

AVIATION TOURISM & CONSERVATION

NEWS EAST AFRICA

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



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Third edition February 2014

Africa News

AFRICA TRAVEL WEEK ORGANIZERS PROVIDE UPDATES FOR CAPE TOWN EVENTS

(Posted 14th February 2014)



Africa Travel Week event organizers Thebe Reed Exhibitions in conjunction with Reed Travel Exhibitions have just announced further details of the Hosted Buyer Programme for the inaugural Africa Travel Week, taking place at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) from 28th of April to 03rd of May. The week comprises three co-located shows – International Luxury Travel Market (ILTM) Africa; Incentives, Business Travel & Meetings (IBTM) Africa and World Travel Market (WTM) Africa.

The Hosted Buyer Programme is exclusive to all three Africa Travel Week events, creating tailored opportunities for exhibitors to meet with top-level buyers in focused, one-on-one appointments. These VIP buyers are qualified to attend WTM Africa, IBTM Africa and ILTM Africa via a specially designed accreditation system.

WTM Africa's world-renowned Hosted Buyer Programme offers a unique opportunity for 300 senior level travel industry buyers with direct purchasing power to attend WTM Africa as VIPs, including complimentary accommodation, transfers and a contribution towards flight costs. The Hosted Buyer Programme allows buyers to select appointments with exhibitors prior to the show to enable them to maximize their time at WTM Africa and engage in as many business discussions as possible during the two days of the event.

WTM Africa Hosted Buyer Manager Paulina Lund said in a media release: *'We currently have buyers confirmed from 23 different countries including Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Germany and United Arab Emirates'*. The dedicated Hosted Buyer Team employs a highly targeted buyer recruitment campaign and applies a strict qualification process, ensuring that the right business contacts are brought to WTM Africa's exhibitors.

'WTM Africa is great for us as it gathers the whole African market under one umbrella. We are looking to meet suppliers for updates and investigate new opportunities' was the comment attributed to Klas Wallin, Sales Manager, Escape Safaris, Sweden.

Katarina Shepherd, the Marketing Manager for WTM Africa added: *'We look forward to welcoming hosted buyers who would like to attend WTM Africa on 2 and 3 May. In addition to many interesting and innovative products on display on the show floor, we have an exciting event programme that will offer great learning and networking opportunities'*.

IBTM Africa will host 50 international top level MICE planners, guaranteed by the Hosted Buyer Programme. They are handpicked from the UK, Europe, North America, South America, Middle East and Asia Pacific, personally invited and verified against strict qualification criteria. All Hosted Buyers will have proven inbound business to place and will be qualified based on budget, type and number of events and decision making ability. IBTM Hosted Buyers commit to conduct a minimum of 36 appointments over two days with exhibitors of their choice and exhibitors are also able to request appointments with the Hosted Buyers they would like to meet.

ILTM Africa offers up to 57 pre-scheduled appointments, 15 more than any other luxury travel event in Africa. Exhibitors at ILTM Africa 2013 saw a return of 12 times their investment: - the event is 36% more cost effective than any other luxury travel event in Africa.

ILTM Africa's strict qualification criterion ensures that only the best of international luxury buyers with a particular specialism in Africa are invited to the event.

To apply to be a Hosted Buyer please visit:

WTM Africa - www.wtm-africa.com/en/Hosted-Buyer-Programme or email Polly Magraw at Polly.Magraw@reedexpo.co.uk

IBTM Africa - www.ibtm-events.com/en/IBTM-Africa/Hosted-Buyer-Programme or email Shinu Pillai at Shinu.Pillai@reedexpo.ae

ILTM Africa - www.iltm.com/africa/vip-buyers/becoming-a-vip-hosted-buyer or email David Patterson at David.Paterson@reedexpo.co.uk

For further information about each of the Africa Travel Week events, please visit www.africatrawelweek.com

EMIRATES REELS IN VISITORS WITH FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES

(Posted 11th February 2014)



Yesterday it was the announcement that Emirates, Dubai's award winning airline, was the main sponsor of the *'Festival of Literature'* and today more news emerged that the airline will be the main sponsor of the *'Dubai Jazz Festival – a Unique Take on Jazz, Pop and Rock'* which will commence on the 13th of February and run until the 20th of February with a list of participants second to none. Taking place at Dubai's Festival Park in Dubai's Festival City, purpose built to cater for such mega events which now form part and parcel of how Dubai markets itself around the world, the best of the best have been included in the lineup of performers.

Names like Santana, the Al McKay Allstars with their Earth Wind and Fire Experience Feat, Stone Temple Pilots, Olly Murs, Jamie Cullum, The Wanted, Colbie Caillat, Al Foster, Larry Carlton, Billy Childs, Sugaray Rayford, Tad Robinson and many others will undoubtedly thrill the crowds from the Toyota and Emirates stages. This is the 12th edition of a festival which has grown in popularity and has in the past seen such names as Deep Purple perform.



Emirates flies from the key airports in Eastern Africa, like Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Entebbe to Dubai and special festival fares are available for travelers still considering a trip to the city of glitz and glamour.

Visit www.dubaijazzfest.com for more details on the programme, where to get the tickets and more and go to www.emirates.com for fares from your point of residence to Dubai.

EMIRATES ANNOUNCES ‘FESTIVAL OF LITERATURE’ FOR MARCH

(Posted 10th February 2014)



The InterContinental Hotel Dubai Festival City will be the venue for the upcoming Emirates’s Festival of Literature, which will take place in four weeks time from 04th to 08th of March. Patron of the annual event, which has grown in leaps and bounds in recent years, is His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai.

Over 300 sessions, panel discussions, workshops and master classes will be available to visitors with sessions being conducted in Arabic, English and French.

The 2014 Festival’s main theme is Metamorphosis, one of the great themes of storytelling from the earliest days of the written word through to the present. Festival organizers have also confirmed that several favourite events from previous years will return, including Desert Stanzas, the Murder Mystery Dinner, the George Orwell Lecture, given this year by Jeremy Bowen, the Watani Debate, and the Quick Pitch with Luigi Bonomi.

New events for 2014 include Friday Rhythms, an evening of music and poetry featuring LiTTLe MACHiNe, Female Focus, a morning devoted to celebrating women’s achievements and exploring the challenges of modern society (men are definitely welcome) and Literary Idol, a cross between Pop Idol and Dragon’s Den, in which a panel of experts critique writers’ unpublished work, which will be read aloud by an actor. The organizers have reportedly also teamed up with the Dubai Food Festival to put on a greatly improved Cookery Strand of literary lunches, demonstrations and panels.

With the Literature Festival becoming larger every year have the organizers also put together themed guides for visitors to choose from under the category they are most interested in:

2014’s Arabic lineup

A Celebration of all Kinds of Fiction

Calligraphy

Cookery

Crime and Thriller

Economics and Business

French authors for 2014

Historians at Emirates LitFest

How to get published

Indian authors for 2014

Other worlds (fantasy)

Writing Life (biography and memoir)

'Hello Tomorrow' – if anyone ever needs a reason to fly to Dubai with Emirates, here is yet another one.

