

# Golf Tourism – Great Potential for Ghana

Africa as a whole and Ghana in particular is quickly becoming an attractive destination for international golfers. According to statistics, approximately 828 courses appropriate for international golf travelers are now available in 50 African countries and half a million regular golfers are reported to visit Africa for club and ball sports. As a result, Ghana is working to improve the available golf infrastructure in order to bring them up to internationally accepted standards so as to boost the image of the sport in the country which will in turn have a positive impact on the tourism sub-sector.



Golf has been ranked among the top five sporting activities on earth. According to International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO), over 70% of international golfers have their eye peeled for new golfing spots across the world. As a result, Ghana through the courtesy of Tullow Ghana Limited has donated to Achimota Golf club \$3 million newly refurbished and internationally recognized 18-hole golf course. This Corporate Social Responsibility gesture has positioned Ghana on a new tee and increased its chances of influencing professional and affluent golfers worldwide. The new world class 18-hole golf course has promoted Ghana and positioned it as a nascent golf destination.

## **Opportunities Associated with Golf**

With expenditure incurred by international golfers ranging from club hire, driving range usage, green fees, admission fees for golf tournaments, golf lessons, purchase of equipment among others, golf tourism is becoming a potential gold mine which is being exploited by many developing countries. Golf has been shown to attract largely gold card tourists who improve the economy of the country. According to KPMG Golf Advisory practice, golf generates over 50 billion a year in EMA region (Europe, Middle East and Africa). It has been shown to drive a huge investment into generating substantial economic growth, job creation and resort development. This makes it a highly lucrative aspect of the overall tourism business.



Some of the things that emerge with golf include increased local property values, increased jobs and

income benefits, tax benefits, new foreign firms in the region, health benefits as well as networking opportunities. As a result, Ghana is exploiting this golden opportunity by improving golf resorts in different regions within the country. However, the mandate to act and improve golf tourism in Ghana entirely rests with Ghana Golf Association (GGA), the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), the Golf Fraternity, The National Sports Authority (NSA) and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts.

### **The Future of Golf in Ghana**

Travelling motivated by sporting activities has continued to be among the fast growing sectors of the global travel and tourism industry valued at about \$600 billion. In addition, sports tourism is shown to generate huge revenue through the attraction of foreign direct investment, enhancing destinations, massive employment opportunities and urban infrastructure development. For this reason, there is a need to invest in golf infrastructure in order to promote golf tourism. With the acquisition of 18-hole golf course, the future for golf sports in Ghana looks very promising. As a result, the government in Ghana along with other corporate entities needs to come up with positive initiatives to invest in the infrastructure.



With increasing growth of international arrivals in Ghana each year, the tourism ministry needs to come up with effective initiative that will promote and develop golf as a tourism sport which will attract potential investors and generate more income for the country. The tourism sector in Ghana must broaden its offer beyond heritage and culture and include sports such as golf. In addition, golf in Ghana must be treated as an important tourism diversification.

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