

# Zimbabwean Tourist Industry Looks East



The Zimbabwean tourism industry has been suffering from bad publicity since 2000, when the government's land reform received a lot of negative media coverage. Tourism accounts for 6% of the country's GDP, 2.2% of employment and 10% of foreign currency earning. Just how does the Zimbabwean tourist board aim to improve these figures and how the marketing campaigns are targeted?

As Mr. Karikoga Kaseke, the chief executive of the Zimbabwean tourist association, has pointed out, the country has embarked on a "look east" policy, with China and Russia being the main targets. More and more Chinese tourists have been visiting Zimbabwe each year and a direct flight route to Beijing has been opened in order to improve business links with China and to increase human traffic. Perhaps more importantly, the Asian country has granted Zimbabwe the highly acclaimed Approved Destination Status. Indeed, China has been predicted to be the world's number 1 tourist market by 2020.

Kaseke added that the Russian market is the second focus of Zimbabwe. This is the reason why he plans to send an attaché to Russia in the near future. In recent years, an increasing number of Russians have been travelling to more exotic destinations. Kaseke hopes that Zimbabwe will become their first choice in years to come.

Russia and China are not the only eastern markets, which the Zimbabweans aim to exploit. Kaseke has stressed the significance of the Czech Republic, Singapore and South Korea. These are all countries in which the tendency to travel further has been growing rapidly in recent years. Whether successful or not, it is clear where the Zimbabwean tourist authorities have placed their priorities in their attempt to improve tourism.

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