

*Under the patronage of the First Lady of the Republic of Zimbabwe
Her Excellency Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa*

2nd UN Tourism Regional Congress on Women Empowerment in Tourism in Africa
Advancing from Empowerment to Leadership: Driving Structural Change in the Tourism Sector in Africa

Elephant Hills Hotel, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 29 April – 1 May 2026

Provisional Programme

Wednesday 29 April 2026

Congress Opening Ceremony Venue: Golf Course, Elephant Hills Hotel

08:00 – 09:00

Registration

Venue: Pagoda Room

09:00 – 13:00

Opening Ceremony

Visit to the stands of Women Professionals in Gastronomy and Handicrafts

National Anthem played by Lupane State University

Gesture to the Traditional Chiefs

Welcome Remarks

- Hon. Richard **MOYO**, Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Matabeleland North, Republic of Zimbabwe

Opening Remarks:

- H.E. Ms. Shaikha **AL NUWAIS**, Secretary-General, UN Tourism

Remarks and Introduction of the Guest of Honor

- Hon. Barbara **RWODZI**, Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry of Zimbabwe

Keynote Address:

- H.E. Dr. Auxillia **MNANGAGWA** Patron for Tourism in Zimbabwe, the First Lady of the Republic of Zimbabwe

Presentation of Gifts

Vote of Thanks

- Hon. Prof. dr A. **MURWIRA**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Zimbabwe

Official Photo

Group photo

13:00 – 14:00 **Lunch break**

Congress Venue: Kalala Room, Elephant Hills Hotel

14:00 – 14:15 **Setting the scene: Women's economic empowerment in Africa- Advancing from empowerment to leadership**

- Ms. Loveness **MAKONESE**, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women, Zimbabwe

14:15 – 14:30 **Results of the Global Report on Women in Tourism Transport**

- Presentation by Mr. Ben **OWEN**, Senior Project Specialist, Ethics, Culture and Social Responsibility Department, UN Tourism

14:30 – 15:30 **Ministerial Roundtable: Institutionalizing Gender-Responsive policies into National Tourism Strategies**
Panelists will discuss integrating gender mainstreaming into national tourism strategies. The session focuses on using **gender-responsive budgeting** and **sex-disaggregated data** to ensure institutional accountability and equitable resource allocation

- **Moderator:** Ms. Elcia **GRANDCOURT**, Regional Director for Africa, UN Tourism

Panelists:

- H.E. Ms. Shaikha **AL NUWAIS**, Secretary-General, UN Tourism
- H.E. Ms. Barbara **RWODZI**, Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry of Zimbabwe
- H.E. Mrs. Nabeela Farida **TUNIS**, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs of Sierra Leone, and WITLAC Chair
- H.E. Mr. William **RODRÍGUEZ LÓPEZ**, Minister of Tourism of Costa Rica
- H.E. Mrs. Ablah **DZIFA GOMASHIE**, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Creative arts of Ghana

¹ WITLAC: Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee. This committee was created in 2019 by African Women ministers, in the framework of the 1st UN Tourism Regional Congress on Women Empowerment in Tourism in Africa, Accra, Ghana with the main objectives to elevate the role of women in tourism, dismantling structural barriers and accelerate their full equal integration as leaders in the tourism sector.

15:30 – 16:30

The WITLAC Dialogue: Strengthening the Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee's advisory role

The session will underscore WITLAC's vision, core priorities, upcoming activities, and pathway for engaging more members. The objective is to enhance the **Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee's (WITLAC)** influence as a regional advisory body. Discussion will focus on coordinating leadership efforts for WITLAC to advocate for women across the continent.

- **Moderator:** Prof. Nellie **SWART**, Professor of Tourism and Director of Executive Education at the Graduate School of Business Leadership, University of South Africa (UNISA)

Panelists:

- H.E. Mrs. Nabeela Farida **TUNIS**, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs of Sierra Leone, and WITLAC Chair
- Ms. Anne **KAOMA-SIBANDA**, Executive Director, Zambia Institute for Tourism & Hospitality Studies (ZITHS), Zambia
- Ms. Mai **BRIGHT UREY**, President of the Liberia Tourism Association
- Ms. Cecile **SOMBO-DIBELÉ**, Head, Tam-Tam guide, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Ms. Linh **VU**, Principal Advisor to the UN Tourism Secretary-General

14:00 – 18:00 (Day 1) *The technical Workshop titled “Dismantling Structural Barriers to Career Progression” will be taking place simultaneously with the Congress and is by invitation only. The programme of the workshop will be shared separately with the delegates. All sessions will be held in English only.*
Kalundu Room

18:00 – 21:00

Gala Dinner at Sunset over the Falls

Venue: *Kumusha Ekhayaletu Private Estate*

Thursday 30 April 2026

Congress Venue: Kalala Room, Elephant Hills Hotel

08:30 – 09:45

Panel discussion: Navigating Financial Ecosystems, Sustainability and Investor Matchmaking

This session addresses the credit gap by exploring tailored lending products and credit-guarantee schemes available for women-led SMEs. It will guide entrepreneurs on aligning their business models with **financial institutions priorities** and sustainable tourism practices to ensure they are "investment-ready" for global opportunities.

