

**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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*Third edition February 2013*

#### **East Africa News**

#### **FASTJET COMPELLED TO RAISE MORE CAPITAL**



Reports from a regular aviation source in the UK indicate that FastJet appears to have hurriedly raised additional capital of over 6 million US Dollars, as the no holds barred exchange of broadsides with erstwhile partner Fly540 continues unabated. Fly540 demands what now amounts to well near 8 million US Dollars from FastJet but has meanwhile withdrawn the permits and licenses granted to their former partners. FastJet in East Africa is reportedly scrambling to repair the image damage the revelations in the local media have done to their reputation in Tanzania, the only country where the airline actually does fly a few times a day between Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro and Mwanza, while so far no visible progress has been made in Kenya, the market they wanted to start up in but were thwarted by numerous unresolved issues with Fly 540, which eventually led to the breakup in 'relations'.

It could not be ascertained if the raised funds are to bite the bullet and pay Fly540's claims, or if the funds could be used for expansion elsewhere on the continent, where particularly in South Africa the deal with 1Time has gone notably silent after some considerably hullabaloo a few months ago.

In Kenya FastJet has reportedly signed an MoU with grounded airline Jetlink, which is also trying to raise additional funding to meet debt obligations before being able to resume flights, raising speculation that the 4 million UK Pounds raised by FastJet's owners directly – through the issue of new shares and through loan arrangements – could be channeled into that new potential partnership to get airborne at last in Kenya and revive Jetlink's extensive domestic and regional network.

It could also not be established at this time of the leasing company which had a three weeks ago issued notice that they intended to deregister some of the aircraft used by FastJet in Tanzania, actually went ahead to do so or has since then received payments to delay such action.

Going by past experiences with upstart airlines in the region, the confusion and hostile court action, resulting in negative headlines in the local media across Eastern Africa, Fastjet has flown into heavy turbulences on the PR side of things. The airline needs to replace the storm clouds with some urgent sunshine to fly either into calmer skies or else face the full fallout of a negative market reaction as seen in the past, when the first dominos started to tumble in other similar cases. Watch this space.

#### **Uganda News**

#### **UGANDA SCOOPS RECOGNITION FOR THE NILE AS TANZANIA TAKES THREE OF SEVEN**



The award ceremony on Monday in Arusha for the 7 natural wonders of Africa, chosen from 12 accepted nominations, saw the River Nile, which starts its journey to the Mediterranean Sea at the '*Source of the Nile*' in Jinja elected as Uganda's only winner and State Minister for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities Hon. Agnes Akiror Egungyu was present at the function to receive the honours for and on behalf of the *Pearl of Africa*.

The 12 attractions nominated were besides the River Nile the Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater, Mt. Kilimanjaro, The Peak of Furnace on La Reunion, Mt. Kenya, the Okavango Delta, the Aldabra Atoll, the Avenue of Baobabs, the Sahara Desert, the Red Sea Reef, Tsuma Rock and Tsingi de Bemaraha.

Tanzania as the host nation of the award ceremony, which was held at the Mt. Meru Hotel, saw all the three nominations returned as winners, namely the Serengeti National Park, Mt. Kilimanjaro and the Ngorongoro Crater, seeing all three nominations end among the top seven.

Others which made it into the winning ranks were the Okavango Delta in Botswana, the Red Sea Reef in Egypt and the Sahara Desert which is touching 10 countries, leaving such global eco giants like the Aldabra Atoll out in the cold.

Being named as among the top 7 natural '*wonders*' in Africa is thought to give a significant boost vis a vis destination interest in the main markets for tourists coming to Eastern Africa and is therefore a hotly contested and keenly sought honour, giving often the decisive edge to one over another attraction. Congratulations to all winners and better luck to those left out this year in the future.

#### UGANDA CAA RECORDS 14 PERCENT TRAFFIC GROWTH IN 2012



Ignie Igundura, the Uganda Civil Aviation Authority spokesperson, has just released the 2012 performance statistics in terms of passenger and cargo movements. Passenger traffic grew by a margin of 14.1 percent while cargo traffic added a round 15 percent, compared to the year 2011.

Passenger numbers exceeded 1.23 million, up from 1.08 million last year, and considering the difficult year the global travel and tourism industries had, this is seen as further evidence that Uganda's position in the world of tourism has grown in leaps and bounds over past years and that the *Lonely Planet's* naming Uganda as *The Destination 2012* has born fruits, along the – albeit rather subdued – celebrations of 50 years of Independence from Britain.

Notably did domestic air travel for the first time in years in fact, show a robust increase from 9,508 passengers in 2011 to 13,780 passengers flown in 2012, a rise by over 42.7 percent, though in the face of dramatic declines in past years. The upturn in domestic flights is largely attributed to commercial exploration activities in the oil and gas sector but also a more buoyant tourism industry with more travelers now going by air as a result of the scheduled flights introduced by the Kampala Aero Club and others.

There will be a focus on Uganda's aviation sector come July this year as the Routes Africa meeting, held with record attendance last year in Victoria / Seychelles, has been awarded to the Uganda Civil Aviation Authority to host – the first time this ever happened at an active session for the next year – and even greater numbers of participating airlines, airport, tourism authorities and related institutions are expected to come to Uganda to strategize over airline cooperation, the launch of new routes and the general promotion of the aviation industry. Visit [www.caa.co.ug](http://www.caa.co.ug) for more information about aviation in *The Pearl of Africa* and as always, Watch this space.

#### BAKER'S DISCOVERIES IN UGANDA TO BE CELEBRATED ON THE 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



Uganda's tourism and conservation organizations are planning a special commemoration of Sir Samuel Baker's first visit to Uganda on the forthcoming 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Credited to have 'discovered' the source of the River Nile, back then at the Rippon Falls which got submerged in the 1950's when the Owen Falls dam was built for the first hydroelectric plant bringing electric power to the country, he at the time also brought the news home to Britain on his return of the existence of Lake Albert and the Rwenzori Mountains, aka Mountains of the Moon. That 'discovery' for the Europeans and the rest of the world then led to the Duke of Abruzzi to make the first recorded climb in modern day history during his expeditions to the mountain range on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1906, an occasion also celebrated in 2006 with a large number of climbers and expeditions honouring that first conquest in a befitting manner.

UWA Executive Director Dr. Andrew Seguya said a range of activities are being prepared in conjunction with the Uganda Tourism Board and the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Heritage to commemorate the various events and retrace Baker's route across Uganda.

Baker's descendants, one of his grandsons and one of his great granddaughters were reportedly in the country to participate in the announcement, but seeing a very different Uganda from the one Baker himself saw at the time which presented itself as one great wilderness area populated by the subjects of the various kings who ruled parts of what is today the Republic of Uganda.

Visit [www.ugandawildlife.org](http://www.ugandawildlife.org) and [www.visituganda.com](http://www.visituganda.com) for more information about the country and to subscribe to regular mailings from these organizations about events and developments in the country.

## Kenya News

### KENYA AIRWAYS SIGNS UP WITH ANTI POACHING COALITION



*The Pride of Africa* yesterday signed a partnership agreement with the Born Free Foundation to join hands in opposing the wave of poaching currently inflicted on Kenya's wildlife, where since the beginning of the year at least 70 elephant have been poached and at least four dead rhinos been found with their prized horns removed.

Dr. Titus Naikuni signed the agreement with the founder of Born Free, Mrs. Virginia McKenna, who starred in the classic wildlife film '*Born Free*' where she played the character of Joy Adamson.

