

Museveni proposes a three-year multiple-entry visa regime for tourists

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KAMPALA. President Museveni has asked the Ministry of Internal Affairs, through the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration control, to relax the visa regime and offer a three-year multiple-entry visa for tourists visiting Uganda.

Museveni wondered why tourists who have money to spend have to get a visa every three months they want to come to the country, saying tourism plays an important role in the development of Uganda.

While opening the Pearl of Africa Tourism Expo 2026 at the Commonwealth Resort Munyonyo in Kampala, Museveni said Uganda is already in the lower middle-income status, and robust tourism development will go a long way in pushing the country up. He also pledged that the government is committed to supporting the sector.

"Tourism is anchored in services such as entertainment, ICT, and hospitality, and your presence here today contributes to advancing Uganda's income status and visibility on the international stage. Therefore, by coming here, you help us to advance our economy to a high, middle-income level status, and a first-world country," he said.

President Museveni wondered why people who are coming to spend money in the country must be restricted.

"In the new government, I advise them to make it easy for the tourists to come. I don't know why they have been giving short visas of three months. But the Americans complain, saying, 'We give you a three-year visa. Why? What are you worried about? Give him three years multiple-entry visa,' he said.

"Let him go and return if he wants. As long as he is paying his bills, what is your concern? Are you worried about his pocket? He will obviously come with money to pay for his bills. I don't know why you people are insisting on these short visas. We are going to discuss it," he added.

Museveni said Uganda offers rich options for tourists who visit the country and asked the visitors to market the country to their friends. He also said the colonial boundaries that separated the countries of Africa are fizzling out, giving way to new, bigger, and better markets.

"Because of the colonial fragmentation, the borders are not rational. There are many landlocked countries in Africa because of the colonial borders. That said, we have also continued working closely with our neighbours, including DRC, Kenya, South Sudan, Rwan-

da, Burundi, Tanzania, and Somalia, to strengthen regional integration, build one market, and address the distortions created by colonial boundaries," he said

No need to worry. When I met with the task force, we didn't agree with the panic of closing the border and all that, because if people are coming legally, we can manage them,"
President Museveni

Museveni also warned against what he said was ignorant spreading of information that the country is grappling with an Ebola outbreak that has killed more than 100 people in the DRC. He said that while few cases have been reported in Uganda, the situation is under control.

"I was watching CNN spreading fear through ignorance. Ebola is much easier to control than coronavirus. Covid-19 was one of the biggest problems in the world, one of the most dangerous pandemics. Why? Because it was spreading through breathing. We sit in the same bus, even if I am some meters away, you can infect me. That's why it was very dangerous. Nonetheless, Uganda was the most successful country in the

whole world, I think, in controlling Corona," he said.

He said while the mortality rate emanating from Ebola infection is high, the disease is easier to control if the right procedures are followed

CNN was saying DRC and Uganda yet these 500 or so infected people are in DRC. Then, they are saying 130 people or so have died. All of them are mainly on the Congo side. The only one who died here in Kibuli Hospital had come from Congo. So, there are only a few casualties in Uganda. So, the correct description of the outbreak is that it is mainly in Congo, but a few people came to Uganda from Congo," he said.

Uganda is safe for travellers

Museveni said while Uganda has refused the call to close borders with DRC, the government is closely monitoring the situation to ensure that illegal entry points do not act as a conduit for spreading the disease. Additionally, while who pass through gazetted entry and exit points are thoroughly screened.

He also directed that all the border markets must be closed to control the spread of the disease and ensure that those who are sick are closely monitored.

"The one thing that should stop is the

markets near the border, because those are very indisciplined. I hear there was a big market in Ntoroko, where the Ugandans and the Congolese were mixing up. Those should be suspended," he said.

Ms Doreen Katusiime, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife & Antiquities, said Uganda's tourism diversity makes it an ideal destination for everyone who loves nature in its purest form. She said over the years, East African countries have become one of the biggest source markets for Uganda's tourism, and working together with the partner states will only make it more attractive.

"The East African region remains one of Uganda's tourism source markets, and we appreciate the spirit of cooperation and integration among our neighboring countries. You have seen the delegations from Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda. Those are our biggest source markets," Ms Katusiime said.

"We commend the collaborative arrangements between Uganda, Kenya, and Rwanda in developing common destination experiences and strengthening regional marketing. These partnerships are critical because tourism today does not operate in isolation, but through cooperation, connectivity and shared prosperity," she added.