

PRESS STATEMENT

MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF TOURISM WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES ON ISSUES OF THE UNWTO GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WORLD TOURISM DAY AND THE MISS TOURISM PAGEANT

I thank you members of the press for having responded to our invitation and equally thank you for the interest and positive reporting you are giving to the tourism sector. We urge you to continue with this action because tourism is important for the economic and social transformation of people's livelihoods, through tourism we have strengthened social relations, redistributed economic benefit and empowered communities.

Allow me at time point to also express my heartfelt condolences to our departed colleague, the late Lillian Nsubuga who was the public relations officer for the Uganda Wildlife Authority. We treasure her service to journalism and to the tourism sector, may the good lord rest her soul in eternal peace.

Today, I would like to address you to three important issues relating to our recent and planned activities. Last week I attended the annual general assembly of the United Nations World Tourism Organization, it was held in Victoria Falls hosted by the states of Zimbabwe and Zambia. It was the first time Sub Saharan Africa was hosting such a high profile event.

In this meeting, Uganda was elected as Vice Chair for the Commission for Africa, through this position; the country will be

able to advance her interests in the sector on the global tourism platform and source development assistance to further empower the sector.

This meeting was themed on the important subject of travel facilitation, covering issues of making it easier for people to travel across borders. In this respect, the delegates discussed and advocated for the issue of visa facilitation through innovations like the e-visa application and incentives like visa on arrival processing, open sky policies and visitor friendly immigration procedures.

For Uganda, I shared our success story in addressing visa facilitation through provisions of visa on arrival policies, easing the immigration processes with biometric equipment and further elaborated the progress in introducing the east African tourist visa that will cost one hundred dollars and enable tourists to visit the member states with ease.

During this visit, we had the opportunity to hold a number of bilateral engagements that included discussions of technical cooperation by the South Korean government, discussions with the South Africans on our participation in the Indaba trade fair and the STEP project that will benefit communities with sustainable projects for eradicating poverty.

Members of the press, in the month of September, the world focuses on the importance of tourism and the 27th of September is the World Tourism Day. The theme this year is tourism and water;

we take this opportunity to recognize the value of water to livelihood and equally to the tourism sector as a form of transportation, recreation and utility to the one billion of tourists that travel around the world each year.

The celebrations this year will be held in the town of Fort Portal, and am glad to announce that a number of activities have been organized to celebrate this event. Am glad to inform you that the kingdom of Tooro will celebrate its annual Empango ceremony on the 7th of September and the tourism fraternity will actively participate in this cultural event.

The Rwenzori mountain climbing challenge will be held on the 19th September and is expected to be flagged off by KingOyo; we again encourage and welcome the participation of Ugandans in this exciting challenge.

On the 26th of September, we plan to track the chimpanzees in Kibaale National Park, I will be your chief guide and welcome you and Ugandans to visit man's closest relative in the primate world. The details of participation can be sought from the tourism board and the Uganda Wildlife Authority.

The 27th of September will be the world tourism day and host of activities are planned, they include a tourism exhibition and musical extravaganza, and we will visit the crater lakes and some of the key attractions in the Tooro Kingdom. I invite all members of the press

and urge you to spread the message that all roads lead to fort portal in the week of 27th September.

In Kampala, a private sector tourism expo has been organized at the Sheraton hotel starting on the 28th September to show case the businesses of tourism. I invite you to further publicize and encourage the public to attend this event.

Let me also mention that closely following the world tourism day will be a host of other events brightening the tourism calendar. The Kampala carnival will be held on the 5th October and will highlight the best of Kampala, the vibrant city life and the enterprises that work. Uganda will also celebrate her independence anniversary and officially mark the end of the jubilee year.

THE MISS TOURISM PAGEANT

Members of the press, may I now also raise your attention to another exciting event that we will be unveiling on the 26th October 2013, the miss tourism pageant, on this day, we shall unveil the pearl of Africa, the beauty that will become our tourism ambassador and join the promotional effort for this sector.

We started this search way back in July with a media launch on the 31st July at the Tamarai Hotel and commenced on the registration exercise that we completed on the 29th August 2013.

On the 30th - 31st August 2013, we held a successful audition process at the Sheraton hotel and will hold a cocktail to unveil the 15 contestants on Friday 7th September at the Sheraton hotel. These

contestants will thereafter be taken for a country film tour and visit our main tourism sites and they will be challenged in various tourist activities. They will also participate in a boot camp intended to groom and prepare them for the final event gala.

Allow me to extend our sincere thanks to the many organizations that have supported this event and I must say risen to the occasion at such a short notice. Their support amplifies the strong belief in the power of tourism and the in Uganda as the Pearl of Africa. I urge you members of the press to equally rise to the call and help us identify the real PEARL OF AFRICA.

Our objectives of holding the beauty pageant are rooted in the desire to showcase the cultural values of a true African queen, to educate and showcase the country to our domestic audience and cultivate a culture of travel. We hope to select a face that will positively represent and promote our country in various forums. All this will be possible with your support because the press plays a crucial role in communicating with the various publics; we rely and urge you to support this cause.

Finally allow me to remind you of the 3rd November solar eclipse sighting, Uganda is the best place to view the solar eclipse and in particular Packwach. We are delighted at this opportunity and invite the press to inform the world that the best place to sight the solar eclipse will be in Uganda.

I thank you all