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Barr. Hannatu Musa Musawa, at Ojude-Oba 2026, Ijebu-Ode

**Eko Hotel At 50: “The Organised
Private Sector Remains
The Engine Of African
Tourism Growth”**










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Air Peace-SmartLynx Dispute Deepens as Aircraft Finally Departs Nigeria for Spain

The long-running dispute between Air Peace and SmartLynx Airlines has taken a fresh turn, following confirmation that the SmartLynx Estonia Airbus A320, which had remained grounded in Lagos since December 2025, has finally departed Nigeria and arrived in Spain.

The development comes months after tensions escalated between both parties over controversial damp lease agreements that Air Peace claims caused the Nigerian carrier monumental operational and financial losses estimated at USD 38 million.

Air Peace had earlier dismissed widespread claims that it planned to seize or indefinitely detain any lessor's aircraft in Nigeria or elsewhere. The airline insisted that its disagreement with SmartLynx was strictly commercial and legal in nature, involving alleged contractual breaches and fraudulent practices tied to aircraft leasing arrangements.

According to Air Peace, the dispute involves three entities under the SmartLynx brand — SmartLynx Airlines Malta Limited, SIA SmartLynx Airlines, and SmartLynx Estonia OU.

The airline alleged that SmartLynx received several advance payments for agreed operational block hours under damp lease contracts but failed to fulfill its obligations despite allegedly knowing months in advance that the aircraft operations would not be delivered as agreed.

Air Peace maintained that the disruptions caused severe operational setbacks during a critical travel period, leading to widespread flight interruptions, reputational damage, and substantial financial losses.

The controversy intensified after one of the leased aircraft, the SmartLynx Estonia

Airbus A320, remained in Lagos for several months following disagreements surrounding the lease arrangement and unresolved legal issues.

Industry observers had speculated that the aircraft might remain trapped in Nigeria indefinitely due to the ongoing legal battle.

However, after prolonged negotiations and legal engagements, the aircraft has now successfully departed Lagos and arrived in Spain, effectively ending months of uncertainty surrounding its status.

Despite the aircraft's release, Air Peace insists that its legal action against SmartLynx remains active.

The airline previously disclosed that it obtained a court order against the lessor on November 12, 2025, as part of efforts to recover losses and seek accountability for what it describes as serious contractual breaches and financial misconduct.

Air Peace reiterated that it has no policy or intention

of unlawfully detaining lessor aircraft and emphasized its commitment to resolving disputes strictly through legal and commercial channels.

The airline further stressed that the case highlights broader concerns within Africa's aviation leasing environment, particularly the risks airlines face when lessors fail to honor operational commitments during peak travel periods.

With the aircraft now out of Nigeria and back in Europe, attention is expected to shift toward the ongoing legal proceedings and whether both parties can eventually reach a commercial resolution to one of the industry's most closely watched leasing disputes in recent times.

Jamaica Diplomats Get Tourism Briefing Ahead Of Global Postings

Fifteen Jamaican Foreign Service officers preparing for overseas assignments received a comprehensive tourism briefing from the Jamaica Tourist Board.

The initiative strengthens cooperation between diplomacy and tourism, equipping diplomats to promote Destination Jamaica, support investment opportunities, and help advance the nation's ambitious visitor growth and economic development goals.

As fifteen Jamaican Foreign Service officers prepare to take up assignments this summer in major cities across the globe, they are receiving more than diplomatic credentials, they are being equipped to serve as ambassadors for Jamaica's tourism industry.

At the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, the Jamaica Tourist Board [JTB] recently hosted a strategic briefing session at its Kingston headquarters for officers scheduled to begin tours of duty across three continents.

The initiative aims to strengthen collaboration between diplomacy and tourism promotion, ensuring that Jamaica's representatives abroad are prepared to advocate effectively for one of the nation's most important economic sectors.

The officers will be stationed in key international markets, including New York, Washington, Miami, Toronto, London, Brussels, Berlin, Mexico City, Tokyo, Havana, Geneva, and Port-of-Spain.



H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Chairperson, African Union Commission

Africa's Visa Revolution: Unlocking 200 Million New Intra-African Journeys

Africa is witnessing a quiet but profound transformation. Across the continent, more governments are dismantling visa barriers for fellow Africans, opening borders that for decades have remained unnecessarily restrictive.

From visa-free entry policies to visa-on-arrival schemes and simplified electronic visa systems, a new vision of African mobility is beginning to emerge. According to the African Travel Commission [ATC], if the current momentum is sustained and expanded, Africa could record no fewer than 200 million additional intra-African

visitors over the next five years. Such growth would represent one of the most significant developments in the history of African tourism, trade, culture, and regional integration.

For too long, it has often been easier for Africans to travel to Europe, the Middle East, or Asia than to neighbouring African countries. Lengthy visa processes, high fees, bureaucratic delays, and inconsistent entry requirements have discouraged travel, limited business opportunities, and weakened people-to-people connections across the continent.

The gradual removal of these barriers signals a

recognition that mobility is central to Africa's future.

More open borders can stimulate tourism, encourage investment, facilitate trade, strengthen cultural exchanges, and support the aspirations of the African Continental Free Trade Area [AfCFTA].

The economic implications are enormous. Increased intra-African travel means more hotel bookings, higher airline passenger volumes, greater patronage of restaurants and attractions, increased conference and events traffic, and stronger demand for transport and tourism services.

It also means more opportunities for small businesses, artisans, tour operators, guides, and

entrepreneurs whose livelihoods depend on visitor spending.

Yet visa liberalisation alone will not deliver the projected 200 million additional visitors.

The African Travel Commission warns that open borders must be supported by deliberate and coordinated tourism development strategies. The continent's National Tourism Organisations [NTOs], regional tourism bodies, and tourism federations must work together to convert easier travel into actual travel demand.

This collaboration is not optional, it is essential. African destinations have historically marketed themselves in isolation.

Countries often compete for the same visitors while overlooking the enormous opportunities presented by regional and multi-destination travel.

The future requires a different approach: joint marketing campaigns, shared tourism circuits, harmonised travel information, coordinated events calendars, and integrated destination branding. Imagine a visitor seamlessly combining Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Uganda in a single East African itinerary. Imagine West African tourism routes connecting Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, The Gambia, and Côte d'Ivoire through common heritage, culture, and business tourism offerings. Imagine Southern African destinations

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Toke Benson-Awoyinka, Lagos State Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture.

