

Uganda to attract more French investors after exhibition

BY VISION REPORTER

UGANDA set to attract more French into the country following an impressive performance that pulled crowds and left a mark on the French at a grand exhibition that included cultural presentations during France's most significant event, Bastille Day on July 14.

The much sought-after premier event known as the Diplomatic Garden Party is an annual occasion organised on Bastille Day alongside other celebrations.

This year, Uganda was chosen as one of four countries to exhibit at the Diplomatic Garden Party organised by the Ugandan Embassy in Paris and facilitated by the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB). The other countries that exhibited were Croatia, Suriname and Gabon.

■WHAT WAS EXHIBITED

Uganda exhibited tourism, investment, culture, heritage and cuisine at the most prestigious event of the day, the Diplomatic Garden Party, held at Bois de Boulogne, an upper-middle and high-end western Paris suburb.

The Uganda embassy in France, UTB and the tourism private sector hosted over 500 guests who were entertained by a Paris-based Ugandan dance troupe and ensemble.

According to a UTB statement, Uganda was the only country that had a cultural troupe at the extravaganza. During the garden exhibition, the guests joined in the



Visitors at the Ugandan stall during the Bastille Day celebrations in France on July 14

crowd-puller Ugandan music to dance and at the finale, chorused "Vive Uganda!"

After the performance, many visitors came to the Ugandans' pavilion to get more information on the country and inquiries have started coming in. The Ugandan pavilion exhibited tourist attractions, investment, agriculture, trade, oil and gas. The guests mainly consisted of top diplomats accredited to France, influential business, corporate and

government officials. The Bastille Day celebrations, also attended by US president Donald Trump and other world leaders, took place at the Champs - Elysees.

UTB was led by the chief executive officer Stephen Asiimwe; marketing manager Edwin Muzahura and the senior marketing officer, Sylvia Kalembe. Uganda's private sector was led by the chairperson of the Association of the Uganda Tour Operators, Barbara Adorso

Vanhelleputte and Marinka San George. Vanhelleputte is also the owner of Asyanut Safaris, while Marinka is a director at Let's Go Travel in Kampala.

The premier event's organiser, VFC Group CEO, Didier Vidal, said Uganda's performance was "fantastic". He said the Ugandan team was highly organised and added colour and flavour to Bastille Day celebrations. He was glad Uganda participated and added this

UTB CEO STEPHEN ASIIMWE
We hope to make inroads by engaging French tour operators and media, training embassy staff on destination marketing

would pay off eventually.

Uganda's outgoing ambassador to France, Nimisha Madhvani who is the brain-child of Uganda's participation, was very excited at the performance.

■THE APPLICATION

"We applied to exhibit at this very competitive opportunity and I am glad UTB and the tourism private firms were very quick to embrace our partnership with them," Madhvani said.

The Uganda embassy was also represented by Elly Kamahungye, the deputy ambassador and Dora Kutesa, a senior embassy official.

"France looks promising. The embassy has done a lot under the leadership of Madhvani and the Uganda team there. We hope to make inroads by engaging French tour operators and media, training embassy staff on destination marketing and branding the Uganda embassy," Asiimwe said.