

Collaboration is key to growing MICE tourism in Africa

Day one of Meetings Africa 2019 saw regional and local speakers share knowledge during the aptly named BONDday, or Business Opportunity Networking Day, on a variety of topics affecting the business events industry. These included MICE industry trends and innovation, the value of academic and professional qualifications and using future technologies to tap into new business opportunities.



Image via [SANCE](#)

BONDday is designed to equip the industry by providing educational sessions and tools to grow businesses in our continent, thus creating value for exhibitors.

South Africa mountaineer, Sibusiso Vilane started proceedings by recalling his first conquest of Mount Everest in 2003. He said if Africa is to take the economy to new heights, self-belief and teamwork will be key. "You've got to team up with people who share the same vision and end goal. Most important thing is to put our energies together."

For Vilane, the above sentiment captures the spirit of Shared Economies – the theme for Meetings Africa 2019.

Shared Economies is a tool for collaborative African growth. It builds on the theme from last year with a specific focus on regionalisation as a continental strategy, and how this enhances the positioning and value offering for the business events Industry in Africa.

Mentorship can aid collaboration

Part of a successful collaboration includes mentorship, according to the co-founder of Mentor a Boy Child, Sydney Mbhele. Having not had mentors in his life, he sought advice and wisdom from numerous people he would come across; adding that the lack of mentors in South Africa has resulted in many young men and women leading aimless lives. Mbhele believes if they were given the right guidance, they would be better off.

Accountability and unity are the keys to success

During the closing plenary on how Africa can win as a destination through collaboration, Deputy Director General of Economic Operations at the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, Rashid Toefy said the business events industry has the opportunity to put Africa on the map. "It is the biggest consumer market that is untapped and hopefully this can lead to economic growth. We do coordination well, but we do not actually do the collaboration."

Kwakyie Donkor, the non-executive director of African Institute of Technology, said collaboration requires strong leadership. "To bring a MICE sector that is comparable to the rest of the world, we all have to sing from the same hymn sheet and I do not think that is happening."

Nelly Mukazayire, Rwandan economist and public administrator, added that collaboration is possible through sound leadership and politics. "Everything [Rwanda] has achieved since the genocide is through accountability and unity.

"Be decisive and innovative in selling the destination. We have seen that home-grown solutions are something that easily adapted."

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