

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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Second edition July 2013

EMIRATES ANNOUNCES MORE DESTINATIONS

(Posted 13th July 2013)



A regular source in Nairobi shared additional routes news when confirming that Kiev will be added to the growing network of Eastern European destinations by Dubai's award winning national airline Emirates, from 16th January 2014 onwards. The aircraft used for the daily flights as per current planning will be an Airbus A340-500.

The announcement comes together with added information that Stockholm will join the Emirates network on 04th September this year, followed on October 01st by a double launch to Clark in the Philippines, formerly a major American airforce base in South Asia, and another flight to New York via Milan, from where Emirates has secured traffic rights to uplift passengers and cargo to the Big Apple.

On the 27th of October will another African destination join the Emirates network, when flights to Conakry, via Dakar in Senegal, will commence.

Emirates flies daily to Entebbe and doubly daily to Nairobi and Dar es Salaam but is yet to open routes to other key East African airports like Mombasa, Zanzibar, Kilimanjaro, Bujumbura and Kigali.

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

ETIHAD PUTS PEN TO PAPER FOR AN AIRBUS A380 FFS

(Posted 12th July 2013)



Word from Abu Dhabi has it that Etihad, Abu Dhabi's national airline, has ordered their first Airbus A380 full flight simulator, alongside one for the B787 Dreamliner and 5 more for other aircraft types, in an ongoing effort to boost the capacity of their in house aviation academy at the Abu Dhabi airport.

The deal with Canada's CAE is worth over 200 million US Dollars according to the source and prior orders include simulators for the Airbus A320, among others already in use.

One of Etihad's roots for their accelerated growth in terms of passenger numbers and cargo uplift are found in the unique partnership with airlines, strategically located around the globe, for which Etihad now delivers training, FFS sessions as mandated by ICAO and local aviation regulations but also maintenance support and other cost saving synergy effects.

The airline's aviation academy will, when the extension is complete by the end of the year, have 11 FFS's for various models online, which will make it one of the best equipped such facilities in the Gulf and around the world. Among the partners of Etihad are Air Seychelles, regularly reported about here and more recently has Kenya Airways signed an extensive cooperation MoU which resulted already in codeshared operations between Nairobi and Abu Dhabi, where the two airlines now fly 10 times a week.

Watch this space for regular and breaking news from the aviation industry.

East Africa News

MORE EXCUSES FOR FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT COMMON TOURIST VISA

(Posted 08th July 2013)



The just concluded meeting of the East African Community's Committee on Tourism and Wildlife once more discussed the long overdue common tourist Visa, which was due to have been introduced by 2012, and that number having been pushed from previously envisaged earlier dates.

While there is broad consensus among the tourism private sector that this measure is crucially important to encourage tourists to use their stay in the region to visit more than just one country of East Africa, it has been bureaucrats who have stalled the projects. Squabbles over how the Visa fees paid on entry into the EAC would be distributed in case of multiple visits and largely untrue statements over the state of unreadiness vis a vis data capturing of cross border transit, have kept the hopes for an early start down at sub basement level.

Ministers and delegations returning from the meeting in Bujumbura / Burundi clearly sang from different hymn sheets again lending credence that shortsighted national interests to keep the entire 50 US Dollar Visa fee to themselves are to blame for the lack of progress.

At present it is only Kenya, which grants free re-entry for tourists who on arrival in Nairobi or Mombasa paid their 50 US Dollar fee and then went to visit neighbouring countries within the East Africa Community, while the four other countries at present under such a scenario make tourists pay again when coming back, as if to punish them for wanting to visit more than just the country of initial entry.

'I travel a lot in East Africa because I send my tourists from Uganda to Kenya, to Tanzania, to Rwanda.

Everywhere you go your details of the passport are captured, you are fingerprinted and a picture is taken to meet ICAO's biometric standards. Now how difficult is it, after all from what I understand those systems were initially sponsored by the US to improve monitoring and surveillance against terror suspects, how difficult could it be to link them, and regularly cross load those data. Say a tourist lands in Entebbe, he enters the system there and then at immigration. Now if he leaves for instance by road to Kenya at Malaba, again Uganda and Kenya Immigration capture those details. If that tourist flies back to Entebbe from Nairobi, the same system take the records again.

Just share the damned information, that is all to make sure that the system then tells you to how many countries in the EAC one has been during one visit. Accordingly they can share the initial 50 US paid with their neighbours. My late father told me in his days after the first community was formed, there were no border controls when travelling by air or road between the three member states. We must get back to that. You go to Europe and have a Schengen Visa. You travel among those countries as you please, no checks, no controls.

Those are a lot more countries than our five. It is national greed to keep the Visa money which has stopped the introduction of a common tourist Visa and we are losing money. Some of my clients refuse to visit Kenya when they hear they have to pay another Visa fee to get in there and when they drive back Uganda also charges them again. If we want more tourists we must make it simple and easy for them but as of now, our governments have their hands in the tourists pockets to siphon their money out of their wallets. Now they start putting VAT on accommodation to at least balance that increase by giving us a common Visa to reduce cost when they come to East Africa. The protocols for free movement in the EAC is clear but they are just not ready to implement it and

tourism is a loser here’ said a source met at the ongoing Routes Africa meeting in Kampala, when discussing the issue and finding out how airlines could benefit from more tourists travelling with them across the region, were it not for the added cost of Visa which in the case of a family of four, when travelling to three countries, can run into 800 US Dollars for Visa at 50 per head, including the return to the country of initial entry, if it is not Kenya where the exception then applies sparing the payment of another 200 US Dollars. ***‘No wonder Africa only managed to get 53 million travellers in 2012 compared to way over a billion worldwide. It is such issues which hinder our progress. There is a common Visa in the Caribbean, a common Visa for Europe and even SADC has introduced one, but for us, we fail to grab such opportunities because some countries are worried over their share’*** did the source then add.

The tourism private sectors, under the East African Tourism Platform, are continuing to push for the earliest possible introduction of the common tourist Visa, an idea which was floated well over a decade ago and as of now still remains a distant vision. Watch this space.

Uganda News

UGANDA GUIDE APPLICATION FORMALLY LAUNCHED

(Posted 13th July 2013)



(Courtesy of www.thepearlguide.co.ug)

Friday night was the proverbial D-Day for Uganda’s first ever guide application, as The Pearl Guide launched their brainchild at the Kampala Serena Hotel.

Available for download through Google Store it is also available via Apple Store and direct download through www.thepearlguide.co.ug/our-mobile-app/ for visitors coming to ***The Pearl of Africa*** with a smartphone. The new way of finding out whats on and where and when it is on in Uganda is thought to be a shot in the arm of promoting Uganda’s attractions and sights, as visitors on business as well as leisure travellers can finally get all the information they need with the push of a few buttons or touches on the screens of their phones.

The Pearl Guide described the features available to this correspondent when sending the invitation for the launch, showing a great array of features:

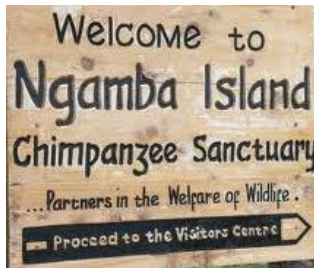
- ★ A detailed sights section with all the attractions of Uganda.
- ★ Complete background information on Uganda and traveler requirements
- ★ Explore by Map
- ★ Filter the map to show you only the facilities you’re looking for near you (Hotels, Restaurants, Bars, Car Rentals and so much more)
- ★ Smart listing of **Points of Interest**: See photo and description of place, Tap Phone Number to dial, Tap Email Address to send email, Tap Website to view site and further info and tap Map Pin to see Map Location.
- ★ Eating out section with Uganda’s best restaurants.
- ★ Discover the nightlife of Uganda! Bars, Nightclubs, Cinema, Cultural Dance and much more.
- ★ Find services fast using the comprehensive search section! Car Rental, Currency Exchange, Tour Operators, Cabs and more.
- ★ Smart mini apps! Phrasebook, Trip Journal for sharing experiences, Expense Tracker, Bus Fare Finder and Find A Tour tool that gives you tour options depending on your budget.