Lagos Targets Hospitality Reforms, Enumerates Over 500 Tourism Establishments

The Lagos State Government has commenced major reforms in the hospitality sector aimed at simplifying licensing procedures and improving investor confidence.

The Commissioner for Tourism, Arts and Culture, Toke Benson-Awoyinka disclosed that over 500 tourism and hospitality establishments have already been enumerated across the state and would be instrumental in the implementation of the new reforms.

She made this known during the ongoing annual Ministerial Press Briefing, commemorating the seventh year in office of the administration of Governor Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu. She explained that the exercise

would help the Ministry develop a comprehensive database for effective regulation, sector planning, and tourism development.

According to her, the government is currently working towards harmonising tourism laws, permits, and licensing fees to eliminate duplications and reduce unnecessary levies on operators.

The Commissioner noted that the reforms are expected to improve the ease of doing business and attract more investment into Lagos' hospitality sector.

She added that the initiative aligns with Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's vision of making Lagos a globally competitive tourism and hospitality destination.

Benson-Awoyinka assured

stakeholders that the State Government would continue engaging operators to ensure the reforms support sustainable growth within the industry.

Management believes his experience, creativity, leadership, and deep understanding of the hospitality industry will further strengthen the hotel's food and beverage operations while introducing exciting culinary experiences for guests and patrons.

The hotel says the appointment underscores its commitment to investing in exceptional talent, service excellence, and memorable guest experiences as it continues its renewal and growth journey.

...Unlocking 200 Million New Intra-African Journeys

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promoting interconnected wildlife, cultural, and adventure experiences across national borders.

Such initiatives can dramatically increase visitor movement within the continent.

However, another critical factor that cannot be overlooked is transport connectivity. Visa-free access may open the door, but visitors must still be able to move efficiently, safely, and affordably across the continent.

The projected 200 million additional journeys will depend heavily on significant improvements in both air and land transportation networks. Africa's airlines, governments, and aviation regulators must accelerate efforts to improve route connectivity, increase flight frequencies, reduce airfare costs, and fully implement regional aviation liberalisation initiatives.

In many cases today, travellers are forced to transit through non-African hubs to reach destinations within Africa, adding unnecessary costs and travel time.

Equally important is the strengthening of cross-border land transportation. Modern highways, efficient border posts, reliable intercity bus systems, rail networks, and regional transport corridors will be essential in supporting tourism, trade, and business travel.

For millions of Africans, road and rail transport remain the most practical and affordable means of movement.

Improved land connectivity will therefore play a decisive role in unlocking the full benefits

of visa liberalisation.

Security, infrastructure, and visitor experience must also remain priorities. Open borders must be supported by modern airports, efficient immigration systems, reliable transportation networks, and high service standards that encourage repeat visits.

The opportunity before Africa is unprecedented. A continent of over 1.4 billion people possesses one of the world's largest untapped tourism markets.

Rather than relying predominantly on long-haul international visitors, Africa has the potential to build a robust and resilient tourism economy powered significantly by Africans travelling within Africa.

The growing wave of visa liberalisation demonstrates political will. The next challenge is execution. If governments continue to open borders and if National Tourism Organisations, tourism federations, airlines, transport operators, and private sector stakeholders embrace a coordinated continental strategy, the African Travel Commission's projection of 200 million additional intra-African visitors may prove not only achievable but conservative.

Africa's future visitors are already here. The task now is to make it easier, more affordable, and more attractive for Africans to discover Africa, and to ensure that the roads, railways, and air routes are in place to carry them there.



Festus Keyamo, Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development of Nigeria.

The Great Nigeria Air Scam

I recently flew from Toronto to Abuja on British Airways.

From Toronto to London, the experience was superb.

The aircraft was modern, elegant, and technologically advanced. We enjoyed seamless Starlink WiFi throughout the journey free of charge.

The service was efficient, courteous, and unmistakably world-class. For a moment, one felt respected as a paying customer.

Then we landed in London and boarded the connecting flight to Abuja. Suddenly, it felt as though we had crossed not just continents, but centuries.

Try flying a foreign airline out of Nigeria, and connect from any western capital to your final destination. It's the same experience. An old aircraft. No WiFi. Tired

interiors. Inferior service. A completely different standard of treatment.

Yet Nigerians often pay the same fare, sometimes even higher, than passengers flying the same airline to destinations in Europe, the Middle East, or even other African countries. And one is forced to ask: what exactly is our offence? What crime have Nigerians committed to deserve this routine humiliation?

Nigeria is not a small market. We are one of the largest aviation markets in Africa. Millions of Nigerians fly every year. Lagos and Abuja remain among the busiest and most lucrative routes on the continent.

Airlines make enormous profits from Nigerian passengers, yet many still deploy aging aircraft and inferior services to our routes. Why? Because they can. Because we have lost

leverage, and because we no longer command respect.

This is what happens when a nation loses its pride, its bargaining power, and its national carrier. If we still had a functional national airline, foreign airlines would think twice before treating Nigerians as second-class passengers in the global aviation ecosystem.

But we destroyed Nigeria Airways and replaced competence with deception. Compare our story with that of Ethiopian Airlines.

It started operations after Nigeria Airways, yet today it competes confidently with some of the best airlines in the world.

Recently flew Ethiopian Airlines to Addis Ababa and back. Both flights were packed with Nigerians. The airline operates one of the youngest fleets in Africa,

including some of the finest aircraft modern aviation manufacturers have ever built. Then there is Addis Ababa itself. Its airport rivals some of the best terminals in Europe.

Beside it stands a massive five-star hotel with over a thousand rooms, constantly filled with guests from across the world. And the Ethiopian government is already constructing another mega-airport projected to become one of the largest aviation hubs globally.

Take another trip with Rwand Air and look at what Rwanda is building. Kigali is constructing a new international airport designed to rival the best anywhere in the world. Smaller countries. Smaller populations. Smaller markets.

Yet they think big, plan long-term, and execute with discipline.

Meanwhile, Nigeria, Africa's giant, continues to stagger from one aviation embarrassment to another. Not too long ago, one man emerged claiming he would revive a Nigerian national carrier.

The President at the time had publicly stated that he was not interested in establishing a government-owned airline.

The idea, we were told, was to facilitate private investors to build a commercially viable national carrier. But somewhere along the line, the vision became a bazaar.