Dr. Naikuni on the occasion was quoted to have said: ***'The poaching of wild animals in the country has a multiplying negative effect which trickles down to that mama mboga who grows vegetables for visitors to eat and all Kenyans need to come together and fight the vice***

He went on to say that Kenyans should be taught the importance of wild animals to the country right from the primary school. It is understood that Kenya Airways will provide envelopes in all its planes so that well wishers and conservation minded travelers can make contributions towards the foundation by placing spare cash and change in any currency to the cause.

***'The contributions which will be collected by KQ and managed by Kenya Wildlife Service and the foundation would be basically for carrying out anti-poaching activities'*** did Dr. Naikuni add.

The founder of the foundation, Virginia McKenna said the country was a top destination and it saddened her when wild animals are killed with impunity. She was quoted saying lions in the country number about 2,000 and they were being threatened because human beings have approached their territories before adding: ***'Lions and other wild animals are the living treasures of Kenya and you need to take a considerable step in ensuring that they are protected'***.

Kenya Airways is the first of major Kenyan corporate entities to join hands with the conservation fraternity to stand up against the poaching menace and the airline's step will hopefully encourage other leading Kenyan companies to join these efforts too with financial and material contributions. Only last week did the tourism sector at the Kenya coast stage a peaceful and orderly demonstration against poaching and called upon government to declare the out of hand situation a national emergency and release sufficient resources to KWS to start fighting back in earnest. Watch this space for developments how corporate Kenya will get involved in the anti poaching initiatives now unfolding on many levels.

### COAST TOURISM WARY OF WATER WARNING



Warnings over a water deficit of some 65 percent were looming large when the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Water admitted at a function in Malindi district a few days ago, when opening a refurbished water station at Baricho. After the improvements at the pumping station and water works over one million people will be able to have more reliable access to safe water from the Coast Water Services Board but growing demand would still leave only 35 percent of the coast population with access to piped water. The PS admitted that industrial growth, new hotels and more residential areas outstripped the increased supply, which comes to the Kenya coast via the Mzima Springs pipeline and the Baricho water works.

The warning by the PS has rattled some stakeholders in the hospitality and services industry, already suffering a stretched water supply from the South Coast of Mombasa in Ukunda and Tiwi over the North Coast of Nyali, Bamburi and along the coast to Kilifi and Malindi.

*‘When you hear that you wonder how more resorts will get the amounts of fresh water they need. If tourism is to expand, if the new conference centre is to come, water, electricity, sewerage services and road access will be crucial. The president will very soon lay the foundation stone for the new port in Lamu. Vision 2030 sees an entire resort city to spring up there. The question is, like here in Mombasa, where will the water come from, where will the sewage be treated instead of flushing it into the ocean at night. I hope that the planner have made such infrastructure works a priority to avoid new facilities coming on line and there is not enough water or electricity lines have not reached’.*



(Impression of the new ‘super highway’ from Nairobi to Thika where 3 lanes in each direction have greatly eased traffic jams and reduced accidents)

Many coast tourism stakeholders have in the past complained about the alleged neglect they suffered as Nairobi, the capital, was undergoing a major transformation in recent years with the new super highway to Thika and a widened highway via Athi River to the Tanzanian border at Namanga and on to Arusha. *‘Around Nairobi the Northern Bypass is ready, the Southern Bypass under construction, new link roads have opened up, the highway to Namanga and Arusha been opened and the same to Thika. We at the coast still have no easy road access from the Nairobi highway to the South Coast, that road is in very bad shape, the new bypass is way off from being built, the crossing into Mombasa at Changanwe is only ever patched up, so yes, we are complaining. Government cannot say they support tourism and then not provide water, electricity, sewerage connections and roads. The new government must prove itself to give equal resources to the coast as they were handing down for projects around Nairobi. What happened there is great but it needs repeating here at the coast too. We need that new highway connecting Mombasa to Lunga Lunga and then on via Tanga to Dar es Salaam. Only then can East Africa finally live up to its potential and the coastal strip be fully exploited for tourism and leisure developments’.*

Adds this correspondent the section into and out of Mombasa to the Nairobi highway, often halting traffic in hour long gridlocks, the bottle neck of the Likoni Ferry, which is constantly in the bad press over ferry failures and periodic accidents but also the need for a second bridge connecting the island of Mombasa with the northern mainland to reduce the often long traffic pile up during rush hours. Indeed the new government will be faced with a great many challenges to meet the country’s Vision 2030 and transform the lives of Kenyans to the better. Watch this space.

## ANOTHER FERRY ACCIDENT SPARES LIVES BUT SCARES COMMUTERS TO BITS



Saturday morning brought the memories of the gruesome ferry accident of two weeks ago back to the forefront, when yet another lorry failed on Saturday to climb the steep ramp, the driver lost control and started rolling back towards the ferry before crashing into it.

***'The truck was according to reports we got quite overloaded. That is a matter of great concern as some vehicles are not roadworthy with weak brakes and other technical faults. On top they overload the lorries. Such vehicles should never be allowed on the ferry and police must step up vigilance and pull such vehicles out of the queue and stop them from trying to go on the ferry. That accident two weeks ago was due to brake failure and cost many lives and injured too many. The ferry CEO should also watch his mouth from shooting off. He talks too much than man. How can he call this incident a 'normal accident' as if there were abnormal accidents too. Why is he still in the job by the way after all the strikes he caused with his bad staff relations'*** narrated a Mombasa based source soon after this correspondent arrived in Nairobi.

The affected ferry, MV Harambee, was out of service for the duration of the rescue operation during which the lorry was eventually towed off and then needed to be assessed for damages before returning to service.

The Mombasa based tourism industry is using the present general election campaign to press home their demands for an early and accelerated construction of the planned bypass road, which would connect the highway from Nairobi and the Moi International Airport to the South Coast by road and finally give tourist operators and traders a direct route without having to cross the treacherous channel but even under the best scenario that new connection will not be ready before probably 2016. Until then, the Kenya Ferry Services it is and when using it everyone holds their combined breath until safely on the other side. Watch this space.

### Tanzania News

#### TCAA TELLS FASTJET TO PAY UP OR ELSE



Inspite of denying liability for legacy debts, incurred by Fly540 Tanzania before FastJet took over that company in 2012, the trend is now clear that the Tanzanian authorities, led by the Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority, are vigorously pursuing payment now and have issued FastJet's local management with an either / or option, to pay or else to face the music. That can only mean that should within the stipulated timeframe no payment be made, that TCAA may pull the plug on the airline's operations, or ground one or all of their aircraft, to ensure that for one no further debts accrue and secondly to compel the carrier to pay outstanding dues from current and past operations. FastJet and Fly540 are involved in a series of bitter legal arguments, as clearly due diligence by the newcomers has catastrophically failed in making sure that legacy debts are the sole liability of Fly540 and provide such evidence to the respective officers at TCAA to have debt collection done at source.

FastJet launched operations between Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro, with onward flights to Mwanza, in December last year but faced intense criticism at the time over their sharpish marketing practices which advertised a 20 US Dollar fare without giving the traveling public a full picture of what they had to pay in add on charges like taxes, fees and even baggage handling, only – under immense pressure from the media – gradually and in piece meal steps revealing the true cost of what one had to pay to fly.

The euphoria therefore soon evaporated among Tanzanians when they realized what was really going on and the added problems with erstwhile friends and partners at Fly540 added to the glee the aviation industry in Eastern Africa enjoyed at the expense of the upstart, which could not turn full mouthed statements into lasting reality.

