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ATA COMMUNICATIONS  
Africa Travel Association  
+1-212-447-1357  
[info@africatravelassociation.org](mailto:info@africatravelassociation.org)  
[www.AfricaTravelAssociation.org](http://www.AfricaTravelAssociation.org)

## **AFRICA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES 2012 CONGRESS**

### **Zimbabwe to Host ATA's 37<sup>th</sup> Annual World Congress in May 2012**

**NEW YORK, NY, January 18, 2012** – The Honorable Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Engineer Walter Mzembi, and Executive Director of the Africa Travel Association (ATA), Edward Bergman, announced today that Zimbabwe will host ATA's 37<sup>th</sup> Annual World Congress in the resort town of Victoria Falls in May 2012.

“It is indeed an honor to be the proud host of the ATA's 2012 World Congress. The 37<sup>th</sup> annual Congress in Zimbabwe will afford the delegates an opportunity to experience our many attractions.” said Honorable Minister Mzembi. “We look forward to telling our story about Zimbabwe, A World of Wonders.”

The five-day congress will kick off in the world's adventure capital, Victoria Falls, on Friday, May 18. Among the expected 300 participants are tourism ministers, tourism board heads, private sector leaders, travel industry professionals, including product buyers and sellers, travel trade media, scholars and African Diaspora leaders.

“ATA was last in Zimbabwe in 1988, when the congress was held in Harare and, after 23 years, we're proud to be heading back,” said Bergman. “We are positive that the 2012 congress will attract leading tourism experts from across the globe. It will surpass all expectations and is an event not to be missed.”

Zimbabwe, also known as “a world of wonders,” boasts a wide array of attractions, including its own seven wonders: (1) People and culture; (2) History and heritage; (3) Great Zimbabwe (grand medieval palace); (4) Victoria Falls (Mosi-oa-Tunya); (5) Wildlife and nature; (6) Eastern Highlands; and (7) Lake Kariba. Delegates will sample some of these wonders during the Host Country Day and by participating in pre and post congress tours.

This announcement follows a recent ATA trip to Zimbabwe hosted by the Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, as well as the Chief Executive of the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, K. Kaseke, and where the delegation met with representatives from the tourism sector and the media.

The ATA delegation also met with Ambassador Charles Ray, US Ambassador to Zimbabwe who expressed his support with the following statement: “Zimbabwe offers a ‘World of Wonders’ to tickle the fancy and sense of adventure of the full array of international travelers...Your visit to Zimbabwe will bring a smile to your face for a lifetime. I applaud ATA's vision in hosting its

37<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress in Victoria Falls and opening the world's eyes to what Zimbabwe has to offer. I look forward to seeing you by the Falls in May.”

The 2012 Congress will address timely industry topics such as web-based PR and on-line communications tourism promotion, and the latest travel trends in Africa. The Congress also offers a wide range of networking events, including receptions and gala dinners. ATA's Young Professionals Program, representing travel, tourism and hospitality students and young professionals from North America and Africa, will also participate in the event.

ATA's 36th Annual World Congress in Senegal was held in Dakar, Senegal in May 2011 under the banner “Destination Senegal: A Tourism Gateway Inspired by Culture, Heritage and Arts.”

### **About the Congress**

World Congress details will be posted at <http://africatravelassociation.org/events/ac.html>.

Companies interested in sponsorship and/or promotional opportunities should contact ATA at +1.212.447.1357 or [info@AfricaTravelAssociation.org](mailto:info@AfricaTravelAssociation.org).

### **About Zimbabwe**

For more information on Zimbabwe, visit [www.zimbabwetourism.net](http://www.zimbabwetourism.net)

### **About the Africa Travel Association (ATA)**

The Africa Travel Association (ATA) is the leading global trade association promoting travel and tourism to Africa and strengthening intra-Africa partnerships. Established in 1975, ATA serves both the public and private sectors of the international travel and tourism industry. ATA membership comprises African governments, their tourism ministers, tourism bureaus and boards, airlines, cruise lines, hotels, resorts, front-line travel sellers and providers, tour operators and travel agents, and affiliate industries. ATA partners with the African Union Commission (AU) to promote the sustainable development of tourism to and across Africa. ATA's annual events bring together industry leaders to shape Africa's tourism agenda. For more information about ATA, visit [www.AfricaTravelAssociation.org](http://www.AfricaTravelAssociation.org)

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