

KENYAN TOURISM STRUGGLING HARD



The Republic of Kenya is a vibrant East African Country with some 35 million inhabitants. The country has a high unemployment, crime, and poverty levels. Many Kenyans live below the poverty level of \$1 a day. Therefore it is clear that the tourism industry is an important source of jobs and revenue.

The government wants to support the growth of the travel trade. Nowadays, it is important to target the domestic customers. Trade and Industry minister Mukhisa Kituyi says that hoteliers can increase the bed occupancy by targeting the Kenyan middle class.

Obviously, the government makes steps to help the tourism businesses. Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi claims that they have removed various licenses that were frustrating the investments. These measures should not only make it easy for investors to get the license but it should also eradicate corruption. Finance minister Amos Kimunya said that they helped the industry players by VAT (Value Added Tax) exemptions to hotels that are carrying out refurbishments and upgrading.

Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi says that tourism played an important role in the development of the economy. The numbers speak clearly, Kenya made \$800 million from tourism last year and it expects to earn \$1 billion this year. The Kenyan authorities try hard to attract more visitors to their country.

The Kenya Tourist Board's (KTB) main purpose is to promote the country abroad. The KTB is the country's main tourism marketing organization, established within the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife. Without doubt Kenya has a lot to offer. The country is thanks to its scenic beauties and abundant wildlife one of Africa's major safari destinations.

Dr. Kituyi finds the MICE sector also as very important. "The Government is ready to assist by developing major conference facilities like the Kenyatta International Conference Centre in other major towns like Mombasa because conference tourism is now big business," Dr Kituyi said. However, the country still has to fight against crime. Another major problem is the poor quality of Kenya's infrastructure.

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