High-Level Panel Session – 27 July 2023

RETHINKING TOURISM FOR AFRICA: PROMOTING INVESTMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS IN TOURISM FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Speakers
Mrs. Zain VERJEE, Founder & CEO the ZVG

Zain Verjee is one of the world’s most respected and recognized journalists, with an action-packed background and experience as a storyteller, entrepreneur, communicator, and interviewer. She is well known as a former CNN anchor and correspondent and has made a successful transition into the world of communications and creative entrepreneurship.

Her communications firm, theZVG, has worked with a deep lineup of organizations and entities such as the United Nations, Bloomberg Media, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Pfizer Inc., Equity Group Foundation of Kenya, World Health Organization, GE Africa, OCP, The Aga Khan Development Network, The MISK Foundation, the Templeton Foundation, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa on their communications and public relations delivery and strategies via advisory, consulting, and content production. She is a highly sought after facilitator and interviewer and has spoken on platforms such as TED and Africa House. She is a senior fellow (non-resident) at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Africa Program. She is a guest opinion columnist on African issues for The National, UAE.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, she created covidHQafrica.com in partnership with MasterCard Foundation, which is a storytelling, data and information site for Africa. Last September, she created and produced Unstoppable Africa, which was hosted by the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN in New York before the Annual General Assembly week, as well as hosting and producing the Qatar Economic Forum in Doha in June.

Hon. Siandou FOFANA, Minister of Tourism, Republic of Côte d’Ivoire

Graduate of a 3rd cycle in Finance, Business Engineering and International Trading at the "Institut Supérieur du Commerce de Paris", and in Financial and Accounting Studies at the "Institut National des Techniques Economiques et Comptables de Paris ", Siandou FOFANA has several years of experience in the areas of infrastructure development and financing.

Managing Director of the Road Maintenance Fund (FER) from 2009 to 2017, Mr. Siandou FOFANA was Administrative and Financial Director of the said structure from 2008 to 2009. He brilliantly assumed the Presidency of the Association of African Road Maintenance Funds (ARMFA) from 2012 to 2015 and is currently its 1st Vice-President.

Mr. Siandou FOFANA was Director of Projects and Development and Financial Advisor of the Airport, Aeronautical and Meteorological Exploitation and Development Company (SODEXAM) and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors of Caisse d'Epargne and Crédit Agricole in charge of credit, management control and audit in Abidjan. Minister Siandou FOFANA has been Chairman of the Executive Council and Chairman of the Africa Commission of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) since 2021 and aims to make the sector tourism and hotel, the 3rd economic pole of Côte d’Ivoire.
Hon. Philda KERENG, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Conservation and Tourism, Republic of Botswana

Hon. Philda Nani Kereng, is the Minister of Environment & Tourism. She has brought a new impetus to the tourism industry of Botswana by revising the tourism policy so as to enhance the participation of the country’s citizens in the tourism industry and to diversify the tourism products across the country. She has been instrumental in the development and adoption of the Botswana’s first Climate Change Policy and Strategy.

Hon. Kereng devised strategies to accelerate the recovery of Botswana tourism industry from the negative impact of COVID 19 through networking with different partners so as to achieve sustained growth while improving sustainable conservation practices and positioning Botswana as a tourism and investment regional hub.

Her efforts have earned due recognition and she received an award for being one of Africa’s Tourism Board (ATB)’s Key Leader in Africa and the Pyne Awards Africa in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

Hon. Dr Jean Chrysostome NGABITSINZE, Minister of Trade and Industry, Republic of Rwanda

Jean-Chrysostome Ngabitsinze is the Minister of Trade and Industry since July 30th, 2022. Before this, he was the Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources since March 09th, 2020, a position he was appointed to after being a Member of Parliament chairing the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in 2018.

Previously, he was a Senior Lecturer at the University of Rwanda for over 10 years, where he taught agricultural economics and agribusiness among other courses, and from December 2018, he was promoted to Associate Professor.

Besides teaching and political work, he has served on various boards of Government Agencies. In 2016, he was appointed to the Board of Directors of the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB) for two years and in the same year 2016, was elected chairperson of the Huye District Council. Prior to that, he chaired the National Land Commission under the Ministry of Natural Resources for three years.

Ngabitsinze has a PhD in Agricultural Economics from the Doctoral School of Technological Innovation in Agri-food and Environmental Sciences from Milan State University, a Master’s degree in Economics from Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, and a Bachelor’s degree in Business Economics from Ca’ Foscari University of Venice in Italy.
Ms. Amanda SERUMAGA, Resident Representative for Seychelles and Mauritius, United Nations Development Programme

Ms. Amanda Serumaga is the Resident Representative for Mauritius and Seychelles at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Ms. Serumaga previously served as Country Director of UNDP Kenya.

Ms. Serumaga leads UNDP to support the development priorities of the two islands (Mauritius and Seychelles) including the development of the blue economy, adaptation to climate change and renewable energy.

Ms. Serumaga has more than 20 years working experience in public policy, governance and rule of law, and poverty law. She began her UNDP career as Chief-Rule of Law and Governance Team leader in Khartoum, Sudan and served as Team Leader Governance and Rule of Law and Deputy Country Director in South Sudan.

She holds an Honours BA in the Humanities and English Language and Literature (York University, Canada); Juris Doctor (Osgoode Hall Law School, Canada); Degree at Barrister (Law Society Upper Canada) and is member of the Law Society of Upper Canada (Ontario Bar) since 1996. She also holds an Msc. In Public Policy Management from the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London) specializing in Public Financial management; Decentralization and Local Government and Human Resource Management, among others.

Mr. Mamadu Serifo JAQUITE, Commissaire en charge du département du Développement Humain (DDH), West African Monetary and Economic Union

Mr Mamadou Serifo JAQUITE, a national of Guinea-Bissau, is currently Commissioner in charge of the Human Development Department of the Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU).

Before being appointed to this post by the WAEMU Conference of Heads of State, he was Minister for the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and Parliamentary Affairs in the Parliamentary Affairs in the Government of Guinea-Bissau. He was also Minister of Transport and Communications and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Agence pour la sécurité de la navigation aérienne en Afrique et à Madagascar (ASECNA), from 2018 to 2019.

He has held a number of other senior positions, including Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Guinea-Bissau Fund for the Development of Enterprise and industry of Guinea-Bissau from 2009 to 2021, Director General of Tourism and Handicrafts of Guinea-Bissau, from 2002 to 2008.