East Africa News

EAST AFRICAN COURT OF JUSTICE HEARS FINAL SUBMISSIONS IN SERENGETI HIGHWAY CASE

(Posted 13th February 2014)



Details have emerged from Arusha, that the East African Court of Justice has earlier this week heard final submissions from the Tanzanian government and the plaintiffs who are seeking to obtain a permanent injunction of the construction of the so called Serengeti highway, which threatens to materially disrupt the annual migration of the wildebeest between the Serengeti to the Masai Mara.

Main opposing party, the Africa Network for Animal Welfare, or in short ANAW, represented by legal counsel S.K. Mbalelo, submitted that: *'the action of constructing the road across the National Park is unlawful and infringes Articles 5 3 (c), 8 1 (c), 112 1 (e), 114 1 (a) of the treaty for the establishment of the East African Community. He added that the road will create negative impacts which will adversely affect the eco-system and the environment and that the Court has jurisdiction to entertain the dispute.*

He further argued that the road will be a potential threat to wildlife as it will interrupt their movements and migration.

The United Republic of Tanzania, represented by Principal State Attorney Malata Gabriel, opposed the plaintiff's application, advancing a number of mitigating factors, among them that the quoted protocol on Environment and Natural Resources was not yet ratified though not stating the reason for that fact being the delaying tactics by Tanzania to create legal loopholes and escape doors.

The court told the two parties that the decision will be made public on notice though no time frame was given as of now. Be sure you watch this space for details when the outcome of the case is known.

Uganda News

KEY AVIATION WORKSHOPS IN ENTEBBE LESS THAN A MONTH AWAY

(Posted 14th February 2014)



AviAssist, in conjunction with CASSOA, East Africa's Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency, is in the final stages of preparing for a number of key certification workshops to be held at the Protea Hotel in Entebbe from the 10th of March onwards. While a number of workshops are sold out already, a few places remain open for those making their decisions at the last moment. All the relevant details are shown below including websites and email contacts for ease of booking one of those places. The *Pearl of Africa* extends a warm welcome to participants and details about the country's tourism attractions can be accessed via www.visituganda.com with yet more particulars about our 10 national parks via www.ugandawildlife.org. See you in Entebbe in March and for those who cannot make it, expect some live coverage from on site.



4 Good reasons to be in Uganda in March



1 **Airworthiness Certification course** - 10-12 March

Only 9 places left!

The course addresses key airworthiness aspects of design, maintenance and operation of aircraft. Learn to understand & apply airworthiness certification regulations.

For a detailed program [click here](#)



2 **Flight Data Management course** - 11 & 12 March

Only 4 places left!

This course will provide you with a solid appreciation of the technical, operational, management and legal opportunities surrounding a Flight Data Monitoring program.

For the program [click here](#)



3 **2Gether 4Safety seminar** - 13 & 14 March

Gain insight on how to maximise the resources available to you and be proactive in every area of aviation safety, in 2014 and beyond....

The seminar will provide a forum for the aviation industry to meet in a collaborative environment to identify safety concerns, devise approaches to reduce risk and implement initiatives to improve safety.

Venue: Protea Hotel - a fantastic venue by Lake Victoria!

For the program [click here](#)

For a video of the 2013 edition, [click here](#)





4 IATA Dangerous Goods course - 17-21

March

Only 4 places left!

- Cat. 6 course
- understand & apply IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations
- Pass the exam and earn yourself an IATA certificate
- Includes a copy of the IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations (worth €225)

For the program [click here](#)

Get your shot of safety updates!

With just one month to go before the AviAssist safety campus takes place in Entebbe, it is imperative that you register as soon as possible in order to secure your place at this essential, safety focussed string of events.

There are a number of easy ways to register:

Visit the website - [click here](#)

Email the registration desk at events@aviassist.org

The three courses are kindly hosted by our partner, the Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency [CASSOA](#) of the East African Community.

Registration in all events includes:

- Tea & coffee breaks
- Lunches
- Event bag
- A 2GB USB disk full of aviation safety reference materials
- **A year's subscription to our full colour quarterly SafetyFocus magazine**

Help us promote these events and forward this email to anyone you think should be attending. Only with good numbers can we continue and expand our work. As an independent, non-profit organisation, we rely on participation and support of aviation organisations and companies, even if only through attending our great events!

See you in Entebbe!

Tom Kok

Director

events@aviassist.org

AviAssist Foundation - www.aviassist.org

In co-operation with among others:



BRITISH AIRWAYS PARTNERS WITH UGANDA'S CORPORATE LEAGUE FOR CHARITY

(Posted 11th February 2014)



British Airways Uganda and the Corporate League, a football league for Ugandan teams, have joined hands to raise funds for local charities through a season opening mini tournament which according to a media release just received will become an annual event.

The Kyandondo Rugby Club will be the venue on the 23rd of February for the first such event, and proceeds have been committed to a number of charitable causes in line with the BA / Comic Relief partnership '*Flying Start*'. Each participating team will bring a million Uganda Shillings to the fund, and several have already committed to play in the tournament, including Civicon, G4S, AAR, DFCU Bank and SSL Logistics, giving the fundraiser a 5 million shillings headstart.



(The key 'players' from left to right are Trevor Ariho, PRO of AAR, Martin Mungai, Business Development Manager G4S, British Airways Country Commercial Manager Faith Chaitezvi and Richard Kawere from the Corporate League)

The Corporate League is now in its 12th year and as such a well established corporate sports event series and therefore a choice partner for British Airways to be certain of both publicity as well as the capacity to raise money for Corporate Social Responsibility projects.

The tournament winning team will receive the BA Charity Shield, team members will be honoured with medals and there is also one return ticket to London in the bag of goodies the winners will take home. The best male and female player and the best goalkeeper too will be recognized with a special prize.

Under the rules each team must comprise 7 players, at least one of them a woman, three subs and have a head coach and a team manager. Uganda's corporate world, active in sports and active in charitable causes, way to go.

KEEN TO NAME A YOUNG BORN RHINO – ZIWA GOT THE ANSWER FOR YOU

(Posted 11th February 2014)



A couple, wishing to remain anonymous but whose contribution to the rhino conservation nevertheless needs a mention and a standing ovation, has named the third of Kori's calves Waribe – meaning 'Unite' or 'Coming together' in Alur, a local vernacular. Kori's previous calves were named Justus and Laloyo by the same couple. According to Rhino Fund Uganda's Angie Genade, CEO of RFU and Uganda's proverbial rhino lady, the naming of a newborn rhino is really a question of approaching RFU and coming to terms over naming rights, making a donation to the Rhino Fund – so far it has not been through open bidding but rather through 'bilateral' arrangements, and hey presto, a company, an organization or an individual will be able to put their, her or his chosen name to the little one.

