

# TOURISM NEWS

## *Top 30 Meetings Africa Exhibitors honoured*

*“We welcome the exhibitors into the inaugural Meetings Africa Top 30 Honorary Guild. It is their loyalty and support that has contributed to the success of Meetings Africa,” Amanda Kotze-Nhlapo, Executive Manager: South African National Convention Bureau*

QUALITY EXHIBITORS MAKE FOR A GREAT SHOW. This is the sentiment from Amanda Kotze-Nhlapo, head of the South African National Convention Bureau. She was speaking at a special dinner held in Johannesburg on Tuesday to honour Meeting Africa’s Top 30 exhibitors for their dedication and commitment to the show.

Meetings Africa is a pan-African exhibition and the best and most comprehensive place for international buyers to meet the widest range of business events exhibitors from across Africa. It’s also the best exhibition for business event service and product suppliers to do business with more than 300 buyers from Africa and around the world.

“Meetings Africa is Africa’s biggest and most influential business events trade show. It connects trade, buyers and exhibitors from the continent and from around the world. This all takes place over three days, under one roof,” said Amanda Kotze-Nhlapo, Executive Manager of the South African National Convention Bureau.

“This is the first time we are hosting an event to publically acknowledge Meetings Africa’s top exhibitors, many of whom have been exhibiting since our early years. We welcome them to the inaugural Meetings Africa Honorary Exhibitor Guild and thank them for their loyalty. It is because of them that the show consistently attracts quality buyers and visitors from across the world.

“The support from exhibitors at Meetings Africa and their contribution to supporting business events is demonstrated, I believe, by how long such quality exhibitors stay with us, and the increase in their numbers. They help make the show and attract quality buyers and happy visitors. We need to show our appreciation,” says Kotze-Nhlapo.

Statistics show that since 2009, Meetings Africa has enjoyed steady growth in the number of visitors, exhibitors, buyers and media. In 2009, the show had 199 exhibitors. Five years later, this number increased by 19% to 237 exhibitors in 2013. This growth in numbers and the reach of the show on the continent and across the world has helped to cement its stance as a pan-African exhibition.

The criteria used to select loyal exhibitors were based primarily on the number of consecutive years they exhibited at Meetings Africa. Secondary factors included diary activity and the size of their stand since 2009.

The Meetings Africa's top 30 exhibitors will be provided with marketing and branding opportunities that include branding on the Meetings Africa and SANCB websites. They will also get exclusive rights to use of the "Top 30" branding as part of their own marketing and branding collateral at Meetings Africa 2014.

"We are proud to have a show that speaks directly to our target markets. We have seen the improvement in growth and quality over the years and we are proud to be part of a show that provides an excellent opportunity to showcase not only our company, but the destination as a whole," says Robin McLeod, Sales and Marketing: Dragonfly Africa. The organisation was one of the thirty being honoured and was also a top performing destination marketing company (in terms of hosted buyer nominations) at Meetings Africa 2013.

"We are delighted that during the three days of Meetings Africa, we get access to top incentive buyers, with an opportunity to present our company and services to these buyers. Meetings Africa helps to make these meetings happen and later, convert the meetings into business opportunities," says McLeod.

"We continue to pursue our vision of making Meetings Africa an African show. Working off the SANCB strategic intent, *Rise with Us*, we are now calling on our continental counterparts to exhibit at the show, visit and send buyers. We want to grow our share of the regional, continental and global business events market. But we cannot do it alone - we need our counterparts on the continent to work with us to bring this vision to life," concludes Nhlapo-Kotze.

Meetings Africa 2014 takes place from February 24 to 26 at the Sandton Convention Centre and will expand on the theme 'Advancing Africa Together'. Registration for buyers and exhibitors is now open.

For more information, visit [www.meetingsafrica.co.za](http://www.meetingsafrica.co.za)

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For further information contact:

Thandiwe Mathibela at South African Tourism  
Tel: +27 11 895 3000

Allison MacDonald at Ireland Davenport PR  
Tel: 011 243 1300 or 082 771 2541

Email: [thandiwe@southafrica.net](mailto:thandiwe@southafrica.net)

[Allison.MacDonald@southafricanet](mailto:Allison.MacDonald@southafricanet)

Website [www.southafrica.net](http://www.southafrica.net)

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South African Tourism is the national tourism agency responsible for the marketing of South Africa as a preferred tourist destination. It is headed up by Chief Executive Officer Mr Thulani Nzima.