appeared to me to be in their mid 20's. I smile at them not being sure what nationality they were and what reception I was going to get from them. The response I got from the one was a question, what language do I speak. I replied English and he said I was not from the island, was not a local and was not welcome at their break. They were locals. I was told by them that I had to sit at the end of the reef away from them and the correct take off point. When I asked why I was told that I was a foreigner and that as such I was not allowed to sit in the line up with them and that I had to sit at the end the wave. When I responded by saying that I would respect them as locals but was not prepared to sit at the end of the wave and would stay where I was they became aggressive, told me that I was arrogant and disrespectful and that I must obey them or else. At this point the one individual (who I later came to find out was a local Xavier Lachkar started to become aggressive and threaten me. I did not back down and after a

confrontation he and his friend paddled away shouting abuse at me. During this altercation I heard the Créole boatman who had dropped me at the reef shouting to these two in French, I could not understand what was being said in the exchanges which took place between them.



(Tamarin Bay)

What then ensued was an hour of being subjected to verbal abuse and the two of them hustling me to ensure that they got all the set waves and that I got all the left overs. At no stage did I try and hustle them or take any waves off them. I gave them cart blanche to have whatever waves they wanted. This was not enough for them in that one of them dropped in on me when I was taking a wave that neither of them had wanted. When my hour of surfing time was up the boat skipper returned to call me in and I left them to their waves. When I returned to the boat I was told by my wife that the skipper, a Créole Mauritian, had seen the altercation and had told the two guys in French not to hassle or insult me. He was apparently told by them to leave me there and mind his own business but refused to do so knowing that for my safety he should keep an eye on me, which he did.

The irony of the situation is that the Creol skipper is only too happy to ferry travelling surfers to the breaks as he needs the money which the tourist supply. The “white Mauritians” do not give a damn. They don’t want tourists to surf their waves but are fine for the tourists to visit their island, spend money supporting their economy and ultimately them indirectly. Further irony is that I later discovered that Xavier Lachkar the main loudmouth and aggressor runs a business called Fun Adventure Mauritius, which relies on the tourist industry.

With a rise in the swell forecast for the following Monday and on the advice of the Créole boatman I did not surf on the Saturday and Sunday because the locals would have been in the water in their numbers. I watched from my resort over the Saturday and Sunday when there were very few occasions that there were not surfers in the line up at One-Eye.

Sunday afternoon saw a dramatic rise in the swell so I contacted my local contact Rodger Thevenneau at the Tamarin Bay Surf School to get a heads up on surf there for the swell. He told me that it would be good at Tamarin on Monday and Tuesday and that I should get to him as early as possible on Monday, preferably by no later than 08h00 a.m. He said that he had some other South Africans who were going to be hiring boards from him and he would take us all surfing so I was really stoked to hear that. When I arrived at the Tamarin Bay Surf School Rodger greeted me with smiles and a promise of really good waves for the day. I could see from his spot that the Left at Tamarin Bay was really good but it was crowded. He introduced me to the other South Africans who were hiring boards from him. They were from Durban and Cape Town and they were on the Island shooting a commercial for a travel company. Rodger said that there were too many locals at the left so he would take us all to a spot in the middle of the bay called “Black Stone” where there were no locals and we would be able to surf without any problems. Well true to his prediction we had cooking four to six foot rights to ourselves at Black Stone all morning. The only competition were a few people riding SUP’s but they were cool. When we were surfed out we came in for lunch which Rodger very kindly arranged for us at the Tamarin Bay hotel. The other South Africans decided to go back to their resort and arranged to return later in the afternoon. Whilst we were having lunch we could see that the Left was really good at 4 to 6 foot and that there were not too many people in the water.



(Trouble in paradise escalating)

After lunch and at around 14h00 Rodger said that he could take me and one other of the South Africans to the Tamarin Left . He said that the locals would not be happy with him if he took more than two foreigners into the line up and that if he did so there would be problems for him and ultimately us. Myself and Ace accompanied Rodger into the line up at the World Famous Tamarin Bay left.

In the line up were a bunch of Groms on the inside section and two Créole locals at the main peak. There were lots of waves, we all had great waves. The vibe was great and everyone was stoked. In fact Ace and I both agree that we had been truly blessed to get Tamarin Bay working and so uncrowded. Rodger told us that the break only works around 20 to 30 times a year.

Rodger then told us that he had to go in for a surf lesson and that it was fine for us to stay out and continue surfing. He warned us that the “white locals” will flock out at around 16h00 after work and that when they did arrive they would be aggressive and he could not be held responsible for them. He told us not to sit near them in the line up and to let them have control of the line up. I was fine with that suggestion as Ace and I had already had tons of great waves and were super stoked. However what was about to unfold was nothing remotely like he had explained.

After Ace and Rodger had gone in I was in the line up on my own with the locals and the Groms and everything was fine. At around 16h00 I noticed a number of surfers on the beach starting to enter the break. Low and behold who was the first local I see paddling towards me but Xavier, the loud mouth trouble maker from One-Eye. He proceeded to abuse me verbally and told me to go in as I was not allowed in the line up. The other locals who came out gave me the same treatment. I kept my position in the line up which was about 20 to 30 metres down from the take off point which is where all the locals were sitting. They were taking all the best waves and I got the left overs.

