

SPEECH FOR
HON. NAJIB BALALA, CABINET SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF TOURISM
DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
AFRICA MICE EXPO 2016

Invited guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a pleasure to join tourism stakeholders from Kenya and other destinations for this very important occasion – The Africa MICE Expo 2016. On behalf of the Ministry of Tourism, I say Karibu

Invited Guests

Over the last two years, Kenya has registered a huge growth in the number of delegates attending conferences in the country from 40,109 delegates in 2014 to 77,848 delegates in 2015. This is a clear show of

how resilient Kenya has been and the confidence that that the destination continues to attract.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Apart from witnessing the increasing number of delegates attending conferences in the country, Last year (2015) was a good year for Kenya's conference tourism. The country played host to very high profile meetings among them the World Trade Organization , The Global Entrepreneurship Summit that was opened by the US President Barrack Obama, The World Public Relations Forum and the visit by the Pope . These are just some of the many functions that put Kenya high on the world map.

Invited Guests

It is no doubt that the excellent MICE performance in Nairobi and other parts of the country has led to the increase in high end hotels and conference facilities in the last three years.

It is worth noting that 2016 is showing even better prospects for conference tourism in Kenya. Already we are preparing to host major meetings this year which include

- African Federation of International Auditors conference – **May, 2016**
- Hotex-Hospitality Expo – **May, 2016**
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) – **July, 2016**
- Tokyo International Corporation for African Development (TICAD) – **August, 2016**
- Global Partnership for Economic Development Corporation Conference(GPEDC) – **November, 2016**

Ladies and Gentlemen

As a country, we shall continue to aggressively market Kenya internationally while also bidding for more conferences.

It worth noting that the government is currently undertaking a feasibility study on the viability of putting up additional MICE facilities at Bomas of Kenya and Mombasa , to supplement the existing ones.

Once completed, the government will engage the private sector and other investors in putting up state of the art conference facilities .

Invited Guests

MICE' contribution to Kenya's economy cannot be underestimated. The Industry accounts for 27.5% of the tourism earnings . To increase this further, my Ministry will continue to work with stakeholders including the private sector to package and Market Kenya as a competitive destination for Conference Tourism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In order to boost our bidding power, We are in the process of forming a National Convention Bureau that will coordinate the bidding , Marketing and Promotion of Kenya as a preferred global tourism destination of choice. This will go a long way in ensuring that conference bidding in Kenya is conducted in a more coordinated way.

In this regard,I urge all the tourism industry players to tap into the huge potential that this industry has , by aggressively marketing and bidding for this conferences as a team.

Invited Guests

In the Spirit of benchmarking, we may wish to make this event an annual expo in the global meetings industry calendar as happens in the Meetings Africa of South Africa , the Confex of London and the Imex of Frankfurt Germany. This will make destination Kenya more global attracting more visitors .

With these few remarks Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to declare the 2nd Africa MICE Expo officially opened.

Thank You