



# VISIT THE KARIBU FAIR, EAST AFRICA'S SAFARI SHOWCASE, EACH SPRING IN ARUSHA, TANZANIA

by Jerry W. Bird

While East Africa's Karibu Fair will celebrate its 10th Anniversary June 4-7, 2009, the most recent version could not have been held at a more opportune time; on the heels of two events that brought the world to Arusha and Tanzania - many for the first time. We arrived in mid May for the Africa Travel Association's 33rd World Congress, with its goal of marketing Africa Tourism on a world scale. We then decided to experience the prestigious Leon H. Sullivan Summit, with its grand array of presidents, ministers and dignitaries from Africa and the Diaspora, plus well known African Americans. As guests at the East African All Suites Hotel, we were reacquainted with Ambassador Andrew Young, and met Rev. Jesse Jackson, Carl and Hope Masters. Hope is the late Leon Sullivan's daughter and a leading organizer along with her husband. In addition, we spent some quality time with the Tourism Ministers of Namibia and Zambia.

## Karibu means Welcome

To round out our stay in Arusha we participated in the Karibu Fair, starting with a get acquainted night. Karibu is Swahili for "welcome" and the Fair has become a powerful magnet of travel, trade and tourism, safaris in particular. We visited exhibits from the en-



tire East Africa region, plus Southern Africa and Europe. The fair operates in close association with the Tanzania Tourist Board and the Tanzania Association of Tour Operators. Now enjoying its 9th successful year, Karibu is one of two such events held in Africa; the other being Indaba in Durban, South Africa. The fair has grown to regional status, with plenty of room to grow, once people like ourselves spread the good word.

## Airport Location: Fly or Drive In

The many travel agents and tour operators we met or were reacquainted with during our stay, feel very much at home at Karibu. Here they can network and conduct business and in an ideal atmosphere, away from the bustle and gridlock of city traffic. Another factor we like about the Karibu Fair is its location at the local Arusha Airport. Being active in publishing air travel magazines and trade shows in Canada since the early 90s, it was a joy to watch a variety of take offs and landings overhead. On hand were familiar names and faces from our visit to Arusha in 1998, such as the owner of Bobby's Tours, who drove us to the site, stopping for lunch with two Russian tour operators. Peter Mwenguo and Amant Macha of the Tanzania Tourist Board made sure we were well introduced. The Zanzibar Association of Tourism Investors (ZATI) invited us to their hospitality hour as a windup on the final day.

## Solid Foundation and Goals

Based on the theme "Get Connected," the Fair's goals are as follows: Raise the show's regional profile by promoting East African

tourism to the global marketplace; produce the premiere travel and tourism trade fair in East Africa; Bring all key industry stakeholders in East Africa together in one place, at one time; Create opportunities for international visitors and overseas tour agents to meet and network with members of the East African tourism industry; Bring new destinations, facilities and products to the attention of overseas tour agents; Facilitate opportunities for overseas tour agents to visit the national parks and properties; Generate direct spending in local economy - accommodations, restaurants, transportation, parks, etc; Create employment - directly and indirectly - by assisting development of small and medium enterprises; Build alliances with neighboring East African countries, and key tourism stakeholders, through combined efforts to promote regional tourism.

## What's Next for Karibu?

Karibu Fair provides a venue for local and regional tourism products and services. You won't experience it all in a few hours -the exhibits are just too interesting! We spent most of an entire day on our first visit - and returned for a friendly encore. Among the exhibitors are tourist boards, camping and safari companies, tour operators, air and land transport providers, mountain climbing outfitters, ecotourism companies, wildlife lodges, hotels, camping and equipment manufacturers. Africa Travel Magazine will give it global attention through our award winning 4,500 page website and Best of Africa issues of our magazine. For more information, visit [www.africa-ata.org](http://www.africa-ata.org) or [www.karibufair.com](http://www.karibufair.com)