

# Jordanian Dr Taleb Rifai to open the 2020 Africa Brand Summit

Organisers of the **Africa Brand Summit** are excited to announce that Dr Taleb Rifai, patron of the African Tourism Board, will deliver the opening address at the first ever hybrid 2020 Africa Brand Summit on the morning of Thursday, 7 October 2020.

His welcome address will be followed by a much-awaited keynote address by well-known and outspoken Pan-Africanist, Kenyan Professor Patrick Loch Otieno Lumumba.

Born in Cairo, Egypt in 1949, Dr Rifai's illustrious career includes having been secretary-general of the United Nations' World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), which he headed for two consecutive terms, from 2009 to 2018. His extensive professional background spans international and national public service, as well as the private sector and academia.

Before his election as secretary-general of the UNWTO, Dr Rifai was assistant director-general of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), based in Beirut and Geneva.



*Dr Taleb Rifai*

Prior to assuming his responsibilities as an international public servant (2004-2018) in Beirut, Geneva, (ILO) and Madrid (UNWTO), Dr Rifai held several ministerial portfolios in the government of The HK of Jordan (1999-2004). He was, at first, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation before, in 2000, he was appointed Minister of Information and spokesman for the government. He later became Minister of Tourism and Antiquities. As Minister of information, he led the major restructuring of Jordan Television (JTV).

Prior to his ministerial responsibilities, Dr Rifai was CEO of Jordan's Cement Company (1997-1999). It was in this position that he successfully led the first large-scale privatisation and restructuring scheme in Jordan during the 1990s. From 1995 to 1997, he was the first director-general of the newly established Investment Promotion Corporation of Jordan, after having served as the director of the newly established Economic Mission of Jordan to the USA in Washington DC, from 1993 to 1995.

As an architect and urban planner from 1973 to 1993, Dr Rifai's career was in academia, a period during which he also taught at universities in the USA and Jordan. He helped establish the first Department of Architecture in Jordan at the newly established School of Engineering, University of Jordan, which led to his appointment as director of The Center of Consultations and Studies at the same university.

He holds a PhD in Urban Design and Regional Planning from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, USA (1982), an MA in Engineering and Architecture from Illinois Institute of Technology, IIT in Chicago, USA (1979) and a BSc in Architectural Engineering from the University of Cairo, Egypt (1973).

With his rich, professional trajectory that spans several decades and continents, Dr Rifai is set to bring a fresh, Mediterranean flavour of global reach to the 2020 Africa Brand Summit. This is particularly important at a time when many African countries are trying to find the best, safest, ways to emerge out of various levels of Covid-19 lockdowns in order to restart their economic engines and save businesses and livelihoods. The livelihoods of millions of people in Africa rely on the broader tourism and hospitality sector. This sector has also been one of the biggest casualties of the Coronavirus related lockdowns in Africa and across the world.

"I look forward to this opportunity to welcome and engage with delegates to the hybrid 2020 Africa Brand Summit. It is a good thing that while some delegates will be gathered at the Vineyard Hotel and Spa in Cape Town, South Africa, many others will be livestreaming from across the globe to be part of the same conversations in real time. Covid-19 has demonstrated, without any doubt, that we are all connected and that a viral attack in one part of the world can bring other economies across the globe down to their knees. In finding its way out of this, Africa cannot act alone. In fact, no part of the world can reasonably act alone. The 2020 Africa Brand Summit is the right platform to join others in leading conversations that should culminate in implementable resolutions about healing Africa in a sustainable way," said Dr Rifai.

"Having a global African of Dr Rifai's calibre open the 2020 Africa Brand Summit takes this event to a whole new level indeed", said Solly Moeng, founder and convenor of the summit. "He brings with him a well-developed understanding of Africa and the many things that have informed perceptions about Africa over time. Our 2020 delegates will learn a lot from the wealth of wisdom that he brings to the summit."

**For more information:**

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**Registrations and award nominations for the 2020 Africa Brand Summit are open at:** [www.africabrandsummit.co](http://www.africabrandsummit.co)

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