

Time running out to register for Hospitality Investment Conference Africa

Time is running out to register for the 2010 Hospitality Investment Conference Africa (HICA), which will be held at the Sandton Sun Hotel from 31 October to 2 November.



This is according to Mmatšatši Marobe, CEO of the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA), who is hosting the annual event in conjunction with the National Department of Tourism. "HICA 2010 will be a turning point in the region's hospitality industry as now, post world cup, we have to find joint answers on questions related to the future and how the industry will find its way out of the economic slump," she says.

She says driving investment in the hospitality sector is one of the key focus areas of the TBCSA. "The investment conference is a business-to-business platform aimed at meaningful industry interaction that leads to actual investment transactions."

An opportunity to interact

Delegates at HICA will have the opportunity to interact with some of the most prominent international hospitality professionals including Kurt Ritter, President and CEO of the Rezidor Hotel Group, Rudi Jagersbacher, area president for Africa and Middle East, Hilton Worldwide and Philippe Trapp, MD of Accor Southern, Eastern Africa and Indian Ocean.

Local industry experts at HICA will include Gillian Saunders, principal partner at Grant Thornton Strategic Solutions, Arthur Gillis, group managing director of Protea Hotels, Adrian Gardiner, chairman of the Mantis Group and Graham Wood, managing director of Southern Sun Hotels and Resorts.

According to Marobe the conference topics are aimed at addressing the realities of today's hospitality industry, such as 'Debt renegotiation and managing contracts in the downturn,' Pricing to win - demand, pricing and revenue management in the downturn' and 'Conversions as opposed to new builds - reinventing existing properties into new products'.

How to attract attention

A session titled 'Attracting the attention of today's hotel investors' will be moderated by Volkert Klaucke, former MD of

Deutsche Bank Mergers and Acquisitions, with panellists Mike Flax, MD of Redefine Income Fund Limited, Hans-Jorgen Nyeaard, founding director of Afrinord Hotel Investments, Kenneth Collins, director of Collins Properties and CEO of Des Roches Island in the Seychelles and Dr Okey Oramah, executive vice-president of African Import-Export Bank in Tunisia.

Ed Fuller, president and MD of Marriott International Lodging says prospects for the hospitality industry are very profitable in the long run. "New markets are emerging for travel. New airlift capacities are expanding opportunities for travel. Leisure is going to grow dynamically over the next five to ten years and new markets are opening. Africa, for instance, is one of the new, emerging marketplaces."

Marobe says HICA will be both informative and practical. "In the very first session, called 'Investment kraal,' a selection of investment projects will be presented and evaluated by a panel of experts made up of investors, advisors, financiers and developers. In this session we will demonstrate how different considerations come into play before a new project actually gets off the ground."

The annual HICA awards will also be made at the conference, in the categories 'Best new hotel investment', 'Best new non-hotel tourism investment', 'Industry mover and shaker' and 'Excellence in travel and tourism reporting'.

To register for HICA or for more information visit www.hica.co.za or phone +27 (0) 12 654 7525.

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