

# BIG MICE PLAYERS IN AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST?



The MICE (Meeting, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) sector is definitely one of the most lucrative industries in the world. A recent study by Global Association of the Exhibition Industry's (UFI) showed the situation of the MICE industry in the Middle East and Africa.

UFI studied MICE sectors of 13 Middle Eastern and 24 African nations. It has find out that there are 34 purpose-built exhibition venues in the Middle East providing a total indoor exhibition space of 633,206m<sup>2</sup>. Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have six venues each. The biggest facility is to be found in Iran. It is the Tehran Permanent Fairground, which provides 120,000m<sup>2</sup> of indoor space. As a matter of fact the biggest number of fairs took place in Iran last year.

The other two biggest players were the United Arab Emirates and Syria. According to the report, 568 trade fairs and exhibitions were held in 30 cities in thirteen Middle Eastern countries in 2006. In the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) states, consumer products and education are the leading exhibition sectors followed by real estate and construction. In the other surveyed Middle Eastern countries, industrial and engineering trade fairs take the lead, followed by construction and agriculture.

The biggest MICE player in Africa is the Republic of South Africa. This country has twelve exhibition venues and half of them are situated in Johannesburg. The second biggest indoor space is available in Egyptian capital, Cairo and it occupies 75,687 m<sup>2</sup>. As the report says, there were 369 trade fairs and exhibitions in 32 cities in 24 countries on the African continent in 2006. Seventy-five of them took place in South Africa, 62 in Tunisia, 47 in Egypt and 46 in Algeria. Most of the fairs taking place in Africa are general trade fairs and consumer events. The second most often events are IT, telecoms and agriculture fairs.

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