Before long, billions of naira were reportedly flowing out of

government coffers in the name of feasibility studies, consultancy fees, branding exercises, foreign trips, launch ceremonies, and endless propaganda.

Then came one of the most embarrassing spectacles in our recent national history. A plane was reportedly leased from Ethiopia. A Nigerian logo was hastily pasted on it.

It was flown into the country amid cameras, applause, and official fanfare. "Yippee! Nigeria Air is born!" But it was all smoke and mirrors. A grand deception.

There was no airline, fleet, or operational structure. No serious institutional backbone. Just a borrowed aircraft dressed in borrowed identity. Billions vanished into thin air, leaving behind nothing but a giant hole in the sky.

Some of us in government at the time saw through the charade and raised the alarm. But the promoter was powerful, a nephew of the President, deeply rooted within the inner power circle and the machinery of state rolled on as if nothing was amiss.

Then President Bola Ahmed Tinubu came into office. The man was arrested. The EFCC reportedly took him in for questioning. Nigerians thought perhaps, finally, accountability would prevail.

But after that came silence. The matter disappeared into the dark archives where many scandals in our country quietly go to die.

And now, astonishingly, the same individual has resurfaced, not in court, not in disgrace, not making restitution to the Nigerian people, but picking up a form to contest for the Senate.

The scam continues. And so does the humiliation of Nigeria.

By Babafemi Ojodu



Bola Ahmed Tinubu, President of Nigeria

Nigeria: Renewed Calls for National Carrier Amid Industry Challenges

Aviation in Nigeria remains a high-stakes sector, shaped by economic realities and public perception.

In recent years, a persistent narrative has pointed to the existence of a powerful inner circle, often described as a “cabal”, believed by some to wield influence over critical industry decisions.

While such claims remain unproven, analysts say they underscore deeper concerns about governance, transparency, and consistency within the aviation ecosystem.

The industry operates under the supervision of federal Ministry of Aviation and Aerospace Development and regulatory bodies such as the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority [NCAA] and the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria [FAAN], responsible for safety oversight and airport management.

However, observers continue to question lack of unwillingness of the current

government to established a national carrier and several issues that have fuelled speculation about undue influence.

At the operational level, domestic airlines face mounting structural challenges, lack of capacity and others which they have attributed their struggles to policy and regulatory bottlenecks.

Critics argue that continued government support for struggling airlines risks prioritising private interests over those of the traveling public.

Concerns persist over high airfares, inconsistent service quality, and long-standing questions about the financial and technical capacity of some operators.

The current administration's aviation approach has drawn mixed reactions. While positioned as supportive of local operators, critics contend that the policy environment has enabled

smaller, underperforming airlines to dominate the space without delivering commensurate value to passengers.

Amid these ongoing challenges, industry stakeholders are increasingly converging on a central argument: the urgent need to establish a national carrier.

For many analysts, the absence of a strong, well-structured national airline has left a strategic gap in Nigeria's aviation sector. Beyond national pride, such a carrier is seen as essential for stabilising the market, improving service standards, enhancing global connectivity, and creating a benchmark for operational efficiency.

This administration says efforts to launch a national airline were stalled by perceived legal disputes and unresolved agreements. The government had cited these challenges as reasons for its reluctance to proceed.

However, recent developments have significantly altered the landscape. Mesfin Tasew, Group Chief Executive Officer of Ethiopian Airlines, has confirmed that the airline has officially withdrawn from the proposed Nigeria Air project and that the airline will now focus on expanding its independent commercial operations within Nigeria.

This move effectively ends the equity-partnership model that underpinned the Nigeria Air initiative and removes a major obstacle that the government had said had complicated decision-making on the aforementioned.

With external partnerships no longer constraining the process, analysts argue that Nigeria now has an opportunity; perhaps its most decisive in years, to establish a truly national carrier built on transparency, strong governance, and commercial viability.

The call is growing louder: the time to act is now. A carefully structured national airline, insulated from political interference and aligned with global best practices, could reposition Nigeria as a leading aviation hub in Africa while restoring confidence among travellers.

As the sector navigates persistent headwinds, the establishment of a national carrier is no longer seen as optional, but as a strategic imperative for the future of Nigerian aviation.

...A Strategic Move That Must Be Matched With Competitive Pricing

cont'd from page 15 investor confidence and long-term economic returns. The success of Ghana's e-Visa platform will therefore depend not only on digital efficiency, but also on whether the country adopts a pricing strategy that encourages travellers to choose Ghana over competing destinations.

As we celebrate this long-overdue reform, it is also important to recognise that destinations do not thrive on visa simplicity alone.

Effective marketing, destination branding and competitive pricing remain essential in attracting visitors from within Africa and beyond. The growing perception of Ghana as one of the most expensive countries in Africa to live in, and even to visit, is a worrying trend that visa liberalisation alone cannot solve.

According to the African Travel Commission [ATC], hotel room rates in Ghana are among the highest on the continent.

The organisation argues that while free visa policies are important, they alone will not automatically attract African travellers. Instead, the total cost of visiting Ghana, including accommodation, transportation, food and tourism services, remains one of the most critical factors influencing travel decisions.

Ultimately, Ghana's tourism ambitions will be measured not simply by the efficiency of its e-Visa platform, but by its ability to create a destination that is accessible, competitive and economically attractive to travellers from around the world.

By Emmanuel Frimpong, President, Africa Tourism Research Network [ATRN] and a Tourism



Gloria Guevara, President/Chief Executive Officer, World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC].

WTTC Tourism Leadership Event Ends In Egypt

The World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC] brought together a select group of global Travel & Tourism leaders in Egypt for a leadership event aboard the cruise ship *Crystal Serenity*.

The event took place from May 6–9, 2026, while the vessel transited the Suez Canal, one of the world's most critical trade and connectivity corridors.

The three-day gathering, hosted by the Egyptian Government and sponsored by the Antonio Lefebvre Foundation, Coral Travel Group, and Abercrombie & Kent, convened ministers, chief executives, and senior travel industry figures from around the world to discuss the future of the global tourism sector at a pivotal moment for international travel.

Held under the theme of Recovery, Transformation and Future Growth, the event focused on strengthening

collaboration between governments and private sector leaders to accelerate tourism recovery, improve resilience and drive sustainable development across the industry.

Opening the summit, WTTC Chairman Manfredi Lefebvre d'Ovidio emphasised the importance of global cooperation and strategic leadership in navigating the evolving challenges facing international tourism.

