

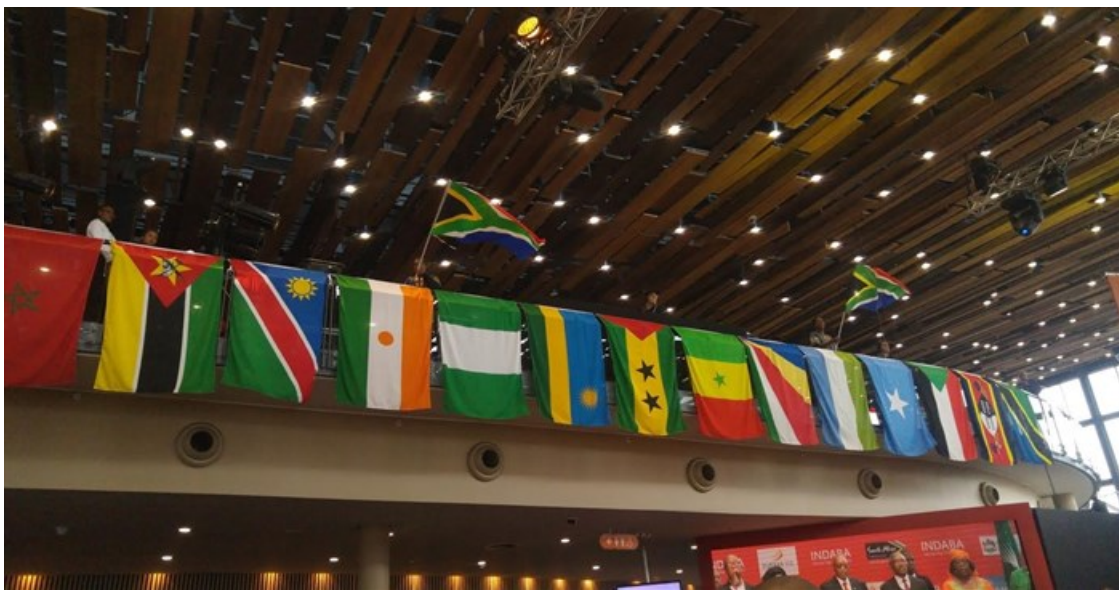
# Tourism's potential to change and grow Africa

By  [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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Tourism has the potential to change the African continent said President Jacob Zuma when he officially opened the 2017 Tourism Indaba. “Indeed, tourism is the new currency that ignites and unites our continent. We are looking forward to exciting times ahead for this industry on our continent.”

The 2017 Tourism Indaba, which runs until 18 May, kicked off with the pomp and ceremony deserving of the biggest tourism expo in Africa. “This week we bring Africa and the world together, in this home-grown trade show where Africa markets herself to the world. We are truly pleased to have our 21 sister African countries exhibiting at this year’s Travel Indaba,” says Zuma.



“We are ready to work in partnership with our sister countries on the continent, and with our partners in the tourism industry, to make Africa a destination of choice for the world. We will grow African tourism together and promote our beautiful continent, as we are doing this week at this Indaba.”

Globally more than a billion people are travelling annually, with world international tourist arrivals growing by four percent on average. Africa has increased its percentage of intentional tourists by eight percent, reaching 58 million arrivals. While this is at twice the rate of the global average, it still only represents five percent of the one billion global tourists.

The president notes that while this is encouraging, as more and more world travellers are discovering our continent. “It means they see its value as an exceptional destination for holidays and business events and it indicates the immense potential for the further growth in the continent’s tourism sector.”

## Moving Africa forward



To achieve this, he says we need to work together as Africans with our global partners. “Then we can open our beautiful continent to further growth in tourism. We are determined to move Africa forward in this business.”

Already a lot is being done by regional economic blocs on the continent to promote regional integration which has positive spin-offs for the economy including tourism, he adds. “At the African Union level, Africa is investing in infrastructure development projects that will help us to promote economic development, including tourism development.”

One of the key goals is to work towards a seamless travel experience across the continent. “I have the privilege of chairing the African Union’s Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Initiative as part of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and one of our key projects is to develop road and rail connectivity within the continent to make it easier to travel around Africa.”

He also states that the continent needs more aviation connectivity. “Ultimately, one does not need to fly to Europe first before reaching a North African destination from South Africa.”

## ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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