It is understood from a regular source in Dar es Salaam that by the end of business yesterday, 15<sup>th</sup> February, FastJet was to have submitted to TCAA a commitment and payment schedule to meet the outstanding debts, which were put at over 570 million Tanzania Shillings and over 95.000 US Dollars. Notably it was pointed out that the legacy debts from past Fly 540 Tanzania operations by November last year stood at about 345 million Tanzania Shillings and just



under 82,000 US Dollars at the time, with the balance now claimed clearly a result of FastJet's direct operations since December and indisputably theirs to pay.

Previously loudmouthed reactions by some of the managers have also become rather subdued if not gone altogether, probably realizing that they now need all the good will they can get and yet much of which has been wasted in the past weeks with sharpish reactions when their ways and means were exposed and challenged in open forum. Watch this space as action now seems imminent by TCAA to make sure FastJet either pays up or else and be sure to read the next twist in the tale of this sad saga in coming days.

#### **SAUDA RAJAB APPOINTED NEW CEO AT PRECISION AIR**



When long serving CEO Alfonse Kioko retires from Precision Air at the end of February, he will be able to look back at a success story Tanzanian aviation has never seen before, taking Precision from a relatively small domestic airline to the lofty heights of a major player in the region, and strong partners with African giant Kenya Airways. Unprecedented at the time, during his reign at the helm Precision Air bought brand new aircraft from French manufacturer ATR, now operating a fleet of ATR 42 and ATR 72 aircraft and more orders for brand new turboprops are pending delivery in 2013 and 2014.

Precision, like no other airline before in Tanzania, has opted to link secondary and tertiary municipalities and their aerodromes and airfields with the commercial capital of Dar es Salaam, but also the lakeside city of Mwanza where the airline established a mini hub.

Flights to Nairobi, Entebbe, Lubumbashi, Lusaka and Johannesburg round up the picture, served with one of the three B737-300 aircraft the airline acquired in recent years.

New to the job but – with all due respect – an old hand in aviation, will be Sauda Rajab, who was selected in a lengthy process to succeed Alfonse Kioko and will take charge from the beginning of March at the Precision Air headoffice in Dar es Salaam. Serving in many positions at Kenya Airways over the past two decades, Rajab at one time was also country manager of Kenya Airways in Uganda, but served last as General Manager Cargo and distinguished herself with her results and performance.

The news broke yesterday and Rajab will be formally introduced to the management and staff of Precision Air in Dar es Salaam on Monday, after which the process of handover from Alfonse begins before she formally takes charge on March 01<sup>st</sup>.

Precision is now listed on the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange but the two principal owners remain to be Kenya Airways with just over 41 percent and company founder Michael Shirima with just under 43 percent shares while the balance of approximately 16 percent of the shares are held by Tanzanians and institutional investors from Tanzania and across Eastern Africa.

Many thanks to Alfonse for years of excellent partnership and all the best in the future, wherever that will take him and a warm welcome to Sauda Rajab and of course success in all she does in coming months and years.

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

#### **UPDATE ON SERENGETI HIGHWAY CASE BEFORE THE EAST AFRICAN COURT OF JUSTICE**



The legal case filed by ANEW, the African Network for Animal Welfare, before the East African Court of Justice in Arusha against the Tanzanian government, came up for mention and a so called scheduling conference on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January and since then the following information was received from Tanzania based sources, explaining the latest developments in the case.

The details are reflected verbatim as received herebelow for the information of readers and others keen to learn on progress made so far. More information will be published as and when available in accordance with the upcoming hearing schedules set by the EACJ.

The scheduling conference was held to ascertain.

- 1 Points of agreement and disagreement.
- 2 Possibility of mediation, conciliation, or any other form of settlement.
- 3 Whether evidence is going to be oral or by affidavit
- 4 Whether legal arguments shall be written or oral, or both
- 5 Estimated time of hearing
- 6 Any other matter as the court may deem necessary

**\*SUMMARY OF FACTS\*:**

**1.1 The applicant alleges that:**

1. The respondent intends to upgrade, tarmac, create, pave, re-align, construct, create and /or commission a trunk road (officially known as the NATA-MUGUMU-TABORA B-KLEINS GATE-LOLIONDO ROAD which road cuts across the Serengeti National Park.

2. This action above will have deleterious environmental and ecological effects and is likely to cause irreparable and irreversible damage to the delicate environment and ecosystem of the Serengeti National Park and the adjoining and inseparable Masai Mara Game Reserve.

3. There are no conceivable precautionary measures that can mitigate the negative effect of the action other than rerouting the road away from the Serengeti National Park.

4. The Serengeti National park is a world heritage property of outstanding economic value. Its protection and conservation is a matter of international concern.

5. The Serengeti is furthermore a trans-boundary resource in the East African region and is of particular economic and ecological importance to both Kenya and Tanzania.

6. The action infringes on the East African Community Treaty specifically Articles 5 (3) (c); 8 (1) (c); 111 (1) (b) and (d); 114 (1) (a) and (b); 112 (1) (e) and 116.

7. The action is unlawful for violating regional and international instruments such as:

- a) The African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (2003), Article 22 (2) (a)
- b) The Rio Declaration under Principle no. 2 and 7
- c) The Stockholm Declaration Principles no. 1,2 and 24
- d) The United Nations Convention on Migratory Species of wild Animals (1979), articles 2 and 3.
- e) The United Nations Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, Articles 3 and 30.

**1.1.1 \*The applicant seeks for\*:**

1) A declaration that the action to construct a road across the Serengeti National Park is unlawful and infringes the provisions of the East African Community Treaty specified.

2) A permanent injunction restraining the respondent from under taking the action complained of.

3) A permanent injunction restraining the respondent from maintaining any trunk road or highway across any part of the Serengeti National Park.

4) The respondent be permanently restrained from degazetting any part of the Serengeti National Park for the purpose of upgrading, tarmacking, paving, re-aligning, constructing, creating or commissioning the NATA-MUGUMU-TABORA B KLEINS GATE-LOLIONDO ROAD.

5) The respondent be permanently restrained from removing or relieving herself from the UNESCO obligations in respect to the Serengeti National Park on the object of upgrading, tarmacking, paving, re-aligning, constructing, creating or commissioning the said road or otherwise for that purpose upgrading, tarmacking, paving, re-aligning, constructing, creating or commissioning or maintaining a trunk road or highway across the Serengeti National Park.

6) Costs

**\*1.2 Response by the Respondent (24/02/2012)\***

The respondent denies the allegations and contends that:

1. The road in dispute has been in existence and the Respondent only intends to upgrade and re-align it where necessary.
2. The Serengeti National Park is a world heritage site not a world heritage property.
3. The respondent denies any infringement of the Treaty of international instruments alleged.
4. The reference is baseless, ultra-vires, is aimed at usurping the powers of a member State of the EAC by limiting development to the key region which is the key objective of the EAC and transgressing the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania without any color of right.
5. It should be dismissed with costs to the respondent.

**\*2.0 Agreed facts\***

The Serengeti national Park is a vital trans-boundary resource in the East African region and is of particular economic and ecological importance to both Tanzania and Kenya.