He noted that the industry's long-term resilience would depend on stronger partnerships between governments and the private sector, particularly in areas such as connectivity, sustainability, investment and crisis preparedness.

President and Chief Executive Officer of WTTC, Gloria Guevara, also underscored the critical role of tourism as a driver of economic

investment and regional cooperation.

Industry executives also addressed workforce and talent shortages affecting the sector worldwide, exploring strategies to attract and retain skilled workers while adapting to rapid digital transformation across travel and hospitality industries.

Discussions on seamless cross-border travel examined opportunities to improve visa systems, aviation connectivity and passenger experiences through technology and smarter border management.

Luxury and experiential tourism formed another key topic during the summit, with panellists highlighting growing demand for premium travel experiences, cultural tourism and sustainable destination development.

The summit featured a series of strategic panels and leadership discussions covering some of the most pressing issues facing global tourism.

One of the central sessions examined the impact of geopolitical developments on international travel and tourism investment, with participants discussing how destinations can maintain travellers' confidence amid regional and global uncertainty.

Another panel focused on accelerating tourism recovery through stronger public-private partnerships, with ministers and business leaders highlighting the importance of coordinated policies, infrastructure

Also contributing to the discussions was Dr. Lucky Onoriode George,

Executive Director of the African Travel Commission, who emphasised the need for stronger continental collaboration and strategic investment in Africa's tourism sector.

Speaking during one of the leadership sessions, Dr. George said Africa possesses enormous untapped tourism potential but must strengthen connectivity, regional partnerships and policy alignment to fully compete in the global tourism marketplace.

“Africa must move beyond fragmented tourism promotion and embrace a collaborative continental strategy that prioritises infrastructure, intra-African travel, cultural tourism and sustainable destination development,” he said.

Earlier, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi received WTTC leaders on the sidelines of the event, reaffirming Egypt's ambition to strengthen its position as a leading global tourism destination and increase annual visitor numbers in the coming years.

The event was also attended by former Presidents of Mexico and Argentina, the immediate past Prime Minister of Italy, as well as the United States' newly appointed Special Presidential Envoy for Tourism, Nick Adams, the first person to hold the position.

Hosting the summit aboard *Crystal Serenity* while crossing the Suez Canal carried strong symbolic significance, underscoring the role of connectivity; both maritime and tourism-related, in supporting economic growth and international cooperation.

A special screening of the documentary *HIDDEN Egypt*, produced and presented by renowned CBS News travel editor Peter Greenberg, was also held during the summit.

The documentary showcased Egypt's rich historical legacy, archaeological treasures and cultural landmarks, while highlighting the country's ongoing efforts to preserve and restore its heritage sites for future generations.



Barr. Hannatu Musa Musawa, Minister of Art, Culture, Tourism, and the Creative Economy and Olayiwola Awakan, Nigerian Tourism Development Authority (NTDA)

Nigeria: Ojude Oba - Cultural Festival Driving Tourism, Global Attention To Ijebuland

For decades, the Ojude Oba Festival has remained more than a colourful cultural gathering in Ijebuland; it has evolved into one of Nigeria's biggest tourism spectacles, attracting thousands of visitors, celebrities, diplomats, culture enthusiasts and international tourists annually.

Held in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, the festival,

celebrated on the third day after Eid-el-Kabir, has become a vibrant showcase of Yoruba heritage, fashion, horsemanship, music and communal pride.

From the richly adorned regberegbe age groups to the thrilling horse-riding displays by Balogun warrior families, Ojude Oba has steadily transformed into a globally recognised

cultural tourism brand.

The festival gained greater international prominence during the reign of the late Awujale of Ijebuland, Oba Sikiru Kayode Adetona, who ruled for more than 60 years before his death in July 2025.

Under his leadership, the festival witnessed remarkable expansion, attracting corporate sponsorships, international media attention and

growing tourist traffic into Ogun State.

Despite concerns following the monarch's passing, organisers have confirmed that the 2026 edition of the festival will hold, reinforcing the position that Ojude Oba has grown beyond an ordinary royal homage into a major cultural and economic institution.

Speaking during a press conference in Ijebu-Ode, the Coordinator of the

Ojude Oba Festival Organising Committee, Chief Fassy Adetokunboh Yusuf, stressed that the festival represents the collective identity and heritage of the Ijebu people.

According to him, suspending the festival because of the absence of a substantive Awujale would negatively affect the economy, tourism potential and global reputation of Ijebuland.

Tourism stakeholders believe the festival has become one of Nigeria's strongest cultural tourism assets, comparable to major heritage events across Africa.

Every year, hotels, restaurants, transport operators, event planners, fashion designers, photographers and local traders experience a major economic boost during the celebration.

The festival also serves as a powerful platform for cultural diplomacy and destination marketing. The colourful attires, elaborate beads, traditional music and horse processions regularly dominate social media trends, helping to project Nigeria's rich cultural identity to global audiences.

Beyond entertainment, Ojude Oba has become an avenue for reconnecting generations of Ijebu descendants from across the world.

Many members of the diaspora return home annually to participate in the celebration, contributing to cultural preservation and local economic development.

Observers say the continuity of the festival in 2026, despite the transition in the traditional institution, demonstrates the resilience of culture as a tool for tourism growth and community identity.

As the event holds today, expectations remain high that Ojude Oba will once again deliver its signature blend of glamour, tradition and tourism appeal, further strengthening its reputation as one of Africa's most celebrated cultural festivals.

... Raising Airport Standards Matters
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Modern, efficient airports encourage tourism growth, facilitate trade, attract foreign investment, strengthen airline connectivity, and enhance a country's international competitiveness.

For business travellers, airport efficiency often influences perceptions about the ease of doing business. For tourists, the airport experience can shape opinions about the entire destination. For investors, it signals the seriousness with which a country approaches infrastructure and service delivery.

In many respects, airports serve as a nation's front office.

Africa's growth story will increasingly be told through its gateways.

The continent is experiencing rising urbanisation, expanding middle classes, growing tourism potential, and deeper integration into global trade networks. Airports will play a central role in facilitating this transformation.

Yet infrastructure upgrades alone will not be enough. They must be matched by operational excellence, customer-centric service, effective maintenance, security, efficiency, and a commitment to hospitality.

The goal should be simple: every African airport should be clean, clear, secure, efficient, and welcoming.

