

Burundi Rises to Reclaim Its Place in Tourism

A few weeks ago, we witnessed breaking news when Ms. Carmen Nibigiria was appointed Director-General of the Burundi-National Tourism-Office. It seems as if Burundi is rising from the ashes to reclaim her place amongst other powerhouses in East African tourism like Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania. This was the signal sent out as the news heralded its intention to become an active player in promoting its tourism actively.



Unknown to many, Burundi has part of Lake Tanganyika and shares Nyungwe Forest National-Park with Rwanda. This forest system is a major tourist attraction of the region, with the member states of the East African Community expressing their interest in having it amongst the offerings in the joint East-African Visitor visa that was recently launched. This initiative aims at making travel within the region cost effective and easier, it also aims to promote the region as a package thereby effectively marketing the existing tourist circuits and adding variety to the tourists.

To start with, there have been social and sporting events in Bujumbura and in several parts of the country in the last few months. Several others have been planned to take place this year and the National Tourism Office will make a difference by marketing the events much more widely to increase the event participation.



Ms. Carmen Nibigiria was recently quoted in Bujumbura as saying that the events are aimed at creating awareness of Burundi and rebranding it as a place to have fun. The aim is to have families, friends and work mates brought over to Burundi and in particular Bujumbura for some weekend action in the following few weeks and months. Bujumbura is renowned for its wonderful weather, fabulous attractions, warm people and great cuisine especially the mukeke that comes from Lake Tanganyika.

She added that Bujumbura will host the Bujumbura Fashion-Week held annually which will attract the

top talent in fashion from Burundi and exhibit new and upcoming fashion designers in Africa to celebrate the African culture and talent. This will take place in forthcoming weeks as well as a music festival that will be week-long. The latter event will have top musical artists from the entire region and will take place along the beaches of Lake Tanganyika to add a beach fare atmosphere.



Apart from this she said that Bujumbura will host Festicab this year. Festicab is a film festival held annually. The subtle call to the tourists is that Bujumbura is the city of choice in East Africa at the weekends. Anyone looking to have a good time should choose it. The events can be family, social or even corporate.

Burundi is now open to tourism business and is easily accessible with connections every day by all the region's airlines – Kenya Airways, RwandAir amongst others. One can sample the wide tourist array that has been served up from Bujumbura.

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