**\*3.0 Points of Disagreement\***

1. The road as proposed does not exist. It is being constructed, realigned and upgraded (Applicant).
2. The road exists. It is just being upgraded and realigned where necessary (Respondent)

**\*4.0 AGREED ISSUES\***

1. Whether the Respondent intends to upgrade, tarmac, pave, realign, construct, create and / or commission a trunk road officially known as the NATA- MUGUMU-TABORA B- KLEINS GATE-LOLIONDO ROAD also known as the North Road or Serengeti Super Highway across the northern wilderness of the famous Serengeti National Park
2. Whether the disputed road exists and is in use
3. If so, whether the proposed action infringes the provisions of the EAC Treaty specified therein as well as the international instruments referred to.
4. Whether the applicant is entitled to the prayers sought.

**\*5.0 EVIDENCE\***



**Applicant:** shall rely on the affidavit by J. Ngonyo Kisui on record and oral evidence and report of one expert witness (\*Report to be filed by 22.03.2013).\*

**Respondent:** shall rely on both the affidavit and oral evidence of 3(three) witnesses ( \*statements from witnesses to be filed by 29.03.2013)\*

#### **\*6.0 LEGAL ARGUMENTS\***

Both parties shall file written submission in accordance with the court schedule and highlight on a date to be given by the Court.

#### **\*7.0 LENGTH OF HEARING\***

Intended length of hearing is 2 (two) days. The court will give the date of hearing through a notice.

#### **\*8.0 MEDIATION\***

It is recommended – But it is not an option for the applicant.

\*Read more on the background of the case here<<http://www.savetheserengeti.org/serengeti-legal-defense-fund/>> and <http://www.savetheserengeti.org/news/serengeti-legal-case-on-track/>

#### **SAUTI ZA BUSARA VERSION 10.0 READY TO RUMBLE**



East Africa's best known performing arts festival, *Sauti Za Busara* is about to kick off its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February on the spice island of *Zanzibar* and the eyes of Africa, and in fact the world, will once again focus on what extraordinary programme the organizers have put together.

Like in past years, access to the festival areas during the day is free but attending the evening live performances will require a nominal payment unless visitors have their pre-purchased entry passes which give access to all areas at all times.

12 foreign groups will perform their songs and moves on stage alongside 6 from the Tanzanian mainland and 4 from Zanzibar itself, giving visitors ample choices what to watch and listen to.

Following a slow start a decade ago, when few would give the organizers the time of day leave alone media exposure, eTN has been a faithful friend of *Sauti Za Busara* for the entire period and promoted and encouraged the idea early on to stay the course in the financially difficult early years of the festival before it became not just fashionable but a must to be seen to be on board as a sponsor. Quality performers in the early years were also harder to come by but as time went on the queues of applicants from the region and across the African continent became longer and longer, more so as side programmes like a film festival attracted new visitors.

Today has the Zanzibari festival made its way into the annual calendar of events showcasing African performing music and culture artists and bringing them to the spice island for the arguably most important continental festival of its kind. All the best to the organizers and fun galore to the participants and spectators.

#### **Rwanda News**

#### **BARBARA BUSH FOOD POISONING CASE IN KIBUYE MAY END MANAGERS IN COURT**



A case of severe food poisoning at the church operated hotel in Kibuye / Rwanda on the shores of Lake Kivu has ended over 20 guests participating in a workshop in hospital. Barbara Bush, daughter of former US President George W. Bush, was among those affected. Several of the more severe cases were transferred from the Kibuye Hospital to the King Faisal Hospital in the capital Kigali to aid a full recover.

Authorities have reacted by throwing the book at the hotel, which together with the responsible managers may now face criminal charges. Fines of up to 500.000 Rwanda Francs and prison terms of up to five years in severe cases could be dished out, as the industry watchdogs are reacting to the incident, ready to crank up inspections carried out in hotels and restaurants by local and national health authorities and the RDB inspectorate. A criminal investigation is according to a source underway now, that all victims have been discharged and returned home. The hotel was immediately closed down but has reportedly since been allowed to resume operations after a thorough inspection and cleanup of its kitchen and food storage facilities and after checking out the staff dealing with food for any pending illnesses.

Barbara Bush is the CEO of the Global Health Corps which had for the fourth time running held its annual media retreat at the location.

#### **Mauritius News**

##### **DO AIR MAURITIUS' PROFITS MARK TURN OF THE TIDE?**



Information was received from a source in Port Louis that Air Mauritius has apparently announced a profit of over 6.4 million Euros for the quarter which ended in December 2012 in group profits, which is a 10 million Euro turnaround of fortunes after suffering a 3.6 million Euros loss for the same quarter in 2011.

This significant financial turnaround is credited to the cost cutting and streamlining of operations put into effect by CEO Andre Viljoen, who after a period at the helm in an acting capacity of nearly two years was finally confirmed in his position in September last year, when the airline also got a new Chairman in Mr. Appalsamy Thomas, who had served the airline in various capacities, including as Managing Director, in the past.

<http://wolfganghthome.wordpress.com/2012/09/13/air-mauritius-confirms-viljoen-as-ceo-and-appoints-appalsamy-as-chairman/>

Cuts in destinations, among others were Milan, Frankfurt and Geneva axed while introducing more flights to Johannesburg, Capetown and Nairobi in Africa and shifting focus to the Far East, resulted in slightly lesser passenger numbers but an even greater reduction in operating costs, which translated into profitability where in the past the airline leaked money contributing to the losses which at the time threatened the survival of Air Mauritius. Watch this space for regular and breaking aviation news from the Eastern African and Indian Ocean region.

#### **Seychelles News**

##### **KENWYN HOUSE – A PIECE OF SEYCHELLES HISTORY IN THE HEART OF VICTORIA**



When the Carnaval de Carnivals parade juggernauts through the centre of Victoria, many vantage points avail themselves to capture the floats and performers through the lenses of cameras, and visitors from all over the world queue, jostle for positions and push for the front row on the pavements of the city, where often people are standing 10 deep and more to get a glimpse of what is going on.

Luckily, journalists accredited to cover the Seychelles Carnival Festival do have a dedicated press access area right in front of the famous Kenwyn House, which since the start of the festival in 2011 served as hospitality hotspot for

the media and made some by now famous photographs of floats possible from the elevated position of the first floor balustrade or the second floor balcony.

The house itself is by many considered even more famous than the Seychelles Carnival, something the archipelago's tourism gurus would perhaps argue over, but for sure the house is older, a lot older in fact, with its history dating back to the year 1855. This is according to the records found on premises but also by the explanation of those who should know, the staff working there, the staff at the tourist board and the Ministry of Tourism and the aficionados of classic Seychellois colonial architecture, which manifests itself at its Sunday best at Kenwyn House.

Declared a national monument in 1984 under the National Monuments Act, the building was in 2003 completely renovated by the owners Flawless Ltd. which, while using it to sell 'flawless gems and diamonds' on the first floor of the building, has set aside much of the classic residence to showcase Seychellois history, art and books, making it from all I could establish, the largest permanent art gallery across the entire archipelago.

Some of the furniture still on display at Kenwyn House dates back to the time the first tenant moved into the building in 1855, according to the records seen a Dr. James Henry Brooks, the then Chief Medical Officer in the colony and in another capacity also the German Consul. Dr. Brooks lived in the building until either 1878 when The Eastern Telegraphic Company from the UK bought the house from him or until 1879, when he – according to other records – moved out to take up residence somewhere else. The name eventually changed to Cable & Wireless, which then housed their engineers there who were setting up the communications base on the main island of Mahe before later on the respective General Managers were accommodated at Kenwyn House, as the building was named during this period by staff of the communications company. It could not be established if Dr. Brooks had initially given his house another name, but the name Kenwyn for all purposes stuck and it remained so until modern days. Today, the entire ground floor, at times described as the 'basement' is dedicated to the art gallery and Seychelles' top contemporary artists showcase their work, among them Michael Adams, George Camille, Camille Mondon, Alyssa Adams and Evelyn Fanchette, to name but a few.

