



# NTA President Speaks at U.S.-Africa Business Summit

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National Tour Association President Lisa Simon spoke at the workshop “Marketing ‘Destination Africa’ in the U.S. Marketplace” at the Corporate Council on Africa's Seventh U.S.-Africa Business Summit. Simon’s remarks support NTA’s partnership with the Africa Travel Association which was created in part to foster business opportunities between members of both organizations. The Africa Travel Association-led workshop offered a bird’s-eye view of the African tourism industry, exploring where and how Africa fits into the global tourism marketplace including what current and future travel and consumer trends are. Simon spoke on the value of travel to the continent for American tourists as well as U.S.-based travel professionals. According to the World Tourism Organization, Africa is one of the few regions in the world that has experienced a growth in tourism so far in 2009, and arrivals are expected to grow an additional one to five percent this year. The U.S. Office of Travel and Tourism Industries reported that nearly 320,000 Americans traveled to Africa last year, an increase of 56 percent over 2007.

“Tour operators are always looking for innovative product and new destinations, and Africa has everything that is hot right now -- cultural and experiential tourism, adventure and authentic experiences,” said Simon. “We often think of Africa as a single destination, yet there is great diversity in culture, fashion, music and history among its 53 nations.” Simon concluded her discussion by outlining ways Africa travel can continue to experience growth. This included educating the U.S. trade on Africa’s diversity and broad product offerings, cooperative marketing, improving infrastructure, developing product in all price ranges to attract visitors of all means and promoting the safety and security of travel to Africa.

The moderator of the workshop was Edward Bergman, executive director of the Africa Travel Association. Other speakers included Kaliba Senghore, deputy minister of Tourism and Culture and permanent secretary of the Department of State for Tourism and Culture in The Gambia; El Hadji Aziz Gueye, director of the Senegal Tourist Office in Atlanta, Ga.; Ogo Sow, president of Ogo Sow Communications and advisor of Diaspora Affairs for the Africa Travel Association; and Gregg Truman, vice president of marketing for [South African Airways](#). The National Tour Association is an association for packaged travel professionals. NTA strives to provide value for its members by advancing the packaged travel industry through its advocacy efforts and progressive leadership. Connecting its members through business development, government relations, professional development and research, NTA has remained committed to serving its members with integrity and quality service since its founding in 1951. Today, the NTA membership represents 48 countries, and includes tour and travel packagers of all types. For more information, visit [www.NTAonline.com](http://www.NTAonline.com).