Because before the tourism revenue, before the foreign investment, before the conference delegates, and before the business deals, there is always a first hello.

And Africa's first hello should feel like an invitation, not a challenge.

By Ekene Nnabuihe, Group Chief Executive Officer, Boulevard Hotel Group



John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana

Ghana's New E-Visa Era: A Strategic Move That Must Be Matched With Competitive Pricing

The launch of Ghana's new e-Visa platform marks one of the most significant reforms in the country's tourism, immigration and trade facilitation history.

Introduced by the Government of Ghana on May 25, 2026, the system is expected to modernise visa processing, reduce bureaucratic delays, improve transparency, strengthen border management and position Ghana as a digitally progressive destination in Africa.

The initiative also aligns with the broader vision of the African Union's Agenda 2063, which promotes free movement of people, regional integration, intra-African trade, tourism development and digital transformation across the continent. Ghana deserves commendation for taking this important step.

However, while the digital transition itself is highly commendable, the

issue of visa pricing for non-Africans travelling to Ghana remains a major concern that could undermine the very objectives the e-Visa system seeks to achieve. Globally, countries are increasingly adopting electronic visa systems because tourism and business travel today depend heavily on speed, convenience and accessibility.

An effective e-Visa system offers faster processing and a better visitor experience, allowing travellers to apply online without visiting embassies or consulates.

Without a doubt, the new platform that promises visa decisions within 48 hours is a major improvement over previous procedure.

Research across global tourism markets consistently shows that destinations with simpler visa systems attract more

visitors because travellers prefer destinations where entry requirements are predictable, affordable and convenient.

One of the most celebrated aspects of Ghana's new policy is the waiver of visa fees for African passport holders travelling for tourism and business purposes. This is both strategic and visionary, particularly at a time when intra-African travel remains relatively low that many Africans still find it easier to travel to Europe than to neighbouring African countries due to restrictive visa policies, expensive fees and cumbersome procedures.

The new policy could significantly boost regional tourism, conference participation, student mobility, cultural exchanges, business travel and investment flows into Ghana.

Despite these positive reforms, concerns have emerged regarding the reported US\$260 service

fee for applicants outside Africa.

This amount places Ghana among the most expensive destinations in Africa for visa processing. The implications of that are significant because tourism today is intensely competitive.

Travellers compare destinations not only by attractions, but also by visa costs, flight affordability, ease of access, taxes, hotel rates and overall travel convenience. An expensive visa can discourage potential visitors before they even begin planning their trip.

A comparison with key African tourism competitors further highlights the need for Ghana to reconsider its pricing structure. Kenya charges approximately US\$50 for its e-Visa, Rwanda charges a similar amount for a single-entry visa, Tanzania also charges about US\$50, while Uganda's East Africa Tourist Visa costs US\$100 and grants access to Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda. Ghana's e-Visa launch is historic and transformative. It demonstrates political will, digital innovation and a strong desire to position the country as a leading African destination for tourism, trade and investment.

The decision to remove visa fees for Africans is especially commendable and places Ghana at the forefront of Pan-African mobility and regional integration.

However, the US\$260 fee for non-African travellers risks weakening Ghana's competitiveness in an increasingly competitive global tourism market.

The future of tourism is not built on barriers. It is built on accessibility, affordability, convenience and positive visitor experiences.

If Ghana truly aims to become West Africa's leading tourism and conference hub, then visa affordability must become a strategic priority. A cheaper visa does not diminish national value. Rather, it increases national attractiveness, visitor volume,



Africa's First Hello: Why Raising Airport Standards Matters

If Africa is a book, then its airports are the cover.

Long before visitors experience our beaches, wildlife, cultural festivals, business districts, or investment opportunities, they pass through an airport. The airport is often the first physical encounter with a country and, increasingly, it shapes perceptions before a single tourist attraction is seen or a business meeting begins.

Across Africa, that first impression is changing. A quiet transformation is underway as governments, airport authorities, and private investors recognize that airports are not merely transportation facilities; they are gateways to national reputation, tourism growth, trade expansion, and economic development.

The last decade, particularly the past five years, has demonstrated what is possible when vision

is matched with investment and effective management.

In Senegal, Blaise Diagne International Airport has redefined the arrival experience in West Africa with its modern architecture, spacious design, and improved operational efficiency.

The facility has become a symbol of the country's ambition to position itself as a regional aviation and tourism hub.

Rwanda's Kigali International Airport continues to earn recognition for its cleanliness, efficiency, orderliness, and customer-focused service culture.

Despite its size, it has established a reputation that many larger airports would envy.

Ethiopia's Addis Ababa Bole International Airport has evolved into one of Africa's most important aviation gateways. Through strategic expansion and

integration with Ethiopian Airlines' growth strategy, it has strengthened its position as a major continental hub connecting Africa to the world.

In North Africa, Marrakech Menara Airport demonstrates how modern infrastructure can coexist with cultural identity. Its architecture reflects Moroccan heritage while meeting contemporary passenger expectations.

Similarly, Cape Town International Airport has shown how efficient operations, excellent customer service, and strong destination branding can reinforce a country's tourism appeal.

These airports prove that world-class aviation infrastructure is no longer an aspiration for Africa, it is increasingly becoming a reality.

Nigeria, Africa's largest economy and most populous nation, has an equally important opportunity.

The ongoing upgrade of the international terminal at Murtala Muhammed International Airport [MMIA], Lagos, is a welcome development. The project seeks to improve passenger movement, modernize facilities, enhance operational efficiency, and elevate the overall arrival and departure experience.

The expectations are understandably high.

Lagos is not only Nigeria's commercial capital but also one of Africa's most dynamic cities. It is the continent's creative powerhouse, a growing technology hub, a leading financial centre, and a major gateway for business and leisure travel.

The city's principal international airport should reflect that reality.

When completed, the upgraded MMIA should embody the energy, innovation, resilience, and entrepreneurial spirit that define Lagos and Nigeria.

While terminal expansions and new buildings are important, the true measure of an airport lies in the quality of the passenger experience.

Many African airports still struggle with inconsistencies that can undermine even the most impressive infrastructure investments.

Passengers should enjoy the same quality experience from curb side drop-off to boarding gate and from aircraft arrival to baggage claim.

Too often, travellers encounter modern facilities in one section of an airport only to step into outdated, poorly maintained areas moments later. A world-class airport experience requires consistency across every touch point.

