

The time is right for an African attractions association

From museums and theme parks to game reserves and aquaria, attractions form the backbone of the African tourism industry. Until now, however, the continent has had no dedicated attractions association - but that is about to change. A key focus of the fifth Attractions Africa conference will be the creation of a continental attractions association in partnership with the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA).



Image via [Gold Reef City Facebook](#)

Attractions Africa brings together industry leaders, attractions professionals and operational staff to talk about the business of running attractions: defining the wide array of facilities on offer, benchmarking best practice and sharing innovation. It is Africa's only such forum.

"The tourism industry is a major contributor to GDP, as well as employment, in Africa – and it relies heavily on permanent attractions to be sustainable. It is imperative that African attractions support each other, and learn from each other, in order to appeal to international visitors and hold their own in a very competitive global tourism market," says Sabine Lehmann, Attractions Africa executive director.

"Attractions Africa 2018 is going to be very exciting for African tourism. In partnership with IAAPA, which has been a staunch supporter of Attractions Africa since its establishment, we will be working towards the creation of an association that will benefit not only the continent's attractions but also national economies as well as the communities in which attractions operate."

Regrouping Africa's leading attractions

IAAPA, which attended the inaugural Attractions Africa conference and has sponsored and presented at the past three events, is once again playing a leading role this year. It is also offering delegates the opportunity to earn 10 hours'

continuing education credit towards IAAPA certification, which will enhance their professional standing.

IAAPA's vice-president for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, Jakob Wahl says the time is right for the creation of an African attractions association – and Attractions Africa provides the appropriate platform for doing so.

"We have been pleased to see Attractions Africa grow rapidly into the continent's premier forum for attractions professionals, where they can learn and be inspired, and discover new, creative ways of presenting attractions from their industry peers and other experts. IAAPA fully supports the event and is proud to be a partner of this initiative to also launch an association to regroup the leading attractions in the region. Attractions Africa, as the only event that brings together attractions professionals from around the continent, is the right place to make it a reality. I'm very much looking forward to this year's conference," says Wahl.

Improving future attraction offerings

An important speaker at Attractions Africa 2018 will be Massimiliano Freddi, vice-president of strategic development at the Leolandia amusement park in Italy, who will address the conference on the dynamics of pricing.

"After more than 20 years in the industry, it's very exciting for me to witness the incredible growth that the African market is delivering," says Freddi.

"Not only is it focusing more and more on guest experiences that will drive jobs, opportunities for business and economic growth, but it is also an incredible opportunity for our industry all over the world to be energised and to learn new ways of entertaining people, exceeding their expectations and projecting attractions towards a bright future."

Other topics to be addressed at the conference include how trends affect the visitor attractions industry; the impact of social media on crisis management over the past decade; and the latest design tricks and trends for moving visitors around sites.

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