The development of the ‘app’ and the launch was made possible through the support by USAID, the African Wildlife Foundation and the partnership with the Uganda Tourism Board www.visituganda.com and the Uganda Wildlife Authority www.ugandawildlife.org with the latter two expecting to become major beneficiaries of the new technology in promoting the country and the national parks and game reserves.

Congratulations again to the Ugandan developers and their partners and supporters for catapulting the country firmly into the cyber age.

JANE GOODALL SETS SEIZED PARROTS FREE ON NGAMBA ISLAND

(Posted 11th July 2013)



The latest visit by Dr. Jane Goodall to Ngamba Island, Uganda's chimpanzee refuge in Lake Victoria, was full of action as she released 17 surviving African Grey parrots into the wild, after an additional four months quarantine period of monitoring their health was over.

The birds were part of a consignment, illegally shipped to Europe and confiscated some time back in Bulgaria, from where in a mercy mission of sorts they were repatriated to Uganda. The 17 parrots are the sole survivors of what was initially dozens more, many of which expired due to the stress over the way they were packed tight in unbefitting boxes and left without food and water during their transit to Budapest.

Jane Goodall pulled the proverbial string a few days ago and set the birds free on the chimp island, releasing them from the aviary where they have been kept. The birds, returned to their natural habitat, can now either stay in the forest of the island where undoubtedly they would enrich the visitor experience or else fly to neighbouring islands or the mainland for a life in renewed freedom. Congratulations to the Uganda Wildlife Education Centre in Entebbe, the first point where the birds stayed upon arrival at the nearby Entebbe International Airport and were inspected and treated by UWEC and UWA vets, before the decision was taken to bring them to Ngamba Island and prepare them for release back into the wild. Visit www.ngambaisland.org for more information about the conservation work with chimpanzees, all of whom were rescued from captivity when found with illegal traders or at the airport in concealed boxes ready to be shipped overseas.

NEW ROAD TO SEMLIKI A BONUS FOR TOURISTS

(Posted 10th July 2013)



The new road from Fort Portal, located at the north eastern side of the Rwenzori Mountains, to Semliki and the border with the Congo DR, will upon completion open up this part of Uganda, for locals as much as for tourist visitors.

Recent information from the Uganda Wildlife Authority confirms that over 80 percent of the road from Fort Portal over Bundibugyo to Lamia is now complete and this allows swift access into the Semliki Toro Game Reserve, where Wildplaces Africa operates their Semliki Safari Lodge in one of the most pristine wilderness areas of Uganda, extending from the escarpment into the Rift Valley to the shores of Lake Albert. Birdlife in the reserve is prolific, largely as the result of several habitats merged into one reserve as is the number of wildlife found, including chimpanzees. The remaining portion of the road should be completed by the end of this year, then also opening up the Semliki National Park, which is right at the border with Congo.

The cost of the new road, reportedly running in excess of 170 billion Uganda Shillings, is to 80 percent underwritten through loans from the African Development Bank, in line of opening up productive areas of African countries which are rich in natural resources, offer tourism attractions and open up urban markets for farmers from remote parts.

Tourism stakeholders are keen to see a number of new roads being either constructed, improved or where appropriate work to be finished to open up the country for 'round trip' itineraries, avoiding to come back to Kampala at every turn. *'There are some roads which need finishing now, like the one to Kisoro. This one to Semliki is a good addition because it will be easy to drive from Fort Portal down the escarpment. Before it was a difficult and long journey. Then we need that portion between Fort Portal to Hoima and from Hoima to Masindi. That will make it possible to drive from Murchisons Falls to Queen Elizabeth or to Kibale or Semliki in one day. The other critical road is from Katunguru to Ishasha because that will connect Bwindi with the core area of Queen Elizabeth, open the Ishasha sector for tourists and finally allow for a safari without having to backtrack over the same routes again. The budget allocated enough money but to see those roads in action from the first promises made has taken 20 years or so. Let them finish the work now and not find more excuses why the funds have not been utilised'* said a tourism stakeholder at the just concluded Routes Africa meeting where a chance meeting allowed to discuss issues surrounding the tourism sector in the country.

Visiting the 10 national parks and many more game and community reserves in Uganda made easier. For more information on the country see www.visituganda.com or www.ugandawildlife.org

ROUTES AFRICA ENDS 3 DAY MEETINGS ON A HIGH

(Posted 10th July 2013)



Presentations this morning by Kenya Airways and FastJet ended three days of intense and often outright captivating meetings at Kampala's lake side resort of Munyonyo, which, according to all delegates, provided *'the best environment for a conference one could wish for'*. This correspondent was privileged to have moderated the *'Driving Tourism in Africa'* session with a panel of eminent individuals like Doreen Owusu, CEO of Ghana Airports Company, Girma Shiferaw, Ethiopian Airline's Director of Alliances and Network Planning, John Twiss, Network Planning Manager of United Airlines and the CEO of the Uganda Tourism Board Cuthbert Baguma. Due to the non arrival of one panelist on the topic *'Outlook for the Future'* an ad hoc appearance was then added, being able to spell out 5 key action ingredients: Improving the policy, regulatory and legislative regimes, Forging Partnerships between the private sector stakeholders and with government, Developing Human Resources, Embracing the media including main stream but also social media and bloggers and finally to Market Market Market Africa both on the continent as well as globally.

During the Uganda Civil Aviation Authority and Air Uganda sponsored gala dinner last night, set in the gardens of the resort right by the lake side, the *Ndere Troup*, Uganda's best known performers of traditional dance, song, poetry and choreographed ballet, entertained nearly 400 delegates and invited guests, who enjoyed the *Pearl of Africa's* traditional hospitality before witnessing the annual award ceremony.

Routes Africa's Vice President Nigel Mayes was at hand to announce the category winners and overall winner of the 2013 awards with Kilimanjaro International Airport, in the under 4 million passengers per annum category took the honours before being also crowned overall winner. Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport took the coveted top prize for Africa's airports, ahead of Casablanca and Addis Ababa.

The Seychelles, almost predictably, scooped the Best Destination Marketing award, edging out Kwa Zulu Natal and Mozambique.

As the overall winner of the Africa category will Kilimanjaro International Airport also enter the race for global top honours, which will be announced at the *World Routes* event later this year in Las Vegas, where they will compete against the likes of San Diego, Munich and Changi, carrying African hopes.

Routes Africa will be heading to Victoria Falls in 2014, their winning bid being announced at the very end of a splendid evening to the roars of approval from those present, and the Zimbabwean delegation held their flag high when they learned that they had bagged this increasingly important aviation conference for their country. From Lake

Victoria to the Victoria Falls it is, see you there between 22nd and 24th of June next year. For more information on the Routes meetings around the world visit www.routesonline.com

ROUTES AFRICA OPENS AT LAKESIDE RESORT OF MUNYONYO WITH RECORD ATTENDANCE

(Posted 08th July 2013)



Routes Africa opened yesterday at the lake side resort and conference complex of Munyonyo with a new record attendance recorded by the organizers. This 8th edition of Routes Africa has brought a large number of airline executives, airport managers, aircraft manufacturer teams, government representatives from transport and tourism ministries across the continent, tourism boards and related service providers to Kampala.

Topics for the three day meeting will cover all aspects of nurturing and developing air traffic into and across Africa with dedicated sessions discussing Private Partnerships for Airport Management and Development, New Carriers for Africa – the Rise of LCC's, Driving Tourism in Africa – a panel moderated by this correspondent – and last but not least The Outlook for the Future.

A series of pre-arranged B2B meetings, in small groups as well as one on one have also taken place on day one of the Routes Africa meeting, with more until the end of the conference on Tuesday, allowing airports to meet airlines, airlines to discuss potential cooperation on new routes and ATR, a strategic summit sponsor, Embraer and Bombardier being able to showcase and discuss their latest innovations with airline partners.