The media pack though was more interested in cold drinks and the readily available snacks, served by the staff of Kenwyn House to everyone who had their media accreditation badge on display, and like in previous years Kenwyn House was a haven for a quick break, tanking up with a drink before resuming positions to capture the parade, or the dignitaries led by President James Alix Michel sitting in the specially erected tent across the road in front of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

Yet, just a few steps into the building, through the jewelry showroom, tend to reveal the majesty of this landmark building, visitor book open and ready to be signed. Old furniture, the wooden floors and wall panels and the book shelves, stacked with classics as well as contemporary books, describing the beauty of the Seychelles besides '**KOLONY**' written by my good friend Glynn BurrIDGE, who also freelances as copy writer for the tourist board, where he produces less scary write ups compared to the contents of his first, and widely acclaimed novel.



It was at Kenwyn House infact where Glynn handed this correspondent a signed copy of his book, specifically recommending '**Don't read at night**' in clear reference to the content, which by the looks of it may well be turned into a feature film sometime in the future. The story goes back to 1823, when combined British and French naval forces '**finally launch an attack against remnants of the rogue Pirate Republic of Libertia, seeking to dislodge them from their stronghold on the island of Madagascar. Anticipating the assault, the hard core of pirates with their degenerate tribal allies manages to escape aboard HMS Valorous, the Royal Society research vessel with a contingent of scientists under the command of a particularly brutal and sadistic fugitive captain, Eric Liddle. During a storm, Valorous with its now deeply divided crew, is shipwrecked on a remote atoll of the Seychelles Islands, setting the scene for the emergence of a monstrous, latter-day pirate cult with a dark secret ... and fresh taste for blood**'.

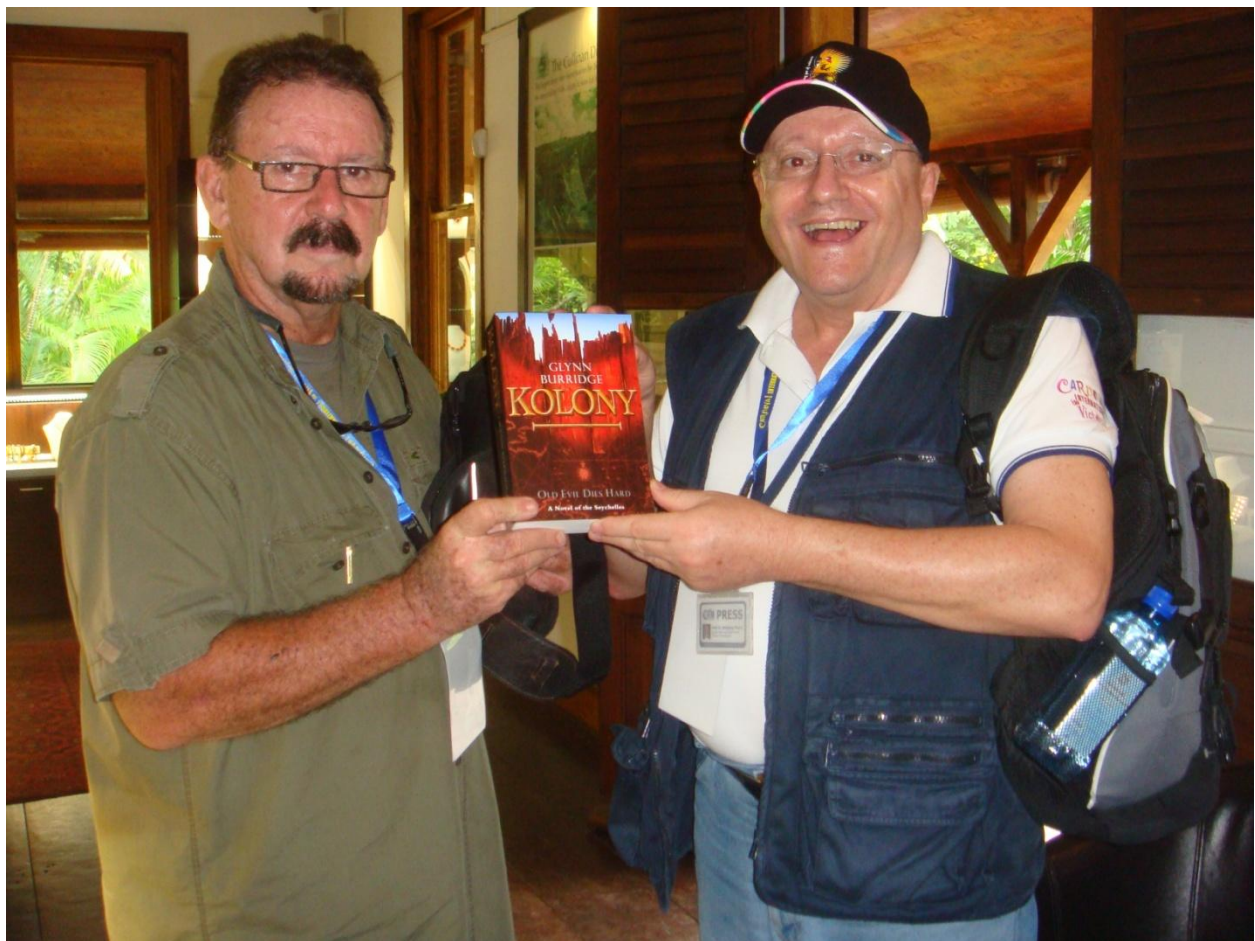
This description of the book's content is perhaps just from the imagination of Glynn's explorer and adventurer mind but then, knowing the history of the Seychelles Islands and that truly pirates used some of them to hide, recover



from raids and rest from being hunted by the navies of Britain and France, there may yet be a grain, or several, of truth in it. Having read deep into the 625 pages, I can however confirm that reading it at night, when a storm howls outside and eerie cries of birds are only partly audible before their sound is swallowed by the gusts of wind, may not be the kind of book the faint hearted should read.

Back to Kenwyn House though – it is as fine a piece of historical architecture as can be found today in the Seychelles and along with other old style villas and commercial buildings worth a visit, when criss crossing the island, by bus at still 5 Seychelles Rupees a trip, or when being part of one of the organized tours which also takes tourists to such places as ‘*Takamaka*’ where again, some old buildings are lovingly maintained to showcase that the archipelago is much more than just sun, sand and fun.

An appropriate time, a few days after the Carnival ended, to say thank you to my hosts of the Ministry of Tourism, the Seychelles Tourism Board and, last but not least, the staff at Kenwyn House who again offered the sustenance during the nearly 3 hour parade, without which some of the media pack would not have managed to complete their assignment without suffering withdrawal symptoms from lack of a cold one. Until next year, when the Carnaval de Carnivals, the Carnival International de Victoria will be held between April 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> in Victoria, on the main island of Mahe / Seychelles. See you there.



#### AIR SEYCHELLES SIGNS CODE SHARE DEAL WITH AIR BERLIN



The partnership between Air Seychelles and Abu Dhabi's national airline Etihad, which holds 40 percent of the Air Seychelles shares and manages the carrier under a multiyear management agreement, is paying off handsomely and has now facilitated a new code share arrangement which come into place yesterday.

