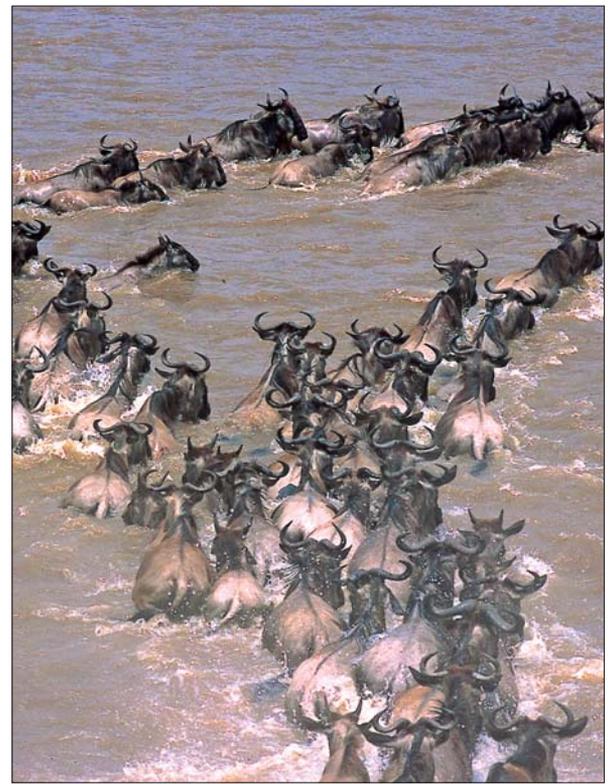




Kenya boasts World Heritage status and an incredible cultural history.



The famous wildebeest migration crosses Kenya's Masai Mara region.

Chinese visitors help tourism roar ahead

Revenues soar as travelers marvel at range of wildlife

Recognized as one of the world's leading tourism destinations for animal lovers, Kenya is setting the benchmark for wildlife and safari tourism as it showcases its precious species to the world and chases investors hungry to take advantage of business opportunities.

Home to a vast array of animals such as lions, elephants and giraffes, Kenya has put together an ambitious strategic development plan for the tourism sector that will treble annual earnings through a series of initiatives and programs.

With the help of the private sector, industry officials are confident this goal can be achieved through the boosting of tourism numbers from 1.8 million a year, to 3 million a year, while also increasing the tourist's average spending.

This follows a surge in international visitors between 2002 and 2007, when earnings more than tripled from \$282 million to \$851 million.

"Tourism has been a major revenue earner for Kenya for many years and the sector is one of the six economic pillars that will drive the economy forward and help

us achieve our annual 10 percent economic growth target," says Minister of State for Planning, National Development and Vision 2030 Wycliffe Oparanya.

Statistics from the 2008 Economic Survey show international tourist arrivals soared from just over one million in 2002 to more than 1.8 million in 2007.

Attractions

Blessed with a unique and diverse landscape comprising gorgeous savannahs, tropical beaches and the stunning Lake Victoria, Kenya has boasted world heritage-status sites and a rich cultural history.

Popular with visitors of all ages and nationalities, Kenya's natural beauty and stunning wildlife means the tourism industry generates more than a tenth of the nation's total gross domestic product and provides jobs to thousands, while being a rich source of tax revenues.

Thousands of travelers from all over the globe arrive in the country each week by air with the international airport in the capital, Nairobi, served by dozens of top foreign airlines with direct connections to



Najib Balala,
Minister of
Tourism

major cities worldwide.

In addition, the bustling port city of Mombasa is a popular stop-off point for cruise liners that provide local people with a key source of income as they sell their home made goods and wares.

According to a forecast from the World Trade Organization, international tourist arrivals are expected to top 1.6 billion by 2020, of which 378 million will be long-haul travelers.

It is against this backdrop that Kenya's tourism sector is strategically positioning itself in the short, medium, and long-term as it looks to tap into the global tourism market and maximize its potential and associated revenues.

But the sector is not without its problems and needs to overcome a series of hurdles and challenges in order to meet its Vision 2030 goals. Key infrastructure such as roads, railways and hotels need to be built if Kenya is to make progress, with these major projects featured in the tourism sector plan.

