

ZIMBABWE WINS BID TO HOST 2008 OVERSEAS TOURISM CONFERENCE



Zimbabwe has won the right to host the 2008 overseas conference of the institute of travel and tourism. The African country has fought off 50 other bidders to stage the event, which will not only bring the Zimbabweans over USD 4 million, yet also give a huge boost to the country's tourism industry. The reason for the success has been put down to improved marketing, which has been advertising Zimbabwe as an attractive and safe destination with great potential.

This new aggressive marketing strategy has, for example, attracted an inquiry from the Republic of Ireland national football team, who have promised to use a Zimbabwean hotel for the 2010 World cup finals on the condition that they qualify for the competition. Another positive result of marketing changes is the country's improvement in its relationship with China. More and more Chinese tourists have been visiting Zimbabwe each year. Similarly, Zimbabwe has seen improvements in exhibitors and buyers at its tourism fairs. The figures from this year are 130 exhibitors and 365 buyers compared to last year's 83 exhibitors and 146 buyers.

In terms of revenue, the conference will be extremely beneficial. Zimbabwe's bidding cost a mere USD 700, yet each of an expected 1000 delegates is to pay USD 350 for the stay. The presence of these visitors shall naturally bring extra money for local businesses. However, Mr. Karikoga Kaseke, the Zimbabwean tourist association's chief executive, was keen to stress other benefits from his country hosting the event.

He called the conference a "serious business event", to be witnessed by many senior figures in the tourism industry. He added that the timing of the event was important, as Zimbabwe aims to extend its development in its regular areas of business. This victory could prove to be a huge success in this area of business not only financially, yet also in terms of Zimbabwe's appeal to potential visitors.

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