The enthusiasm and zeal among the county governments in fronting tourism activities as one of the key economic activities in their respective regions is commendable. Most counties acknowledge that tourism remains relevant to their success and there is need to tap into the diversity of Kenya’s product offering.

This drive will pave the way for the identification and subsequent development of more unique and distinct tourism products in respective counties. As the country’s tourism marketing agency, we have continued to diversify our tourism products besides the traditional attractions; beach and wildlife safari we are known for. The counties thus provide an opportunity for us to market a diversity of our tourism products to cater for the changing tastes and preference among our tourists and a further opportunity to open doors for more expanded tourism circuits.

We also take note that the counties have appointed executive secretaries to oversee tourism activities in their respective jurisdictions. This will indeed add impetus to tourism programs in the counties.

KTB is willing and ready to support the counties in their tourism activities and plans and there’s a need for frequent and coordinated engagement to this end. We call upon the counties to engage us at all times as we seek to market the destination and realize the growth in the sector as per the country’s economic blue print- Vision 2030.

KTB steps up sustainable tourism efforts

Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) has stepped up its conservation activities with the official launch of an environmental committee. The committee will now oversee KTB’s sustainability programs spread within the year as well as other collaborative activities on conservation and environment.

KTB has in the past years participated in conservation efforts and specifically on tree planting activities. Under the restoration of Mau forest, KTB in 2010 planted some 10,000 trees in Naisoya forest in Narok County home to the world famous Maasai Mara National reserve. KTB has also been allocated a piece of land in Karura forest for tree planting with the recent exercise where KTB led delegates of women in Tourism in a tree planting session. Branding of key tourist attractions in the forest were also done by KTB and Kenya Forest Service (KFS) as the forest is listed as one of the tourist attractions within the Nairobi circuit.

Conservation of Nairobi National Park has also captured KTB’s attention with the planting of trees through the Green Line Initiative which seeks to create a buffer zone around the parks to prevent it from further encroachment. KTB has previously participated in various environmental related activities in a bid to enhance tourism sustainability. A recent partnership with Green line in 2012 has seen KTB involve staff in tree planting. The Green line in partnership with the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) came together to ensure the preservation of the Nairobi National Park through planting of trees to fence out the park.

This has enhanced the existing fencing and will later make way for a jogging lane for those who would like to use the facility. The KTB Environment Committee organized the second tree planting exercise in partnership with Green line in May. The objective was to plant 1000 indigenous acacia trees with involvement of staff and tourism clubs in Nairobi mainly in order to build a live breathing fence along the Nairobi National Park to protect the wildlife therein and prevent human encroachment.

Through the existing relationship with GTTP, 15 KTB staff members participated in the exercise alongside The Green line Project officials Wanja Kimani the coordinator and Simon Waithaka, the Forester. The tourism clubs that participated through GTTP-Kenya included Makini School, Our Lady of Mercy High School, New Dawn High School, Kyangala High School from Machakos and Olympic High School.

A total of 1000 trees were planted making it a total of 1,250 trees planted by KTB within one year. The teachers were grateful for the invitation citing that the activity was very relevant to what the students were being taught in class under the GTTP Curriculum.

KTB also participated at this year’s ‘To Hell’s Gate on a Wheelbarrow’ event hosted by the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) at Hells Gate National park. The event aims at fundraising for communities living around the park and this year, it drew sponsorships from more than 23 Corporates raising a total of Kshs. 9.4 million in total.

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From the Managing Director’s desk

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UNEP and Unilever meet KTB

The Coordinator, UNEP - Kenya Country Programme, Mr. Henry Ndede recently led part of his team to meet KTB in discussions drawn around the hosting of the Global South - South Expo to be held between October 28th and 1st November, 2013. UNEP expressed interest to work closely with KTB to raise destination awareness prior and during the event expected to draw over 1000 delegates.

Both teams are keen to leverage on the event to particularly promote the host city, Nairobi. Another key area of discussion was KTB and UNEP partnership in the production of a Green passport for the event, envisaging broadening its use to advocate more for sustainable tourism.

UNEP through the UNON also expressed interest in having more tourists visiting their complex both from the local and international tourist markets in order to hype the Gigiri offices headquarter status as well as share some best practice in green ideas implemented at the complex. The complex gets 3, 500 visitors in a year.

The Kenya Tourism Board recently hosted the Unilever East and Southern Africa top management team at their request. Led by the Managing Director, Mr. Yaw Nsarkoh, the team was keen on learning from KTB on how the country has built a visible tourism brand from resources that are stretched.

The meeting attended by senior KTB Management staff is expected to be the beginning of many exchange sessions that may lead to opportunities that may prove beneficial to both organizations. KTB shared some of the key strategies the tourism brand in Kenya has used over time even amidst serious image challenges to stay afloat. Key setbacks in the past have been security challenges and negative perceptions about the destination.