Routes Africa co-hosts Uganda Civil Aviation Authority and Entebbe International Airport had the opportunity to meet Africa's who is who from the aviation industry while quasi national airline Air Uganda used the summit to launch their latest destination Mogadishu on early Monday morning with an inaugural flight.

A large number of delegates took advantage of complimentary tours on Saturday, courtesy of the hosts and the Uganda Tourism Board, to visit either the Source of the River Nile in Jinja or the Ngamba Island chimpanzee refuge, while others took advantage of the splendid weather over the weekend to relax on the shores of Lake Victoria or see the colourful markets in the city of Kampala.

The choice of the conference organizers for the venue of the **Routes Africa** meeting in 2014 is expected to be announced shortly although news already broke that Durban was selected to host the **World Routes** conference in 2015, bringing the global routes event to Africa for the first time. For readers keen to follow the events was a twitter hash tag #RoutesAfrica created, which offers 'insight' via twitter picture uploads and live commentary from participants as well as the organizers. For more information on the regional and global Routes events visit www.routesonline.com

Kenya News

INTERCONTINENTAL NAIROBI LAUNCHES NEW LOYALTY PROGRAMME

(Posted 12th July 2013)



The InterContinental Hotel Nairobi earlier this week launched their new loyalty programme, now called IHG Rewards Club, which emerged from the previous Priority Club Rewards.

Karl Hala, General Manager of the Nairobi InterContinental and also Director of Operations for Africa for the InterContinental Hotel Group, in short IHG, said on the occasion of the launch: '***The mobile internet revolution has increased hotel guests' desire for seamless connectivity regardless of geographical location. This has made it***

necessary for us to enhance our guests' experience and to minimize the communication disruption traditionally occasioned by being away from their workstations or families, at no extra cost'. Mr. Hala was referring to the free of cost access by Rewards Club members to wireless internet at not just the Nairobi InterContinental but across all 4.600+ hotels of IHG worldwide, which will provide members with all of the existing benefits, in addition to some exciting new ones. This applies whether members are staying the night or coming in for a coffee or impromptu meeting, starting on 09th of July for Elite members and available to all members from 2014.

IHG's offers a range of nine brands in nearly 100 countries and territories for anything from an overnight getaway, a business trip, a family celebration or a once-in-a-lifetime experience in some of their acclaimed resorts.

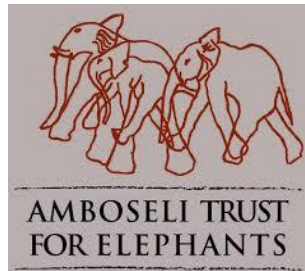
IHG remains the only global hotel company that offers members additional recognition for exploring the entire range of its portfolio, which include among others InterContinental, Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn and Hotel Indigo.

IHG Rewards Club is the world's oldest and largest hotel loyalty programme, with 73 million members. Visitors and guests can sign up free of charge and find out more about the changes and benefits [online](#) or at any IHG hotel.

The Nairobi InterContinental Hotel later this month is the venue for the Hotel Summit East Africa and in September for the second consecutive global hotel investment conference, a sign that the hospitality industry knows well that they are at home at the Nairobi InterContinental Hotel. Watch this space for updates from the Kenya Hospitality Trade Fair and the Hotel Summit East Africa, reporting live of course while staying at the InterContinental Hotel Nairobi once again.

AMBOSELI TRUST FOR ELEPHANT COMES OUT IN SUPPORT OF SOILA SAYIALEL

(Posted 12th July 2013)



Although the matter at hand is sub judice in Kenya, has the Amboseli Trust for Elephant come out with a statement of support on behalf of their long time member Soila Sayialel, who alongside her son Robert was arrested some weeks ago after ivory was found in their car. Suggestions have been aplenty since then that this was a set up of sorts and the ivory had been planted at them. Being nonresident in Kenya, this can be said here without being affected by the sub judice rule in effect inside Kenya's borders which would otherwise prevent substantive comments about an ongoing court case.

ATE's understandably low key commentary is shown here and I am sure that readers will be able to 'read between the lines' of what is being said without being in conflict with the sub judice rules which otherwise might end ATE up in court too with contempt of court charges:

Start quote:

'Everyone by now has heard the sad news that one of our oldest and most loyal team members, Soila Sayialel and her son, Robert Ntawuasa, were arrested on May 12 allegedly for possessing and attempting to sell 19 kg of ivory. The whole ATE team, and huge numbers of Soila's supporters in Kenya and abroad are in a state of shock, disbelief, and most importantly, in total support of their innocence.

We can say very little at this point as the case is sub judice, but we feel to our Newsletter family of readers we must state the following:

We are 100% behind these two ardent conservationists, who have been for many years (more than 25 in Soila's case) an example of the kinds of dedication and energy that a growing number of today's Kenyans, in particular women and youth, are willing and able to put into conservation of their natural resources and ecosystems.

We are confident that given what appears to be absurdly weak evidence for the prosecution the case will be dismissed very soon. It is not only in our laypersons' view that the episode appears to be a frame-up.

We believe that given the dreadful expansion of the illegal trade of ivory into the realm of international crime, the whole sorry event is likely to be the result of criminal elements seeking to defame ATE and drive a wedge between ATE and KWS. Why? Because together, ATE with its eyes and presence in the ecosystem and KWS with its mandate and ranger force stand between the poachers and what must be the last source of 'big ivory' in Kenya, if not the East African region. Remove us, and it's open season on the Amboseli elephants.

Please bear with us. We are confident that the truth will out very soon. Thanks for your understanding.

End quote

Be certain to watch this space for the eventual outcome of the pending case, if dismissed outright for lack of evidence or alternatively, should the trial go ahead.

KENYA AIRWAYS TOPS PUNCTUALITY STATS IN HEATHROW

(Posted 12th July 2013)



Kenya Airways came out tops in terms of on time performance at London Heathrow with 100 percent of all June 2013 departures right on time, while 83 percent of the arriving flights landed as scheduled. The only other African airline coming close to this achievement was South African in place 19, still respectable, while others followed way down the line like Egypt Air in position 67 and Ethiopian in position 72. Kenya Airways presently operates a daily flight between Nairobi and London, using a B777 on the route and has in the past said more flights are contingent on both getting the extra slots as well as of course a rise in passenger numbers. Previously KQ has come in as runner up in the Heathrow on time statistics but never topped the charts until June of this year.

Over 80 airlines fly in and out of Heathrow, operating nearly 1.300 flights a day with an average of just over 191.000 passengers.

Meanwhile was it learned too that the airline's second converted B737-300F will arrive before the end of July back in Kenya, adding a third dedicated cargo aircraft to the fleet of one B747-400, jointly operated with KLM's Martinair, and a previously converted B737-300C. Further conversions, the airline had last year signaled that as many as 4 of their B737-300 aircraft would be withdrawn from passenger service and converted into freighters, will be deferred until such time that the demand for air cargo has stabilized and improved. The B737-300's earmarked for conversion will until then remain in the Kenya Airways fleet of now 41 passenger aircraft and be deployed on the route to Mombasa and to regional destinations like Entebbe. Watch this space for regular and breaking news from the Eastern African aviation industry.

TWO WEEKS TO GO TO KENYA HOSPITALITY TRADE FAIR AND HOTEL SUMMIT EAST AFRICA

(Posted 11th July 2013)



One of East Africa's premier hotel conferences and trade fairs, **Hotel Summit East Africa** and the **Kenya Hospitality Trade Fair** are now just two weeks away, due to kick off on the 25th of July at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre – for the exhibition lasting three days – and the hotel conference, due to be held at the InterContinental Hotel Nairobi on the 26th of July.

This year the theme is '**Investing in the Hospitality Industry: The Next Frontier**' and the event is partnered by the East African Economic Chamber of Commerce and while the exhibition has taken place in the past the conference element is new, hoping to open new doors for investors and showing the many opportunities which now exist across Eastern Africa for global as well as local investors. A further point to be extensively discussed will be service improvements, and ways and means towards those objectives as well as adapting new marketing strategies for the sector in this part of the world.

