

## Ghana launches domestic tourism program

"Hospitality Festival 2007" has been launched in Accra, Ghana's capital, to brand Ghana's tourism into various segments to promote domestic tourism.

ACCRA – The program, a private sector initiative, would focus on promoting Ghanaian culture through various tourist brands such as comedy, music, dance, food and beverage.

Jean Lukaz, managing consultant of Bronzzetti Management Consult, a tourist branding and management consultancy, said statistics from the Ghana Tourist Board had shown that when promoted well, the food, beverage and the entertainment segments of tourism alone could contribute as much as 51% of tourist revenue for the country.

He said the week-long event beginning from June 25 to July 01 would include other programs to promote nightlife tourism as well.

He explained that nightlife tourism had positioned most cities worldwide such as Las Vegas, New York and Johannesburg as major tourist destinations, adding that it was time that Ghana also tapped its own version of such tourist attractions to generate more revenue.

Lukas said there would also be for the first time in Ghana, the "Accra City Nightlife Awards 2007", to promote service quality and the development of concepts in the nightlife tourism sector.

He expressed the hope that the festival would encourage most tourists to patronise Ghanaian indigenous foods under the slogan "Eat, drink and play Ghana".

### Providing a forum

Joe Baidoe-Ansah, Deputy Minister of Tourism and Diasporan Relations, who launched the program, said the festival would provide a forum for the public to have an interface with stakeholders of the tourism and hospitality industry and create awareness on the huge holiday and tourism investment potential for increased investments.

He said the event also had the potential to boost domestic tourism and spice the recreation and entertainment scene for Ghana's Golden Jubilee Celebration.

The Minister called on District Assemblies and private entrepreneurs to create more interesting tourism products to attract more tourists, telling the entrepreneurs that the hallmark of the country's promotional effort is authenticity, innovativeness and creativity. "This should be our guiding principle and a prerequisite to Ghana's survival in the sophisticated and globally competitive tourism industry", he added.

Bridget Katsriku, Chief Director of the Ministry also called on players in the hospitality industry to improve service delivery and not to take hospitality only in the context of the affectionate nature of Ghanaians.

She advised the organisers to ensure proper marketing and promotional programs to ensure the success of the festival.

The festival would be co-organised by Empire Entertainment, Global Signature and the National Commission for Culture.

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