

UGANDA AT KARIBU 2011



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Karibu 2011

Located at the main entrance of the exhibitions, the Uganda stand attracted an overwhelming over 6,000 visitors daily! The recently concluded Karibu Tourism and Travel fair held in Arusha Tanzania from June 3rd - 5th 2011 had the Uganda booth as its centre of attraction as thousands of the trade visitors flocked the stall to learn about the unique attractions offered by Uganda.

The stand, noticeably labeled “Uganda, the Home of Mountain Gorillas” was located at a strategic point close to the main gate of the Mangereza grounds near Arusha airport.

The Uganda stand was managed by staff from Uganda Tourism Board, Uganda Wildlife Authority and for the very first time tour operators like Lake Kitandara, Stebar Safaris and Pearl of Africa Project.

Unique attractions such as the national parks, Uganda’s diverse culture, the source of the Nile and

Kasubi Tombs a world Heritage site, the snow capped Rwenzori and the matchless to Uganda mountain gorillas were showcased.

Adorned by the national colors and banners depicting various wildlife including mountain gorillas and climbing lions, the Uganda stall also hosted a cock tail organized Uganda Tourism Board and attended by hundreds.

Watching the mountain gorilla trekking videos and the men donning gorilla masks behaving like actual gorillas chest beating, mock charging and picking green leaves for food added more color to the Uganda stall.

The Tanzania deputy minister for Trade and Industry, Mr. Lazaros Nyalandu, applauded Uganda for aggressively marketing Uganda as a tourism destination. He pledged to closely work with Uganda counterparts to offer complete packages that will see tourists explore East Africa.

Oruzongo Gorilla Group boosted

The planned launch of Oruzongo mountain gorilla group for tourism was boosted following the birth of two new babies in the family.

Tibirikwata the dominant Silver-back made sure his family was viable and a formidable force in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest ahead of the approaching season when hundreds of human friends flock to south western Uganda to meet their closest cousins.

Information from the forest indicated that the proud mothers are the cute adult females Birungi and Mutesi although the sex of the two babies remained to be established. The new babies join the posse of other infants Buchura and Kanywani.

Rangers habituating the gorilla group have almost completed the task of naming all the 16 individuals save for the three infants who are currently known by their mothers' identities like Mutesi baby or Birungi baby.

Other individuals in the group include Busungu (Meaning short tamped), Kashundwe, Nyakiina, Kaganga (the giant one), Otaka, Bwoba (the coward), Karimi (tongue), Kiromba, Katooto (the small one), Kanywani (meaning friendly), Kakobe who looks like a monkey and Buchura referring to the youngest or last born before the two newest babies came forth.

Martyrs Day Celebrations

Uganda Tourism Board exhibited at the Catholic shrine at the delegates' registration point, exhibiting and distributing the Martyrs Trail brochures, UTB DVDs and brochures. Over 2500 international delegates from Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, USA, UK, Kenya and Tanzania attended the function.

Foreign Visitors

This year the recorded foreign visitors included Nigerians - 90, Malawi - 96, Congo - 71, Rwanda - 336, Kenya - 656, Tanzania - 663, America - 17, Burundi - 2150, Austria - 2, Italy - 5, Sudan - 28, Poland - 6, Chile - 4, South Africa - 39 And Uruguay - 9.

Anglican Shrine

Prayers were held at the Anglican shrine and they were headed by the West Ankole dioceses. In attendance, was the President, Mrs Museveni, Prime Minister, various Members of Parliament and an assortment of international pilgrims.

If tapped and lured to stay for an extra day, the pilgrims would be a great opportunity for Uganda to market and promote her tourism products considering the numbers that flock the country for this celebration.

Buganda Expo

A week long Buganda tourism expo organized by the Buganda Kingdom and the Ministry of Tourism graced the Lubiri from 27th June to 3rd August 2-11. A series of events took place including an exhibition which showcased various activities and attractions of the kingdom and the country at large.

The exhibition visitors and participants had a chance to experience Uganda's wildlife which included a lion, Monkeys, Pythons, and Leopards among others brought to the exhibition by the Uganda Wildlife Authority. There was also lots of cultural entertainment which was embroiled in cultural tourism.

The exhibition was attended by many government representatives including the minister of Finance who thanked the organizers and encouraged Buganda Kingdom to improve on the tourism sites since tourism earns foreign income for the Kingdom and the country. Other officials included the ministers of Tourism Ephraim Kamuntu and Agnes Akiror and Buganda Kingdom officials.

Buganda Kingdom is one of the most active Kingdoms in Uganda with many cultural heritages where tourists who come to Uganda visit. During city tour, tourists are taken to Kasubi Tombs, the King's palace, the Kabaka's lake, Kateroke prison trench, nagarabi colonation site, the churches, among others which makes up a big part of cultural tourism in addition to the city tours, wildlife tours, gorilla tracking, bird watching and adventure which tourists engage in.

Batwa, the First People

Historically, western Uganda was cloaked by forest, the home of the Batwa pygmies. In their lore, the forest people also consider themselves the first people. Indeed they are central Africa's most ancient ethnic group, their traditional hunter-gatherer activities predating farming and cattle keeping by 40,000 years.

Previously dislodged by the desire to protect forests and natural resources and human encroachment on their habitats, the forest people had become forgotten for they had no place to run to.

Not anymore because today the Batwa now have a voice, the United Organization for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU). Seeking to be voice for the voiceless, UOBDU, promotes Batwa rights and helps provide land, education and health care to these less privileged people.

The Batwa Trail has since been launched and it runs across the lower slopes of Muhavura and Gahinga volcanoes in Mgahinga national park.

The Batwa trail is the latest tourism product to be added on Uganda's already unmatched tourism product menu.

It is a celebration of the forest culture of the first people!

Tourism Awoken

With arguably the biggest tourism potential compared to her east African competitors, Uganda is set to take advantage of this potential. This year, with a full ministry dedicated to tourism along with a minister and a state minister, the industry is indeed headed for better.

As if all the above is not rewarding enough, Uganda Tourism Board has developed a new market strategy to give general direction to the industry in order to strongly position the country as a viable tourism destination.

Currently in its final stages, the strategy clearly articulates plans of vigorously marketing the pearl of Africa including measures to base marketing on empirical findings, establishing reference centers in major source markets, tapping into untamed markets such as Asia and strong PR and crisis management strategies.

The enactment of the strategy is generally aimed at increasing the number of arrivals by 200%, their length of stay by 100% and their expenditure by 5%.

This way, the country will have not only awoken to the reality of its tourism potential but also many more benefits reflected in the strategy such as increase in employment and betterment of Uganda's History.

Upcoming Events

British Bird Watching Fair

Every year, birders of all walks of life converge in the nature reserve of Rutland, United Kingdom to witness birding experiences being offered by different destinations in an exhibition.

Uganda has participated in the fair for the last over 10 years. This year Uganda Tourism Board will once again lead a delegation of both the private and public sector tourism stakeholders to the annual event.

Birding is a niche market in which most Ugandan tourism players have picked interest. With intensive training to bird guides, a website (to be launched sometime this year) totally dedicated to birding, development of birding as a tourism product and more investment in birding is an indication of better times for birding in the industry.

Offering a 20 day birding itinerary and with a prime location at the exhibition, the Uganda stand is ordained to pull crowds.

The show is slated for 19th – 21st August 2011.

Other upcoming events include **World Tourism Day** slated for 27th September in Gulu and **World Travel Market** in November.