

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact Person: Edward J. Bergman  
Company Name: Africa Travel Association  
Telephone Number: 1-212-447-1357  
Email Address: info@africatravelassociation.org  
Web site address: www.africatravelassociation.org

### **New Social Entrepreneurs Head Africa Travel Association**

**NEW YORK, May 17, 2006**—The Africa Travel Association (ATA) appointed Edward Bergman as its new Executive Director at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Congress in Accra, Ghana.

As part of the new ATA leadership, Robert Alsbrooks of Philadelphia has been appointed to the administration as the Executive Programs Director and will focus on building the grassroots membership and chapter development.

"It is an honor and a great responsibility to serve as the new Executive Director of the premiere international travel association that has promoted tourism to the African continent and intra-Africa partnership for more than three decades," said Bergman. "The new administration will build on the foundations laid down by the hard work and dedication of many, especially Mira Berman, Executive Director Emeritus, and her team."

As an African development advocate and adjunct professor of tourism and entrepreneurship, Bergman has served as a member of the ATA's International Board of Directors for three years and as associate member for seven years. During this period, he has built private-public strategic partnerships committed to promoting travel and tourism opportunities on the African continent. Bergman, together with his colleague Robert Alsbrooks, have also developed entrepreneurial community development programs around Africa that have benefited thousands of people.

"I am excited to lead ATA into a new chapter of history and look forward to partnering with all of the global stakeholders," said Bergman. "Our team brings a culture of diversity and a vision of optimism, realism and entrepreneurialism to the organization, and is united in our belief that the travel and tourism industry holds great potential for socio-economic growth of the continent."

Bergman will focus his efforts on further advancing ATA's strategic partnerships with a priority on retaining and expanding membership in the public and private sectors and increasing revenue flow for the organization to sustain and expand its programs, with Africa's interests at heart. "Our central objective is to increase travel to the African continent," said Bergman.

As part of the priorities the new administration will further cultivate relationships with African Diaspora communities. They also will focus on developing the youth travel market, particularly from North America, Europe and Asia, which represents an incredible opportunity for Africa. In addition, the administration will explore the establishment of African regional headquarters in pursuit of its goals of 100 percent Africa country membership.

At the 31<sup>st</sup> Congress, Hon. J. Otanka Obetsebi-Lamptey, Minister of Tourism & Modernization of the Capital City, Republic of Ghana, also was elected as the new President of the association.

"Minister Obetsebi-Lamptey is a true visionary and is committed to bringing African Diaspora communities around the globe back home," said Bergman. "Minister Obetsebi-Lamptey is making his mark on the travel and tourism industry in innovative ways and with a strong appreciation of public-private partnerships. Minister Obetsebi-Lamptey's vision for the ATA is more relevant today than ever before, and we look forward to working together."

Marlene Melton, President of African Ventures, Inc., a New York-based public relations and marketing firm, has been elected to serve as First Vice President of the association. Ms. Melton brings a long history of promoting tourism to Africa through marketing representation, organization of FIT and group tours, involvement on travel industry panels and a history of leadership within the ATA. "We are excited to work with Ms. Melton who is truly passionate about ATA" said Bergman.

Bergman also extended praise to Hon. Kabinga Pande, Minister of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, the Republic of Zambia, for his leadership and strong commitment to the association during his term as President, and noted that ATA "looks forward to his continued partnership and guidance as Immediate Past President and current Vice President."

Other newly elected officers of the Executive Committee include Hon. Anthony Diallo, MP, Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, United Republic of Tanzania; Ambassador Mohamoud Dirir, Minister of Culture and Tourism, Ethiopia; Charles Gatt Jr., Publisher, Travel World News; Roger Kacou, Director of Operations Africa, Intercontinental Hotels and Patricia Brown, Kambi Tours.

The new Executive Director was inducted into office at the conclusion of the ATA congress on May 4, 2006 and is assuming all duties immediately excluding financial responsibly, which will be begin on July 1, at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Bergman has selected Ogo Sow, a Senegalese-born internationally recognized media personality, as an Advisor for U.S. Africa Diaspora Affairs. Sow will focus on cultivating relations with the African community in the Diaspora, on behalf of the Executive Director, which represents an increasing market for tourism development. Other members of the administration and a new office address will be announced shortly thereafter. Updated contact information for the association has been noted above.

### **About ATA**

The Africa Travel Association (ATA) is the premier international travel industry association, promoting tourism to the African continent and intra-Africa travel and partnership since 1975. Upcoming events include the 10<sup>th</sup> Cultural Heritage, Adventure and Ecotourism Symposium in Nigeria from November 15 – 20, 2006 and the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Congress in Ethiopia scheduled for May 2007, on the occasion of the Ethiopian

Millennium celebrations.

**About Edward J. Bergman, ATA Executive Director**

Edward J. Bergman currently serves as the Executive Director of Miracle Corners of the World Inc. (MCW), which he co-founded in 1999. MCW is a non-profit organization that serves young people worldwide, primarily through programs of leadership training, community center and housing development, and healthcare outreach, with a special focus on Africa. To date, MCW has raised over two million dollars of in-kind and cash support and has led youth empowerment and community development programs on the African continent.

He is President of Innovative Development Services Inc. (IDS), a consulting firm that provides customized consultation services for nonprofit, government and private sector organizations in the areas of international development, communications, travel and tourism, and organizational management.

Bergman holds a position of adjunct professor at the City University of New York - Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, where he lectures on tourism and entrepreneurship. He received his Masters from New York University's (NYU) Gallatin School of Individualized Study with a major in "Social Entrepreneurship" and his BS in Hotel and Tourism Management from NYU's Tisch Center for Hospitality, Tourism and Sports Management, where he was a Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholar.

Bergman serves on the board of directors of several international organizations in the non-profit, education and travel trade sectors including Shared Interest Inc.; the advisory boards of the International Crisis Group, the NYU SCPS Center for Global Studies, the NYU Gallatin School of Individualized Studies; and the NYU Wagner Graduate School of Public Service Reynolds Foundation Program in Social Entrepreneurship graduate scholars selection committee. He has received several humanitarian awards.

**About Robert Alsbrooks, ATA Executive Programs Director**

Robert Alsbrooks is a native of Philadelphia. He is a political activist, "Community Connector," motivational speaker and entrepreneur.

Alsbrooks is co-founder and Programs Director of Miracle Corners of the World, Inc. He serves as a leadership instructor for the Philadelphia District Attorneys Office and the Institute for the Development of African American Youth. He has served as a guest instructor for the United States National Guard Drug Demand and Reduction Program, research assistant for Dr. Elijah Anderson, social scientist at the University of Pennsylvania, and a bi-annual lecturer on leadership at the Wharton School, for late Dr. Edward B. Shils, among many other assignments.

Alsbrooks received an Associate Degree in Business Management from the Pennsylvania Business Institute and a Liberal Arts Degree from the Community College of Philadelphia. He is a graduate of the "Dr. Herman C. Wrice University of System Science."

He has received several leadership humanitarian awards recognizing his grassroots community development work internationally and in the United States.



(From left to right) Hon. Kabinga Pande, Immediate Past President and current Vice President of ATA and Minister of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, the Republic of Zambia / Robert Alsbrooks, Executive Programs Director ATA / Edward J. Bergman, Executive Director ATA / Hon. J. Otanka Obetsebi-Lamphey, President of ATA and Minister of Tourism & Modernization of the Capital City, Republic of Ghana