For many travellers, particularly first-time visitors, confusion can be more frustrating than delays.

Clear signage, multilingual information systems, visible wayfinding, and reliable flight information displays significantly improve passenger confidence and comfort.

Effective communication is one of the simplest and most cost-effective ways to enhance customer satisfaction.

The most important airport features are often the simplest.

Clean restrooms, functional air conditioning, dependable Wi-Fi connectivity, adequate seating, charging stations, efficient baggage systems, and clean public spaces should not be viewed as

premium services.

They are basic expectations in today's travel environment.

A traveller may forgive architectural shortcomings, but they rarely forget poor hygiene, uncomfortable facilities, or operational inefficiency.

Again, technology can improve efficiency, but people define the experience.

Africa's greatest competitive advantage remains its hospitality and warmth. Every immigration officer, security personnel, customer service representative, airline staff member, and airport worker contributes to the visitor's first impression.

Professionalism, patience, courtesy, and helpfulness transform a routine transit experience into a memorable welcome.

Regular customer service training, performance monitoring, and a culture of accountability should accompany every infrastructure investment.

However, one of the most common criticisms of modern airports globally is that they often look identical and African airports should resist this trend.

A visitor arriving in Lagos should immediately feel that they are in Lagos. A traveller landing in Dakar, Nairobi, Kigali, Accra, or Marrakech should encounter visual and cultural elements unique to those destinations.

Local art, music, architecture, cuisine, fashion, cultural exhibitions, and storytelling can transform airports into ambassadors of national identity.

The airport itself should become part of the destination experience. Airport quality extends far beyond passenger comfort.

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Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Governor, Lagos State.

More Worries As Gov. Sanwo-Olu Backs Away From Lagos Tourism Agency Law

There is something deeply troubling about the current state of tourism governance in Lagos State. Seven years after the Lagos State Tourism Promotion Agency Law was enacted, the institution envisioned by that legislation still appears unable to fully stand on its own.

What should have become the central institutional driver of tourism policy, destination management, investment coordination, and tourism regulation in Nigeria's commercial capital remains largely invisible in practical governance.

That reality should worry everyone connected to the tourism, hospitality, entertainment, and creative economy sectors.

The Lagos State Tourism Promotion Agency Law was passed by the Lagos State House of Assembly and signed into law during the administration of

former Governor Akinwunmi Ambode in 2019.

The law was not designed as another ceremonial government announcement. It was intended to establish a professional tourism institution capable of giving Lagos a long-term strategic direction in one of the world's fastest-growing economic sectors.

Yet years later, the Agency still struggles to emerge as a fully operational and independent institution.

This raises serious questions, why pass a law if there is no political will to fully implement it?

Again, why spend public funds on tourism planning if institutional execution is never allowed to mature? And why does Lagos State, despite all its enormous tourism and entertainment potential still appear trapped in repetitive annual tourism programming without lasting institutional structure?

The concerns become even more significant when viewed against the background of the Lagos Tourism Master Plan reportedly developed by Ernst & Young for the Lagos State Government at considerable public expense.

That process involved contributions and stakeholder engagements across the tourism industry. It was designed to reposition Lagos as a continental, if not globally competitive tourism destination with strong institutional foundations capable of surviving beyond political administrations.

The recommendations from that framework aligned closely with the eventual establishment of the Lagos State Tourism Promotion Agency under the 2019 law.

The vision was clear: create an institution capable of coordinating tourism development professionally, independently, and

strategically.

Unfortunately, implementation appears to have slowed significantly under the current administration of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu.

To be fair, the Sanwo-Olu administration has supported entertainment, infrastructure, transportation, and cultural activities across Lagos.

Nobody can deny the visibility of concerts, festivals, road projects, nightlife expansion, and event-driven economic activity within the state.

But tourism development is not only about events, requires institutions.

It requires policy continuity, reliable data systems, destination management structures, regulatory coordination, investment planning, environmental protection, tourism statistics, and long-term strategic execution.

Without institutions, tourism becomes seasonal publicity rather than sustainable economic planning. This is where the Lagos State Tourism Promotion Agency should have become critically important.

The law establishing the Agency already provides for a governing board comprising government officials, tourism stakeholders, and representatives from the five traditional divisions of Lagos State. The structure was clearly intended to broaden participation and reduce excessive concentration of tourism administration within a single ministry structure.

Yet many industry stakeholders privately believe institutional resistance within the ministry may have slowed the Agency's full

emergence.

There is a growing perception within the industry that previous and current commissioners associated with the tourism ministry have been reluctant to fully release operational influence to an independent agency backed by law.

If true, that would be unfortunate.

Because no serious continental or global tourism destination succeeds by personalising tourism governance around ministries or political offices alone. Strong tourism economies are built through strong institutions.

Sadly, what Lagos continues to experience is a recurring cycle of tourism activities without deep institutional continuity. Every administration announces programmes, festivals, campaigns, and events.

Yet the structural problems remain largely unchanged: weak tourism statistics, fragmented attraction management, poor coordination, inconsistent implementation, and limited long-term planning.

One industry stakeholder recently summarised the frustration bluntly: "Garbage in, garbage out year after year."

Harsh as that statement may sound, it reflects a growing level of frustration within the tourism and hospitality sector.

The bigger concern now is not whether Lagos has tourism potential. It certainly does.

Lagos possesses one of Africa's strongest combinations of entertainment, culture, fashion, nightlife, conferences, creative industries, waterfront assets, food culture, and commercial energy.

The real issue is whether the political leadership is prepared to allow the institutional framework already established by law to genuinely function independently.

The Lagos State House of Assembly must also not escape scrutiny.

Lawmakers who passed the

cont'd on page 8



Guests At Eko Hotel & Suites at 50th Anniversary.

Eko Hotel & Suites At 50: Celebrating A Legacy Of Hospitality, Culture And Resilience In Lagos

For five decades, Eko Hotel & Suites has remained one of Nigeria's most iconic hospitality landmarks a symbol of elegance, resilience, culture and world-class service in the heart of Lagos.

Recently, the renowned hospitality giant marked its 50th anniversary, celebrating not only its longevity but also its remarkable transformation into one of Africa's leading cultural and hospitality institutions.

Over the years, the hotel has grown beyond its original purpose into a major centre for entertainment, business, tourism and cultural exchange in Nigeria.

Its enduring profile as a sustainable hospitality and cultural destination is a tribute to the discipline, vision, resourcefulness and commitment of those who have managed and

sustained the institution through changing economic and social realities.

