



## **250 Representatives from the Private and Public Sectors expected at Africa-Asia Business Forum on Tourism Development in Africa**

*New York, 12 June 2009:* The fifth Africa-Asia Business Forum (AABF V) will take place from 15 to 17 June in Kampala, Uganda. Under the theme of *Forging Business Linkages for Sustainable Tourism Development in Africa*, AABF V will bring together over 250 participants from more than 30 countries in Africa and Asia, representing business, government, international organizations, civil society and the media. They will examine strategic directions and prospects to foster partnership building and technology transfer in tourism-related industries, attract more Asian and Japanese tourists to Africa and generate a boost in investments for the promotion of tourism on the continent.

“At this critical juncture of the ongoing economic slowdown, AABF V provides an important platform for African and Asian businessmen to address the challenges and opportunities of the tourism industry in Africa,” said Ambassador Cheick Sidi Diarra, United Nations Under-Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Africa, and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. “We hope that this important forum will provide a springboard for government and business to come up with policy recommendations for the sustainable development and promotion of tourism in Africa.”

The three-day event, which will be held at the Speke Resort and Conference Centre in Munyonyo, is designed to foster an interactive policy dialogue between private and public institutions and face-to-face negotiations in partnership building between representatives of African and Asian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It includes four thematic pillars: an overview of the tourism industry in Africa; public-private partnerships; product development and marketing of flourishing African destinations to Asian tourists and investors; and pro-poor sustainable tourism development.

AABF V begins on 15 June by a high-level opening session hosted by Uganda’s President, H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. The high-level session will be followed by a policy forum coordinated by Moustapha Soumaré, Deputy Assistant Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Deputy Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa. A press conference is scheduled for 16 June at the Conference Venue. (Click on the following link for AABF V Live Webcast by the African Press Organization for the opening session at 6:25 GMT on 15 June and press conference at 9:25 GMT on 16 June: <https://go.weboconference.com/index.htm?page=guest&conid=APO>.)

A reconnaissance tour to Rwanda for Japanese high-level public-private delegates and an induction seminar for the representatives of African SMEs, which will address pertinent issues in financial planning, sources of financing, business partnerships and options for cooperation, will be conducted prior to the forum.

“The current economic downturn teaches us that we need to explore better ways and means to refocus our economies,” said Emma Kawawa, a woman entrepreneur from Tanzania who is the East Africa Coordinator of the African Business Roundtable and Director of the Tanzania Investment Center. Kawawa, who is attending the forum for the second time, added. “We welcome AABF V and its theme on tourism development. It is our hope that deals generated will involve many businesswomen and help to boost investments and stimulate the regional economy.”

Organized by the Government of Japan, the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (UN-OSAA), UNDP, and the World Bank, with technical cooperation by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), AABF V represents a major event in the follow-up to the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) held in May 2008 in Yokohama. TICAD IV adopted the “Yokohama Declaration”, outlining principles for advancing African development among TICAD stakeholders, including the promotion of tourism, as well as the “Yokohama Action Plan” and the “Yokohama Follow-up Mechanism”, laying out a roadmap for action-oriented initiatives.

“We see AABF V as an innovative mechanism that will support the implementation of a wide range of measures in trade, investment and tourism as spelled out in the Yokohama Action Plan,” said Seiko Hashimoto, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan, adding “The tourism sector plays a crucial role in job creation, which is particularly important during the current economic crisis.”

Of relevance to AABF V is the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2009 released in March 2009 by the World Economic Forum under the theme of “Managing in a Time of Turbulence.” The report, which focuses on difficulties facing the industry during the economic downturn, contains a detailed profile of 133 economies from all of the world’s regions. Mauritius, South Africa and Botswana, which are ranked 40<sup>th</sup>, 61<sup>st</sup> and 79<sup>th</sup>, respectively, in the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2009, are leading sub-Saharan African countries.

Launched in 1999 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the Africa-Asia Business Forum has strived to increase trade and investment between Africa and Asia for the past 10 years. The process continued with AABF II in 2001 in Durban, South Africa, AABF III in 2004 in Dakar, Senegal, and AABF IV in 2007 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Altogether, the AABF series have generated business prospects worth over US\$ 300 million.

**For further information, please contact:** Nicholas N. Gouede (communications contact for TICAD co-organizers), TICAD/UNDP Africa Bureau, New York, email: [nicholas.gouede@undp.org](mailto:nicholas.gouede@undp.org); telephone: +1 (212) 906-5954; mobile in Kampala: + 256

7 83204353 or visit the TICAD Web site at: [www.ticad.net](http://www.ticad.net); or the TICAD Exchange: <http://www.ticadexchange.org/index.php?id=136>.