

# Meetings Africa 2011

## 'exceeds expectations'

*In keeping with South Africa's knack of creating memorable business experiences, Meetings Africa 2011, held at Sandton Convention Centre, has exceeded expectations and cemented its status as the African continent's leading business tourism exhibition. Irene Costa, editor, reports ...*

**N**omasonto Ndlovu, global manager of business tourism at South African Tourism, said: "Meetings Africa 2011 has definitely paved the way for South African Tourism's strategic development to grow the business tourism industry in South Africa.

"Africa's flagship business tourism event has been hailed by its attendees as a success, and has achieved its goal of showcasing Africa as a world-class international meetings and events destination."

Minister of Tourism, **Marthinus van Schalkwyk** opened the first Meetings Africa after South Africa's very successful hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. "We have always maintained that it is imperative we leverage the success and learning of the World Cup, especially in the tourism industry in South Africa. It is clear business tourism has been bolstered by a new sense of energy and direction and I believe this will make a significant contribution to consolidating our continent's position in the global arena and demonstrating our capabilities in terms of hosting international events," Minister van Schalkwyk said.

He highlighted the important and growing role that business tourism will play in helping government's job creation objectives. "Tourism contributed an estimated 7,7 per cent to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2010. Business tourism will no doubt play a role in getting more visitors to South Africa.

"We have already secured almost 200 meetings and conferences in South Africa over the next five years, attracting more than 300 000 delegates to our country. The potential economic impact of these confirmed meetings and conferences is more than R1,6-billion."

"In 2009 we welcomed approximately 500 000 business tourism arrivals to South Africa, representing about 4,7 per cent of total tourist arrivals. This represents a total economic value of about R4-billion, with business tourists spending an average of R5 300 during their stay in South Africa. The average length of stay of business tourists also increased from 4,6 nights in 2008 to 4,8 nights in 2009," Minister van Schalkwyk said.

The Minister also noted the boost South Africa would receive from becoming the fifth country in the powerful Brazil, Russia, India



The Contact Publications stand with Cristina Catalano, stand manager, and Jeanette van Rensburg.

and China (BRIC) partnership. These countries account for 40 per cent of the world's population and annual global GDP and are set to become the global growth locomotive.

"Collectively, these countries are expected to outperform major industrialised economies over the next two years. South Africa stands to gain tremendously from our inclusion into the BRIC partnership. Among others, we expect increased levels of trade and investment activity between South Africa and the other partner countries will also lead to increased business travel and business meetings. In addition, South Africa will be able to share and learn from these countries in terms of business tourism success stories and identify opportunities for stronger collaboration in bidding for and staging major business events," Minister Van Schalkwyk said.

### MATCHMAKING PROGRAMME

More than 7 000 official meetings were scheduled during Meetings Africa 2011, breaking all previous records and exceeding the expectations of platform owners, South African Tourism.

Ms Ndlovu said: "The enhancement of the Meetings Africa Matchmaking Programme this year was undoubtedly the strategic feather in our caps. A record 7 387 business meeting requests were sent, of which 6 176, or 83,61 per cent, were already actioned by the end of the first day of Meetings Africa. The success of this programme and the enthusiasm with which it was received by our valued stakeholders, exhibitors and visiting buyers is extremely encouraging and a great sign of things to come

for our industry."

The Matchmaking Programme was further supported and extended through the integration of Poken technology – an electronic business card unit that facilitates the exchange of contact information digitally; all but negating the need for business cards and significantly modernising the networking experience.

In addition to the added emphasis on speedier networking platforms, Meetings Africa 2011 saw the introduction of several additional elements that elevated the event to arguably one of the best in its category globally. Progressive developments to the domestic business tourism agenda included the addition of the

corporate brunch and MeetingsAfrica Golf Day, offering further opportunities for networking and encouraging greater involvement from the local corporate sector.

The positive sentiments and impressive event results were shared by many of this year's exhibitors. "Meetings Africa 2011 was much improved and we saw a lot of growth this year. I was particularly pleased that there was a definite increase in the number of buyers interested in Africa," said **Beatrice Makawiti** from The Kenyatta International Conference Centre.

Exhibitors rose to the challenge of an even bigger and better Meetings Africa by showcasing their offerings competitively, creatively and uniquely. Meetings Africa 2011 judges were hard-pressed to name the winning stands in each category, as the quality and heightened marketing efforts by all exhibitors was of a particularly high standard this year.

The small stand award winners were NH Hoteles and runners-up were Uniquely Spectacular. In the medium stand category the overall winner was Legend Lodges, Hotels and Resorts and runners-up were Peermont Hotels & Casino Resorts. Runners-up in the large stand category were Gauteng Tourism Authority and the overall winner for best large stand was awarded to Johannesburg Tourism Company.