Air Berlin, Germany's second largest airline and also in the Etihad 'stable' through a nearly 30 percent shareholding the Gulf based airline acquired two years ago, has put pen to paper with Air Seychelles and added Berlin and Duesseldorf as new codeshared destinations, connecting Mahe with two more German airports.

Air Seychelles already operated 26 codeshared flights to Germany via partner Etihad's Abu Dhabi hub on Etihad services and has now widened this number to 38 per week.

Cramer Ball, Air Seychelles' Chief Executive Officer was quoted saying: ***'More than 28,000 German tourists visited Seychelles in 2012, a 20 per cent increase over 2011. Germany is among our island's fastest growing markets so these new air links are vital to our tourism sector, the Seychelles' most important industry. The double-digit growth we are seeing from our new tourist markets supports our government's vision for a national airline that connects Seychelles to key markets while delivering world-class service with unique Creole warmth. We are confident the new connections and seamless flight experience will appeal to German travellers and ultimately deliver a new source of revenue, continuing Air Seychelles progress toward sustainable profitability in 2013 and beyond. Our partnership with our 40 per cent shareholder, Etihad Airways, is driving new growth as we capitalize not only on economies of scale, but also their relationships with other airlines. We can work together to identify partners which will optimally expand the reach of Air Seychelles across the globe, airberlin being a prime example'***.

Wolfgang Prock-Schauer, Chief Executive Officer of Air Berlin was quoted in a media release received by this correspondent as having replied: ***'The codeshare agreement with Air Seychelles is equally important for Air Berlin in a number of ways. Firstly, we are able to make our route network even more attractive by enhancing the number of weekly codeshare connections to the Seychelles. Secondly, the new agreement once again illustrates the enormous potential that the partnership with Etihad Airways offers in terms of the joint marketing of the route network and the targeted use of synergies across all areas'***.

Subject to regulatory approval, the two airlines plan to expand the scope of the agreement in the future to include more destinations on their respective networks and implement reciprocity through the respective frequent flyer programmes.

Air Seychelles is due to receive another Airbus A330-200, which was outfitted at the Etihad maintenance base in Abu Dhabi, in a matter of weeks and will from early March onwards then commence services from Mahe to Hong Kong, via Abu Dhabi, initially three times a week. Visit [www.airseychelles.com](http://www.airseychelles.com) for more information about the airline.

## NOTTING HILL MAKES IT THREE IN A ROW



(Seychelles' Minister of Tourism and Culture Alain St. Ange seen with some of the performers)

It came as no surprise that the three top foreign teams competing for the honours of claiming first prize in the just concluded Carnaval de Carnivals, the Carnival International de Victoria 2013, came from among Brazil, Mauritius and Notting Hill in the UK, which thrilled the crowds already during the opening show and then again when the parade juggernaut rocked and rolled through the centre of Victoria.

But it was the Notting Hill Carnival Road Show which again claimed top honours and claimed the trophy for best foreign float and performers, a fair verdict in the eyes of this correspondent who himself found his feet tapping to their tunes, eyes glued on their dance moves as they paraded by the media section outside the Ministry of Tourism and Culture last Saturday afternoon.

Claire Holder of the Notting Hill Carnival Group was awarded with a gold trophy sculpted by the famous Tom Bowers of the Seychelles. The prize giving ceremony award was presided over by Alain St. Ange, the Seychelles Minister for Tourism and Culture. The award presentation ceremony followed the Notting Hill Carnival Roads

Show Company vibrant performance at the carnival parade where public comments remained unanimous that the performance by Notting Hill was even more impressive this year than in previous years. By scoring the top mark, Notting Hill Carnival Road Show retains its title as the best International float of Carnaval International de Victoria. The Notting Hill Carnival remains the unbeatable international float of the Indian Ocean Vanilla Island's Carnival. Coming all the way from United Kingdom, this year's Notting Hill Carnival Road Show came in full swing, jamming the streets of Victoria overcoming Mauritius, who came out in second position and Brazilian group, Rosa de Ouro, which took the third position.



Mauritius beat the fancied Brazilians to claim second place and the Minister then released the following statement in which he said: ***'The Mauritian delegation has impressed the Seychellois public and all who attended the 2013 edition of the Carnaval International de Victoria. This is the first participation by Mauritius at the Indian Ocean Vanilla Islands Carnival that is staged annually in Seychelles'.***

Mauritius was parading alongside their sister islands of Seychelles, La Reunion and Madagascar with delegations from the Community of Nations. Mauritius went to Seychelles with Ms Shenaz Omarjee of the MTPA as the head of their delegation. They travelled to Seychelles and in so doing showcase the people of Mauritius, the island's culture and the unique selling points of Mauritius with the slogan 'Maurice c'est un plaisir' displayed on a big display balloon on a truck following the delegation in the carnival parade.

***'Mauritius participated with a sea life theme and they captured the attention of all who were in Victoria to watch the carnival parade last Saturday. The segatier were all enthusiastic and the Mauritian ladies in the parade beautifully dressed in a sea motif elegant dress. They did Mauritius proud'.***

The Mauritius carnival group presented a perfect mix between Sega and Samba and already during the opening show on Friday evening last week served notice of their intent to go home with silverware, as they got the crowd on their feet with a thrilling performance, then repeated as they paraded through Victoria. Well done indeed and surely, with this success under their belt, Mauritius will be a regular in future events and not come on board as a participant at the very last moment as was the case this year.

## SEYCHELLES AND LA REUNION SIGN CO-HOSTING AGREEMENT



The President of the Regional Council of the French island of La Reunion Mr. Robert Didier and Seychelles Tourism Minister Alain St. Ange signed a new agreement on the sidelines of the just concluded ***Carnaval de Carnivals – The Carnival International de Victoria*** which cements the three year old relationship between the two leading Vanilla Island partners for future events.

La Reunion will continue to co-host the annual carnival festival alongside the Seychelles, giving substantial additional exposure in the international tourism markets to La Reunion, which by admission of key staff attending the Carnival last week in Victoria has given their tourism sector a major boost vis a vis visibility and market penetration.

The renewed partnership allows to bring other partners on board too, as was the case this year with Zimbabwe and Madagascar and the Seychelles do expect to sign up additional co-hosts for the 2014 edition of the already globally



renowned carnival festival, which brought the world of carnivalists to Victoria this year with 15 participating countries from around the globe.

Alongside the co-hosting of the festival did the agreement also include further measures of cooperation whereby hospitality students from La Reunion can now study at the Seychelles Tourism Academy and placement programmes in Seychelles based resorts will be availed to them, with reciprocity for Seychellois hospitality students to undergo their industrial training and attachment period in resorts on La Reunion. ***'La Reunion and Seychelles have a special relationship. We cooperate for the carnival and we cooperate in the Vanilla Islands initiative. It now needs to see island hopping packages created by DMC's and for airlines to link the two partner islands so that tourists can visit and explore both. They have very distinct features which are unique and special'*** said a regular source from the tourism board in Victoria. Visit [www.seychelles.travel](http://www.seychelles.travel) and [www.reunion.fr](http://www.reunion.fr) for more information and details on the two destinations.

**AND** in closing, as most of the times, some worthwhile material from ***'Further Down South'*** taken from the ***Livingstone Weekly*** by Gill Staden:

## **VICE PRESIDENT MEETS LIVINGSTONE BUSINESS PEOPLE**

By Clare Mateke

Vice President, Dr Guy Scott, on 9th February met Livingstone business people at Chrismar Hotel to talk about trade and tourism. Over 150 people turned up for the meeting, including those involved in hotel and lodge managers, tour operators, small scale business people, artists, musicians, farmers, government representatives, etc. The Vice President was accompanied by Tourism and Arts Minister Sylvia Masebo, Southern Province Permanent Secretary, Dr Chileshe Mulenga, and Livingstone City Council Town Clerk, Vivian Chikoti. PF parliamentary candidate for Livingstone, Lawrence Evans, was also present.