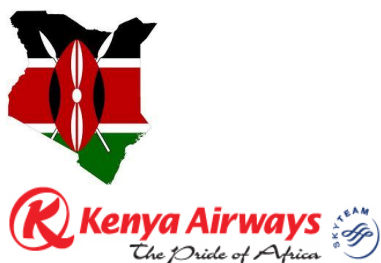
Programme components include presentations and discussions on the regional outlook, Investment Assessments – Planning – Strategy and Expansion, Brand Consolidation, Operational Excellence, Revenue Management, Technology and Innovation, Communication, Social Media and Marketing. In addition will the issues of Regulatory Updates, Customer Satisfaction and Service Delivery be covered by breakout sessions.

Speakers and panelists include Dr. Eduardo Zepeda, Selim Zain, Mokeira Masita, Dr. Alice Ondigi, Dr. Mary Mbithi, Mikul Shah, Mary Kimonye, Agnes Gitau and Muriithi Ndegwa, among many others, including this correspondent.

With partners on board like Kenya Airways, InterContinental Hotels Nairobi, Sustainable Tourism Partnership Programme and the East African Business Council, to name but a few and media partners Eat Out, Sleep out, Capital FM 98.4, THINK – Africa's Thought Institute and Kenya's Standard Group, the two events are bound to make an impact for the participants.

The event organizers are Nairobi based Slujan Events (www.slujan-events.com) and more particulars can be accessed via www.hotelsummitea.com

KENYA SET TO BUILD TOURISM & TRADE RELATIONS ON THE BACK OF ABU DHABI FLIGHTS (Posted 11th July 2013)



Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Transport and Infrastructure, while in Abu Dhabi last week to represent the Kenyan government at the formal launch celebrations of KQ's flights to the capital city of the United Arab Emirates, wasted no time to promote increased trade, commerce and tourism between the two countries. Eng. Michael Kamau was quoted to have said during the celebration dinner in Abu Dhabi: ***'We are currently at an advanced stage of modernising and expanding the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, which will significantly boost the capacity to handle more travellers. As you know the airport is already a regional hub through which Kenya Airways is able to connect the world to Africa and vice versa. As part of the Vision 2030, we are also constructing the Green Field terminal, a new state-of-the-art terminal which will be delinked from the current Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and will be built from scratch. When complete, the new terminal will be the largest single terminal in Africa built on four levels and will be able to handle up to 20 million passengers, annually'***. He then added that following the signing of the codeshare agreement between national carriers Kenya Airways and Etihad Airways, the new air links will not only favour Kenyan businessmen sourcing for goods in the UAE, but also open doors for tourists from the UAE and in particular from Abu Dhabi wishing to travel to Kenya and the rest of the continent through the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. The UAE is one of the favourite expatriate work countries for many Kenyans, making careers in the hospitality and aviation industry besides being well known for being one of the most favoured shopping destinations for Kenyans with the means to travel.

Dr. Titus Naikuni, who was also present on the occasion, in turn was quoted: ***'The inaugural Kenya Airways flight to Abu Dhabi, marks the culmination of three years of multilateral discussions and negotiations, to have Kenya Airways and Etihad Airways work together towards the opening of this strategic route. The Abu Dhabi International Airport is a gateway to the Far East and countries such as Australia which Etihad flies to. We aim to provide the much needed link to customers who intend to travel to African countries through this code share agreement. That's why this calls for a celebration'***. Kenya Airways' plans to connect all African commercial and political capital cities with Nairobi over the next years makes the airline an ideal partner for Etihad Airways, which will be able to reach the entire continent through code shared flights, well beyond the destinations they are flying to directly at present. Etihad Airways is currently serving the Abu Dhabi – Nairobi route daily with an Airbus A320 and Kenya Airways is now adding three flights using a B737-800NG for the service.

A source close to Kenya Airways indicated that once demand for travel on the route rises, KQ will progressively add more flights to eventually offer daily flights, all codeshared with Etihad. That would bring the route to the desired double daily flights, offering passengers a range of onward destinations in the Americas, Europe, the Indian subcontinent, the Middle and Far East and as far as Australia. Kenya Airways already flies 10 times a week between Nairobi and Dubai and Abu Dhabi is now the second destination within the UAE. Watch this space for regular and breaking aviation news from across Eastern Africa.

KENYAN AUTHORITIES IMPOUND YET MORE BLOOD IVORY

(Posted 10th July 2013)



Following the discovery of a 20 foot container originating in Uganda last week, which stuffed with ivory was waiting to be shipped to the Far East, did Kenyan authorities yesterday nab yet more, hidden in a 40 foot container due to leave for Malaysia for transit to a final destination.

A regular source from Mombasa confirmed that like in the case of the Ugandan container, police and other government agencies are seeking anyone connected to the container's paperwork and shipping documents, to establish where the cargo came from and who was involved in soliciting the ivory, transporting it to Mombasa and financing the operation.

Like Southern Africa has been hit in recent years with a wave of rhino killings for their – medically speaking absolutely worthless – horns the same crime wave, and arguably triggered by the same countries in the Far East, has cost thousands of elephant their live. *'If we are not careful, if Tanzania is not careful, we might lose the big herds of elephant forever and yet this is one of the biggest attractions for tourists. They come from all over the world to see wildlife in the natural habitat. They expect to find large numbers of game, of elephant, not just a few here and there. Once such magnetic attractions disappear, why should tourists come to visit our parks. At least you in Uganda have very few elephant poached in comparison. The Chinese government gives the death sentence to anyone who poaches a Panda but the same government does too little to stop the flow of blood ivory to their country. They simply must do a lot more or remain accused of complicity and maybe even covertly supporting the trade, because ivory carvings give prestige. Let the Chinese government come out and declare that their leadership, their ministers, have not an ounce of carved blood ivory in their own homes. Because if they don't we know what is going on and who is behind this scourge'* added the source in a conversation yesterday when discussing this latest find in Mombasa.

KWS, customs and other security agencies deployed at the port of Mombasa have, as a result of recent finds and confiscations, stepped up their vigilance even further and cargo scanners are now used more often and on more cargo than ever before. Sniffer dogs too are deployed to seek out containers with illicit ivory cargo and shipping manifests are now used as a foundation of searches when weights do not match the records, or when suspicious loads declared as furniture, plastic waste and similar are found.

Conservationists however still feel that too little is done in Kenya too, as fines and jail terms need further attention, while magistrates should be given mandatory sentencing guidelines to prevent ivory smugglers to pay peanuts, be set free and leave the country instead of serving deterrent long sentences as a lesson towards mental rehabilitation. Congratulations to the officers of the Kenya customs officials who discovered the loot and their colleagues who assisted in the search and seizure.

KENYA AIRWAYS AND KLM GET CLEARANCE FROM COMPETITION AUTHORITY

(Posted 07th July 2013)



During the last week did the Kenya Competition Authority delivery its verdict on the application filed by alliance partners Kenya Airways and KLM/Air France, to be given a further exemption of 7 years in coordinating schedules, setting fares and using joint measures to save cost through codeshare agreements, scheduling alignments and where necessary adjusting capacity on the route between Nairobi and Amsterdam, vice versa and beyond.

The application, when filed, was reported here and the grant of a further 7 years has been welcomed by the two SkyTeam partners.

Covered by the grant, other airline competitors cannot now file cases against the two, national airline Kenya Airways and KLM / Air France, related to aligning fares and take other joint action which could otherwise be termed anti competitive.

Kenya Airways and KLM have been in a close partnership since KQ was privatized in 1996 with KLM holding a significant share portion alongside the Government of Kenya. KLM sponsored Kenya Airways to full membership at SkyTeam, one of the world's leading airline alliances which has benefitted Kenya Airways through codeshare arrangements with a number of partners, opening routes for instant to Seoul, Ho Chi Minh City, a number of Chinese mainland destinations beyond their own gateways in Hong Kong and Guangzhou and to Australia. Watch this space for regular and breaking news from Eastern Africa's vibrant aviation industry.