Unaudited attendance numbers for Meetings Africa 2011 were 3 353, up from the 2 899 delegates who attended last year's show. South African Tourism hosted 123 international buyers and 32 international media from global

core markets and this year's Association Day was attended by 52 delegates.

Meetings Africa, in conjunction with the Southern Africa Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI), also hosted educational seminars that were very popular with the Meetings Africa attendees. The attendees were enlightened on how the Consumer Protection Act affects business

tourism on the first day of Meetings Africa. The topic for the second seminar created heightened awareness about the greening of the business tourism industry and how the industry can better apply and adhere to global greening trends.

Ms Ndlovu felt the continued success of Meetings Africa ensured that South Africa remained well poised to cement its position

as one of the most intriguing and dynamic business tourism destinations in the world.

"What remains most promising to us is that the growth of this event elevates the exposure of the African continent, our world-class facilities and uniquely African personality. In turn, this could translate to even further growth for the continent as a whole," Ms Ndlovu concluded.

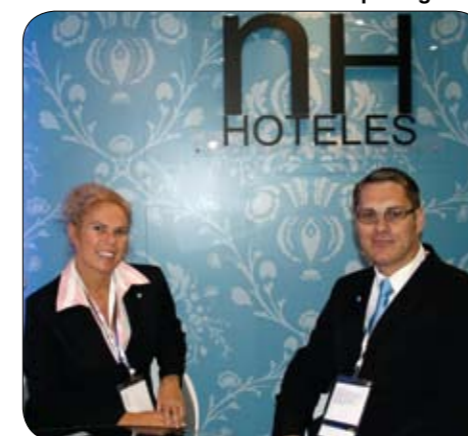
### Seen @ Meetings Africa ...



Marthinus van Schalkwyk ringing the bell, which announced the opening of Meetings Africa.



Malcolm King and Allie Jankee, Contact Publications; and Bev Engelbrecht, By Word of Mouth.



Angela Jacobson and Vernon Hearne, NH The Lord Charles.



Gil Frith and Juanita Marais, Forum Homini.



Cristina Catalano, Contact Publications stand manager, and Nigel Walker, Complete Exhibitions.



Robin Brown, Cansaf – Creative Teaming, and Wilma Griffith, Wild Horizons.



The team from Protea Hotel The Ranch, from left: Paul Shearer, Neil Burnett and Kate Shearer.



Derek Houston, Houston Marketing Services.



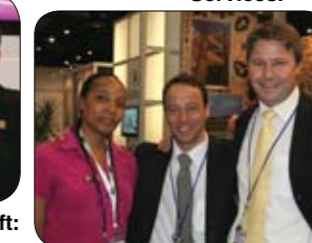
Michael Hunter-Smith, Gatsby International Hotels & Resorts; and Linda de Caires, Emerald Resort & Casino.



Adele Muller, Southern Sun Lifestyle Resorts; Darron Moore, Drakensburg Sun Lifestyle Resort; and Martin Anthony-Kirsten, Southern Sun.



The Peermont team, from left: Junese Viljoen; Chris Prieto and Belinde Moniez.



Left: Maiketso Mojaki, Springbok Atlas; Gary Arenson and Wayne Neath, Premier Hotels & Resorts.



Debbie de Villiers and Simone von Luttwitz, Terra Nova.



From Scan On Show, organisers of Meetings Africa, from left: Amanda Margison, Justin Hawes and Jacqui Reynolds.



Craig Drysdale and Peter-John Mitrovich, Springbok Atlas.



Glenn Harding and Bronwen Cadle, CSIR ICC.

**Seen @ Meetings Africa ...**



The Focus Rooms team, from left: Nadine De Vos, Marisa Scott and Shan Hale.



Reg Ferreira, Status Hotels



Bernard Asoro and Beatrice Makawiti, The Kenya International Conference Centre.



Chris Anagostellis, An African Anthology; and Bryan Coetzee, Tourvest Destination Management



Karin Sieberhagen, Serena Hotels.



The Global Conferences Africa team, back from left: Jim McIntosh; Brian MacDonald and Bryan Coetzee, Tourvest Destination Management. Front: Melanie Campbell (left) and Illana Myburgh, T.E.A.M.



The Arabella Starwood team at Meetings Africa 2011.



Liz Monteiro, The Conference Company, based in Johannesburg.



Strinivas Venkatkumar and Moses Mazibuko, Arcadia Hotel



Amanda Kotze-Nhlapo, Cape Town and Western Cape Convention Bureau; and Natalie Kensley, The Conference Company, based in Cape Town.



Dawn Holmwood, Contact Publications; and Linda Ngcipe, Johannesburg Convention Bureau.



Keith Burton, African Agenda; and Bjorn Huffie, Cape Town and Western Cape Convention Bureau.



Raquel de Sousa, Congress Rental; Sunil Menon, NFS Hospitality; Romaine Veeran, Congress Rental; and Helen Surgeson, Gearhouse.



