



VANGUARD

Africa: Tourism Stakeholders Storm Gambia for ATA Congress

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As the Africa Travel Association's (ATA) 35th Annual World Congress holds in Gambia next week, stakeholders across the tourism spectrum in the West African country are gearing up for ATA's hallmark event.

Just as the Nigeria chapter of the body has elected new executive members to run the activities of the association in the country.

More than 200 tourism and travel professionals from around the world are expected to attend the four-day event, which will be held at the Sheraton Hotel Resort and Spa in Gambia.

According to Alieu Secka, Chair of the Gambia Hotel Association (GHA) and head of the Congress Host Committee, "Gambian tourism stakeholders are thrilled by this opportunity to share with the participants the legendary Gambian hospitality, which has evolved and been refined over the years."

The congress will engage international delegates in discussions on a broad range of industry topics, such as marketing and branding, niche markets and emerging trends, African Diaspora travel to Africa, hotel standards, responsible tourism, sustainable travel, and hospitality education.

For the second year in a row, the congress will include a marketplace for buyers and sellers specializing in promoting "Destination Africa."

ATA's Young Professional Network (YPN) will also participate in the event. Delegates will also experience the people and culture of Gambia on a number of tours, including a visit to Albreda and Juffureh, the sites of the Heritage "Roots" trail. Delegates will also participate in networking receptions and gala dinners. Pre- and post-congress trips are also available.

After the congress, delegates are invited to attend the Kanilai International Festival. The two-week festival will showcase and promote the rich cultural heritage of West Africa and include elaborate and diverse cultural performances and celebrations.

In the new executive instituted in Nigeria, Architect David Binga emerged the President of the Nigeria chapter. Binga, though an architect is a successful travel agent and tour operator based in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory [FCT].

Architect Binga who is also a member of the Executive Council of the Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigerian [FTAN], apex umbrella body for tourism private sector in Nigeria said ATA is close to his heart and he's willing to do all he could to push and take the association to the highest level.

According to him, ATA is a respected travel and tourism body across Africa and wonder why the situation was different in Nigeria. Explaining what ATA has done and still doing for destinations across Africa, he posited that countries like Tanzania, Zambia, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Egypt among others have benefited tremendously from their symbiotic relationship with ATA.

He noted that Nigeria may have failed in the past to capitalize on its relationship with ATA, and promised that things will be done differently this time.

As for ATA Nigeria, the chapter is ready to participate in this year's edition of ATA 35th Annual Congress, holding in the Gambia from May 17-20, 2010.

Also speaking, ATA Liaison person in Nigeria and a member of ATA International Board, Mrs. Margaret Fabiyi, said Nigeria is not just going to participate but effort and discussion are ongoing with the relevant agency and the ministry that Nigeria bid for the hosting right of ATA 2011 congress in the country.

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