In his opening remarks, the PS pointed out that the Patriotic Front Government was not only concerned about the poor, but also the business sector. His remarks were followed by those of Sylvia Masebo, who said this was a chance for the Vice President to interact with the business community as we do a count down to the UNWTO Conference in August. She said that in preparation for the conference, road works had started and some money had been released to improve the water and sanitation system. Various other issues were being addressed. She pointed out that in Zimbabwe the Government had partnered very effectively with the private sector in preparing for UNWTO, and she hoped the same could happen in Zambia.

Dr Guy Scott then spoke briefly, encouraging participants to feel free and ask about any issues affecting the business community. He said he was interested in what Government could do for the private sector and what the private sector could do for the government, particularly in connection with the UNWTO.

After the brief remarks the meeting was opened up for questions. The following are some of the issues that were raised:

Mwape Walumba from Lion Encounter – The roads are pathetic. We can provide fuel but have no graders. Can someone please provide graders? Answer from TC – two graders have been acquired under the roads project. The roads project for UNWTO will be doing 52 km of tarmac, including Mosi-o-tunya Road.

Benjamin Mibenge from Wildlife Society – A big billboard at the airport welcomes visitors to Mosi Beer. Could the same company please sponsor a sign welcoming visitors to Livingstone and the Victoria Falls instead? Answer – The Local Organising Committee (LOC) will look into this issue.

Felix Daka from Cross Border Traders Association – Loan facilities are not reaching small-scale traders, who are also facing competition from foreign small-scale traders. Can anyone help?

Michael Mubita M, small-scale trader and artist – Zambian TV advertises many other countries but does not do enough to advertise itself. Further, craft sellers have to compete against big hotels, who sell foreign crafts to their visitors. Answer – the VP said that supporting local artists and craftspeople was very important and there were certain things the government needed to do in connection with this. He said hotels should be encouraged to display local art works instead of foreign ones. He said the policy on hotels selling crafts was under review. The issue of hotels importing foreign crafts was a serious one and should be addressed

Andrew Murrin from Green Tree Lodge – Can we do something about reducing or removing visa fees? They are putting visitors off coming to Zambia because they are too high. Answer from Minister of Tourism & Arts – the issue of visas had been raised by the Ministry and been handed over to the Ministry of Home Affairs. There was need to see if some visas could be reduced or done away with completely. She said that Zambia is still one of the most expensive tourist destinations and that the visa fees tended to be a hindrance rather than a benefit. She said the issue of RTSA charging vehicle fees at the borders was unique to Zambia and was also an issue to be looked into. She urged the business community to keep reminding government of these issues.

Peter Jones from River Club – Thanked Government for tax incentives in connection with UNWTO. Concerned about heavy trucks that were damaging the roads in Livingstone. Is anything being done about a bypass? Answer from Town Clerk – This is a long term plan, but not part of the 20 roads being done for the UNWTO. But it was important and should be dealt with at the next meeting of the LOC. Perhaps could gravel the bypass.

Guy Scott pointed out that many of these were local government issues. He said that there was need to have regular meetings with local government officers.

William from a car hire company – How can we benefit from the tax benefits on tourism vehicles if we cannot get loans to buy the vehicles?

Senga Chashi, Musician, Zambia Association of Musicians – Musicians in Southern Province have been neglected. What is government going to do to support local musicians? The LOC should involve local artists and musicians, particularly youths.

Alexander Mutale from LTA – How far has government addressed the issue of yellow fever vaccination requirements? Answer from Ms Masebo – Government is very concerned about the Yellow Fever issue. The Ministry is working on it. This issue should be raised next week when several government ministers would be meeting in Livingstone to discuss the UNWTO Conference.

Alan Mulenga from Muvi TV – Can government allow private local broadcasters to cover the UNWTO Conference, rather than foreign ones? Answer from Ms Masebo – Muvi TV should join the Sub Committee on publicity.

Yataba – What is government doing about street vending? It is getting out of hand. Answer from Ms Masebo – Street vendors have been engaged on a UNWTO Committee and they are very understanding and agreeable to suggestions.

Nicholas Katanekwa, past chair of LTA – Can we reduce border controls to allow visitors to see both sides of the Falls without having to go through customs and immigration? This would allow visitors to see water in the Falls even when it is dry or nearly dry on the Zambian side. Secondly, can we agree on a way of jointly sharing the delegates for the UNWTO between Zambia and Zimbabwe? Ms Masebo answered that the issue of immigration was complicated and could not be dealt with in a day.

Ms Masebo appealed to the business community to help make Livingstone truly a tourist capital.

Dr Guy Scott said the issues of visas and yellow fever had to be resolved before the UNWTO. He said there had been no case of yellow fever in Zambia for 67 years and that only one country required yellow fever certificates for people travelling from Zambia. He said the issue was being addressed.

Dr Guy Scott pointed out that the office of the Vice Presidency strangely has the power of convening meetings where people talk. He urged people to talk with each other even when he was not present. He said he would return in two weeks and would be happy to call another meeting if people wanted it.

Ms Masebo said that there was a team of government ministers meeting in Livingstone the coming Tuesday and suggested a joint meeting be arranged with them and the business community to deal with some of the issues raised. She said the meeting would be arranged for Tuesday or Wednesday.

Dr Scott said he had to leave, but proposed that the group remain behind to come up with a list of priority issues to be presented to the Ministers. So after two hours with the Vice President and Minister of Tourism and Arts, a fair number of people remained behind for another two hours or so to produce a priority list of issues to present next week.

Some of the issues brought up in the second part of the meeting were:

- provision of emergency health services during UNWTO
- funding for loans for small-scale businesses
- visas – reduce them, make available at point of entry, payable by card, remove multiple entry requirement
- RTSA fees for vehicles at borders
- information dissemination – should be positive and patriotic
- make resources available for local media
- development of Livingstone airport
- incentives for training and development
- coordination between government bodies like NHCC and ZAWA to avoid double charges
- reduction of charges for various services to reduce tourism costs
- facilities for people with disabilities
- lower the tourism tax rate, as for mining and agriculture
- reduce charges at borders
- address yellow fever certificate requirements
- create bypass for Livingstone
- allow more airlines to fly to Livingstone
- regulate tourism training in local colleges to improve standards
- address issue of load shedding
- include curio sellers in the UNWTO programme
- allow taxis to enter the game park
- need a recycling centre for Livingstone
- need public conveniences in town
- organise a fashion show for UNWTO
- improve water and sanitation facilities
- improve local information flow about UNWTO
- decentralise issuing of tourism licences
- improve times and frequency of flights between Lusaka and Livingstone
- city dump site harbouring criminals

- address issue of street sellers as they are making the town dirty and difficult to walk along corridors
- blocked drains need addressing

I left the meeting before the priorities were arrived at, but it was pretty clear that some of the important issues were visas, yellow fever requirements, tourism costs, roads and making a clean and tidy city that would be welcoming to foreign visitors. Another important issue was information flow, as there seemed to be not enough sharing of information concerning preparations for the upcoming UNWTO conference.

