

OBAMA EFFECT - GREAT HELP TO TOURISM INDUSTRY



The election of the first non-white president of the USA will surely have considerable impact on happenings in the world. It is not only the politics that is already affected by Mr. Obama's election, also the tourism industry changed a bit.

The victory of the Democrat's candidate has been particularly well accepted in Kenya. This African country depends on tourism industry because it is the country's second largest hard currency earner and it is an important part of the Kenyan economy.

There have been, however, troubles lately that damaged the Kenyan tourism industry. The whole world could have seen the post election violence in the recent past. The current government tries to convince the tourists to come back but it is still complicated. The number of U.S. visitors declined by 31.5 per cent in the first nine months of 2008 compared to the same period last year. These are worrying numbers because the U.S. is the second biggest source market for Kenya's tourism industry after the United Kingdom.

Kenyan officials hope that the Obama's victory will help to lure more Americans in here. Kenyan Tourism Minister Najib Balala has even said they were contemplating opening an 'Obama Route'. The route would include Nairobi, the Great Rift Valley, Lake Victoria and would end at the Kogelo village, where is the Obama's father's birthplace. Mr. Najib Balala predicts the "Obama effect", meaning the arrivals from the U.S. would increase by 10 to 15 per cent. Kenyans also expect further positive impact of Obama's book "Dreams", where the author showcases the country.

It is not only Kenya who capitalizes on the Obama's victory. Authorities of Chicago invite visitors to come and "experience the city the Obamas enjoy." Indonesians in Jakarta witness steady influx of U.S. tourists, who are interested in the school Mr. Obama attended and also in the house where he lived between 1970-72. Last but not least there is a Japanese port city with a population of 32,000 that has witnessed an influx of tourists. The reason? The city's name is Obama.

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