

EAST AFRICA TOURISM PLATFORM

PRESS RELEASE

Kigali, October 20, 2020



INTRA-REGIONAL TOURISM IN FOCUS FOR EATP AS EAC RE-OPENS

- The East African region as a tourism destination is well renowned, mainly due to its unique attractions. It has some of Africa's most evocative safari destinations and the world's last remaining mountain gorillas. From Wildebeest over the savannah in the Serengeti-Maasai Mara ecosystem, rhinos stand in the shade in Ngorongoro crater and Chimpanzees in Western Tanzania's Gombe Stream and Mahale Mountains parks to mention a few.
- The significance of travel and tourism to the EAC partner states economies cannot be over-emphasized. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Tourism in East Africa contributed an average of 8.1% to GDP and 17.2% to export earnings and generates 7.1% of employment. As regards employment, tourism employed about 1,278,000 direct and 1,981,000 indirect jobs in the partner states
- Tourism in East Africa has taken a severe blow, with the tourism sector expected to face 92 per cent decline in cash flows due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a report released by the East Africa Business Council.
- Regional tourism has long relied on international travellers, but cannot bank any longer on traditional key source markets like North America and Europe. Hence the importance to spur the region within EAC capitalizing on the use of national ID and expatriate travel.
- Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania earned the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) global health and safety stamp, thus are designated as "Safe Travels" Destinations. The EATP advocates for regional tourism as it is a safe destination.
- There is a need to unlock the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic to tourism to enable the industry to thrive. We are advocating for harmonized reopening protocols in the partner states to allow east Africans and international tourists to take advantage of the attractions in the region and discover the hidden treasures.
- Speaking at the occasion, Mr Fred Odek, the East African Tourism Platform Chairman, said that today marks a very significant step into the revitalization of the East Africa Tourism Platform – EATP. The handing over of the baton between the Kenya Tourism Federation outgoing host of the EATP secretariat and the Rwanda Chamber of Tourism, the incoming host of the secretariat is a continuation of the relay in nurturing the Platform for the East Africa Region. We are also officially launching our two years workplan supported by Trademark East Africa. He added that the Platform is working closely with key stakeholders in the industry to ensure recovery from the effects of COVID-19.
- If there was ever a period for the region to cooperate for economic gains, wellbeing and safety of its people, now is without a doubt the right time. Cooperation will determine the course of regional tourism, commented Mr David Butera, Programme Manager at TradeMark East Africa.
- In light of the above, the East Africa Tourism platform will work with stakeholders to develop special tour packages for the region. These will cover both the airfare, attractions, accommodation with attractive rates.

Notes to Editor:

The East Africa Tourism Platform is the apex private sector body for Tourism in East Africa. The EATP Mission is to promote intra and inter-regional tourism through advocacy, marketing, skills development, research and information sharing. The East Africa Tourism Platform was established in 2011 and is supported by Trademark East Africa. The Platform under the leadership of key tourism leaders in the region motivates and define private sector participation in the emerging EAC policies and behaviour. It makes the voice of the private sector heard and relevant in the regional integration process, pursuing common a common agenda as a sector.

The Rwanda Chamber of Tourism hosts the EATP Secretariat since June 2020. The Rwanda Chamber of Tourism is the private sector pillar, of the Rwanda Private Sector Federation, which dedicated to promoting and representing the interests of the Rwandan business community.



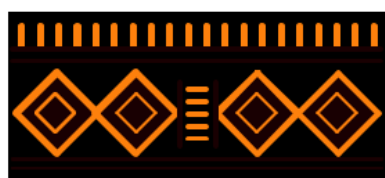
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EATP - Secretariat| Rwanda Chamber of Tourism
M&M Plaza Ɔ Gishushu, Kigali
Tel: +250782523055
Facebook: East Africa Tourism Platform|
Twitter: @TourismEA|
Skype: tourisma