A short while later the next group of locals came into the line up one by one. One of them paddled up to me and asked me what I was doing in the water . I then told him that I was a friend of Rodger’s and he said that I could stay in the surf but I had to go and sit at the end of the Reef where all the Groms were sitting. I told him that I was not prepared to do that but that I would not interfere with him or any other of the locals as I respect their right to the break. I said that I was going to stay where I was and that I would not interfere with any of them. He was not happy with this and regarded my attitude as arrogant and disrespectful. An argument ensued and I told him that I was not disrespectful nor arrogant but I was not going to be told by him or anyone else where I could sit as long as I was respecting their right to have whatever waves they wanted.

The results of an encounter with the locals.

Each time one of the locals had a wave and paddled passed me they would verbally abuse me and tell me to get out of the water. When I refused to obey them and essentially started to ignore them they got

more aggravated. Eventually I noticed an older guy with grey hair paddle out to the pack . He and the other locals had a discussion, they were talking about me as I could see them looking and pointing in my direction. I then noticed the older guy and a couple of the others in a group of four paddle down the line to where I was sitting. The older guy confronted me in a very aggressive manner and told me to get out of the water or else. When I argued with him and told him that I was not prepared to be abused by them he threatened me with physical violence and pushed his board into my ribs and said that if I did not leave there would be trouble. I realised that this situation was getting out of control and that it was not worth endangering my safety so I decided to leave the break and I paddled in. During one of the arguments I said that I could not understand how the locals could treat me in such an abusive way when I had done nothing. I was respecting them, had in no way interfered with their surfing. I was supporting their economy as a tourist I could not understand how they could treat tourists in this way. Their response was that tourists were welcome on the Island but if they are surfers they are not allowed to surf there. This I said was ridiculous and that angered them even more. I have, over the past 48 years, travelled the world surfing and no- where have I ever been treated in this disgusting and disrespectful manner. As a result I did not surf again during the remaining seven days of my stay as I did not want to face this kind of abuse again.

The white Mauritians need to learn the meaning of localism and respect for fellow surfers because if they travel anywhere and behave the way they did towards me I shudder to think how they will be treated. Needless to say that if I ever see any of them in South African waters they will not get any waves at all but they will not be treated in the disrespectful and abusive manner which I was.

Suffice it to say I will not be going back to Mauritius any time soon.

<http://www.thebombsurf.com/blog/7/2978/trouble-in-paradise>

Seychelles News

SEYCHELLES GETS WORLD BANK NOD OF APPROVAL

(Posted 23rd January 2014)



Five years, and a bit, after the Bretton Woods institutions left the Seychelles government with little choice but to implement major structural reforms of how the archipelago's economy was run, are the results now not only felt across the islands, where economic opportunities have opened up, helping to empower local entrepreneurs but are widely acknowledged as a true success story by the IMF and earlier this week by the World Bank.

An economic forum a few months ago, coinciding with the 5th anniversary of President Michel's announcement of harsh and painful measures to turn the economy around amid the global financial and economic crisis of 2008, applauded the Seychelles for having stayed the course and for having pulled through, coming out on the sunny side of the tunnel. Earlier this week did Dr. Kalyala, the World Bank's Regional Executive Director, overseeing the 22 countries bundled in what is known as Group 1 in Africa, then also heap more praise on the Seychelles when he named the archipelago as the top performer among the 22 Group 1 countries in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa.

The Seychelles have in recent years embraced both the green and blue economies, concentrating on sustainable tourism and sustainable fisheries as the two key economic activities. Tourism has been on the upswing since 2009, establishing year after year new arrival and revenue records while fisheries are reclaiming its place in the Seychelles economy after by and large defeating the Somali ocean terrorists which for some time had severely impacted on fishing by local and licensed international boats inside the extended economic interest zone of 200 miles around the islands. Dr. Kalyala specifically pointed to the average GDP as being the highest among his 22 constituent countries as was unemployment at the lowest at the same time.

The comments are again seen as another resounding endorsement for the Michel government's success in recent years, to shift from the command economy of old to a modern day market economy, attracting a number of high

profile foreign investments in the hospitality industry and spurring a flood of local investments in the sector under the empowerment programme which unfolded alongside the economic reforms. *Seychelles*, truly *Another World*.

SEYCHELLES MARKETING JUGGERNAUT RESUMES AT FITUR

(Posted 20th January 2014)



The new year for the Seychelles marketing team will start with an appearance at FITUR which opens in Madrid on January 22nd and runs until 26th.

None other than Minister for Tourism and Culture, Alain St. Ange, will lead the Seychelles' delegation to Madrid where he will be met by Bernadette Willemin, STB's Director for Europe.

Before leaving on Monday for Madrid with an Air Seychelles' flight via Abu Dhabi, Minister St. Ange addressed the media and stated: '*Seychelles has been present at this tourism trade fair for many years and I will be accompanied at FITUR only by Bernadette Willemin, our Director for Europe who is based in Paris. Members of the private sector will also join us on the Seychelles stand at this fair*'.



Alongside FITUR will the 5th edition of the Tourism Investment Forum for Africa take place (INVESTOUR), co-organized by FITUR, UNWTO and Casa Africa, offering a platform for Africa's key destinations to meet potential investors from Spain and Portugal besides promoting tourism's sustainability in the long term.

While in Madrid, it was learned, Minister St. Ange will also meet with UNWTO Secretary General Taleb Rifai in his capacity as a member of the UNWTO Executive Committee while also holding a meeting with his fellow ministers from RETOSA to discuss the future direction of this body of SADC, which brings the tourism ministers together. A sizeable delegation from the Seychelles' private sector will be present in Madrid to showcase the destination.

Next up on the annual calendar of events in the Seychelles will be the Seychelles – China Day celebrations which this year are scheduled for the 31st January to 02nd February.