Strategic partnerships, good will from stakeholders and government support emerged as key drivers of effectively managing global campaigns.

Most consumer campaigns, KTB shared have been driven on line, through face book, twitter, google ads and bloggers among others. The recent launch of a KTB mobile App that allows travelers into Kenya to share their experiences is the latest entrant into marketing on line. Unilever observed that some of the campaigns have been very unique.

The Unilever MD, Mr. Yaw Nsarkoh observed that Kenya stretches beyond Safari given the diversity of products that include culture, MICE, authentic nature and thus encouraged KTB and the industry to continue show-casing Kenya as a one-stop destination citing extreme modernity and authentic culture were all available in the same destination. He particularly singled out Nairobi as multifaceted. The teams were in agreement that aggressive marketing of famed agricultural products is a big advantage to the destination. One of the key areas of convergence included support to the environment in a bid to push sustainable tourism noting that Kenya’s key tourism products are nature based, Wildlife and the beaches.

The teams discussed the possibility of partnerships in joint campaigns to rally the Kenyan consumers towards the variety of the services and goods that the organizations market.

It is notable that the current consumer is ever changing and corporates have to change their strategies while noting that organizations must endeavor to cater for the various categories of the consumers based on their purchasing power. Unilever builds their brands around making life better, explaining their reason for their recent launch of a water purifier.

Isiolo to host World Tourism Day celebration

The profile of Isiolo as a resort city and tourism circuit has been boosted as Kenya marks this year’s World tourism day in the region. Under the economic blue print-Vision 2030, Isiolo County home to a resort city aimed at pushing tourists to the northern part of the country whose tourism potential has not been fully explored.

A number of activities including seminars and workshops with the communities, visits to national reserves and other attractions in the area, meeting with stakeholders, town cleaning are among the activities lined up for the days preceding the climax on 27th September.

The proposed Isiolo city will help optimize the rich tourism potential presented by Mt. Kenya, Meru National Park, the Aberdares, Samburu National Park, Buffalo Springs and Shaba Game Reserve.

This will seek to exploit these underutilized parks by increasing bed-nights. Already the government has commissioned the construction of Isiolo international airport to handle heavy aircraft and thereby increasing the potential of visitation to the region.
Kenya has received destination exposure through India’s biggest photography magazine known as Better Photography. This follows the grand finale Photo awards winners face off competition which took place in Kenya in the month of May where Eight (8) finalists took pictures of prime location/attractions within the country under the themes that included Landscapes, Scenery, Wildlife and Culture.

Award ceremony
The award ceremony for the Competition to select the best photographer whose images will market Kenya through the social media took place at Taj Mall Hotel Mumbai, India where the who is who in the photography competition and partners graced the occasion. Mr. Senthil Kumar was awarded the best winner in an event graced by among others the CEO of Network 18 Publishing Company Mr. Sandeep Khosla, World renowned New York based Photographer Mr. David Zimmerman and KTB Ag.Director of Marketing Ms Jacinta Nzioka who gave out the best photography award.

The award ceremony received good publicity as it was aired live on CNBC TV18 one of Network 18 Publishing Company stations - India’s No. 1 business news channel. The channel reaches out to more than 35Million households in India comprising High Networth Individuals, business owners, professionals, investors, corporate executives - all being frequent travelers to various destinations.

Laikipia County is putting in place strategies to brand all the tourism attractions in the region. County executive secretary in charge of Tourism and Trade Ms. Jane Putunoi told the KTB Bulletin that several attractions are being identified for branding to enable easy access and identification of the products by tourists. “We shall be seeking KTB support on this after we have identified all the possible attractions,” says the executive secretary.

She said the county is rich with diverse tourism products such as wildlife, sceneries, culture, sports and water sports among others. “The recent Maasai cricket sport is a niche we are aggressively marketing. Besides being a sporting activity, the message is strong on conservation and peaceful co-existence between wildlife and communities in the county” She said. The county according to the executive secretary will also brand the Equator which is well positioned through the county and has become a major attraction for tourists.
Upcoming Events

- Maralal Magical Kenya International Camel Derby - 30th August to 1st September 2013
- Cheshale Kite Surfing in Malindi - 16th to 17th August 2013
- Eco-Tourism and Sustainable Tourism International Conference - 24th to 27th September, 2013
- World Tourism Day 27th September, 2013 - Isiolo
- The World Travel Awards (WTA), Africa - 16th October 2013
- Magical Kenya Travel Expo (MKTE) - 18th to 20th October 2013

We welcome your feedback
Please write to: md@ktb.go.ke or wwalya@ktb.go.ke