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## WORLD CUP FOOTBALL CAN MOVE AFRICA'S TOURISM ONSIDE

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WASHINGTON DC - African nations would benefit from focusing their efforts on attracting visitors headed to South Africa for the FIFA World Cup in 2010, asserted a development expert who addressed the Africa Travel Association's (ATA) symposium examining Sports Tourism in Washington DC last weekend.

"The South Africans see the value of spreading the World Cup benefits to other African nations," asserted development expert Lelei LeLaulu who addressed participants from North America, Africa and Europe. "So, sister African nations should take advantage and use this once-in-a-lifetime chance to attract visitors to see other parts of Africa and observe other types of football styles," said the president of Sensible Development Corporation.

"As a first step, African nations should recognize South African visas so anyone attending the World Cup can enter any other nation on the continent with the same visa," added LeLaulu who as head of Counterpart International was involved in the launching of significant sustainable tourism programs in Ethiopia and Mali.

"The key is to make it as bureaucracy-free as possible because the World Cup is the main event and we're trying to divert Cup fans to other parts of Africa before and after the event." Noting the urgency of the task, LeLaulu, who co-founded the World Tourism Forum for Peace and Sustainable Development as well as the Caribbean Media Exchange on Sustainable Development (CMEEx), added, "We only have one shot at this goal because for most of these sports fans, this will be their first, and probably last, trip to Africa."

"For the longer term, we should be looking at attracting some of these World Cup fans to future Africa Cup venues. African nations could also use World Cup advertising to highlight the power and beauty of the African game which has so dramatically altered the way football is played," he declared.

Edward Bergman, executive director of the ATA, said the weekend workshops looked at the "challenging but exciting times" and how African nations could benefit by using their Diaspora communities. It was also an opportunity to confront and deal with negative perceptions of travel on the continent, he added.

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