Today, Eko Hotel & Suites stands not just as a hotel, but as an epicentre of culture, hospitality and high-profile events in Lagos, particularly in Victoria Island, one of the city's most vibrant commercial and social districts.

The story of the hotel dates back to the 1970s when construction began ahead of the historic FESTAC '77, the global celebration of Black and African arts and culture that brought the world to Nigeria.

The project was conceived to provide accommodation and facilities of international standard for the thousands of dignitaries and guests expected for the festival.

Designed by renowned Nigerian architect Oluwole Olumuyiwa and his partners, the hotel officially opened to the public in 1977 under the management of Holiday Inn.

Over time, the brand evolved, including a period when it operated as Eko Le

Méridien, before transforming into the present-day Eko Hotels & Suites.

From what began as a modest hospitality brand, the establishment has expanded into a sprawling hospitality complex widely regarded as the largest hospitality facility in West Africa.

With more than 800 rooms spread across four distinct hotel brands, Eko Hotel, Eko Suites, Eko Gardens and Eko Signature, the hotel has become the preferred destination for major conferences, concerts, exhibitions, weddings and corporate events across the sub-region.

Indeed, the contemporary history of Lagos would hardly be complete without the story of Eko Hotel & Suites.

Over the years, the hotel has hosted presidents, global business leaders, entertainers, diplomats and cultural icons, while

simultaneously serving as a gathering place for everyday Nigerians.

Beyond hospitality, the institution has distinguished itself through strong people-oriented values and community engagement.

Its ability to connect genuinely with staff, guests, stakeholders and local communities has helped build a warm, people-driven culture that continue to define the brand.

The hotel has also maintained one of the most visible corporate social responsibility footprints within Nigeria's hospitality industry, consistently supporting travel, tourism and hospitality stakeholders whenever the need arises.

As part of the golden jubilee celebration, the hotel hosted the two-day *Africa Legacy Summit* from May 15 to May 16, a platform dedicated to reflection, innovation and conversations around the future of African tourism, hospitality and culture.

The summit featured conversations around key themes including "Brand Africa: Culture as the Engine of Global Perception," "Culture as Infrastructure: Foundations for Sustainable Hospitality and Tourism," "Culture as the Foundation of Africa's Integration," and "Reimagining the Future of Travel, Tourism and Hospitality in Africa."

Other discussions explored the intersection of culture and technology in African hospitality, as well as strategies for building more connected tourism and hospitality experiences across the continent.

The *Africa Legacy Summit* provided not only an opportunity for reflection on the hotel's journey over the last 50 years, but also a platform for knowledge sharing among industry experts, hospitality leaders and tourism stakeholders from different parts of the world.

More importantly, the event highlighted emerging possibilities in culture, tourism and hospitality management, reinforcing the role of Eko Hotel & Suites as both a legacy institution and a forward-looking driver of hospitality innovation in Africa.

At 50, Eko Hotel & Suites remains more than a hospitality brand. It is a symbol of endurance, excellence and evolution, a landmark whose legacy continues to shape the cultural and hospitality identity of Lagos and Nigeria as a whole.



Chef Leslie Quarmyne

La-Palm Welcomes Back Renowned Culinary Icon Chef Leslie Quarmyne

La-Palm Royal Beach Hotel has announced the return of renowned hospitality culinary expert, Chef Leslie Samuel Akorli Quarmyne, in a move aimed at strengthening the hotel's pursuit of culinary excellence, innovation, and enhanced guest experiences.

Chef Leslie Quarmyne rejoins La-Palm following an extensive international hospitality career that has seen him work with leading hotel brands across Ghana, Nigeria,

Kenya, Morocco, and the United States.

His experience includes roles at Abuja Continental Hotel, Lagos Continental Hotel, Four Points by Sheraton, Golden Tulip [now Lancaster], Best Western Hotels, and Holiday Inn Accra Airport.

His return is considered significant for La-Palm, where he previously served for several years and contributed immensely to the establishment and opening of the hotel's

iconic Ghanaian Village, now recognised as one of Accra's leading cultural dining and entertainment destinations.

With more than three decades of experience in luxury hospitality and culinary operations, Chef Leslie is highly regarded for his expertise in African and international cuisine, Afro-fusion gastronomy, menu innovation, banquet operations, kitchen management, food safety systems, and culinary training.

He is also an award-winning culinary professional. In 2005, he

hospitality excellence. I believe the next phase of tourism growth in Nigeria and Africa will be defined by stronger

won the National Cooking Competition Award organised by the Ghana Chefs Association in partnership with Nestlé Ghana. Since then, he has earned several other culinary honours both locally and internationally, reflecting his creativity, talent, and industry recognition.

Over the years, Chef Leslie has led large culinary teams, managed international conference catering operations, upheld food quality standards, and mentored many young professionals within the hospitality industry.

...Gov. Sanwo-Olu Backs Away From Lagos Tourism Agency Law



Solomon Bonu, Lagos State Assembly Tourism Committee Chairman

ensure that institutions created by law are not quietly reduced to symbolic structures after passage because oversight does not end once a bill is signed into law.

If the Agency was important enough to be established, its implementation should also be important enough to monitor aggressively.

At this point, Lagos tourism stakeholders deserve clarity.

Will the Lagos State Tourism Promotion Agency become the professional institution originally envisioned under the law?

Or will it remain another well-written law trapped inside government files while the tourism sector remains without strong institutional coordination?

The answer to that question may determine whether Lagos truly becomes a world-class tourism destination, or merely continues staging world-class events without building world necessary tourism institutions. **By Dr. Lucky Onoriode George, Executive Director, African Travel Commission [ATC], writes from Accra, Ghana.**

As Eko Hotel & Suites marks its 50th anniversary, veteran hospitality and tourism stakeholder, Chief Sam Alabi, reflects on the evolution of tourism in Nigeria and Africa, the role of the organised private sector, industry associations, government responsibilities, and the future of tourism as a strategic economic driver. He speaks with Dr. Lucky Onoriode George. Excerpts:



Chief Sam Alabi, Company Secretary and Legal Adviser, Eko Hotel & Suites.

As Eko Hotel & Suites celebrates 50 years, how do you assess the journey of tourism development in Nigeria and Africa?

The journey has been both challenging and inspiring. Across Africa, tourism growth has not happened by chance. Progress has largely been driven by an organised private sector that continues to invest, innovate, create jobs, and deliver quality visitor experiences.

