

GHANA: TURNING TOURISM AROUND



As one of the most popular African countries, Ghana is trying to embrace its tourists and make sure they not only return, but also spread the country's reputation. The setback, however, is that Ghana is nowhere near a tourist-friendly land and the current Minister of Tourism vows to turn that around.

In recent years, Africa's come into tourist focus and individual countries are sealing investment deals to improve services and infrastructure. By now, **most have realized that in order to keep the tourist flow high, they need to provide sufficient comfort.** However, rather than a quick fix, such in depth change is a long and often painful process. The Minister of Tourism in Ghana, Mrs. Sabah Zita Okaikoi is very critical when it comes to the quality of services here and is trying to turn the situation around.

According to Mrs. Okaikoi, **the government needs to acknowledge the power of the tourist sector and introduce incentives to bring more foreign money into the economy;** tax allowances or concessionary rates on import duty may be a great start. The Minister has recently also met with Mr. Stuart Chase, the General Manager of the soon-to-open Movenpick Ambassador Hotel in Accra and after their discussion, Mrs. Okaikoi mentioned **there are many places with great appeal, however, due to lack of accommodation they remain undiscovered.** Furthermore, the Minister spoke about the lack of quality service which needs to be tackled.

However, lack of accommodation is not the only reason why tourism is not exactly blossoming here. **Corruption has a firm grasp on local administration officers.** They often expect bribes and payment for entry visa many times depends on their mood. Also, hoards of begging children are a very serious issue and restaurants with misleading menus and rude staff are only the tip of the iceberg.

While many visitors to Ghana wish to explore the former Slave Routes, **they come across misleading information and unprofessional tourist guides.** All these issues require attention and hopefully the Minister of Tourism will be successful. Ghana faces a substantial tourist make-over which will hopefully improve the country's reputation and will generate the desired tourist income.

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