In a bold move aimed at boosting room capacity and attracting fresh foreign direct investment, the Kenyan government has given the green light to the building of flagship projects that include the construction of three resort cities aimed at enhancing the visitors' overall experience and set the standard for future hotel developments.

New resort cities planned

The first resort will be located at Isiolo close to Mount Kenya and Meru National Park. The second, at Kilifi, will have 7,000 beds and focus on families and high-income tourists, and the third, at Diani, will have 4,000 beds and focus on Kenya's diverse cultures.

Other innovative ideas contained in the comprehensive tourism plan include the development of niche products like eco-tourism products and tours, cultural tourism

national music center in Nairobi.

Given the dynamic nature of the sector, major legal, institutional, and regulatory reforms will be required to ensure the smooth implementation of the programs, with building works closely monitored in order to limit their environmental impact.

"In pursuit of the Vision 2030 goals, the tourism sector will implement various strategies and programs in order to attract investment that will improve tourism facilities and raise the quality of hospitality services in Kenya," Oparanya said.

Visitors increasing

Charged with ensuring the sector grows at a sustainable rate is the Ministry of Tourism, which is led by Tourism Minister Najib Balala, who said he is pleased that the number of Chinese visitors to Kenya is continuing to increase



operations and related fields." Outlining ways that Kenya's tourism sector can capitalize on this positive trend, Balala said "our objective in China is to enhance brand awareness among the trade and consumers through partnership campaigns with key tour operators in the market."

"We have strong representation in Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong through the proactive work of the embassy and the production of information material in Chinese. This includes a Chinese sub-site of our marketing website magicalkenya.com."

"During safety issues in 2008, China was not carried away by the false perceptions prevalent at the time which gave its people confidence to continue visiting Kenya. China certainly has a true and positive perception of Kenya."

In a further sign of close collaboration between China and Kenya, Chinese officials are helping Kenya preserve its endangered animal and other species as China has valuable experience of protecting the panda.

"Kenya remains the destination of choice for Chinese tourists," said Minister Balala. "The number of tourists from China continues to grow and tourism stakeholders are making their stay more comfortable by catering for their specific needs in areas like cuisine and facilities."

Tourism resources remain largely unexploited in certain geographical regions, but new tourism circuits are being opened up. Despite the challenges facing the sector, tourism will remain the engine of Kenya's economic growth.

Kenya remains the destination of choice for Chinese tourists due to its unique and unparalleled diverse product offering. Investment opportunities exist in tourism facilities such as hotels, restaurants, convention centers and safari tours."

NAJIB BALALA
KENYA'S MINISTER OF TOURISM

activities focused on the country's 42 indigenous cultures and colorful festivals, sports and water-based tourism holidays along the coast, and cruise tourism featuring the development of a modern cruise terminal and steamboat service on Lake Victoria to serve a planned new five-star lake resort.

The plan calls for the development of facilities run by international hotel chains, health spas, exhibition galleries at museums, business conference facilities, plus the creation of a golf city and

and believes the tourism sector offers Chinese businessmen an abundance of lucrative investment opportunities.

"China is one of our key emerging markets and has high potential for us," he said.

"The number of Chinese visitors to Kenya has increased ever since China granted Kenya approved destination status in 2004 and following the launch of Kenya Airways flights to Asia. Investment opportunities exist in hotels, restaurants, convention centers, safari tour

TOURISM ARRIVALS AND EARNINGS (2002-2007)					
Year	Holiday/ Business Visitors	Visitors in Transit	Other	Visitors Total International (Tourist) Arrivals	Earnings in USD
2002	819,124	163,252	18,904	1,000,280	\$282 million
2003	866,012	219,000	61,000	1,146,102	\$335 million
2004	1,132,000	162,200	66,500	1,360,700	\$510 million
2005	1,269,200	79,800	130,000	1,479,000	\$635 million
2006	1,313,549	137,165	149,829	1,600,541	\$730 million
2007	1,520,700	130,900	165,200	1,816,800	\$851 million

Source: Economic Survey, 2008



Bird's eye view of breathtaking landscape and wildlife offered by a 'balloon safari'.



Seafont at Lamu