Says Angie in response to questions raised recently when meeting her in Kampala during one of her rare visits to the city: ***'There is no formal system for getting to name a rhino. [It is] pretty much a case of mailing me and enquiring as to the cost which is normally [around] US Dollars 5000. If you are happy with that you put your name up with me to enable you to name the next rhino born and I manage that and keep you informed as to how things are going and when the baby is due and the birth etc. Once the baby is born, you give us the [chosen] name and do the [money] transfer. Once the money is received in the Rhino Fund bank account we make it known what the babies name is on Facebook, [on] our website www.rhinofund.org and on notice boards and[announce] who named it. After that we send quarterly updates and photos of the rhino you named. Names should preferably be African names and [if possible] not more than 6 letters (this makes it easier on data sheets etc).'***



(Kori and her only hours' old baby girl, now named Waribe – picture courtesy of Rhino Fund Uganda)

Another birth is expected in a few weeks time on Ziwa, which will bring the number of young rhinos born on the sanctuary to 9 and the total number to 15, a remarkable achievement and against many odds stacked against RFU at the onset, when many doubted it could be done, the funds could be raised to create the Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary and the breeding programme, once the 6 adult rhinos had arrived, could actually take root.

Those early critics have been silenced over the years and the rate of reproduction, just over two years, has amazed many in the rhino conservation community around the world, who now seek answers to what RFU has been doing over the past year to achieve such a phenomenal success rate.

Visits to the sanctuary are free, i.e. no entrance fee is charged, and those who wish to go and track rhinos by foot can do so after making a donation at the sanctuary headoffice towards rhino conservation and to raise much needed funds to pay for veterinary services and the now over 90 staff who are tasked to protect the sanctuary and the prized rhinos, monitor the animals, collect data and carry out research on rhino behaviour.

Watch this space for more news from Ziwa, as and when the next baby is born.

UGANDA TOURISM BOARD GETS NEW BOSS

(Posted 10th February 2014)



Cuthbert Baguma will be succeeded at the helm of the Uganda Tourism Board by Mr. Stephen Asiimwe, who was appointed as CEO of Tourism Uganda last week and introduced by the Minister for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities Maria Mutagamba.

Joining UTB from the private sector, Asiimwe was best known over the years in his capacity as CEO and Editor in Chief of the East African Business Week, a weekly business newspaper covering the entire East African Community.

His experience in the media business promises a closer cooperation with the local, regional and international media in the future, including a stronger engagement with the social media scene which under the former regime at UTB was hardly tapped into, foregoing many opportunities to promote Uganda as *The Pearl of Africa*.

Asiimwe will be deputized by one John Ssempebwa.

Uganda's Tourism Board has been underfunded for years, barely scratching by meeting recurrent expenses, as the Ministry of Finance continues to treat the tourism industry more like an accidental sector than a leading performer for the national economy, in spite of annual budget allocations which kept the ministry, and the tourism board, near poverty levels. Here too it is hoped that the new leadership will be more effectively lobbying parliament and the finance ministry officials in charge of preparing the resource distribution ahead of the national budget, which will be read next month, to at last have Uganda match her neighbours in tourism marketing spending.

Congratulations to Stephen on his appointment and good fortunes in the years ahead.

AIR UGANDA RECEIVES THUMBS UP BY IATA AS IOSA CERTIFICATION RENEWED

(Posted 09th February 2014)



According to information received has Air Uganda recently completed their latest IATA safety audit, resulting in a two year renewal of their IOSA Certification. The IATA Operational Safety Audit is presently the non plus ultra for airlines to show full compliance with local regulatory requirements, IATA guidelines and recommendations and aircraft manufacturers directives on aircraft maintenance and inspections.

Air Uganda operates a fleet of three Bombardier CRJ200 jets and flies from its hub in Entebbe to Nairobi and Mombasa, to Kilimanjaro and Dar es Salaam (in codeshare with Precision Air), Bujumbura, Kigali (in codeshare with RwandAir), as well as to Juba and Mogadishu.

IOSA certification is today a key requirement for smaller regional airlines like Air Uganda to be able to discuss cooperation, interline agreements and even codeshare arrangements with larger carriers or be chosen by them to feed and de-feed traffic. Visit www.air-uganda.com for more information on U7's flight schedule and special offers.

Kenya News

KENYA TOURISM BOARD ON MARKETING MISSION IN THE GULF

(Posted 14th February 2014)



The Kenya Tourism Board is presently on an extended marketing mission in the Gulf, concluding visits to Dubai and Abu Dhabi before over the weekend heading to Doha, the capital of Qatar.

The Gulf region is of growing importance for Kenya as the large number of affluent expatriates working in the UAE, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait provide a significant pool of potential visitors, besides the citizens of these countries wanting to escape the summer heat and enjoy the beaches of the coast or the safari parks

upcountry. The UAE are connected with Kenya from Dubai, Abu Dhabi and from Sharjah by Kenya Airways, Emirates, Etihad – which flies in code share with Kenya Airways, Air Arabia and even RwandAir, which has traffic rights between Mombasa and Dubai as part of their flights from Kigali. Saudia is flying to Nairobi from Riyadh and Jeddah, Oman Air from Muscat and Qatar Airways from Doha, offering easy connections at often spectacular special fares. KTB has in connection with their marketing mission just released the following media statement. For more information visit www.magicalkenya.com

Start Quote:

UAE, a fertile ground for Kenya's tourism product offering

The Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) continues with its weeklong camp in the GCC countries in pursuit of a share of the outbound travelers in this region. KTB in the last two days met over 100 Destination Marketing Companies (DMC) in both Dubai and Abu Dhabi with a view of enhancing knowledge about Kenya and making direct contacts with the travel trade companies accompanying KTB.

Abu Dhabi which had a large town out of DMCs is the centre of the UAEs oil and gas industry, thus a wealthy city where travelers are keen to sample luxury and unique products as offered by Kenya. KTB confirms that the focus has been on promoting luxury aspects of Kenya to the trade to a population whose disposable income is significantly high. In Dubai, where the majority of travel to Kenya from the region starts, the populace here is more aware on Kenya's tourism product but KTB was keen to highlight to the trade what is new. So far, Dubai has over the last 3 years shown the highest percentage in growth with numbers doubling in the last two years. KTB also had an opportunity to share with select media in the region an overview of Kenya with specific emphasis on tourism. KTB confirmed that Kenya is committed to security for all her visitors and appreciated the support of media in the region through coverage on Kenya especially through sporting events like the recent Dubai Sevens as well as various documentaries and features on Kenya which had elevated Kenya to the global map.

