

Govt urged to emphasize promotion of tourism

TTB spends less than \$2 million annually to sell the country's vast tourist attractions

By Costantine Sebastian

Travel and tourism stakeholders have urged the new government to give more emphasis on tourism promotion as a measure to develop the country's nascent hospitality industry.

The Managing Director of Skylink Travel and Tours, Moustafa Khataw, said tourism promotion requires adequate funding to market Tanzania globally. He also called upon stakeholders to participate effectively in major tourist fairs.

"We need to market Tanzania to new emerging markets in Eastern Europe, South America, the Far East and Australia," the immediate past chairman of the Tanzania Society of Travel Agents (TASOTA) told *The Citizen* last week.

Authorities like the Institute of Resource Assessment (IRA) at the University of Dar es Salaam say, the country has potential to host more than a million visitors annually. They say that what is currently lacking, is adequate funding to promote destination Tanzania.

The Tanzania Tourist Board spends less than \$2 million annually to promote and sell the country's vast tourist attractions. David Stanton of DFID Tanzania said recently that the



Newly appointed Natural Resources and Tourism minister Anthony Diallo (left) takes the oath of office as he was being sworn in by President Jakaya Kikwete.

country is a world-class destination with massive tourism potential.

"Tanzania has world-class attractions. It is a world-class destination but the infrastructure is weak and the number of arrivals is still very small," the British official told *The Citizen*.

According to the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), tourism is a critical industry in Tanzania that accounted for 47 per cent of total exports in 2002. The number of tourist

arrivals in the country has increased from 295,312 in 1995 to 576,000 in 2003.

Government figures show that the tourism earnings grew by over 180 per cent between 1995 and 2004. The earnings increased from \$258.1 million to \$731 million.

However, it is unclear from official statistics how much the government gets from the sector.

ICC says that although Tanzania

attracts significantly fewer tourists than Kenya, it has much larger tourism receipts.

In part, this is because Tanzania is more expensive, but it is also because tourists' activities differ in the two countries.

"In Kenya, a substantial part of the tourist's visit takes the form of beach holiday, which is relatively cheap, while in Tanzania it is mostly safari tourism, which is more expensive."