KENYA AIRWAYS CREW ON KQ 117 EXECUTES PERFECT EMERGENCY LANDING IN ATHENS

(Posted 06th July 2013)



Although information is still somewhat sketchy it can now be confirmed that the crew of Kenya Airways flight KQ 117 from Amsterdam to Nairobi executed a perfect emergency landing in Athens, when sensors from the cargo hold indicated a fire on board. The Boeing B777-200ER with 301 passengers and crew on board was according to the reports at hand upon landing directed to a parking area and passengers deboarded normally when coming to a full stop. From available details it seems clear that one of the sensors had malfunctioned but the cockpit crew took no risks, activated the fire suppression system and immediately, upon declaring an emergency, diverted the plane to Athens. The plane was checked thoroughly and no evidence of any fire was found in any of the cargo holds. Kenya Airways has now issued a preliminary statement which is shown here in full:

Start quote:

'KQ117, a Boeing B777-200ER with 301 passengers on board from Amsterdam to Nairobi diverted to Athens at 125am EA time. This was due to a fire warning indication in one of the cargo holds. As is standard procedure which is normal in the industry, the fire suppression system was activated and the aircraft had to divert to the nearest airport for further assessment. The flight landed safely in Athens and all tests conducted on the fire detection system confirm it is functioning correctly.'

'The functional tests and profiling of the cargo to confirm the source of the warning required that the flight be rescheduled. All passengers and crew were taken to a hotel in Athens and the flight has been scheduled to depart Athens at 5 pm Kenya time arriving at 2255pm today.'

End quote

Passengers have started to express their thanks and appreciation through social media to the entire crew which handled the emergency in a most professional way. As mentioned in the media release, the plane is expected back in Nairobi tonight after the crew had taken their minimum rest time as required under Kenya's aviation regulations. Watch this space for breaking and regular news from East Africa's aviation industry.

Tanzania News

TCAA PLANS TO DOUBLE NAVIGATION FEES

(Posted 07th July 2013)



Information has emerged from Dar es Salaam's aviation circles that the Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority appears set to double navigation charges. While stakeholder consultations, now an almost mandatory requirement for statutory bodies like the TCAA, will apparently be called to discuss the implications of the move, stakeholders have already denounced the plans as unsustainable if not outright ludicrous.

'Doubling navigation fees will be a big blow to general aviation where charges will rise from 30 to 60 dollars. For commercial jet aircraft the new charges per flight will go from 350 dollars, already the highest in East Africa, to 700 dollars. Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya are all lower than that which means that flying there can be more competitive than flying within or into Tanzania. When they offer air safari packages, that differential will reflect in the prices. The government should first look at streamlining TCAA operations. All the posh offices can be

amalgamated into an East African Civil Aviation Authority. We already have CASSOA in charge of aviation safety and security. If we have one regional head office and all the rest will be branches we achieve multiple cost reductions. We can make use of the resource pool of qualified staff without having to hire expensive consultants and we can save money now spent on having all the administrations times 5 across the member states. Before asking for a doubling of fees, let them explore where they can save us money in administrative areas. We aviators are not proposing they cut in oversight or safety issues, but there is a lot of deadwood around and a regional body could get rid of that. We can streamline, we can improve service delivery. We can have a single lower airspace control like we already cooperate when it comes to high altitude overflights. There is room for savings through cooperation. When we have the public consultations TCAA is better prepared to answer those questions and not put up a smokescreen' said a regular aviation source from Dar es Salaam, broadly reflecting what other senior staff in the airline industry feel. This fait accompli as one other regular source put it, shows that the industry will be ambushed with double the previous cost, at literally no notice at all, since the consultations have been scheduled for next week already and the implementation of the new fees could then happen within weeks, once approved by the relevant oversight bodies and duly gazetted.

TCAA sources have in turn responded by pointing to the present fees being in place for over 10 years already. They also claim that the country is underserved by land based navigational aids and beacons as well as radar coverage, all of which needed heavy investments to bring the country up to international standards after years of neglect. Coupled with increased in park fees, added tax measures and high cost across the country to use backup generators when the main power supply fails, which is too often going by the complaints received here, one can expect that visiting Tanzania for safaris or beach holidays will definitely become more expensive in the short term already.

Rwanda News

RWANDAIR'S ACCRA FLIGHTS LEAD TO OPENING OF CONSULATE IN KIGALI

(Posted 12th July 2013)



The recent launch of direct flights from Kigali to Accra, via Lagos, by national airline RwandAir, has now resulted in the opening of a Ghanaian consulate in Kigali, strengthening diplomatic relations and improving the ease with which Rwandans can now obtain Visa.

Previously did Rwandans need to travel to Nairobi to apply for Visa at the Ghanaian embassy there and the launch of a Consulate yesterday in Kigali has eliminated extra cost and saves time for those wanting to travel to Accra. It is a case in point however, that other African countries should reciprocate the Rwandan government's decision to grant Visa on arrival to citizens from all member countries of the African Union, a move which has significantly aided RwandAir's rollout across Africa, as neither transit Visa are now needed, while those wishing to stay over in Rwanda for a few days, can get their Visa at the immigration counter instantly.

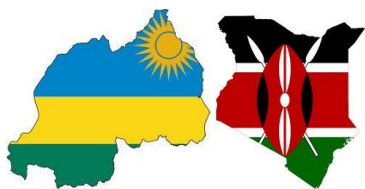
Ghana's Consul in Rwanda, Dennis Karera, will no doubt be a busy man to sign Visa approvals for his fellow Rwandans now that his offices are operational and RwandAir will be a beneficiary as travelers can now book their flight with them and get their Visa approved on the same day.

In a related development has RwandAir attended the just concluded *Routes Africa* meetings in Kampala, represented by Senior Manager Sales Alice Katiti, who held a number of bilateral and multilateral discussions with other airline executives to explore ways and means to have more airlines fly more often to Rwanda. RwandAir it was learned at the meetings, has also applied for 5th freedom rights between Entebbe and Juba, though that decision is presently pending following further discussions between the Uganda Civil Aviation Authority, South Sudan's aviation authorities and other stakeholders with an interest in this particular route.

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

RWANDAN TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS HOST KENYAN COUNTERPARTS IN KIGALI

(Posted 11th July 2013)



The Land of a Thousand Hills offers within its borders a range of tourism attractions unique to Eastern Africa and it is no wonder that Rwanda's tourism stakeholders are keen to get that message out and forge partnerships with other countries in the region, where not competition but complementing each other is the main driver for cooperation.

This week on Monday did a group of Kenyan stakeholders come to Kigali, courtesy of RwandAir, to meet their counterparts at the Kigali Serena Hotel for a day of discussions and brainstorming sessions, but also to see a bit of Rwanda's capital city. In Rwanda it was the RTTA, the Rwanda Tour and Travel Association which had taken the lead, inviting members of KATA and KATO from Kenya alongside Watari Matu, the coordinator of the East African Tourism Platform, EAC's tourism apex body for the region.

Only weeks ago did the Ereka Group, a partnership of several tourism stakeholders, in conjunction with RwandAir, the Rwanda Development Board and other partners, operate two familiarization tours across the country for tour operators, travel agents and media houses, to showcase Rwanda's attractions, inside and outside the national parks. RwandAir, Serena Hotels, Thousand Hills Expeditions and Brussels Airlines additionally conducted a series of one day visits to Kigali earlier in the year to combine the experience on flying on the two airlines – which incidentally codeshare the route to Brussels – with a taste of Rwanda, authentic meals served courtesy of the Kigali Serena of course.

As a result of the slow pace of the regional integration on EAC level, the lack of progress towards introducing a common East African tourist Visa is just a case in point, have countries willing to move ahead at faster pace formed coalitions of goodwill to cooperate and work hand in hand, aimed at attracting more visitors together. ***'The benefits of cooperation outweigh those aspects of competition by far'*** said a Rwandan stakeholder when this correspondent was last visiting Rwanda and discussing such events. ***'This is a new age and our destinations are opened up by the internet for everyone around the world to see. When people come such a long way from America or Japan, visiting just one country is really not doing justice to all our attractions'***.

