



**Government of Sierra Leone**

**Women in Tourism Regional Congress**  
**“Beyond Empowerment to Education, Innovation, and Finance Access”**

**29-31 October 2024**  
**Freetown, Sierra Leone**

**PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME**



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM &  
CULTURAL AFFAIRS**  
*..home of hospitality*



In collaboration with

**UN Tourism**

## Monday, 28 October 2024

**Venue:** The Freetown International Conference Centre

14:00 – 18:00                      Registration

## DAY 1: Tuesday, 29 October 2024

**Venue:** The Freetown International Conference Centre

08:00 – 09:00                      Registration

09:00 – 10:30                      **Opening Ceremony**

### Opening Remarks:

- Her Worship Yvonne Aki Sawyerr, Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone
- Ms. Elcia Grandcourt, Director for Africa, UN Tourism
- Ms. Natalia Bayona, Executive Director, UN Tourism (*video message*)
- Ms. Seraphine Wakana, UN Resident Coordinator, Sierra Leone
- Hon. Nabeela Farida Tunis, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Sierra Leone, and Chair of the Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee (WITLAC)
- **Keynote Address:** H.E the Vice President, Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, Republic of Sierra Leone

### UN Tourism Scholarships

### Official Photo

Tour around the exhibition for high-level representatives.

10:30 – 10:45                      Coffee Break

10:45 – 11:00                      **Guest Speaker:** Breaking barriers and paving pathways: Women transforming the future of African tourism.

Ms. Jérôme Setcheme Mongbo, Head of Office, UN Women Sierra Leone

11:00 – 12:30                      **High-Level Panel Discussion** - "Advocacy strategies and actionable steps for creating an enabling environment for women in tourism through gender-responsive policies."

Moderator: Ms. Elcia Grandcourt, Director for Africa, UN Tourism

Speakers:

- Hon. Nabeela Farida Tunis, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Sierra Leone
- Hon. Barbara Rwodzi (MP), Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Republic of Zimbabwe
- Mr. Abdel-Nasser Daoud KINEFOUR, Senior Program Officer, AUDA-NEPAD
- Ms. Mai Bright Urey, President, Liberia National Tourism Association (LINTA)
- Ms. Isatu Thorlu Bangura, Posseh's Hotel Catering and Training Centre, Sierra Leone

12:30 – 14:00

**Networking Lunch** (all participants)

14:00 – 14:30

**Fireside Chat: Personal Journey of a Woman Leader in Tourism overcoming gender disparities and structural barriers.** In conversation with...

Moderator: Mr. Kojo Bentum-Williams, Senior Expert on Communications in Africa, UN Tourism

- Hon. Barbara Rwodzi (MP), Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Republic of Zimbabwe
- Ms. Zakiatu Swaray-Rowe, CEO/Owner, Anzak Tours and Resorts, Sierra Leone

14:30 – 15:30

**Gender Responsive Policies and Initiatives - Case Study Presentations from Sierra Leone.**

Moderator: Ms. Lydia Bebe Kum, Programme Officer Africa Department, UN Tourism

- Hon. Dr. Isata Mahoi, Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs, Republic of Sierra Leone
- Ms. Randa Swaid, CEO, Swiss Hotel, Sierra Leone

15:30 – 16:00

**Key takeaways from Day 1**

- Ms. Binta Akibo-Betts, Managing Director, Betts Firm Consult, Sierra Leone
- Ms. Lydia Bebe Kum, Programme Officer Africa Department, UN Tourism

*N.B.: Permanent exhibitions by women from Sierra Leone, neighbouring countries, and across Africa, will be accessible to the delegates throughout the duration of the event.*

19:30 – 21:30

**Welcome Reception and Networking** (all participants)

Venue: Lagoonda

***Note: A Technical Workshop on Finance Access will be taking place simultaneously on Day 1 Prepared in collaboration with MasterCard and moderated by Invest Salone***

**10:45 – 17:00** (By invitation only)

*\*Note: This technical workshop will be conducted in **English only**.*

## **DAY 2: Wednesday, 30 October 2024**

**Venue:** The Freetown International Conference Centre

07:00 – 08:00

**Optional: Morning walk along the Lumley Beach**

Breathe in the fresh morning air, enjoy the peaceful ambiance, connect with fellow participants, and get a glimpse of Freetown's early morning charm before diving into the day's conference activities.

### **MENTORSHIP, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING**

09:00 – 09:15

**Setting the scene.**

Effective leadership training and business skills development for women in tourism, cultural, and creative industries.

