

Press Release - For immediate release

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EAST AFRICA TOURISM PLATFORM LAUNCHES 'TEMBEA NYUMBANI' CAMPAIGN.

East Africa Tourism Platform (EATP) Headquarters, Kigali, Rwanda. September 8, 2021. The East Africa Tourism Platform has launched a three-month campaign dubbed "*Tembea Nyumbani*", in the East African Community (EAC) Partner States. *Tembea Nyumbani*, Swahili for Visit Home, is a call to the citizens of the countries in the East African Community to visit each other's countries — in an effort to promote domestic and regional tourism business in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. In the spirit of East African unity, the tourism body is drawing wisdom from the popular adage that as an East African, any East African country you travel to is a home away from home.

Undertaken in partnership with stakeholders, the campaign will promote different tourist packages within the region. The campaign aims to spur tourism business within the region by showcasing the many hidden gems as well as affordable and exciting holiday packages that can be explored in what the world has come to know as Africa's magical destinations. It is expected that an increase in interest to travel within the region will revive the tourism industry, which is a lifeline for millions of people.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the tourism sector had become one of the most lucrative, but the pandemic brought it to its knees. As uptake of vaccines increases and recovery efforts start, many nations are cooperating to revive tourism. Before Covid-19, tourism contributed to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of EAC Partner States by an average of 9.5% in 2019. It contributed an average of 17.2% to EAC total exports and 7.1% to employment. Research shows that EAC Partner States lost international tourism receipts to the tune of USD 4.8 billion in the year 2020. In terms of impact on employment, it is estimated that 2 million tourism jobs in the region were lost.

Efforts to deal with challenges associated with Covid-19 on domestic and regional tourism should focus on the long term, beyond the pandemic, in order to enable the industry to revive and thrive sustainably to withstand future shocks.

The EAC has a lot to offer in terms of products and attractions, with its enormous untapped tourism and hospitality potential.

Different discounted packages for East Africans are available on the *Tembea Nyumbani* platform <https://tembeanyumbani.visiteastafrica.net/>. The site features various tourist attractions, culinary experiences, tour offers and diverse travel experiences in the EAC. It will facilitate people to navigate and find a range of offers within the region and enable business owners to connect with customers easily. We are inviting all East Africans to visit the portal to start exploring beautiful East Africa.

Speaking during the campaign's launch, EATP Board Member and CEO of the Tourism Confederation of Tanzania, Mr. Richard Rugimbana, said: "The tourism economy is at a crossroads. The coronavirus has heavily hit it, but this pandemic also brought us opportunities to explore new markets, open up new destinations, encourage innovation as well as think new and sustainable tourism development models."



"The crisis is an opportunity to think about the present and the future. With the hard-hitting decline in international arrivals and recovery to pre-crisis levels not expected before 2023, *Tembea Nyumbani* will provide the much-needed boost to help sustain our region's many tourism destinations and businesses. Besides promoting domestic and regional tourism, this campaign will be a key driver of business recovery in the short to medium term."

"Recently, we re-introduced the www.visiteastafrica.net portal where tourists can plan and book tour packages and offers from service providers in the region. This is an addition to a great achievement of the East Africa Tourism Platform and its commitment to continue offering value to its members."

More than 830 regional tour operators and travel agents will now be able to market and sell their packages through *Tembea Nyumbani*. More travel operators are welcome to join the platform, at no cost, by registering through their respective country tour associations.

Mrs. Anataria Karimba, Director of Business Competitiveness at TradeMark East Africa (TMEA), said: "A return to pre-Covid-19 international tourist arrival levels may seem far off as travel restrictions still hold. However, this should encourage us as the Partner States to work together in addressing the impact of the pandemic on the tourism sector and in joint tourism recovery efforts."

"Tourism is one of the world's major economic sectors, and the current crisis is an opportunity for us to rethink how we do things. One of the vital lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic is that domestic and regional tourism markets are very important. In such situations, they can help make the tourism sector resilient. We need to focus more effort on developing many creative and innovative packages for domestic and regional tourism. *Tembea Nyumbani* is long overdue."

Notes to the editor

About the East Africa Tourism Platform (EATP)

The East Africa Tourism Platform (EATP) is the private sector body for tourism in East Africa, working towards promoting the interest and participation of the private sector in the East African Community (EAC) integration process. The East Africa Tourism Platform was established in July 2011 after extensive consultations with tourism stakeholders. It became operational on April 2, 2012, with the support of TradeMark East Africa. The vision of creating and promoting a vibrant and diverse single tourism destination is the driving force. The platform promotes intra and inter-regional tourism through advocacy, marketing, skills development, research and information sharing. It works closely with national ministries responsible for tourism, hospitality, wildlife, transport portfolios, the EAC Secretariat, TradeMark East Africa (TMEA), the East African Business Council (EABC) and private sector organizations in all EAC Partner States to promote intra and inter-regional tourism.

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