

Guebuza to open Africa investor Tourism Summit

LONDON: Pan-African investment group Africa investor (Ai) and the Government of Mozambique are to partner to host the 2009 Ai Tourism Investor Summit and Tourism Investor Awards. The summit will take place at the Joaquim Chissano Conference Centre in Maputo, Mozambique on - 27 February 2009.

The Mozambican government is the platinum sponsor of the two-day event and is partnering with Africa investor to showcase Mozambique to Africa and the world as a world-class tourist destination. There will be a dedicated gala launch event for the Mozambique brand on the opening night of 26 February opened by Armando Guebuza, President of the Republic of Mozambique. The evening will include a film presentation and a speech by the Minister of Tourism, who will present the GEOMAPA project, a new tourism map created in partnership with National Geographic.

The 2009 Ai Tourism Investor Summit is themed on leveraging the FIFA 2010 World Cup as a platform for African governments and cities to originate major international event-hosting opportunities to catalyse tourism investment. In this respect a unique directory of international bidding opportunities for major international sporting events between 2011 and 2018 will be presented to delegates. Additional tourism investment opportunities will be presented in dedicated project pitch sessions and panels of investors will have facilitated meetings with project owners.

Commenting on the partnership, Hubert Danso, vice-chairman of Africa investor, said: "Africa investor welcomes the Government of Mozambique as our strategic partner for the 2009 Tourism Investor Summit and Awards. With preparations for 2010 well under way, Africa is in a unique position to capitalise on the vast array of opportunities waiting to be developed, a number of which will be profiled at the event."

The summit has attracted the support of the Ministry of Tourism and National Parks of Gabon, with its national tourism agency GABONTOUR; and Food Concepts and Entertainments. These are joined by a number of international partners including the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), Africa Travel Channel, Africa Travel Association, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the NEPAD Business Group.

The summit will also host the prestigious Ai Tourism Investor Awards, designed to raise the profile of Africa as a tourism investment destination and showcase and reward those companies and initiatives investing to drive sustainable economic growth in Africa's tourism industry. The Tourism Investor Awards are the exclusive international benchmark for tourism investment and development in Africa, and earn participants global recognition.

The Tourism Investor Awards have the support of judges; Geoff Lipman, assistant secretary-general, UNWTO; Kate Rivett-Carnac, tourism specialist, Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA); Trevor Ward, managing director, W Hospitality Group; Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong, tourism and environment advisor, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and Irene Visser, tourism sector operations officer, Investment Climate Team for Africa, International Finance Corporation (IFC).

Professor Geoffrey Lipman, assistant secretary-general of the UNWTO and chair of the Awards judging

panel said: "Tourism is emerging as a crucial industry for Africa and one that can act as a catalyst for wide-ranging economic growth across the region. By recognising those at the forefront of investing in these markets, these Tourism Investor Awards are making a vital contribution to the development of the industry

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