Ms. Mary-Ann Kaikai, Founder and Creative Director of Madam Wokie, Sierra Leone

09:15 – 10:45

**Panel Discussion - "Building a strong foundation and bridging the skills gap: The power of mentorship and education in advancing women's careers in tourism."**

Moderator: Ms. Ariana Oluwole, Founder and Publisher at Ariana Diaries Blog, Founder at Narnia Educational Group

Speakers:

- Dr. Fatou Taqi, Director of the Academic and Careers Advisory and Counselling Services, University of Sierra Leone
- Ms. Anne Kaoma-Sibanda, Executive Director, Zambia Institute of Tourism & Hospitality Studies (ZITHS), Zambia
- Ms. Stella Christiane DRABO, Tourism Manager, CEO Orchideo Consulting

- Ms. Fatmata Binta, Chef and UN Tourism Ambassador for Responsible Tourism, Sierra Leone
- Ms. Nellie Swart, Associate Professor in Tourism Management, Department of Applied Management, University of South Africa
- Mr. Matthew Lambert, CEO, Invictus Education Group, South Africa (*video message*)

## **INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY**

10:45 – 11:15

**Fireside Chat: Innovative journey to success - Integrating new technologies and digital tools for women-led tourism business enhancement.** In conversation with...

Moderator: Mr. Kojo Bentum-Williams, Senior Expert on Communications in Africa, UN Tourism

- Ms. Isatu Harrison, Creative Director, Creative Hub Africa, Sierra Leone

11:15 – 13:00

**Panel Discussion - “Leveraging digital transformation in tourism: Opportunities for women entrepreneurs.”**

Moderator: Ms. Gemma Mathshediso Mbegabolawe, Principal Officer - Women and Youth in Trade, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

Speakers:

- Hon. Salima Bah, Minister of Communication, Technology and Innovation, Republic of Sierra Leone
- Hon. Heather Sibungo, Deputy Minister for Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Republic of Namibia
- Hon. Kadiatu D. Konteh-Brohiri, Deputy Minister for Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism, Republic of Liberia
- Ms. Pamla Gopaul, Unit Lead for Economic Analysis and Foresight, AUDA-NEPAD
- Ms. Cecile Marie-France Sombo-Dibele, Founder at TamTam-Guide, Tourism Expert at the Office of the Minister of Tourism, Democratic Republic of Congo
- Dr. Sia Foday-Iscandari, Deputy Team Leader, Invest Salone, Sierra Leone

13:00 – 14:30

**Networking Lunch** (all participants)

14:30 – 15:00

### **Recommendations and Outcomes from the Workshop on Finance Access**

- Mr. Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie, Team Lead, Invest Salone, Sierra Leone

### **Presentation on Women Banking Initiative (10 minutes)**

- Ms. Naasu Fofanah, Founder and CEO, Susue Women's Finance/Women's Green Bank, Sierra Leone

### **Presentation of workshop certificates**

- Ms. Elcia Grandcourt, Director for Africa, UN Tourism
- Hon. Nabeela Farida Tunis, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Chair of the Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee (WITLAC)

### **Official photo with Technical Workshop participants**

15:00 – 15:30

### **Key takeaways from Day 2**

- Ms. Binta Akibo-Betts, Managing Director, Betts Firm Consult, Sierra Leone
- Ms. Rachel Monnier, Senior Project Specialist Africa Department, UN Tourism

15:30 – 16:00

### **Closing Ceremony**

#### **Closing Remarks:**

- Ms. Elcia Grandcourt, Director for Africa, UN Tourism
- Hon. Nabeela Farida Tunis, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Chair of the Women in Tourism Leadership Africa Committee (WITLAC)

*N.B.: Permanent exhibitions by women from Sierra Leone, neighbouring countries, and across Africa, will be accessible to the delegates throughout the duration of the event.*

19:30 – 21:30

### **Dinner incl. live concert featuring prominent women musicians and entertainers (all participants)**

Venue: LOR Restaurant, Levuma Beach

**Note: A “Fambul Tok” session will be taking place simultaneously on Day 2**

**10:00 – 15:00**

*Local participants will have the opportunity to share their personal experiences, openly discuss the challenges they encounter, and directly present their recommendations to government officials. This platform encourages meaningful dialogue and active engagement between the community and policymakers.*

### **DAY 3: Thursday, 31 October 2024**

09:00 – 16:00  
2-3h excursions

#### **Social Programme** (all participants)

##### **Option 1: A Day in the Life of Local Women Artists**

Immerse yourself in the creative world of Sierra Leonean women artists and explore their daily lives and artistic processes. This unique experience offers delegates a glimpse into the vibrant and diverse creative scene while showcasing women-led initiatives and businesses that are making a significant impact in Sierra Leone. Engage with inspiring local talents and discover how their contributions are shaping the cultural and economic landscape of the region.

##### **Option 2: City Tour**

##### **Option 3: Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary Tour**

16:00 – 00:00

#### **Open-air carnival with performances**

Venue: Gigibonta Car Park

**End of the Women in Tourism Regional Congress**