The tourism ecosystem comprises hotels, airlines, tour operators, event companies, restaurants, transport providers, and creative entrepreneurs.

Together, they transform our natural, cultural, and historical assets into real economic activity and sustainable revenue streams.

While governments provide policy direction, infrastructure, and security, it is the private sector that supplies the

energy, innovation, and capital needed for growth. The future of African tourism depends on stronger public-private partnerships, innovation, sustainability, and respect for cultural authenticity.

Why do you describe the organised private sector as the engine of tourism growth?

Because tourism is fundamentally a business-driven industry. The organised private sector is

responsible for creating products, attracting investments, employing people, and delivering experiences that visitors pay for.

When tourism businesses operate within strong associations and collaborative networks, they improve service standards, strengthen destination branding, attract investment, and support long-term industry resilience.

Tourism's impact goes beyond hotels and

airlines. It empowers youth, women, local communities, artisans, entertainers, and small businesses. It stimulates economic activity across transportation, hospitality, culture, entertainment, and crafts.

What role do industry associations play in tourism development?

Industry associations are essential because they create unity, structure, and influence within the private sector. Individual businesses may struggle to influence policy or solve industry-wide challenges, but collectively, associations become powerful platforms for advocacy and reform.

In Nigeria, the Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigeria serves as the umbrella body coordinating tourism associations and engaging government on matters such as infrastructure, taxation, regulation, security, and investment incentives.

Associations also promote ethical standards, professional development, fair competition, and stronger stakeholder engagement. Strong associations create the framework that makes sustainable tourism growth possible. When the private sector is organised, tourism growth becomes more than a possibility, it becomes inevitable.

What does government owe the tourism sector?

Government's primary responsibility is to create an enabling environment where tourism can thrive

sustainably.

This begins with infrastructure, good roads, efficient airports, reliable electricity, digital connectivity, effective transportation systems, and clean environments.

Tourists may come because of attractions, but they stay because of comfort, convenience, and safety.

Government also owes the sector policy consistency, security, destination branding, investment incentives, and support for skills development.

Most importantly, governments across Africa must stop viewing tourism merely as a leisure activity and begin to recognise it as a strategic economic development tool capable of generating employment, foreign exchange, and enterprise growth.

Question 5: What does the tourism industry owe itself?

The industry owes itself greater unity,



professionalism, and collaboration. A destination's reputation can rise or fall based on visitor experience.

Therefore, operators must continuously improve service standards across hotels, tour operations, transportation services, and event management.

The industry must also invest more in human capital development, innovation, technology, digital marketing, sustainability, and eco-tourism.

Most importantly, stakeholders must embrace collaboration rather than unhealthy competition.

What should a viable African tourism policy look like?

A successful African tourism policy must go beyond slogans. It should provide a coordinated framework for inclusive economic growth.

Such a policy should focus on infrastructure development, simplified visa processes, stronger regional connectivity, public-private partnerships, tourism financing, skills development, digital transformation, safety, and destination branding.

Countries such as Egypt, Morocco, South Africa, Kenya, and Tanzania have demonstrated tourism's ability to contribute significantly to GDP and economic growth.

In Nigeria, tourism's contribution is often underestimated because official statistics tend to

focus mainly on hotels, food, and beverages, rather than the broader tourism value chain. In reality, after agriculture, travel and tourism remain among the largest employers of labour in the country.

Are tourism associations drivers of growth or gatekeepers of progress?

They can be either, depending on how they are governed. At their best, associations unite fragmented players, influence policy, improve standards, encourage investment, and promote professionalism.

However, when associations become overly bureaucratic, poorly governed, or resistant to innovation, they can slow progress and discourage entrepreneurship.

Where associations are inclusive, democratic, transparent, and forward-looking, they accelerate growth. Where they focus on control rather than collaboration, they risk becoming obstacles.

Ultimately, their effectiveness depends on governance, accountability, and transparency.

What specific roles do FTAN and HOPESEA play in the tourism industry?

Both the Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigeria and the Hotel Owners and Managers Association of Lagos State share a common objective of strengthening tourism growth through collaboration, advocacy, and industry development.

However, Nigeria's realities, including power supply challenges, multiple taxation, and

regulatory complexities, require localised solutions and stronger engagement between government and industry stakeholders.

These organisations play important roles in ensuring that the concerns of operators are heard and addressed.

Looking back, what has Nigeria's tourism industry learnt, and where did it get things wrong?

One of the industry's greatest lessons is that Nigeria possesses extraordinary tourism assets. Our culture, music, fashion, festivals, food, entertainment, hospitality, and creative economy offer enormous tourism potential.

The growth of the creative economy, particularly entertainment, nightlife, weddings, religious gatherings, and cultural festivals, has become one of Nigeria's strongest tourism drivers.

The private sector deserves credit for much of the growth we see today. Despite difficult operating conditions, entrepreneurs and investors have continued building and innovating. The industry has also demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability in the face of economic instability, infrastructure gaps, and changing market conditions.

However, we also

made mistakes. For too long, the sector remained fragmented. Hotels, tour operators, transport providers, and associations often failed to work together with a unified voice capable of influencing policy consistently.

We focused excessively on events and short-term activities while neglecting long-term destination development, tourism infrastructure, and global destination marketing.

Service quality has also been inconsistent, partly because we have not invested enough in training and visitor experience.

At the government level, inconsistent policies, insecurity concerns, weak infrastructure, and poor destination branding have all limited growth.

Question 10: What gives you confidence about the future of Nigerian tourism?

I remain optimistic because the fundamentals are strong. Nigeria's tourism future will not depend only on natural attractions. It will depend on structure, partnerships, investment, storytelling, and confidence in the value of Nigerian experiences.

If government and the organised private sector work more closely together, strengthen institutions, improve infrastructure, and invest deliberately in destination



development, tourism can become one of Nigeria's most transformative economic sectors. As Eko Hotel & Suites celebrates fifty years of

hospitality excellence, I believe the next phase of tourism growth in Nigeria and Africa will be defined by stronger institutions, deeper

collaboration, and a greater recognition of tourism as a serious economic development tool.



Chief Sam Alabi, Company Secretary and Legal Adviser, Eko Hotel & Suites.

Eko Hotel At 50: “The Organised Private Sector Remains The Engine Of African Tourism Growth”