

# OBAMA IN KENYA - GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR TOURISM MARKETING



Kenya's Association of Hotelkeepers and Caterers (KAHC) requested that the government make full use of the visit of President Barack Obama for marketing the country's tourism sector. This is the best time to devise innovative marketing strategies, according to the hoteliers.

Barack Obama arrived on Air Force One on July 24 at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport to attend the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES). Obama left Kenya on July 26.

In his speech at Mombasa prior to Obama's visit, Sam Ikwaye, Association's Coast Executive Director, **said that the government along with the help of the Tourism Board should focus on conducting marketing campaigns in the US, UK and Germany, among others, so that Obama's visit could be made use of to reclaim the lost glory of Kenya's tourism industry.**

International arrivals to Kenya declined by as much as 70% following the attacks by al Shabab terror groups. In May 2014, travel advisories issued by the UK against Kenya resulted in the evacuation of more than 500 British nationals from the country's coastal areas. However, the 13-month old travel advisory has since been revised after last month's visit to Mombasa by Christian Turner, the British High Commissioner. He said that he was satisfied with the security measures that have been put in place in the country.

Phylis Kandie, Tourism Cabinet Secretary, said that President Obama's visit is an endorsement that the country is a secure tourist destination. According to her, the second largest source of tourists as far as Kenya is concerned is America after the UK. USA accounts for more than 100,000 tourist arrivals in a year.

Kandie also said that the country is indebted to America and its citizens for the faith reposed in Kenya even during the times of security challenges and that in addition to bringing in US and global investors, business tourists and media, President Obama's visit as well as the GES forum would encourage more visitors and investors from US and other countries to come into Kenya.

The Cabinet Secretary is optimistic that **direct flights between the USA and Kenya that are scheduled to start next year would further boost the cooperation between the two countries.** Earlier this month, Kandie visited several US cities as well as states to muster support for the 40th edition of the Africa Travel Association Congress which is scheduled to be held from 9th to 14th of November 2015 in Nairobi. Kenya is hopeful that by November/December the country would start receiving cruise ships and international charter planes.

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