It is understood that airlines in the region are examining the option for a tourist air pass, which would lower the airfares for tourists and enable them to explore two or three countries during one visit and though the absence, for now, of a common Visa is seen as an obstacle, plans to offer more regional itineraries are advancing already. Way to go, East African cooperation for real, not just in abstract terms, by the one sector which arguably could be the fastest driver if only permitted – Tourism.

RWANDA LIVES UP TO BEING EAST AFRICA'S BEST CONNECTED COUNTRY

(Posted 10th July 2013)



Rwanda's reputation to being East Africa's most tech savvy country and the best connected country took a further boost, when it was learned that the Jaguar bus company, based in Kigali, has started to equip their entire fleet with routers, permitting speeds of up to 21.6 MB per second.

Only a few weeks ago did Safaricom of Kenya launch wireless internet mini routers for matatus and dozens have already installed the gadget in their commuter vehicles, but it was learned only belatedly that right at that time was Jaguar already having the same rollout underway.

The fleet of busses is operating on the route from Kigali to Kampala and back and this latest innovation will go a long way to keep passengers connected, allow tweeting of journey updates, post pictures from enroute, stay in touch with friends and family and, should it be needed, send emergency requests via the wireless connection to for instance alert medical personell of someone needed urgent attention at the next major town.

This added feature on Jaguar coaches will undoubtedly spur a wave of installation on the fleet of rival companies, across East Africa, where thousands of wananchi travel every day by bus to their final destinations, even on very long journeys which now connect cities as far apart as Dar es Salaam with Kampala or Mombasa, via Nairobi and Kampala to Kigali. Going by an article written by this correspondent for the current edition *The Eye Magazine* which is published, and distributed for free, in Kampala (<http://www.theeye.co.ug/explore.htm>) more and more budget travellers from overseas are taking to such methods of overland travel, in part because airfares between the member countries of the EAC remain high and beyond reach for many of them and in part because it avails the opportunity to meet wananchi, interact with them and see the country side while travelling by road. The introduction of wireless internet connection on overland buses will therefore be a welcome feature as these folks will tweet and post Facebook messages along the way, wherever they travel to, promoting in fact our countries through the social media. Congrats to Jaguar for pioneering this feature.

Ethiopia News

DREAMLINER FIRE ROCKS BOEING AND AIRLINES ALIKE

(Posted 13th July 2013)



The fire on a parked B787 of Ethiopian Airlines at London's Heathrow Airport has not just caused the temporary closure of the UK's primary aviation hub, but rocked both Boeing and the airlines flying the world's most advanced passenger jet once again. Ethiopian is Africa's first B787 operator with presently 4 aircraft in service, the affected plane included, and was expecting delivery of a fifth aircraft later in July and a further 4 or 5 before the end of the year to complete their initial order of 10.

The aircraft, named 'Queen of Sheba' is reportedly the very same which kicked off commercial flights again with a service from Addis Ababa to Nairobi at the time, after the long grounding of the aircraft by the FAA and other aviation regulators was lifted a few weeks ago. ET – AOP was parked for the day after arriving from Addis Ababa earlier in the morning before the planned return in the evening to Ethiopia. Images now circulating on the web show the rear of the aircraft damaged by fire, which was put out by the airports fire fighting engines while all landings and take offs were suspended until clarity over the incident had been obtained by airport security. The pictures show clearly that the fire burned through the top of the aircraft, casting doubts on any early return to service until major structural repairs have been carried out, if that is within the abilities of Heathrow based MRO's considering the composite structure of this type of aircraft.

Teams from Boeing, the US' National Transportation and Safety Board, the FAA and of course the UK's air accident investigations branch are either on site already or enroute, to establish this latest mishap hitting the B787 Dreamliner. Long delayed before going into service due to assembly issues, the three months grounding from January this year onwards had stirred sentiments aplenty among airlines and passengers, and this latest incident involving this aircraft type, albeit on the ground, will raise a whole spectrum of questions once more, even if current indications are pointing to a cause other than the battery installation which is located in a different part of the plane. Current focus is on the rear galley and its electrical installations as a possible cause of the fire but no conclusions can be drawn at this time until the investigators have concluded their forensic examination of the plane. Passengers booked for their flight from London to Addis Ababa and beyond have been informed and the airline, according to information at hand, is making arrangements to rebook them on other flights with either Ethiopian or other airlines flying to Africa.

A second incident with another B787 operated by Thompson Airways, which returned to the UK after taking off on a flight to the US, has doubled the spotlight on the troubled aircraft and will do little to calm the nerves of passengers around the world, who find themselves in coming days booked on the Dreamliner, a dream once more turned nightmare.

Boeing's immediately shares dropped by around 7 percent when the news spread, an indicator of how the market reacted to more bad news as the scenario of yet another global grounding looms large, impacting perhaps even more heavily than during the January – April period on the airlines operating the aircraft type and the passengers who would have to fly on it. Watch this space for breaking and regular news from the world of aviation.

ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES CREATES 'MALAWIAN AIRLINES' IN JOINT VENTURE WITH MALAWI

(Posted 10th July 2013)



The government of Malawi, holding 51 percent of the shares, and Ethiopian Airlines, the erstwhile Pan African carrier, holding 49 percent, have according to information from Addis Ababa finalized the creation of a new national airline in the Southern African country, called **Malawian Airlines**.

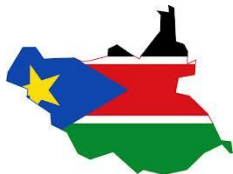
Negotiations had been ongoing for a while and as previously reported did Malawi's government seek a strategic investor after the financial collapse of Air Malawi, to create a new national airline but one professionally managed and supported by a strong partner. After ASKY in West Africa will Malawian be the second such joint venture, as Ethiopian seeks to assert their continental leadership through both direct expansion across Africa but also through strategic partnerships, which can help feed extra traffic into ET's long haul network and in turn benefit from 'de-feeding' Ethiopian's traffic to the respective countries into the near region.

In a related development did Girma Shiferaw, Director Alliances and Network Planning at Ethiopian Airlines, give an elaborate overview of what African airlines, and in particular Ethiopian, do to drive tourism forward, when being part of a panel of experts during the just concluded Routes Africa meeting in Munyonyo / Kampala / Uganda, which was moderated by this correspondent. There, as is the case with the airline's new investment in Malawi, did it come across very clearly that leisure travellers besides business and trade travellers, are not only an integral part but of growing importance to any airline's success. Watch this space for breaking and regular aviation news from Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean islands.

South Sudan News

CONFLICTS TURN TOURISM INTO A HIGHLY ENDANGERED SPECIES IN SOUTH SUDAN

(Posted 07th July 2013)



Once thought of as Africa's last safari and expedition frontier, attracting huge attention following the features on National Geographic TV '**The Great Migrations**' has South Sudan's tourism industry been made captive and held hostage by events beyond the sector's sphere of influence.

The events over the past 2 years since independence on the 09th of July 2011 along the joint border with the Republic of Sudan, often commonly referred to as Khartoum Sudan or North Sudan, which led to the suspension of oil production by the South, left the entire country reeling from lack of cash to pay for salaries, infrastructure and even to allocate foreign exchange to repatriate funds – with Kenya's Jetlink airline becoming the most notable victim of that situation. Aggression and ethnic cleansing on a significant scale inside the three states of Blue Nile, South Kordofan and Abyei, which wish to join South Sudan in order to attain independence from the slave masters in Khartoum, have sent waves of new refugees fleeing into South Sudan to escape Khartoum's regular army troops and proxy militias, both notorious for implementing a 'burnt earth' policy of wholesome destruction, looting, rape and murder. Large scale displacement of people living inside South Sudan, following the repeated aerial bombardment by Khartoum airforce planes and incursions by Khartoum troops into Southern territory, and the renewed use by Khartoum of proxy militias to cause constant armed conflict, also did little to reassure regular travellers and even the most hardened adventurers have started to give the South Sudanese parks a wide berth, with arrivals trickling down all the time.

