



Telling our own stories

This year's Africa's Travel Indaba BONDay sessions highlighted that while Africa needs to tell stories about itself, these must not be the stereotypical view of the continent.

Instead these stories need to be unique, to be heard above all the noise, both in content and how they are told.

Locals need to travel and tell their stories to paint a picture of local destinations.

These were just some of the key points that emerged from the BONday discussion moderated by well-known media personality and entrepreneur, Kojo Baffoe.

Baffoe's panel included respected actor, storyteller and poet Nokugcina "Gcina" Mhlophe, veteran journalist, Professor Anton Harber and Social Media specialists Fred Felton.

"We need a story to tell for everything. Africans telling their stories every day but there is so much noise out there, we need to break through that noise. We must take a story and make it ours," says Mhlophe.

Professor Harber, says the way in which stories are told has changed. "We need to find different ways to hold the readers' attention, so the emphasis is on the different ways of telling the story."

"While there is a lot of bad news coming from the United States, it does not stop us from going there. The same is not true for Africa. This is because we understand the complexities of America's society. We need to ensure that the world understands the complexities of our continent beyond the current stereotype of Africa," he says.

The BONday discussion on Domestic Tourism Trends was also well received. The close to 600 delegates that attended were given great insights by industry experts.

"The new relaxation is immersing yourself in a destination; how to make the food, how to live your life... not staying in a hotel, but living like the locals," says Annareth Bolton, CEO of Stellenbosch Wine Routes.

Bolton was part of the BONday Panel on domestic tourism together with Mmatšatši Ramawela, CEO of the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (moderator), Lindiwe Mthethwa, African Sun Hotels, Sales Manager and Tessa Chikaponya, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority.

"People want to connect emotionally because they are exhausted. We need to show them our destinations as moments of inspiration, so not a picture of grapes and wine, but of someone enjoying that wine," Bolton adds.

Chikaponya says Zimbabwean tourism has gone through many challenges. "As a result, we realised the importance of being ambassadors for our own destination, by travelling locally and telling our stories. If we travel to different places in Africa, we will see it is not a dark continent."

Bronwyn Williams, Trend Translator and Future Finances Specialist at Flux Trends opened proceedings at Africa's Travel Indaba BONday where she discussed and explained Blockchain to the audience.

Blockchain has its roots in Bitcoin. "It is a new way of sharing information. Blockchain is like a spreadsheet or ledger but instead of there only being one copy of that ledger, the ledger is distributed throughout the network, so everyone has access. By everyone having a copy of all the information, it is more secure."

Blockchain is especially pertinent for the travel industry. Apart from transactions it also allows for smart contract building. This means contracts can be set up without the services of a lawyer, and that obligations are met. "When technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) are added to this, it enhances an already exciting dimension."

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