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ATA Reports Rising U.S. Interest in Africa Due to World Cup

June 16, 2010

Edward Bergman, executive director of the Africa Travel Association (ATA), said the 2010 World Cup in South Africa has sparked more U.S. interest in Africa. “All over the U.S., we can see how excited everyone is about the World Cup,” said Bergman. “We have already seen a surge in interest about South Africa in major American cities, where the country’s flag, culture, cuisine and wines are on full display. We’ve also seen a huge amount of media coverage about a positive event taking place on the continent rather than the usual politics or a humanitarian crisis.”

According to reports from South Africa, the month-long tournament is expected to boost tourist arrivals by almost 400,000 visitors. The World Cup puts South Africa on center stage, showing the world that Destination Africa can compete. It also puts a focus on Africa, providing other nations with an opportunity to attract tourists and investment to their countries. All this builds on the idea that sports tourism can boost economic growth. “At the same time, American tourists have something tangible to offer Africa: tourism creates jobs, fights unemployment and boosts the economy,” said Bergman. “Every tourist needs a flight, accommodation, and meals. They also want to enjoy the nightlife, explore the local culture and do some shopping.”

The United States is the top source market for Tanzania, Ghana, Rwanda, Ethiopia and South Africa, as noted in a report recently published by ATA, [New York](#) University’s Africa House and the World Bank. The U.S. is also the top source market for the largest number of ticket holders, outnumbering all other nationalities except South Africa, the host country.

Bergman is confident the World Cup will leave a lasting legacy on South Africa and Africa. “The World Cup will show the world that Africa has the infrastructure and the ability to host events of all sizes. The new roads, railways and bus networks, as well technology development will also help further position South Africa as a premier destination.”

The Africa Travel Association (ATA) was established as an international travel industry trade association in 1975 with a mission to promote travel and tourism to Africa, and to strengthen intra-Africa partnerships. ATA provides services to a broad range of members including:

tourism, diaspora, culture, and sports ministers, tourism boards, airlines, hoteliers, travel agents, tour operators, travel trade media, public relations firms, consulting companies, non-profit organizations, businesses, small and medium-sized enterprises, and other organizations engaged in tourism promotion. For more information, call 212-447-1357 or visit www.africatravelassociation.org.

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