But the worst blow came when the famous Boma National Park came under attack two months ago by the Khartoum sponsored militia of David Yau Yau and the park warden and several of his staff were killed. Crucial park infrastructure was destroyed, robbing any potential clients, for the time being, of even the most basic of facilities.

In particular Kenya based adventure travel firms immediately pulled back when the news of that attack broke, largely in view of potential insurance issues, as travel into an open warzone is not covered by liability insurance, and travel insurance of individuals too lapses when heading into such hot zones.



And it was in particular the Boma National Park which suffered, as it is in combination with the Sudd and the Bandingalo Game Reserve combining to provide the stomping grounds one of the world's greatest migrations. Unfortunately little is known about it to the wider world and beyond the expert lore told among aficionados of roughing it deep in the bush for the privilege to see up to 2 million animals congregate once a year and then go their separate ways again, back to their home ranges.

White eared kobs, tiang antelopes and mongalla gazelles make up these huge numbers, followed of course by predators and interspersed by elephant and buffalo.

It is widely feared that in particular the elephant, long protected under the SPLA rule before the CPA came into effect and the country became independent, are now targeted by militias to sell the blood ivory, then exported either via Khartoum and Port Sudan, arguably with little obstacles though at a much greater distance, or via Uganda and Kenya to Mombasa, where time and again major consignments are seized by vigilant customs officials.

From usually well informed sources it was learned, that inspite of the efforts by the Wildlife Conservation Society, arguably the biggest donor and supporter of the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism in South Sudan, they country is fighting a losing battle. Only recently did WCS and the ministry staff in a combined project collar elephant to establish their range, migration patterns and monitor the potential impact of poaching gangs on the social structures of the eles, but only about 5.000 elephant are thought to remain inside South Sudan, numbers considered barely adequate to ensure the long term survival of the species.

As a result of the political quagmire situation in South Sudan, where only last week the Vice President made his intention known to stand during the next presidential elections in a clear challenge to incumbent Salva Kiir, who only weeks ago stripped him of a number of functions and powers, and furthermore because of the ongoing on again off again conflict with neighbours Khartoum Sudan, were strongly worded travel advisories issued which for all practical purpose will not just keep 'regular mainstream tourists' away but have also started to affect the segment of intrepid adventure travellers, who otherwise so often continue to visit such fringe destinations inspite of such warnings.

The few tourism operators inside South Sudan are putting a brave face to these developments and have by and large cancelled their 2013 safaris and expeditions to Boma National Park while trying to find alternative parks and reserves to take the clients to.

Khartoum's latest broadside against the South, the closure of the pipeline to Port Sudan, the one and presently only export route for the oil coming from South Sudan, has pushed the government in Juba with the back to the wall, as

hopes of renewed cash flow, and with it the ability to pay wages and bills, once more seems to slip away, as was the case during the self inflicted export stop of oil which came into effect last year as a result of hostilities in Abyei. As in many similar cases, where conflict impacts on a nascent tourism industry – like seen right now in Mozambique – only time will tell to what level South Sudan's tourism sector can recover from these blows, and while there is always hope, reality at present speaks a different language, for now at least. I for one do have hope left that a lasting political solution between the north and south can be found, and implemented under African Union supervision, which will allow for tourists to come and see the great spectacle of the Boma migration, traverse the Sudd, explore the other four national parks and 14 game reserves across the country, or boat the River Nile which is known here as Bahr el Jebel. Watch this space.

Mozambique News

MOZAMBIQUE ANNOUNCES NACALA AIRPORT RE-CONSTRUCTION AT ROUTES AFRICA

(Posted 09th July 2013)



Emmanuel Chaves, Chairman and CEO of Airports Mozambique, aka Aeroportos de Mocambique, announced during the **Routes Africa** meetings that the airport of Nacala in the North of the country will be fundamentally reconstructed, expanded and upgrades, to be able to receive long haul flights, the main targets being carriers in the Far and South East. The work according to Emmanuel started in March this year and will likely be completed by the end of the year. The existing runway will be resurfaced and expanded, allowing maximum weight takeoffs for such aircraft as the B747-400 and a new apron area be added to create more space for parking of aircraft on the ground. The terminal building too will see substantial additions and when complete will feature 16 check in counters, 16 immigration desks, 4 arrival and departure gates and two lounges each for arrivals and departures.

Emmanuel stressed the link of the airport not just to trade and commerce – a nearby airport city is in planning and will be constructed to complement airport activities – but referred to the opening up of the greater northern region of Mozambique for tourism purposes. Endless beaches await investors willing to come on board and create resorts, which could easily rival those of other, more established destinations along the seaboard of Eastern Africa, and the presence of a major airport, which allows for direct flights from tourist source countries, will undoubtedly improve the prospects of major investments coming to Mozambique in the future.

During the Routes Africa meetings did several countries announce new plans to refurbish and modernize their aviation infrastructure, among them host country Uganda, and more details on such plans and presentation to the delegates of Routes Africa can be found via www.routesonline.com

Mauritius News

EMIRATES GETS APPROVAL TO FLY THE A380 TO MAURITIUS

(Posted 09th July 2013)



Information was just confirmed, at no other place than the **Routes Africa** meeting which just ended at Kampala's lakeside resort and conference complex of Munyonyo, that Emirates has obtained regulatory approval to start operating the giant Airbus A380 to the island from the 16th of December this year.

Emirates had operated a one off flight to coincide with the independence anniversary of Mauritius this year, on which occasion a brand new A380 gate was opened at the main airport Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International. At the time did Tim Clark, President and CEO of Emirates, already state the obvious, that his company would very much like to bring this aircraft type to Mauritius on a permanent basis, a move welcomed warmly by Mauritius' private sector tourism stakeholders.

From details at hand it is understood that the current two flights with B777-300 with 364 seats in First, Business and Economy will be substituted by the A380, which in a three class configuration can uplift up to 496 passengers. This will add a further 264 seats a day on the route, which tourism stakeholders claim are needed to fill beds in existing and new resorts and turn the fortunes of Mauritius' tourism around. Last year did the island end up second in overall arrivals for Indian Ocean islands, behind the Maldives, and with Sri Lanka's arrivals also growing, stakeholders were worried that the island may lose further ground against its popular Indian Ocean rivals.

The flights between Dubai and Mauritius are codeshared with national airline Air Mauritius, arguably speeding up the regulatory approvals needed to introduce the larger plane. A major campaign will no doubt go underway ahead of the launch of the A380 flights, which will make Mauritius yet another destination which can be reached by the growing fleet of A380's, 35 of which are now in service by Emirates. Watch this space for breaking and regular news from the Indian Ocean islands aviation sector.

Seychelles News

SEYCHELLES SECRETS RELOADED

(Posted 12th July 2013)



As often demonstrated here, emphasis on demonstrated and not just stated, does the Seychelles islands also offer a very affordable component of holidays, besides the of course much better known high end, 5 star resorts of global acclaim, for which the archipelago is best known. 'Affordable Seychelles' is very much a reality, for those who know how to go about it using self catering establishments like the Chalets d'Anse Forbans, B&B's, guest houses or holiday villas. Apartments, right on a beach like for instance the Pied dans L'Eau where a restaurant, for those too lazy to cook, offers breakfast, lunch, tea and supper offer another option and across the islands is privately owned accommodation available for as low as 30 Euros a night during the off season.

The Seychelles Tourism Board has now re-emphasized that promoting their 'Seychelles Secrets' remains a key element of promoting locally owned businesses at trade fairs abroad and a look at www.seychelles.travel will affirm that indeed budget holidays are on offer as are guest houses, selfcatering establishments and small hotels featured there. Elsia Grandcourt, the outgoing CEO of Seychelles Tourism, while attending the Routes Africa meeting in Uganda earlier in the week, where she collected the coveted **Routes Africa Best Destination Marketing Award**, said: ***'The Seychelles Secrets' portfolio of accommodation establishments is an important component of our tourism as it makes the full Seychelles holiday experience accessible to people travelling on a budget and in search of authentically Creole lodging offering great value to money and I encourage more establishments to register to join Seychelles Secrets and benefit from the added marketing clout that the portfolio provides'***.