- **Moderator:** Ms. Mbali **MNGOMEZULU**, Business Development Manager, MasterCard, Africa

Panelists:

- H.E. Mr Rodney **SIKUMBA**, Minister of Tourism of Zambia and Chair of the UN Tourism Commission for Africa
- Dr. Millicent **MOMBESHORA**, ZTA Board Member and Strategy, Investment and Policy Consultant
- Ms. Eyerusalem **FASIKA**, Country Manager for Zimbabwe, African Development Bank Group
- Mr. Shaun **MANN**, Senior Tourism Specialist, World Bank, USA
- Ms. Marygoreth **MUSHI**, Programme Officer: Policy & Market Development, SADC
- Ms. Shelley **COX**, Co-Owner, Africa Conservation Travel

09:45 – 11:00

Panel discussion: Leveraging Technology for Market Access

This session will discuss how **AI, e-commerce, and digital analytics** can scale women-led businesses. Panelists will share success stories of digital adoption that have enabled entrepreneurs to access global tourism value chains.

- **Moderator:** Mr. Ghalib **LONE**, Director, Communications Department, UN Tourism

Panelists:

- Hon. Dr. Ashatu **KIJAJI**, Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, Tanzania
- Ms. Ann **KALEMBE**, Founder, Women in Hospitality Uganda
- Ms. Mbali **MNGOMEZULU**, Business Development Manager, MasterCard, Africa
- Ms. Sonto **NDLOVU**, CEO & Founder, Beacon Africa Tourism Consultancy
- Prof. Tawanda **MUSHIRI**, Executive Director, Scientific and Industrial Research and Development Centre (SIRDC)

11:00 – 11:15

Coffee break

11:15 – 12:30

Panel discussion: From Policy to Practice - Facilitating Women Leadership in Tourism

This session explores how to dismantle the "glass ceiling" and other structural barriers preventing women from reaching executive leadership and board positions. Panelists should share actionable tools and successful pathways for increasing female representation in high-level governance.

- **Moderator:** Mr. Sebulon **CHICALU**, CEO, Namibia Tourism Board

Panelists:

- H.E. Princess **COOPER**, Director General, Liberia National Tourism Authority (LNTA)
- Dr. Barbara **KY**, Director of Gender, WAEMU Commission (Western Economic and Monetary Union - UEMOA)
- Ms. Juliana **KAGWA**, CEO, Uganda Tourism Board
- Prof. Nellie **SWART**, Professor of Tourism and Director of Executive Education at the Graduate School of Business Leadership, University of South Africa (UNISA)
- Dr. Mavis **SIBANDA**, Permanent Secretary for Women Affairs, Community, and Small and Medium Enterprise Development

12:30 – 14:00

Lunch break

14:00 – 15:30

Closing Ceremony

- Highlights of the technical workshop titled "Dismantling Structural Barriers to Career Progression" by workshop co-facilitators:

- Mrs Lydia **BEBE KUM**, Programme Officer, Regional Department for Africa, UN Tourism
- Ms Chipso **MANDELA**, Liam Collection, Founder and Proprietor, Zimbabwe

Symbolic Presentation of the Certificates of Participation

- H.E. Ms. Shaikha **AL NUWAIS**, Secretary-General, UN Tourism
- H.E. Ms. Barbara **RWODZI**, Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry of Zimbabwe

- Presentation and Adoption of the Victoria Falls Statement

- Ms. Elcia **GRANDCOURT**, Regional Director for Africa, UN Tourism
- Dr. Takaruzo **MUNYANYIWA**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Zimbabwe

- Closing Remarks

- Mr. Liu **SHIJUN**, Executive Director, UN Tourism
- Mr. Farai **CHIMBA**, Board Chair, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority

08:30 – 12:30 (Day 2) <i>Kalundu Room</i>	<i>The technical Workshop titled “Dismantling Structural Barriers to Career Progression” will be taking place simultaneously with the Congress and is by invitation only. The programme of the workshop will be shared separately with the delegates. All sessions will be held in English <u>only</u>.</i>
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Dinner at leisure

Friday 01st of May 2026

10:00 – 13:00

Technical Tour(s) for Congress participants

- **Jafuta Foundation** – Delegates will visit the centre dedicated to empowering women through skills training, education provision, digital access, conservation, community co-existence, and other livelihood development practices.
- **Victoria Falls Women's Curio Market** – Delegates will visit the market showcasing handmade arts and crafts.

13:00 – 14:00

Lunch break

- END OF ALL ACTIVITIES -

In compliance with the United Nations system's environmental protection policy, the working documents **will not be distributed on paper** at the venue of the event. Therefore, **the delegates are requested to bring with them copies of the documents.**