Dumisani Nshangase, Dinokeng; and Marina Toerien, Mongena Game Lodge.



Brandon Clifford and Karin White, Sandton Convention Centre; Lyrene Zimmerman, ICC Durban; and Sharon Peetz, African Bureau of Conventions.



The Sunwa River Lodge team, from left: Desiré Maene, Renette Pretorius and Angéline Swanepoel.

**Seen @ Meetings Africa ...**



Sigi van Rooyen, Choice Getaways; Dave Walters, Actual Events; Andries van Schalkwyk, Buffelsdrift Game Lodge; and Glenda Paterson, Cape Hotels.



Back, from left: Greg Steyn, Vulcan Catering Equipment; and Neil Davison, general manager, Avianto. Front, from left, the Avianto team: Marissa Steyn, Gladys Mhongo and Jeana Turner.



Kathy Basson, The Holiday Factory.



Marie van Wyk, Spier; and Chris Prieto, Emperors Palace.



The MTN Expo Centre team with one of the models, front, that hosted guests on the stand.



Stuart Freeman, Promag Publishing New Zealand.



Moledi Mantambo and Winny Leshomo, North West Parks & Tourism Board.



Jabulile Khumalo and Kgomotso Mathope, Sandton Convention Centre.



Nicolette Segeel and Adene Pringle, SAACI; Chris Prieto, Emperors Palace; and Hannes Venter, MTN Expo Centre.



Martin van Niekerk, Junxion Communications; and Glynis Anderson, Thebe Exhibitions and Projects Group.



Iris Himmel, Consult Iris; and Charles Drewe, Drewe Associates.



Megan Arendse, Cape Town International Convention Centre; and Brian Prowling, Oasys Innovations.



Renzo Tomassi, Recreation Africa; Jeanette van Rensburg, Contact Publications; Charl Pretorius, Kwalata; and Adele Forsyth, Recreation Africa.



Erica Jago, Maropeng; and Karen Nicholls, Southern Spoor.



Stephan Gotta, manager, Trade Relations, South African Tourism, Germany; Bruno Reis Neto and Anja Schimpke, Sandown Tours & Incentives.



The Khaya Ihubesi team, from left: Mandisa Bundwini; Anél Knoetze and Chantalle Nortje.

## Seen @ Meetings Africa ...



Janine Meyer, African Bureau of Conventions; Robyn Turner, Fairmont Hotels and Resorts; and Sharon Peetz, African Bureau of Conventions.



The Legend Lodges, Hotels & Resorts team – all in zebra stripes.



Philip Beardwood, Gearhouse Group of Companies.



Brenda Dooge, Guvon Hotels & Spas; Julian Katz, Fairmont Hotels and Resorts; and Reta Goosen, Guvon Hotels & Spas.



Doreen Inonge Mukanzo, High Commission of the Republic of Zambia; and Solistor Cheelo, Zambia Tourism Board.



Nonnie Kubeka, Gauteng Tourism Authority.



James Macquet, Champagne Sports Resort and Pumula Beach Hotel.



Lorin Bowen, Indaba Hotel; and Karabo Moikangoe, MTN Expo Centre.



Robert Ngcobo, Indaba Hotel & Conference Centre.



Joey Pather, Cape Town International Convention Centre; and Nina Freysen-Pretorius, The Conference Company and national chairperson of SAACI.



Anja Serfontein, Kievits Kroon.

## Meetings Africa 2011 embraces global greening trend

MEETINGS AFRICA has gone green. For the first time since its inception in 2007, Meetings Africa was eco-audited by an independent sustainability consultancy, Icologie, bringing it in line with globally developed greening and sustainability standards.

Another exciting green initiative being implemented at MeetingsAfrica by South African Tourism (SA Tourism) was the purchase of renewable energy from GreenX Energy to power the show, which made its electrical consumption virtually carbon-neutral. "Sustainability in the tourism industry – particularly in terms of the eco-footprint that the industry places on the environment – is critically important in terms

of ensuring that the very natural resources that create our wonderful destination are maintained for future generations," said **Nomasonto Ndlovu**, global manager for business tourism at South African Tourism.

SA Tourism also announced Meetings Africa's alignment with Event Greening Forum (EGF). EGF promotes and embraces sustainable and ethical business principles within the events industry in South Africa, with an initial focus on MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conference, and Exhibitions). This partnership will assist with the development of MICE events in South Africa so they can compete at an international level of eco-friendly standards.

"Greening" offers social advantages to the local communities and, particularly for business tourism activities, cost benefits. "Conferences, events and exhibitions can consume massive quantities of energy and produce equally massive quantities of waste. Auditing of Meetings Africa not only suggested a more socially aware way forward, but also gave us pointers on how to reduce some of the costs," Ms Ndlovu continued.

This move towards greening Meetings Africa came at a significant time for South Africa, as the country prepares to host the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP17/CMP7) in Durban later this year. ■