All in all, I think it was a good meeting. Even if not all the issues were addressed, it provided a good forum for people to raise pertinent issues and learn a bit about what was or was not being done to address them, or who should be addressing them.

## PRESS AND NEWS RELEASE

The Livingstone Tourism Association (LTA) held its Annual General Meeting Fallsway Lodge in Livingstone on 7th February 2013.

The outgoing Chairman Kingsley Lilamono highlighted some of the areas that the LTA had embarked on, during the past year, which included the establishment of a working relationship with the Livingstone City Council as a major partner in the development of Livingstone. In addition to this he emphasized the importance of all stakeholders to become involved in the Tourism Policy review which was recently launched by the Minister of Tourism and Arts in Lusaka. This formed the basis of tourism development for Zambia and would be the platform from which the tourism levy would be determined and a definitive proposal needed to be made to the Ministry. He further went on to say that ZAWA were in the process of moving the park entry gate near to Chrisma Hotel and he urged that there be positive consultation with stakeholders so that this move was not detrimental to tourism for Livingstone. He reminded the membership that 2013 was also an extremely important year for Livingstone with the co-hosting of the UNWTO with Zimbabwe and it was necessary that challenges faced by the local organizing committee be met and that all stakeholders should work together to ensure the success of this congress.

During the meeting a new Executive Committee was elected and the Board members for 2013 are:

- |     |                   |                 |
|-----|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1.  | Active Monze      | - Chairman      |
| 2.  | Alex Mutali       | - Vice Chairman |
| 3.  | Graham Nel        | - Treasurer     |
| 4.  | James Mwanza      | - Secretary     |
| 5.  | Kim Phippen       | - Board Member  |
| 6.  | Sonja Clay        | - Board Member. |
| 7.  | Kalinda Hamambwe  | - Board Member  |
| 8.  | Joyce Sikabbuba   | - Board Member. |
| 9.  | Michel Musenga    | - Board Member  |
| 10. | Kingsley Lilamono | - Board Member  |

In his remarks as the new Chairman of the LTA, Active Monze reminded the membership that the existence of LTA is to benefit the tourism industry in the country as a whole, with Livingstone being the gateway for the rest of the country. Tourism is the major economic driver for Livingstone city and its residents. The success of tourism in Livingstone will spread to the entire country and promote sector growth. He further urged members that the success of the Association is through unity and that everyone should strive to introduce at least one new member to the Association. He encouraged the

members to work hard and participate in LTA activities and promote the destination as and said that he was looking forward to the challenges that lay ahead in striving to promote Livingstone as a preferable Tourist destination in Central Africa.

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### Rain and High Water

We have been having lots of rain this week. The Zambezi is high already. But more water is on the way: *Learners at some of the 21 schools in the flood-hit Kabbe Constituency in the Caprivi Region are accommodated in makeshift shelters on school premises after the rising Zambezi River cut off most villages from schools.* (From New Era)

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### Kariba Dam

The gates at the dam will be opened in March. The notice says that up to three gates will be opened. Anyone living downstream of the dam wall should be prepared and move to higher ground where necessary.

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### Rhino Stats

Johannesburg - A total of 82 rhino have been poached in the country since January 1, the water and environmental affairs department said on Wednesday.  
“The Kruger National Park remains the hardest hit by rhino poachers this year, having lost 61 rhinos to mostly foreign poachers,” it said in a statement.  
“Twenty one poachers have been arrested, 14 of them in the Kruger National Park.”  
Eight rhino had been poached in KwaZulu-Natal, six in North West, four in Mpumalanga and three in Limpopo ...

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### Syndicates target loopholes in SA hunting permits

The Mercury

Durban - Criminal syndicates have been roping in bogus sport-hunters from the Czech Republic, Poland and Russia to step around South Africa’s ban on Vietnamese “pseudo-hunters” shooting rhinos and smuggling their horns to the East.

Last year, in an attempt to plug a legal loophole exploited by Vietnamese organised crime syndicates, Environment Minister Edna Molewa announced that the government would refuse to issue any more rhino-hunting permits to Vietnamese citizens.

The move came after widespread abuse of hunting permits to circumvent the rhino horn trading ban under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites).  
Since 2003 Vietnamese citizens have hunted more than 400 rhinos legally in South Africa, sparking a major outcry from several conservation groups.

This has pressured the government to stop a situation whereby people with no prior hunting experience were being recruited by organised crime groups to obtain rhino horn for the black market under the pretext of legitimate sport-hunting permits.

Now it has emerged that the crime syndicates changed their strategy rapidly, even before the ban on Vietnamese hunters took effect in South Africa in April last year.

A new report to be presented to the Cites meeting in Bangkok on March 3 has suggested that Vietnamese middle-men hired sport hunters from Poland and the Czech Republic to visit South Africa as “proxy pseudo-hunters”.

An intelligence report from the Czech Environmental Inspectorate to the Cites rhino working group in September last year warned that several Czech hunters (mainly from one area in northern Bohemia) were being recruited by Vietnamese agents living in the Czech Republic.

“These recruited ‘hunters’ are not members of any Czech hunting associations, do not have hunting licences and have no previous hunting experience. They allegedly travel to South Africa to hunt a rhinoceros at a selected location, identified by the recruiter,” reads the report. Expedition expenses had been covered by the recruiters, who also made Czechs sign a declaration to give up the rhino trophy when they returned home.

“Once the trophy reaches the Czech Republic it is laundered into the illegal trade,” says the report, which notes that Czech and South African authorities were co-operating to deal with the new trend. According to a summary report co-authored by Richard Emslie, the Pietermaritzburg-based scientific officer of the African Rhino Specialist Group, rhino horn smuggling remained “one of the most structured criminal activities currently faced by Cites”.

There was also evidence that Polish and Russian proxy hunters were being recruited for the same purpose, while syndicates were scrambling to fill the growing demand for rhino horn by raiding museums, antique dealers, auction houses, taxidermists and private collections worldwide. Since 2009 at least 94 rhino horns had been stolen in Argentina, Europe and the US. Europol had reported at least 67 rhino horn thefts and 15 attempted thefts in Europe since 2011, although the spate of museum thefts appeared to have dropped significantly since the UK and some European nations introduced tighter controls last year to prevent rhino horns being laundered into the black market.

Although the South African Department of Environmental Affairs had been alerted to the bogus hunts by Poles and Czechs, the Cites report said there was still a need for vigilance to ensure that only bona fide hunters were granted permits.

Ironically, there were indications that the clampdown on Vietnamese and other bogus hunters and tougher domestic clamps in South Africa may be driving the unrelenting rhino-poaching spree.

According to Emslie’s report, the clampdown on bogus hunts and the plugging of other loopholes “appears to have significantly constricted the illicit rhino horn supply from pseudo-hunting; and this might have resulted in shifts to other sources of horn such as poaching (the largest source of illegal horn), illegal dehorning, or thefts”.

However, Emslie said other factors could be also at play, including increasing corruption or the emergence of new rhino horn markets.



Mozambique was also emerging as a major link in the chain in the horn smuggling routes to the Far East, with evidence that, increasingly, horns were being shifted out via Maputo International Airport and other sea or airports in Mozambique.

Horns were then sent to Nairobi, Addis Ababa and Mauritius and to Vietnam and China.

There was also evidence that local professional hunters were involved in the scams, particularly after the country imposed tighter regulations on the number of rhinos which could be shot by a single hunter. “In some cases, professional hunters in South Africa, rather than the ‘hunter’ listed on the permit, illegally shot the rhino, which is a violation of the country’s hunting laws.”

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