

THE GAMBIA TO HOST ATA'S 35TH ANNUAL CONGRESS IN MAY 2010



Honorable Nancy Seedy Njie, The Gambia's Minister of Tourism and Culture, and Edward Bergman, Executive Director of the Africa Travel Association (ATA), have announced that the Republic of The Gambia will host ATA's 35th Annual Congress in the capital city of Banjul in May 2010.

Known as the "Smiling Coast of Africa," the West African country is famed for luxurious beach resorts, quaint fishing villages and magnificent coastline. Affordable and safe, with peaceful and friendly people it offers eco-tourism, sports fishing, bird watching and safaris, music, dancing and traditional wrestling matches, and visiting trans-Atlantic slave trade sites.

ATA's hallmark international event will be attended by African tourism ministers and industry experts representing tourism boards, travel agencies, ground operator companies, airlines, and hotels. Participants from the travel trade media and the corporate, non-profit and academic sectors are also expected to attend.

The four-day event will engage delegates in discussions on industry topics such as public-private sector partnership, marketing and promotion, tourism infrastructure development, industry trends, and social media. ATA member countries will organize a few evening networking receptions and ATA's Young Professionals Network will meet with local hospitality professionals and students. For the second year, the congress will also include a marketplace for buyers and sellers specializing in Destination Africa. Delegates will also have the opportunity to explore the country on pre- or post-congress trips, as well as on the Host Country Day.

The Gambia, the smallest country on the African continent, has an estimated population of 1,600,000. With the exception of a small shoreline, the English-speaking country is surrounded by Senegal. Approximately 120,000 charter tourists, mainly from

Europe, arrive annually. The Ministry plans to attract 500,000 arrivals by 2012 by targeting the US marketplace and "up-market" tourists, and by lengthening the tourist season to year-round. Public-private sector plans to increase the accommodation stock and build a conference center are underway. Travel and tourism accounts for sixteen percent of Gambia's GDP.

The 2010 Congress builds on the success of the West African country's longstanding ties with ATA. In 1984, ATA held its ninth congress in Banjul, immediately following the association's eighth congress in Cairo, Egypt.

"ATA is excited to return to Gambia and anticipates that the 2010 congress will help Gambia reach its goal of bringing in more tourists and industry investment," said Bergman. "We are especially grateful to our private sector partners, particularly Starwood Hotels, who have been instrumental in bringing the Ministry and ATA together to organize this important continental event."

Africa Travel Association (ATA),
info@africatraselassociation.org,
www.africatraselassociation.org;
Gambia Tourist Authority (GTA), www.visitthegambia.gm/

WORLD MAJOR ITB COMES TO INDIA CO-BRANDED WITH SATTE

World major ITB Berlin, a product of Messe Berlin, has announced a co-branded show with SATTE for 2010. The endorsement reflects commitment to the India market and the entire South Asian region. It recognizes the power of the Indian traveler and India as a major generator on the travel and tourism circuit of Asia, and also identifies the leadership position of SATTE as the premier tourism product of the region.

SATTE and ITB have signed a Memorandum of Understanding in New Delhi. Present at the event, Dr. Martin Buck, Director of the Competence Center Travel and Logistics at Messe Berlin, saw the developments as most positive, coming from ITB Berlin, regarded as the world's biggest tourism business platform.

ITB has been looking to increase its international presence and last year embarked upon its first show in Singapore, launching the first edition of ITB Asia. A co-branded show in India is a significant recognition of the Indian market and of SATTE in particular.

SATTE and ITB have been working together over the last four years. This new agreement will secure a world-class experience at the 17th annual edition of SATTE January 28–30, 2010.

ITB Berlin 2010 will take place Wednesday to Sunday, March 10–14. The show will be open to trade visitors only from Wednesday to Friday. Parallel with the event, the ITB Berlin Convention, the world's largest specialist convention for the industry, will be held Wednesday to Saturday, March 10–13, 2010. In 2009 a total of 11,098 companies from 187 countries exhibited their products and services to 178,971 visitors, including 110,857 trade visitors.

ITB Berlin, ITB Berlin Convention, www.itb-kongress.com,
www.itb-berlin.com, www.itb-convention.com