

UGANDA PLANS TO BECOME CHAMPION OF TOURISM IN AFRICA



Tourism in Africa has been growing and Uganda wants its slice of the pie. The country saw the arrival of almost 2 million visitors last year and expects to close 2019 with 3 million. The main attractions are local natural parks, gastronomic delicacies, and wild nightlife.

However, the latest idea of the Ugandan State Minister for Tourism, Godfrey Kiwanda, became the focus of the media: the Miss Curvy pageant with no rules. It's the goal? Showing to the world the countless erotic attributes of Ugandan women, with the purpose of strengthening the country's international image.

Numerous associations dedicated to tourism have discredited the minister, including feminist organizations, who accuse Kiwanda of treating the body of women as an object and promoting sex tourism. In a country where sexism is still present in every aspect of public life, the pageant represents the icing on top of an outrageous cake.

Few African countries have tourist strategies as unique as Uganda. The country stands out for its vibrant night scene: trend magazines such as Traveler have highlighted the network of restaurants, pubs, and nightclubs in its capital, Kampala, dubbing it "the other city that never sleeps."

The government has capitalized on the growing buzz around Uganda through celebrities, such as Lionel Messi in 2015, an exasperating Kanye West in 2018, or its many tourism "ambassadors". From having the current Miss World Africa crowned at the Miss World finals, to local influencers of international projection.

For many, the infamous Kiwanda beauty pageant only showcases the unpredictable nature of its tourist program, full of false steps. Uganda boasts 50% of the world's gorillas, countless national parks, and the source of the Nile River. **However, the government's plan is to attract tourists with curvy women.**

Judging by the media reaction, it is a counterproductive plan. 10% of Uganda's GDP already depends on tourism, despite its democratic failures and its persecution of the LGBT groups. The country wants to become a champion of tourism in Africa, but at the moment, it relies on controversial strategies: parties, celebrities and... sexism.

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