Addressing the DMCs from a city Hotel in Abu Dhabi, Kenya's Ambassador to the UAE, H.E. Ambassador Mohammed Gello applauded the Ministry of East African Affairs, Commerce and Tourism which through the KTB team was seeking out the UAE clientele. He urged KTB to constantly maintain presence in the region as other competing destinations have taken notice of the same market. He singled out unique places in Kenya like Nyeri from where Queen Elizabeth was pronounced queen and where the iconic Scouts movement leader, Baden Powell was buried as part of Kenya's untold stories laying emphasis on the need to front the various other products beyond wildlife and the beach. Ambassador Gello cited the relationship of Kenya and UAE as going back thousands of years through the coastal connection but had been crystallized more recently through opening up of foreign mission offices in both countries.

One of the biggest strengths that Kenya enjoys as it pursues tourists in the region is the level of connectivity through about 8 direct flights to Kenya a day; these are provided by Kenya Airways, Emirates, Etihad and Rwandair. The Ambassador assured the tour operators that the visa process to Kenya was smooth and that he and his team at the embassy in Abu Dhabi and the Consulate in Dubai were ready to assist travel agents even beyond working hours in cases of any challenges regarding visa issuance especially for large groups.

KTB proceeds on the final leg to Doha, Qatar where both media and DMC sessions are anticipated to build more awareness of Kenya as a destination of choice.

(For further clarifications please get in touch with wwalya@ktb.go.ke)

End Quote

MAKE A DATE WITH KENYA AIRWAYS' FIRST B787 DREAMLINER

(Posted 14th February 2014)



Kenya Airways has named the 04th of April as the tentative date for the expected arrival of their first B787-8 Dreamliner, which is now in the final stages of assembly. This delivery, overdue by more than 3 years as a result of production problems over the complex new technologies which is using composite materials to reduce weight, will be the first of as many as 6 of these new planes in 2014, with three more of the initial order of 9 due for delivery in 2015. The new aircraft has been registered with the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority as 5Y - KZA and will very likely be 'named' at a special ceremony soon after arriving in Nairobi.

Dr. Titus Naikuni recently in fact confirmed that once the delivery of the new B787-8 models, which Kenya Airways ordered, goes underway, their ageing B767-300ER fleet will be progressively retired from service, taking full advantage of the new aircraft's higher payloads, longer range and most important, over 20 percent fuel savings compared to the aged planes.

The B787 Dreamliner made a first appearance in Nairobi in December 2011 when Boeing had embarked on a worldwide tour with the aircraft to showcase it to airline customers, their corporate clientele and the local media. It is understood from usually well informed sources that Kenya Airways did manage to negotiate a comprehensive package with Boeing over the delays encountered with the delivery of these aircrafts and while the first delivery was slotted for March this year, there will be some relief in the corporate headquarters in Embakasi that a date has finally been set. In fact, in private two regular sources close to Kenya Airways expressed almost relief that KQ was NOT the African launch customer since the aircraft was dogged with problems over the use of the unproven Ion Lithium battery technology which led to a three month global ban early last year, costing the airlines which had already taken delivery of the B787 millions of dollars.

With those issues, by and large, now resolved, Plan Mawingo, the airline's strategic 10 year plan, will receive a boost as the B787-8, together with the B777-300ER will form the backbone of the long haul fleet of Kenya Airways over the next two decades at least and support the expansion of destinations from presently 65 to 115 by the year 2021 as the fleet will progressively grow from the present 45 aircraft to 119, including several freighters. Watch this space and be sure to get life updates from the arrival of the B787 at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport come April 04th.



(Kenya Airways' first B787-8 still under assembly and then fresh out of the paintshop)

KENYA TOURISM AND KENYA AIRWAYS PARTNER TO MARKET KENYA IN SOUTH AFRICA

(Posted 13th February 2014)



The Kenya Tourism Board has confirmed that a joint campaign to market Kenya in South Africa has been launched in close partnership with Kenya Airways. As tourism arrivals from the traditional core markets for in particular the Kenya coast remain below expectations has KTB stepped up marketing efforts across Africa, and in particular in destinations where Kenya Airways is flying to. From within East Africa does Uganda provide the most visitors to Kenya but on the wider continent it is South Africa, just under four flying hours away from Johannesburg. Other markets KTB has identified for growth are Nigeria and other more affluent countries in West Africa, to where Kenya Airways flies on a daily basis.

The tourism private sector, after a year of financial drought for KTB and the country's tourism marketing efforts, is now awaiting the budget reading in March, when figures will be published of just how much added funding will be made available for the financial year 2014/15 and if cabinet secretary Phyllis Kandie can deliver on the promises made to the sector about increased spending for tourism marketing. Watch this space.

SWAHILI FASHION WEEK HEADING TO KENYA

(Posted 13th February 2014)



East Africa's most successful fashion festival, the Swahili Fashion Week, is preparing to make a full appearance in Kenya as a mainstream event, starting from the 05th of April this year. Mustafa Hassanali's erstwhile vision, which resulted in the first Swahili Fashion Week to be launched in 2008 in Dar es Salaam, has now established itself as the region's foremost fashion and accessories event giving local designers a platform to showcase their creations and make a name for themselves in the international arena.

While the venue and programme are still to be announced, the SFW organizers have set a deadline for applications by Kenyan designers to send in their particulars by the 28th of February to designers@swahilifashionweek.com or use their website www.swahilifashionweek.com to download the relevant forms.

Expect to hear more about this event in coming weeks as the programme takes shape and the lineup of designers and models is made public.

TSAVO / MKOMANZI ELEPHANT CENSUS CONFIRMS A LOSS OF 1.500 ELEPHANT SINCE 2011

(Posted 11th February 2014)



Information has come to light, following the conclusion of the recent transboundary elephant population survey covering the Tsavo and Mkomanzi national parks in Kenya and Tanzania, that compared with the last census in 2011, the returns showed some 1.500 elephant less in the space of just 3 years.

Comments attributed to the Kenya Wildlife Service Deputy Director Ben Kavu, who reportedly announced the results at the Sarova Taita Hills Lodge yesterday, in fact talk of some 800 elephant being poached during that period of time on the Kenyan side of the border with the balance obviously attributed to the Tanzanian side of the border in and around Mkomanzi National Park.

Numbers according to Mr. Kavu dropped from 12.573 recorded during the 2011 census to just 11.000 this year, confirming the downward trends already known caused by increased poaching, displacement of elephant through an increase in human population and new settlements in previous wilderness areas and the destruction of the elephant habitat through deforestation, leaving entire areas bare of elephant during the just concluded aerial and ground surveys.

The data will be welcome 'fodder' for the London Conservation Conference which is now underway, where elephant range countries are both taken to task over their failures to protect elephant and other game as well as will be receiving support from the 50 heads of state and ministers present in the form of pledges to boost anti poaching operations and wildlife conservation measures.

NEW RAILWAYS' HUNGER FOR LAND TRIGGERS CONSERVATION CONCERNS

(Posted 10th February 2014)



Emerging news of gazette notices about compulsory acquisition of land for the construction of the new standard gauge railway between Mombasa and Nairobi, affecting land inside the Tsavo National Park to the tune of over 250 acres, has triggered the alarm bells among the conservation fraternity in Kenya.

