

308 Czech tourists land to a water canon salute in Mombasa



Chairman Kenya Coast and Tourists Association, Victor Shitakha [right] congratulates captain Tanbas Burak of Airbus A330 from Ostrava, Czech Republic. The captain has arrived with 380 tourists in Mombasa. They will have one week holiday stay in South Coast and Wildlife Safari in Tsavo East. 27th October 2019. [Photo Omondi Onyango/Standard]

Kenyan tourism sector got a shot in the arm after a charter flight operated by Atlas Global flew in 308 tourists from Czech Republic to the Kenyan Coast. An airbus A 330 with the words Atlas Global emblazoned on its livery touched down at the Moi International Airport Mombasa (MIAM) on Saturday at 7.15 pm.

The plane landed to a rousing welcome and a water canon salute by the Kenya Airports Authority (KAA) Fire Brigade after an 8 hour flight from the city of Ostrava.

Officials from the Kenya Coast Tourist Association (KCTA) led by chairman, Mr. Victor Shitakah, MIAM Airport manager, Mr Peter Wafula and a team from the Kenya Tourism Board received the guests.

"This is early Christmas for us. We are delighted at the prospects of having to receive such a large number of tourists at this time of the year," Shitakah said.

Shitakah said that they are now on course to reaping fully from the benefits of the government initiated Charter Incentive Programme (CIP) that was launched by Tourism Cabinet Secretary, Mr Najib Balala in 2016.

CIP is purposed to stimulate demand for destination Kenya by subsidising costs of tourist acquisition for charter companies.

It attracts no landing fees for a period of two years and comes with a passenger subsidy of Sh3100 per passenger seat filled by international passengers.

The tourists were handed over Magical Kenya delivery bags that contained vital information on destination Kenya.

Speaking at the airport, **Mr Roman Brulik of BB TravelMakers**, the tour company that chartered the plane to Mombasa expressed his joy at landing to a warm reception on Kenyan soil.

"We are delighted at the warm welcome and look forward to an eventful one week holiday stay for the Czech guests on this trip," Mr. Brulik.

He added that they had teamed up with their local partners; Serena Secrets Safaris based in Mombasa to organise the trip itinerary.

Ms. Mini Warah, a director with Serena Secrets Safaris said that they were committed to working with various stakeholders to help bring in more tourists in the country.

" This is just the beginning. We remain optimistic that the prevailing good political situation and continued political stability will help make Kenya attractive to global tourists," she said.

Since the inception of CIP, the government earned Sh3.7 billion in revenue thanks to the ambitious programme.

The Sh1.2 billion CIP package that come into effect in 2016 has brought in 60,000 tourists as of March, 2018 into the Kenyan Coast destination has been given.

The government has shown its commitment to revitalising tourism and invested heavily in infrastructure development and at the same time boosted security in the country.

The government has projected that with sustained international tourist arrivals, the country was poised to reach the 1.7 million international arrival mark by the end of the year, an improvement from the 2017 1.475 million arrivals.

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