

Association of African Attractions launch a step toward improving Africa's attractions for visitors

This year's Attractions Africa conference saw the launch of the Association of African Attractions. The association forms part of the official African chapter of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), which enables those working in this industry to network, share best practice, create standards and collaborate to improve the quality of attractions for visitors.

In one of the keynote presentations at the conference, tourism expert Kiéra Schoeman, of Urban-Econ Development Economists, said: "There were 25 million people travelling in 1950, one billion people travelling in 2012 and 1.24 billion in 2016. By 2030, there will be 1.8 billion travellers worldwide." The World Travel and Tourism Council estimates that travel into Africa, for example, will increase by 157% by 2030, she added.



Sabine Lehmann

It is against this background that attractions on the continent will need to gear up to be more professional and more visitor-friendly than ever.

The chair and founder of the Attractions Africa conference, tourism veteran Sabine Lehmann says **the new association's aims are to:**

- Increase the visibility of the attractions industry in South Africa and Africa
- Lobby government and industry bodies on issues around attractions
- Provide a networking solution for the growing industry, for example in order to share case studies with one another
- Motivate for research to be done on the industry

Lehmann says the association will look to attract decision-makers and senior staff of all types of attractions.

"The formation of this association has been long overdue. There's a gap and we need to fill it. We hope the formation of the association will lead to better collaboration, career mapping for attractions professionals, and ultimately contribute to a better tourism industry that will, in turn, help make South Africa and other African countries even better destinations for international and domestic tourists," says Lehmann.



The time is right for an African attractions association

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IAAPA's vice-president for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, Jakob Wahl says the time is right for the creation of an African attractions association – and Attractions Africa has provided the appropriate platform for doing so.

"We have been pleased to see Attractions Africa grow rapidly into the continent's premier forum for attractions professionals, where they can learn and be inspired, and discover new, creative ways of presenting attractions from their industry peers and other experts. IAAPA fully supports the event and is proud to be a partner of this initiative to also launch an association to regroup the leading attractions in the region. Attractions Africa, as the only event that brings together

attractions professionals from around the continent, is the right place to make it a reality," said Wahl.

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