Present law requires that any national park land intended for other purposes than conservation requires an elaborate process of degazetting by Kenya's parliament, a fact overlooked even by the planners of Nairobi's Southern Bypass who got slapped by an injunction when they tried to commandeer the land at the edge of the Nairobi National Park before a legal case was brought to stop them.

Conservationists have now written to this correspondent and asked to highlight their concerns that the new railway line, when reaching the outskirts of Nairobi, would equally seek to carve out a route at the edge of the park, joining the highway project, which according to reliable information at hand does not intend to seek alternative land, mainly by saying that there is no viable alternative, and intend to have government initiate the process of degazetting national park land. Opposition was also voiced over the planned destruction of the African Heritage building, which has over the years, since moving the gallery and art centre from the city to the outskirts along the Mombasa road, become a focal point for the local, regional and international fashion, art and craft scene. That building, along with others, is apparently to be razed to the ground to make way for the new railroad, potentially pitting supporters of the African Heritage building against those who vowed to resist any more land to be carved from the park.

Figures obtained from Nairobi speak of a compulsory acquisition of land for the new railway line of over 5,500 acres along the proposed route, potentially also affecting protected areas along the route into and across the Rift Valley towards the border with Uganda and the Kenyan lakeside port city of Kisumu.

More independent observers have, while expressing sympathy to the conservation fraternity, however pointed out that there is little which can be done once parliament de-gazettes land now under the jurisdiction of the Kenya Wildlife Service as a protected area, and advised the conservationists to rather concentrate to horse trade with government to get added funding for conservation and work towards being allocated more land elsewhere along the affected parks in mitigation of the likely loss of land for road and railway projects. Whichever way this latest saga of conservation versus '*progress and development*' plays out, be sure to read any future developments right here.

Tanzania News

AURIC AIR ADDS DODOMA TO GROWING DOMESTIC NETWORK

(Posted 13th February 2014)



Auric Air, one of Tanzania's leading domestic scheduled and charter airlines, has confirmed that effective 17th February they are adding flights to Tanzania's formal capital city of Dodoma. Operating from their main hub in Mwanza, the airline now uses a fleet of 8 Cessna 208B Grand Caravans, all of which were purchased brand new ex factory, the first to come online in 2008 and the most recent acquisition made in 2012.

Additional bases were since the start of flight operations established in Arusha and at the country's main international airport, Julius Nyerere International in Dar es Salaam, from where passengers can now reach 19 'regular' destinations on scheduled flights and yet more by charter. This makes Auric Tanzania's airline with the widest network and a choice for tourists and business travelers alike. Notably for tourists does Auric bring Tanzania's coastal and island destinations within easy reach, like Tanga, Pemba, Unguja / Zanzibar and Mafia Island

while also offering flights to some of the lesser known but nevertheless spectacular national parks like Katavi, Rubondo Island or Ruaha besides the main parks like the Serengeti and Manyara. Air Safari packages are available on request via the airline's website www.auricair.com. Notably the airline has received 'BARS Silver' recognition by the Flight Safety Foundation last year for their commitment to safe operations and compliance with air service regulations.



CONSERVATIONISTS TELL TANZANIA TO STOP MOUTHING OFF AND INSTEAD FIGHT POACHING FOR REAL

(Posted 12th February 2014)



'The shame has come home to roost' wrote a regular conservation source from Arusha, when it became known that a hugely damaging media report in the UK blamed Tanzania's massive poaching records squarely on the failures of the government of President Kikwete to take any meaningful steps against it and which minced no words over the alleged complicity of top ranking government officials in the epic slaughter of elephant over the past few years. *'Our government mouthpieces should stop blaming others who tell the truth of what has been going on in our country and instead talk about the culprits, the masterminds and their connections and the patronage they enjoy. They should talk of why Tokomeza was suspended, and why Kagesheki was sacked. The international media exposed our conservation debacle in a timely fashion and I hope Kikwete gets what he deserves, not an award like the Americans did last year but a public roasting for presiding over the worst elephant slaughter in history'.*

It is understood from a source in Dar es Salaam that the Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism Lazaro Nyalando was ordered back from the airport as he was about to leave for London to prepare for President Kikwete's visit to the global conservation conference which is taking place under the patronage of The Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge, leaving Tanzania's participation for now under a dark cloud.

'How Tanzania, how Kikwete could expect to go there and expect the truth to be hidden, only shows how completely out of touch our political leadership is. They have completely failed to understand the global sentiments over the Serengeti highway and the many other ills they perpetrate against the environment and against conservation principles. If the Selous elephant population can be decimated from over 70.000 to just around 13.000 in a few years under their noses, and they expect the world ignore it, they are having a rude awakening now. Even until last year they still tried to convince CITES to let them sell ivory when everyone in the world now burns or crushes it. Their greed for money has taken over from reason and common sense' said another source.

To make matters worse did the Daily Mail openly suggest that Prince Charles should not shake hands with President Kikwete, causing Tanzania yet more embarrassment even if a handshake will take place in the end, if for nothing but diplomatic expediency. Follow the international media reports about the deliberations of the London Conservation Conference and its eventual outcome.

SAUTI ZA BUSARA – FIVE DAYS TO GO

(Posted 08th February 2014)



When a reader wrote to me after my last article about Sauti Za Busara and said ‘*You make too much hype about that concert*’ I responded ‘*There cannot be enough hype about what has become Africa’s foremost festival of music, performing arts and films. This is not just a concert, this is a week of celebrating Africa’s talent and showcasing it to the world*’. Needless to say there was no further feedback and for aficionados of Sauti Za Busara, it is now just a week to go before the festival opens its doors with the opening salvo on opening night. For the period of 13th to 16th of February, all roads, sea and airways in East Africa lead to Zanzibar for the 11th edition of what has become a showcase event, where the best talent from Zanzibar and the Tanzanian mainland, from across Eastern Africa and the continent at large perform their hearts out and show the world what African music, performing arts and films are made of. And there are plenty of repeat visitors, according to feedback received, who will renew their annual love affair with Sauti Za Busara on February 14th, when the world celebrates Valentine’s Day – on site in Zanzibar, where else.



(Picture courtesy of Sauti Za Busara Festival)

The festival takes place against the magnificent backdrop of the ‘*Old Fort*’ which as the picture above shows provides for both ear and eye candy moments. The lineup of artists is available on line through the festival website. Visit www.busaramusic.org or ‘like’ their Facebook page via <https://www.facebook.com/sautizabusara>

Rwanda News

RWANDAIR’S NEW BOMBARDIER Q400 CABIN NOW COMPLETE

(Posted 13th February 2014)



The countdown is now truly on as RwandAir is expecting their newest bird, a Bombardier Q400 to arrive in Kigali on the 03rd of March. Latest pictures obtained show the aircraft interior now completely outfitted in the dual class cabin, offering both business and economy classes on board. The arrival of the new aircraft further reduces the age of RwandAir’s fleet, as two Bombardier DRJ900 NextGen aircraft are now just over one year old, while the two B737-800NG are two years old. Two more recently acquired B737-700NG’s, acquired from TUI Fly, are said to be 5 and 6 years old respectively.

