

Conference tourism boosts Kenya's image

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Conference tourism has taken centre stage in Kenya, elevating the nation to a hub in less than 24 months as it now hosts the fourteenth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 14) in Nairobi.

Several heads of state, ministers, trade experts and civil society members are already in the country for the event, which aims at translating the globally-agreed Sustainable Development Goals into concrete plans of action.

An estimated 7,000 delegates are expected at the conference.

To its credit, Kenya—which prides itself as a leading safari destination—has witnessed growing diversity within the tourism sector,

expanding to business tourism which has steadily grown in stature for hosting major forums.

In 2015, the country successfully hosted the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) attended by US President Barack Obama, and probably one of the biggest congregations of influential thought leaders, business development experts, and emerging and established entrepreneurs and innovators.

The historic visit by Obama, the first sitting US president to visit Kenya, made headlines globally not only for the multi-billion-dollar worth of opportunities and deals, but also due to the visit's historic symbolism to his father's homeland.

The GES forum was immediately followed by the 10th World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference (MC10), which also concluded with the



historic signing of the Nairobi Package for Africa and the World.

The MC10 was estimated to have injected about Sh2.6 billion into the tourism sector. It took place immediately after the 'Stop Breast, Cervical and Prostrate Cancer in Africa Conference' at the Kenyatta Interna-

tional Convention Centre where thousands of participants were in attendance.

Last year, Kenya was also honoured to be the country where the Pope made his maiden visit to Africa. The Holy Father came as the Vatican's Head of State, and as the spiritual leader of the Catholic church making the visit both a State and a Pastoral visit.

Kenya proved it is a business conference hotbed and has already hosted the ICT4D conference which brought together experienced professionals from around the world to share and explore ways of using ICT to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Next month, the country will host the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development on August 27 and 28.