

LETTER OF THE DAY

Adopt foreign languages to market Uganda's tourism

EDITOR: Last week, the French embassy in Uganda spearheaded by Her Excellency Ambassador Stephanie Rivoal gave Uganda Tourism Board a-sh49m-grant to aid the Uganda tourism fraternity acquire skills and lessons in French.

The main beneficiaries of this grant was the Uganda Tourism Association which is the umbrella organisation that brings together all tourism associations in Uganda that include the Association of Uganda Tour Operators, Uganda Safari Guides Association, Uganda Hotel Owners Association, Uganda Association of travel agents, and Uganda Community Tourism Association.

Tourism is Uganda's largest foreign exchange earner contributing more than 10% to the annual gross domestic product and 23% of export earnings.

This is set to increase with efforts from Uganda Tourism Board already penetrating more foreign tourism markets in the Nordic region and other markets in Asia, the Arabic region and Pan-African Market.

Adopting foreign international languages is a great asset to Uganda's tourism industry. It is important to the cognitive process of acquiring new knowledge about the destination by the tourist as the challenge of language barrier would have been overcome and communication is eased. Uganda being among the most welcoming countries in the world tasks the tourism industry in the country with the responsibility to commit to learning foreign languages in order to capitalise on the inbound tourist population.

A multilingual tour operator and tourism practitioner has the ability

to reach out to multiple tourists of different cultures. This lessens the impact of adjustment for the tourist if the tour operator makes an attempt to learn the foreign tourists' language in advance.

In today's interconnectedness, learning a new language is a valuable tool in tourism. It improves cultural open-mindedness. Tourists love visiting places they know they will feel at home in and not be segregated because of their lingua. Given that language gives one insight to a particular culture. Studying a new language enables the tourism fraternity to have extensive understanding of the foreign tourists' way of life. Tell the Ugandan story in different international languages.

*Mitchel Mwesiga,
Kampala*

PICTURE BY WILFRED SANYA

WRITE TO US:

The Letters Editor, P. O. Box 9815 Kampala; or email: letters@newvision.co.ug
Letters must be precise and must be signed. You can also SMS your comment. Type LETTERS [SPACE] YOUR COMMENT then send to 8338