The new Q400’s arrival will offer added seat capacity and also expand the range of destinations served by this aircraft type as the presently used Bombardier Dash8-200 is returned to the lessor ALS in Nairobi. Expect live reports from Kigali on the 03rd of March, when RwandAir, and in fact the whole country, will celebrate this latest accomplishment of their national airline. Watch this space for breaking and regular aviation news updates from across Eastern Africa.



RWANDAIR SET FOR RESUMPTION OF JUBA SERVICES EFFECTIVE 01ST MARCH

(Posted 11th February 2014)



RwandAir has announced that their Juba services, suspended since the outbreak of hostilities between the two opposing sides in South Sudan, will resume their full schedule between Kigali and Juba as of 01st of March. The airline will from that date onwards again fly three times a week between the two capitals, using one of their CRJ900NextGen aircraft featuring a dual class configuration.

The decision to resume flights came on the heels of the news received from the South Sudan government that they had signed a ceasefire deal with the rebels. This confirmation of peace talks reassured the airline of the safety of their passengers though the latest news from Addis Ababa, that the second round of peace talks has been halted, may yet add a twist in the tale of this story.

RwandAir the national carrier of the Republic of Rwanda launched flights to Juba last year on September 21st with attractive fares which raised their number of passengers within the first week of operations and continued to grow until flights had to be halted in December.

The launch of Juba as a destination marked the final milestone for RwandAir in the year of 2013 as its 15th destination across Western, Southern and Eastern Africa and to Dubai. The two months wait for operations to re-commence now appears to be finally over as the airline is ready and eager to serve their customers on the Juba route once more

Meanwhile is the airline preparing for two major events, the delivery of their first Bombardier Q400 dual class turboprop aircraft on the 03rd of March and the launch of their 16th destination, Douala, at the end of March in an effort to expand their footprint in the lucrative West African market.

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

A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES AT RWANDAIR

(Posted 09th February 2014)



When on the 03rd of March RwandAir's latest acquisition, a Bombardier Q400 dual class turboprop aircraft will join the fleet in Kigali, a new technical support agreement will just have come into effect, which the airline signed a few weeks ago with Ethiopian Airlines for the line maintenance of this aircraft type.

The technical support agreement was signed by RwandAir's Chief Executive Officer Mr. John Mirenge and Ethiopian Airlines CEO Mr. Tewolde Gebremariam. Under the agreement will Ethiopian provide technical support service to RwandAir as of 01st of March for line maintenance up to A-Check level and component exchange support for the new Bombardier Q400 aircraft, an aircraft type also flown by Ethiopian Airlines. Ethiopian's MRO Services will base a technical team in Kigali to carry out the day to day maintenance on site while getting additional support from their main base in Addis Ababa should the need arise.

Said John Mirenge: *'Rwandair recognizes the important role Ethiopian Airlines has played as a pioneer MRO provider in Africa over the years thus it was imperative that we explore the opportunity for MRO partnership. Agreements such as the momentous one signed here today further strengthen the bond between RwandAir and Ethiopian Airlines while continuing to show the world that the African aviation industry remains a vital catalyst for African economic growth and advancement'*. Ethiopian's MRO has a facility certified by both the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and the European Aviation Safety Agency and has MRO capabilities in Boeing and Bombardier aircraft.

RwandAir has taken advantage of having the same MRO servicing their two Boeing 737-800NG's, their two Boeing 737-700NG's as well as their brand new Q-400 NextGen due to arrive on 03rd of March.

This new agreement builds on the already strong relationship RwandAir enjoys with Ethiopian Airlines through the ongoing pilot training program RwandAir pilots go through as well engineer training which has seen RwandAir engineering staff graduate from the Ethiopian Airlines training programme.

RwandAir is, according to John Mirenge, also on course to add more destinations over and above Douala within 2014 and will continue to add more aircraft to reach their goal of a fleet of 17 by 2020.

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

Burundi News

BURUNDI'S TOURISM MINISTER'S RESIGNATION BRINGS GOVERNMENT TO VERGE OF COLLAPSE

(Posted 07th February 2014)



Victoire Ndikumana, Minister of Posts, Commerce, Industry and **Tourism** resigned from government on Wednesday only one day after Communal Development Minister Jean-Claude Ndiwokubwayo and Information, Communication, Telecommunications and Parliament Relations Minister Leocadie Nihazi had quit their ministerial posts.

The resignation of the three ministers followed the dismissal on Saturday of Burundi's First Vice-President Bernard Busokoza over his alleged 'inability' to distinguish his assignments as the country's deputy-president and his conduct as a chairman of a political party, throwing Burundi into the worst political crisis since the last elections and the end of the civil war. There is speculation now over the possible collapse of the current government as a result of the three ministers resigning after the First Vice President was sacked.

The move by Minister Ndikumana is also threatening a nascent tourism industry, which was rocked only two weeks ago by revelations that there is sustained poaching of hippos in the Rusizi National Park. Burundi has confirmed participation in the forthcoming ITB Berlin 2014 and while the tourism office and private sector according to one source from Bujumbura is still expected to attend, it is by no means certain that the delegation will be led by a newly appointed tourism minister.

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

Ethiopia News

ETHIOPIAN PONDERING NEXT MOVE ON SINGLE AND TWIN AISLE AIRCRAFT ORDERS

(Posted 08th February 2014)



More B787 Dreamliners, if only they could get them, a keen interest in Boeing's latest bird, the B777X and up to 20 single aisle orders within a few months, the message could not have been clearer by Ethiopian Airlines that the carrier is intent to defend their continental top spot and make sure they retain it for years to come.

Tewolde Gebremariam, ET's Chief Executive, was quoted by a source in Addis Ababa, to have let the cat out of the bag yesterday when he confirmed that the airline was in the final stages to lease at least three more B787 Dreamliners, and would buy more if only Boeing could produce enough of these aircraft, of which now over 150 are already delivered and criss-cross the globe every day.

What took industry observers somewhat by surprise though was the fact that Ethiopian, after an initial lukewarm response to the B777X, has now signaled a much keener interest in this performance enhanced version of the B777-300ER for which Boeing has bagged already significant orders from in particular Gulf airlines.

Ethiopian is reportedly considering an initial order of up to 10 such aircraft while continuing to take delivery of yet more B777-300ER's.

It is also expected that Ethiopian will within weeks announce their decision on ordering as many as 20 more single aisle aircraft, and while it is understood that both the Airbus A320NEO and the Boeing B737MAX are being evaluated, the odds are stacked against Airbus as Ethiopian already operates 14 B737-800NG's and B737-700NG's and has 5 more on firm order. ET also runs one of Africa's best reputed MRO's at their Bole International Airport hub, dedicated to servicing Boeing aircraft and the airline, inspite of having 14 Airbus A350XWB-900's on order, is thought unlikely to opt for a further aircraft type to be added to their overwhelming Boeing fleet. ET does presently operate 13 Bombardier Q400 aircraft used on domestic and near regional services and has another 8 on order.

