

Tourism sector future bright

Gloria Tumwesigye is the chief executive officer of the association of Uganda Tour Operators (AUTO). Ahead of the World Tourism Day celebrations in Jinja, she told Stella Naigino what they do, how it impacts the economy and opportunities in the sector

Q Give us an insight into your association and how it fosters the development of the tourism sector

AUTO is Uganda's leading tourism trade association, representing the interests of the country's prominent and experienced professional tour operators. AUTO has been in existence since 1995 and has a membership of over 250 active members who offer a wide range of tour packages/services. In addition to representing and lobbying for issues affecting tour companies in the country, we uphold the good reputation of Destination Uganda by ensuring that the Ugandan tour operators maintain the highest standards of service and value guided by our vision and strategic plan. In our engagements with the partners from the public, we recommend certain Standards which the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities would consider in determining



Some tourists take a tour of Kidepo National Game Park

whether or not to grant or renew the licence of an operator.

Tourism is a big forex earner for the country, how can the youth be helped to tap into these opportunities?

The sector provides direct and indirect employment to over 500,000 people, most of them women and youth. There are, however, many untapped opportunities for the youth and those planning to venture into the tourism business. They have to first understand the multiplicity nature of this sector and position themselves strategically along the value chain.

For example, tourism feeds airlines which transport tourists to Uganda. It

provides revenue to the Government in form of taxes, delivers employment to the transport companies who drive tourists to their hotels. It also indirectly employs the rolex guy on the roadside who provides a quick snack to the visitor and the local traditional restaurant and the crafts shops. Managers of the tourist attractions also earn a living out of it.

This year we are celebrating World Tourism Day in line with digital transformation. With this digital age, there are immense opportunities in selling digital support services to tourism businesses. These may include social media management, website designing and promotion and other digital solutions. There are



Gloria Tumwesigye

also openings in the area of tourist guiding as well as job opportunities in the hospitality sector. But this requires training, passion and love for the sector as well as discipline. The youth can also engage in promoting performance arts and development of authentic crafts, which can be vended directly to tourists through a tour company or a crafts shop as tourist souvenirs. The youth who own or manage country homes in the villages can position these as tourist homestays and in so doing they will have to create visitor experiences. For example, tourists will want to experience a day in the life of a Mugisu, a Muganda, Karimojong, Munyankore or a Musoga. And they are willing to pay for these experiences.

What are some of the challenges

you face and what have been your achievements?

The biggest challenges are the unfair public relations for the destination in both local and international media. The prevalence of briefcase and unlicensed tour operators who do not pay taxes, but outcompete the registered professional tour companies and also defraud clients; and also offer substandard services are a threat to the industry. There is also the absence of a proper crisis management procedure and need to improve skills in the sector for better service delivery. We, however, appreciate the Government improvements in infrastructure, and the increase in the budgetary allocation to tourism. Marketing, as well as the various tax exemptions for tourism businesses, for example the exemption on imported tourism vehicles and tourism boats are a good gesture.

How do you envisage the future of tourism in Uganda?

The future of tourism in Uganda is promising, but lies in sustainable utilisation of natural resources as many travellers today are on the lookout for green (also called ecotourism) destinations. Uganda is still an untapped destination and this is a big merit for us when contrasted with mass tourism destinations since the concept of responsible travellers around the world is gaining more popularity each passing day.



This year's World Tourism Day highlights the global potential of tourism for socio-economic development. With more than one billion international tourists now traveling the world each year, tourism has become a powerful and transformative force that is making a genuine difference in the lives of millions of people.

With the advancement in ICT and the adoption of digital technologies in tourism businesses, tourism in Uganda, like around the world is expected to make much greater strides.

"On behalf of all professional tour operators in Uganda, we wish you a Happy World Tourism Day"