Travellers from Africa, who need no Visa to enter the Seychelles though a Yellow Fever inoculation certificate may be required, often opt for the more affordable options of accommodation when visiting the Seychelles but even tourists from further abroad nowadays more frequently purchase their airfare when special promotions are on the market and then use the Seychelles Tourism Board's website to seek out affordable accommodation to tailor make their own package.

Take aways across the islands offer great Creole food at amazingly affordable prizes, like less than 5 US Dollars for a lunch box filled to the brim and local restaurants serving local dishes are more than pleased to see tourists come to their establishments and eat a meal while sitting next to Seychellois people. ***'A bus fare only costs 5 rupees per trip no matter how many stops one travels with the bus. Busses are quite safe and operate from dawn to early evening. From most locally owned guest houses or B&B's a bus stop is just a short distance away for those who prefer to travel the local way across the island. Taxis are available but of course much more expensive, so this is a perfect way to explore Mahe or Praslin. You still see the same beaches, the same marine parks, the same attractions like others of our visitors who spend top dollar for top quality. Budget visitors are as much welcome to the Seychelles as are millionaires. We have offers for every market segment now. A full list of such Seychellois owned places is available on the STB website and all those shown are fully licensed and they are regularly inspected to ensure quality standards, even basic ones, are maintained'*** added another source from Mahe.

Way to go **Seychelles**, which truly is and remains **Another World**.

SEYCHELLES TAKES *ROUTES AFRICA* DESTINATION MARKETING AWARD

(Posted 09th July 2013)



Few had any doubts of the outcome of this contest, when the Seychelles were crowned winner of the annual Destination Marketing Award by *Routes Africa*, which ended this morning in Kampala with final presentation to the delegates by Kenya Airways and FastJet after three days of lively deliberations, a range of topical presentations and 4 panel sessions covering key topics. B2B meetings between airlines, airports, aircraft manufacturers, tourism boards and service providers were in such demand that they continued through the break times and beyond the set timeframe, testament to the growing importance of the Routes meetings for the African aviation industry.

The announcement of the Seychelles taking to top destination marketing honours was made by Nigel Mayes, Vice President of UBM Aviation Routes, during the UCAA and Air Uganda hosted gala dinner night at the Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort, where the lakeside setting under palms and the soft evening breeze made a perfect fit of location and recipient.

Elsia Grandcourt, the outgoing CEO of Seychelles Tourism Board, assisted by Glynn Burrridge and Amy Michel, took to the stage to claim the prize for her country, as the three represented STB at the Routes Africa Conference they hosted in 2012.



Congratulations to the entire team, those present and those who will wake up to the good news back home at the Bel Ombre offices of the Seychelles Tourism Board, for this outstanding accomplishment.

AND in closing more worthwhile reads from *The Livingstone Weekly*, courtesy of Gill Staden:

Ngonye Falls

At the end of June, a friend, Venice, and I took to the road and headed towards Sesheke and Ngonye Falls. Last week I told you about the road and the new bridge to be constructed near Maziba Bay.

We had booked in at Kabula Lodge. There are only three lodges along this stretch of the river now. Sakazima Island Lodge is on an island in the Zambezi and is used for groups. Mutemwa Lodge is an upmarket lodge catering to the avid



fisherman. Kabula is a lodge a bit further north ... and is for people like me ...

We arrived at Kabula latish in the afternoon and were shown to our chalets by Lloyd. Lloyd is the 2IC but only works when there is work to be had. We found this out later when we were told that most of the staff had all been put on piecework since the advent of the new minimum wage.

Kabula is a self-catering lodge. The chalets are all



self-contained, most facing the river. They are all a bit squonk, having been made of local materials of wood, reed and thatch. They are, of course, full of character because of this.



Behind the chalets there is a large kitchen with all the pots, pans, cutlery, glasses you need. There are gas cookers. Outside the kitchen there is a barbeque site and at the rear a scullery. It is all organised!



Venice and I set to making our supper and then sat to enjoy the peace and quiet. The river was like glass just sliding past; the only ripples to be seen were those of fish jumping. Venice had brought her fishing rod and hoped to have a bit of a go at catching a tigerfish which this area is famed for.

In the morning I got up early and Venice had a lie in. I went for a walk along the sandy road to the main road. I was surprised to see some spoor of small animals and found out later, chatting to Lloyd, that there *are* animals – elephant, waterbuck, buffalo, duiker. It would seem that the efforts of Peace Parks and their work in the area are beginning to show results.

I found a pair of bearded woodpeckers in a tree. I know someone will write in and tell me that they are not bearded woodpeckers, so I look forward to that!



When Venice had surfaced we quickly had breakfast and headed out to Ngonye Falls about 50 km away.



The area around Ngonye Falls has been fenced off. One section is used as a campsite where some impala have been introduced. I was told that there are plans to bring in more animals when time and money allows. The other section is the entrance to the falls themselves. We paid

our dues of K26,040. As soon as I had been told the price I knew that they had been set by ZAWA who likes to add the K40, just to make change difficult. Why? We also had to pay the same amount for the car.



Our guide was Aaron and he came with us, picking up some paddles on the way. Oh no, I thought, we are going in a makora, so was delighted to see a 'normal' boat parked by the river's edge. Aaron paddled us across a small channel to an 'island'. From there we could see the main section of the falls. There are eight sections to the falls and some can only be seen from the island.



I chatted to Aaron and his pals afterwards about how the area is run. They told me that it is a community project and that all the money goes to the people who work there. ZAWA is involved as research support only. One of the staff made me laugh when he pointed to a room and said: *They work in there and have computers!*



Just as we were about to leave 5 cars drew up. I knew that Aaron and his co-staff were going to be very happy that day and that they would be paid.

We then returned to Kabula because we had booked a boat ride on the river. Lloyd took us out and we toured the river, still glass-like. There are two islands nearby, one called Kabula and the other Buffalo. Kabula Island gets its name from a tree which has really good fruit which the people like. I looked the

name up in the book but couldn't find it. Anyone out there know more? Buffalo Island used to be a favourite spot for buffalo but they were all shot for the pot in the 1990s.



The cruise was very enjoyable. Venice and Lloyd did a spot of fishing but did not catch supper; they didn't even have a bite.

We watched kingfishers, fish eagles and bee-eaters and then saw some of the Kabula staff leaving work and heading home across the river in their makora.

The evening was spent

cooking on a fire. We came home the following day.



Hydro-Electric Scheme at Ngonye Falls

In the news, not long ago, there was a story about a hydroelectric scheme to be put at Ngonye Falls. I asked the guys what they knew about it.

They told me that some 'white men' had been there recently to talk to the communities. The people had been told that they would get work by digging a channel between the Litunga's Channel and the river. It would divert the water from above the falls to a point



downstream. Turbines would be put on the channel to generate power. The people were told that the power would be sold to ZESCO and that it would mean that they could have electricity in their homes. They also mentioned that the electricity would be exported to Angola.

Being the eternal sceptic I feel that it is unlikely that the people will get power in the homes. We know from Livingstone that most people cannot afford electricity. I opt for most of the power being exported to Angola.

In order to achieve the aim of generating power the falls themselves will be degraded by receiving less water. This will not matter when the water is high, but may have a big effect during low water levels. It will be a similar scenario to Victoria Falls on the Zambian side.

Litunga's Channel

Just to give you a bit of a story about the Litunga's Channel which is a National Heritage site, is that it was dug in 1908. In those days trade was conducted by boat and the Litunga had already dug many channels in the Batotse Floodplain in order to ease movement of boats.

He wanted to get round Ngonye Falls and decided that he would dig a channel round them. At that time it was necessary to take all the boats out of the river and portage around the Ngonye Falls. Litunga's Channel was never completed and used.

Events on the Way

13-14 July: Vic Falls Marathon
25-27 July: Pumping Legs for Water.
Hwange National Park
24-29 August: UNWTO
11-16 August: Cycle Zambia.
26 October: Zambezi Kayak Festival.
26-31 October: World Adventure Travel Summit. Windhoek