In a related development it was also confirmed that after launching ASKY in West Africa two years ago and earlier this month commencing flights in a joint venture with the Malawi government under the Malawian Airlines brand, Ethiopian is now looking at Kinshasa to launch a third partner airline in a market which continues to be lacking a quality airline on the domestic, regional and international market which could break the EU Black List ban of which all Congo DR airlines are affected.

It is clear that Ethiopian Airlines is positioning itself to not only fend off competitive challenges from airlines in Africa, most notably closest rivals Kenya Airways which is pursuing a similar expansion strategy, but is also fighting to regain market share vis a vis the major Gulf carriers, which have in recent years, in the words of one regular source '*ransacked our markets*', by offering nonstop services at allegedly near or below cost fares from across Africa to Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha from where passengers can the reach literally every corner of the globe.

Ethiopian, with a fleet of 61 aircraft and a further 42 on firm orders, will be 69 years old in April after commencing flight operations on the 08th of April 1946. Watch this space for breaking and regular aviation news from across Eastern Africa.

Vanilla Island News

Mauritius News

MTPA'S MOOTOOSAMY ATTEMPTS DAMAGE CONTROL

(Posted 13th February 2014)



Usually reliable and well informed sources in Port Louis have broken the story that the head of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, one Karl Mootoosamy, clearly rattled by both local and international media reports about his continued spat with the Seychelles and the Vanilla Island Organization, has apparently tried to mend some of the broken down fences.

It is understood that Mootoosamy attempted to deny any effort on his part to leave the Vanilla Island Organization however failing to answer relevant questions in regard to media reports over the past two weeks as to other announcements and quotations allegedly made to the contrary.

One source in fact called Mootoosamy a '*bystander*' whose heart clearly is not inside wider regional cooperation or the Vanilla Islands in spite of Mauritius being a founder member.

Media contacts from Port Louis also confirmed that Mootoosamy was unwilling to go on public record in the media, perhaps anticipating that failure to answer questions put to him may only lead to yet more pressure on him to stand down, should he fail to explain his obvious antipathy towards regional partners and cooperation so often allegedly uttered in private or within earshot of third parties who are then spreading his true feelings.

Evidence, both hard and circumstantial, presently speaks another language from what appears has been a single approach to a critical media person on Mauritius, a development which only further confusticates and smokescreens the issue instead of finally owning up. Watch this space for more updates on this sad saga of how the leader of Mauritius tourism's official agency digs himself deeper and deeper into that proverbial hole.

MAURITIUS SNUBS SEYCHELLES AGAIN

(Posted 10th February 2014)



A regular source from Port Louis described the latest spat between Mauritius and the Seychelles as a diplomatic form of one island giving the other the proverbial finger, when it became known that the Mauritius Minister for Culture M. Choonee had earlier on confirmed that there will once again be no official delegation from the island to the Carnaval de Carnivals, the Carnival International de Victoria.

Last year did a privately organized delegation from Mauritius take the festival in Victoria by storm and earned them the highest accolades though sadly only the runner's up prize for best performing troupe, and was the darling of the spectators lined up along the festival route through the heart of the Seychelles' capital.

The source also suggested that the man at the centre of the controversy, one Karl Mootoosamy, CEO of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, appears to be relentlessly campaigning to create animosity between the two Indian Ocean neighbours through often thinly concealed negative remarks and dismissive gestures while at the same time being busy to copy cat ideas from the Seychelles marketing juggernaut in an open admission of creative and ethical bankruptcy.

It is understood that the private sector in Mauritius is once again working on its own to send a delegation to the Seychelles in defiance of the stand taken by Mootoosamy's MTPA and the latest slap dished out by their Minister for Culture and will be taking this as a springboard to initiate other activities in promoting Mauritius in the future without MTPA being involved, and more specifically not being invited to be part of such activities.

'Karl loves to play golf with celebrities and strut around like a peacock with beautiful ladies but when it comes to doing his job, he is a failing Mauritius. Under his leadership has Mauritius lost its competitive advantage, lost out to the Maldives in arrival numbers for several years now and from what you told me even to Sri Lanka. His personal ego issues has now become embarrassing and counterproductive for Mauritius. We are speculating what sort of political hold he has over key figures in government but for sure, he and those who support him and damage our tourism image, should all just go'.

Pas de carnaval pour Choonee

Pas de défilé, pas de spectacle coloré pour Mookhesswur Choonee aux Seychelles. Des sources proches du dossier au ministère des Arts et de la Culture indiquent qu'il ne répondra pas favorablement à l'invitation de son homologue seychellois Alain St Ange. Choonee ne sera donc pas au carnaval des Seychelles en avril prochain. Ce, pour des raisons financières, les frais du déplacement étant à la charge du ministère mauricien. A défaut des Seychelles, le ministre s'envole pour Rodrigues aujourd'hui, pour l'ouverture de la *Tagore Week* organisée par l'écrivain Bhisimadev Seebaluck.



This announcement coincided with figures coming into the public domain that Mauritius had indeed been displaced to third place in the Indian Ocean arrival rankings as both the Maldives, a Vanilla Island Organization member already, and Sri Lanka, a Vanilla Island member in waiting, outscored the arrival numbers for Mauritius in 2013.

(<http://www.eturbonews.com/42586/sri-lankas-tourist-numbers-26-percent>)

Sources in the Seychelles took the announcement by the Mauritius' culture minister in their stride and reiterated that the event is and remains open for all member of the Vanilla Island Organization and other countries from Africa wishing to participate in a formal setting or through direct participation by performing troupes. They also chose not to comment on allegations of a growing rift within the Vanilla Island Organization where Mauritius appears to be increasingly isolated from the mainstream direction, even though the island is a founder member of the organization which was formally launched at WTM 2013 by UNWTO Secretary General Dr. Taleb Rifai.

The 2014 Carnival Festival, an official Vanilla Island Organization event, is taking place between 25th and 27th of April in the Seychelles capital of Victoria.

Reunion News

REUNION TOURISM PROMOTING GOLFING HOLIDAYS

(Posted 13th February 2014)



The Reunion Tourism office, in short IRT, has confirmed that they will attend the Paris Golf Show from the 14th to 16th of March which will be held at the Parc de Expositions at Porte de Versailles.

The world's leading golfing brands will all be on site in Paris as will over 300 golf courses, 3 of them of course from the Ile de la Reunion, showcase their attractions to players.



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From Reunion, the French Indian Ocean island, will additional partners besides IRT participate, namely Reunion Golf, Golf Bassin Bleu and the Saint Alexis hotel and resort with emphasis to promote the annual Reunion Golf Open which is taking place in December again.