Uganda's Professional Tour Companies

1000 Shades of Green Tour & Safaris Co. Ltd	Baboon Adventure Safaris Ltd	Gonilas & Wildlife Safaris	Kigezi Biota Tours LTD	Off Road Uganda Safaris Ltd	Tales of Africa Safaris Ltd
2 Travel 2 Safaris Limited	Banda Safaris Ltd	Florae and Fauna Tours and Travel Ltd	Kikoko Africa Safaris LTD	Orogu Tours and Travel (U) Limited	Terrain Safaris Limited
AA Safaris & Tours LTD	Bantu Africa Travels	Friendship International Tours and Travel Limited	Kisa Developers Limited	Palmis Travel Bureau Ltd	The Crested Cranes Bwindi Tours
AAB Tours and Travel (U) Ltd	Beyond the Sky Tours & Travel Bureau Ltd	G & C Tours Ltd (Wild Frontiers)	Kompas Safaris Ltd	Parkview Safaris	The Far Horizons U Ltd
Abacus African Vacation	Bio Tours Ltd	Gecko Safaris (U) Ltd	Kori Safaris	PearlAfrica Tours & Travel	The Tourist Centre
Abercrombie & Kent Tours and Travel Ltd	Bird Uganda Safaris Limited	Global Interlink Travel Services	Lakato Safaris Ltd	Picnic Safaris Ltd	The Uganda Safari Company
Able Safaris LTD	Border-Less Travel	Go Gonilla Trekking	Lake Bunyoni Eco Resort Tours and Travel	Pinnacle Africa Safaris	Thousand Hills Expeditions
Acacia Safaris	Braca Tours & Travel	Go Uganda Safaris	Lake Klandara Tours and Travel	Platinum Tours and Travel Ltd	Tishal Tours and Travel Limited
Achieve Global Safaris Limited	Breeze Travel and Safaris Ltd	GoExplore Safaris	Lets Go Travel Ltd	Primate Expeditions Ltd	Tourland Uganda
Across Africa Holidays Ltd	Buffalo Safari Camps (Buffalo Rocks Limited)	Gonilla Tours Ltd	Lifetime Experience Safaris	Primate Watch Safaris	Trailblazer Safaris
Active African Vacations	Bugoma Forest Tours and Travel	Gonilla Trek Africa Ltd	Lionking Safaris Limited	Primate World Safaris Uganda	Travel 256 Ltd
Adrit Uganda	Bunyonyi Overland Resort Ltd	Gonilla Uganda Bookings	Livingstone African Safaris Ltd	Prime Safaris & Tours Ltd	Travel Light Africa Limited
Adventure Consults (U) Limited	Bushman Safaris Ltd	Gracious Tours and Travel Ltd	Love Uganda Safaris & Tours Ltd	Pristine Tours	Travelers Link Africa
Adventure In The Wild Safaris LTD	Cheetah Safaris Uganda	Great Lakes Safaris	Malachite Tour and Travel Ltd	Promote Uganda Safaris Limited	TravelNez.com
Adventure Natural African Safaris (U) Ltd	Chigo Tours Africa Ltd (Kasenyi Game Safaris Ltd)	Great Value Safaris Ltd	Maleng Travel	Nalubale Rafting	Tristar Africa Skimmer Safaris Ltd
Adyen Creations Limited	Churchill Safaris & Travel	Green Breaks Uganda Ltd	Mamaland Safaris	Raft Uganda Adventures Limited	Twende Expeditions Ltd
Alin Tours & Travel Ltd	Classic Africa Safaris	Green Journeys Africa	Mantana African Safaris	RAK Safaris & Tour Company Ltd	Uganda - Trails Ltd
Africa Adventure Safaris	Concord International Travel Bureau	Green World Safari Co. Ltd	Maranatha Tours And Travel Ltd	Range Land Safaris Limited	Uganda Experience Safaris
Africa Promise Safaris Limited	Coral Safaris Ltd	Heritage Holiday Safaris Ltd	Matoko Tours	Realm Africa Safaris	Uganda Travel Bureau 2004 Ltd
Africa Runners Co Ltd	Cycaads African Safaris Ltd	Hog Safaris	Mazike Safaris Uganda	Red Chilli Hide Away LTD	Uganda Wildlife Safaris Ltd
Africa Tours Adventure Ltd	Eden Adventures Uganda	Home To Africa Tours and Travel Company	MJ Safaris Uganda Limited	Red Road Tours Limited	Uganda Wildlife Scene Safaris
Africa Wild Explorations	Elephant Safaris Ltd	House of Uganda Safaris Ltd	MOCAMBO, Pasión por Africa, Ltd	Reed Buck Uganda Tours and Travel	Uzuri Uganda Safaris Ltd
African Adventure Travellers	Ellington Safaris Limited	Iconic Travel Services Limited	Moses Uganda Tours and Taxis Ltd	Riessance Tour and Travel Company Ltd	Venture Uganda Ltd
African Big Five Safaris	Encounter Africa Safaris Ltd	Immersion Ug - SMC Limited	My Adventure Africa Ltd	Roadtrip Uganda	Victoria View Hotels and Tours Ltd
African Jungle Adventures Ltd	Engagi Safaris Ltd	Jewel Safaris Ltd	Nanjing Tour and Travel	Roots Tours and Travel	Visit Uganda Tours and Travel
African Pearl Safaris	Enjoy Safaris Africa Limited	Journeys Uganda	Naturetrack Expeditions (U) Ltd	Safari 2 Gorilla Tours	Volcanoes Safaris
African White Rhino Safaris (U) Ltd	EverBased Tours and Travel Limited	K Safaris	Natureseen East Africa (Chuvivi Natureseen Ltd)	Safari Chapter Uganda Ltd	Voyager African Safaris Ltd
Africa's Great Exploration (AGE)	Exclusive African Safaris Ltd	Kabira Wilderness Safaris LTD	Netspan Ltd	Safari Skies	Wave Expeditions
Albion Tours Ltd	Experience Uganda Travel Ltd	Kagera Safaris Ltd	Nile Rapid Falls Tours & Travel (U) Ltd	Sangala Africa Limited	Whistling Duck Tours & Travel Ltd
Alvo Safaris Ltd	Exposure Tourism Ltd	Kampala Executive Aviation	Nile River Explorers	Sasa Holidays Limited	Wild Discoveries Safaris
Alpha and Omega Tours & Travel	F&M Adventure Safaris Ltd	Karomoja Wilderness Expeditions Limited	Nkumungo Walking Safaris (U) Ltd	Sasoo Uganda Safaris Limited	Wild Jungles Trails Limited
Alpha Wild Safaris		Kara-Tunga Arts & Tours Ltd	Novam Ltd	Seneca of Africa-Uganda	Wild Whispers Africa
Ape Treks Limited		Kazinga Tours Ltd	Nshongu Safari Tours & Travel Ltd	Shoebill Safaris	World of Living Fantasies Limited
Around Africa Safaris		Kibo Slopes (U) Ltd	Nshuti Safaris Ltd	Simba Africa Expeditions	World Venture Ltd
Aysanant Safaris & Incentives				Sites Travel Limited	Xin Tianwang Travel And Safaris (U) Ltd
Ateker Safaris Ltd				Speedway Safaris Ltd	Y - Save Safaris Limited
Atlas African Safaris Ltd				Spoke Uganda Holidays	Yala Safaris Uganda LTD
				Sun Africa Expeditions	
				Swanair Travel & Safaris Ltd	

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