

IFITTalk@ Nairobi 2017

THEME: "ENHANCING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF AFRICA'S TOURISM: THE ICTS PATHWAY".

VENUE: KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

DATE: 9TH NOVEMBER, 2017

Workshop Report

IFITTalk@Nairobi was held on 9th November 2017 at Kenyatta University, Nairobi under the theme of **Enhancing Competitiveness of Africa's Tourism: The ICT Pathway**. The event was jointly hosted by Mount Kenya University's School of Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Management, Karatina University's Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, and Kenyatta University's School of Hospitality and Tourism with support from the International Federation for Information Technologies and Travel & Tourism (IFITT). Other collaborating organisations included: The Kenya Association of Tour Operators (KATO), Kenya Tourism Board (KTB), Ministry of Tourism (Kenya, Nairobi), Kenya Association of Hotel Keepers & Caterers (KAHKC) and Safaricom Ltd. Over 120 people drawn from tourism academia, industry and policy makers participated in the event.

The event was organised in three sessions: morning, mid-morning and afternoon sessions. In addition, the workshop featured two panel discussions, mid-morning and afternoon.

The morning session was chaired by Dr. Esther Munyiri of Kenyatta University and opened with remarks from the Event Coordinator Dr. Mary Mutungi who urged participants to leverage on outcomes of the workshop to build cutting edge business practices, policy directions and academic knowledge acquisition. Further remarks were made by the official representatives of the three collaborating universities and representative of the IFITT Board, Dr. Ray Mutinda of Mount Kenya University who gave the background information on IFITT and IFITTalk.

The first key note presentation was delivered by Oscar Rombo, the Senior Manager, Business Analysis and Relationship Management at Safaricom Ltd on the title: *Mobile Applications in Tourism*. In this presentation, participants were provided with an up to date view of the mobile applications in the travel and tourism industry. He highlighted case studies in travel agencies, destination apps, targeted product offers and wildlife tracking. He finally presented a summary of the key trends in mobile applications in tourism.

The second session was chaired by Kevin Nyamai of Mount Kenya University. Three presentations were featured in this session. The first presentation was delivered by Mary Rahab, the CEO of the Trans-Travel Safaris who delivered *practical case studies on ICTs and the Tour Operator within the Kenyan scape*.

Daniel Muoki, the Director of Research at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) made the second presentation focusing on *ICTs and MICE Development in Kenya*. He highlighted the application of ICTs in the event life cycle- sourcing, servicing, and post event.

Keziah Odemba, the Ag. Director of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism made the third presentation on the theme: *The Place of ICTs in Kenya's Tourism Blueprint 2030*. She elaborated that Kenya seeks to use ICT throughout the implementation of the 2030 blueprint strategy observing that the Ministry will first set its approach and then design ICT elements to assist in the process; will take advantage of intranet to re-organize internal processes; extranet for developing transactions with trusted partners; and the internet for interacting with all its stakeholders.

The session ended with a panel discussion involving the two sessions' presenters. The Dr. Boniface Kihima of the Technical University of Kenya chaired the panel discussion and gave the participants an opportunity to engage with the key note speakers.

The third session was chaired by Dr. Bichage Methuselah of Karatina University. Three presentations were delivered during the session. First, Dr. Eng. Thomas Senaji of Kenya Methodist University delivered a keynote presentation on the *State of Knowledge and Research in ICT's for Travel and Tourism*. Dr Senaji focused on number of areas pertaining to ICTs and travel and tourism including ICT as a sector and enabler of other sectors, enabling environment for the Development of ICT, Current conversations in ICT, Kenya's ICT Policy (2006) and Masterplan (2014-2017).

The second presentation was delivered by Dr. Fred Kaigua the CEO for Kenya Association of Tour Operators (KATO) on the topic of *ICTs and Tour Operations*. Overall, he noted that ICT advancements will, to a large extent, determine the competitiveness of Tour Operations going forward. This will in turn call for changes in several areas of operations including Adopting innovative practices of acquiring clients, Establishing interactive platforms to engage consumers, Promoting tourism products on the internet and mobile devices, Personalizing the experience for every user irrespective of the channel used, Ensure there is value addition to services at every level, and Introducing dynamic product packaging to differentiate from the pack.

The final presentation for this session was delivered by Leah Ng'ang'a, the Administration Officer, Kenya Association of Hotelkeepers and Caterers (KAHC) *ICTs and Hospitality Management*. The main focus of her presentation the Impact of ICT on hospitality industry, Technology used in the hospitality industry, and Negative and positive effects of technology

The session was concluded with a Panel discussion featuring the three afternoon session presenters and chaired by Dr. Albert Kariuki of Kenyatta University. The panel focused on aspects and future directions of ICTs role in Africa's tourism competitiveness. Participants were accorded the opportunity to engage with the presenters and give their input.