Reunion will host the media on the 14th of March for a working breakfast during which they will present details about the 2014 Reunion Golf Open and make details available about the island's golf courses.

For more details, or to register for an appointment with Reunion exhibitors, visit www.reunion.fr or write to them through the contact link on their website.

FRENCH FOOD CRITIC PLANS VISIT TO REUNION TO SAMPLE CREOLE CREATIONS

(Posted 11th February 2014)



Gilles Pudlowski, a famous French food critic and writer for Le Point, Version Femina and Cuisines and Wines of France, will be visiting Ile de la Reunion, the French Indian Ocean island from 25th to 28th of February. He is following an invitation by Reunion Tourism (www.reunion.fr) to sample the island's cuisine which is largely influenced by Creole creations, the use of tropical organic ingredients, a different way to spice the food and a more colourful presentation of dishes on the plates.



(Food – Creole style in Reunion)

Creole cuisines, as witnessed during a weeklong visit last year, is heavily influenced by a blend and fusion of different styles of preparing food, with a heavy influence from China, India and Madagascar, as well as the African mainland. A mouthwatering prospect surely for visitors to the island, besides the natural attractions the island offers from pristine beaches to the rugged interior of volcanic origin, from white water rafting to paragliding to deep sea fishing or watching whales and dolphins.

iPhone users and owners of Android smartphones can download an application dedicated to the island which gives access to a range of useful information of where to eat, where to stay, where to go and what to do while in Reunion.



REUNION TOURISM NAMES GEORGE COLSON TOURISM AMBASSADOR

(Posted 11th February 2014)



The Chairman of the National Union of Travel Agents, George Colson, was last weekend named Ile de la Reunion's Tourism Ambassador, in recognition of his work to promote this French Indian Ocean island. SNAV just concluded its 7th meeting on La Reunion with over 300 delegates flying out from across France who were able to sample the island's attractions and hospitality besides doing their work in the conference rooms.



(George Colson seen here receiving his honour as Tourism Ambassador for Ile de la Reunion)

The honour, bestowed only on deserving individuals, recognizes not only work done in the past to promote tourism to the island but also requires continued efforts to volunteer and assist IRT in the future as one of their brand ambassadors. Information about the island can be accessed via www.reunion.fr and more details are available through Reunion's home airline website at www.air-austral.com

7TH SNAV MEETING IN PROGRESS ON THE ILE DE LA REUNION

(Posted 08th February 2014)



For the past three days, and until tomorrow, Sunday 09th of February, will over 300 delegates, who have assembled on the French Indian Ocean island of Reunion, discuss all matters related to tourism, a backbone of the island's economy. The event is also covered by over a dozen invited journalists who are following the debate over the latest trends in European and global business and leisure travel, matters concerning air travel and the role of travel agencies in today's social media age, the regulatory requirements in place across the European Union and the impact of the digital age on doing business in the tourism industry.

Delegates, among them key staff of France Inter, Daily Tourism Tourmag, Tour Hebdo, The Pros' tourisme.com, Echo Travel, The Quotidienne.fr, Stratégos, I Tourism, Travel on Move, Tourisimes.tv, Bus and Car and Travel Pros, among many others, will have the opportunity to explore some of the island's attractions and gain firsthand knowledge on the product range and quality of services as part of the conference programme.

Reunion's tourism income for last year was given as in excess of 314 million Euros or nearly 425 million US Dollars and offers direct employment to over 10.000 people on the island with more jobs in secondary and tertiary employment opportunities. For more information about the island and its unique blend of French lifestyle and Creole culture, music, art and food in the deep of the Indian Ocean, visit www.reunion.fr

Seychelles News

SEYCHELLES STARTS 2014 AS 2013 ENDED – WITH A NEW JANUARY ARRIVAL RECORD

(Posted 11th February 2014)



There was certainly pride in the latest media brief received from Seychelles' Minister of Tourism and Culture Alain St. Ange, when he shared the January statistics of arrivals and average stay of tourists to the islands.

The length of stay increased to 10.9 days while 5 percent more tourists set foot on the archipelago in January 2014, compared with the same month a year ago.

Out of the 16.521 visitors counted, 2.317 came from Russia, which represents an increase from that market by nearly a third, relegating France to second place with 2.216 visitors. China came a strong third with 2.086 arrivals, an increase of nearly 90 percent from January 2013. These results are largely attributed to the strong presence in Russia and China of marketing teams visiting tourism trade shows or participating in sales missions, supported by airlines like Air Seychelles / Etihad and Emirates, both of which connect from their global network via Abu Dhabi and Dubai respectively several times a day.

Germany, Italy and South Africa make up the top six countries of origin for visitors, the statement added. Minister St. Ange was quoted to have said when announcing the continuing upwards trend: *'This is an achievement for any country, but over and above these comparative figures tourism remains the pillar of the Seychelles economy'*.



Meanwhile are preparations in full gear for the annual Seychelles Eco Friendly Marathon which will be run on 23rd of February. For more information on this and other events visit www.seychelles.travel

EDEN ISLAND'S SUCCESS IS THE SEYCHELLES' SUCCESS TOO

(Posted 08th February 2014)



Eden Island, manmade though by first time visitors often mistaken as a 'real island' continues to be the success story it was intended to become, when the idea was first launched a few years ago.

Now largely complete, with shopping, offices, apartments, condominiums, residences and of course the all important marina, the island today has 580 completed residential units available, of which some 460 have now been sold.

As a gated estate, entry is across a guarded bridge with entrance controls similar to when entering a resort or hotel, security is second to none and with all amenities now complete, residents – should they so wish – could happily stay

for weeks at end on Eden Island, though would of course miss the splendid attractions and sights of elsewhere on the archipelago's main island of Mahe. Notably have the developers paid particular attention to the landscaping across the island and created a nursery for local trees, shrubs and flowers, all of which were then planted to not just 'green' the island but also to create that unique flair the Seychelles are known for, colourful scented flowers, shrubs and palms lining the roads and gracing the gardens.



(Eden Island as seen through the lense of this correspondent's camera from an elevated view point over the capital Victoria)

No wonder did the Eden Island Development Company start 2014 with the good news of having bagged three awards at a property development award ceremony in Dubai recently, namely '***Best Development: Multiple Units in Seychelles***' and also '***Best Development Multiple Units for Africa***'. Eden Island also received a ***Highly Commended*** accolade in the Development Marketing category.

Eden Island is open for tourist visitors who can rent an apartment or a residence, while owners are on purchase granted residency rights in the Seychelles, and with most properties a mooring place for a yacht coming as part of the deal, sailors from around the world have been eyeing Eden Island as a place where the climate is all summer, all year round, offering excellent sailing around not just Mahe but across the seas of the entire archipelago. ***Seychelles***, truly ***Another World***. Visit www.seychelles.travel for more information about accommodation as well as the attractions the islands hold for visitors and it is worth to remember, the Seychelles require NO VISA from visitors no matter where they come from.