

**Statement by Ogo Sow on behalf of Edward J. Bergman,  
Executive Director of the Africa Travel Association  
6<sup>th</sup> African Diaspora Heritage Travel Conference, Bermuda  
October 2010**

- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
- As the Special Advisor on Diaspora Affairs to the Executive Director of the Africa Travel Association,
  - Mr. Edward Bergman,
- Allow me to say that it is a great privilege to be here,
  - Representing the Africa Travel Association,
    - A trade association that was founded in 1975,
      - With a mission to:
        - promote travel and tourism to Africa,
          - and to strengthen intra-Africa partnerships to make this happen.
- In this regard, I have been asked to deliver a statement on behalf of **Mr. Bergman**.
- Before I deliver the statement,
- I want to thank the government and the people of Bermuda,
  - For hosting the event,

- And for their incredible generosity, hospitality and warmth.

**[PAUSE]**

- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
- I would like to speak to you today,
  - About a subject at the heart of the work of ATA:
    - Partnership.
      - Partnerships dedicated to promoting travel and tourism to Africa,
      - Partnerships like:
        - The ADHT-ATA Partnership,
        - And the ATA-Diaspora Partnership.
- It is in the spirit of partnership:
  - That ATA is represented here today.

**[PAUSE]**

- Let's begin with the **ADHT-ATA partnership**.
- As many of you may know,
  - The idea behind the African Diaspora Heritage Trail was born when the late Hon. David Allen,

- Former Minister of Tourism for the Government of Bermuda,
- And the late,
  - Ms. Mira Berman,
    - Who was ATA's Executive Director for 16 years,
  - Met in New York City in 2000.
- During their meeting,
  - Hon. Allen told Ms. Berman about the time when he was working as a reporter in Africa,
    - Where he had begun to dream about creating a heritage trail for the African Diaspora,
      - A trail that would link Africa, Bermuda, the Caribbean and the United States,
        - And educate the world about the cultural heritage of the African Diaspora.
- Ms. Berman believed in Hon. Allen's dream.
- So, to lend her support, she invited him to use ATA as a platform,
  - To launch the African Diaspora Heritage Trail.
- They organized a press conference in New York City to spread the news.

- Then, Hon. Allen attended an ATA congress in Cape Town, South Africa in 2001,
  - and another one in Conakry, Guinea in 2002,
    - Where he introduced the idea of the trail to the travel trade industry.
- That same year the first ADHT Conference was held in Bermuda.
  - Since then, ADHT has become an important event for the African Diaspora and the travel industry.

### [PAUSE]

- This brings me to the **second reason** why ATA is here today:
  - The **ATA-Diaspora partnership**.
- Recognizing the important role that the African Diaspora plays in Africa's socio-economic growth,
  - ATA has created an **Africa Diaspora Tourism Initiative**,
    - That engages the African Diaspora in tourism promotion and investment across Africa,
- While it's difficult to give an accurate figure on the exact amount of money that is sent to Africa from the African Diaspora community every year,
  - We know that these funds have:

- Sustained families,
  - Stimulated new home construction,
  - And supported the development of small and medium sized businesses and enterprises,
    - Such as hotels, Bed and Breakfasts, restaurants, hotels, entertainment centers and the like.
  - They have also helped maintain and expand public infrastructure in schools and hospitals.
- ATA believes that the African Diaspora is an untapped resource that holds extraordinary promise in our goal to promote tourism to and investment in Africa.
- With the proper incentives,
- and with support from the African Union, African governments, the travel trade industry, ADHT, the international community and the private sector,
    - The African Diaspora can play a leading role in the development of a sustainable tourism industry in Africa.
- It is here where the African Diaspora and ATA can make significant inroads.

**[PAUSE]**

- Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests:

- Since we last gathered in Tanzania a year ago,
  - ATA has made great progress in advancing our mission.
- Allow me to highlight a few of our most recent **milestones**.
- First, ATA partnered with New York University's Africa House and the World Bank,
  - To make a case for developing and investing in Africa's tourism industry,
    - With the preparation of a report called *The State of Tourism in Africa*.
  - Using facts, figures and stories,
    - The report paints a picture of the current and potential impact of tourism on both a country's and a region's development strategy,
      - And makes a strong case for governments and the private sector,
        - To give increased attention and resources to the tourism industry.
- Here is the **second milestone**:
- For several years now,
  - The **African Union (AU)** and ATA have expressed a strong interest to partner together to,

- Market and brand Africa as a unified travel and tourism destination.
- On this basis, in the spring,
- ATA and the African Union signed an MOU devoted to working together to market Destination Africa around the world.
- A **third milestone** took place this summer.
- ATA and the **Caribbean Tourism Organization** formed a new strategic partnership with the,
  - Signing of an MOU,
    - Pledging cooperation,
      - And to build partnerships between Africa and the Caribbean.
- Each of these achievements is about more than growing ATA.
- They're about creating **true partnerships** for Africa.
- This is the spirit behind ATA's invitation to ADHT to embark on a new joint initiative.
- Allow me to explain.
- As you may already know,
  - Since 1976, ATA has held an Annual Congress in Africa every year,

- Providing a networking, learning and agenda-shaping platform for 300-500 travel professionals.
- Last year, our congress was held in The Gambia.
  - Before that, we were in Egypt,
    - And a year before in Tanzania,
      - The home of ADHT's first Africa event.
- I can't imagine a more fitting partnership than one between ATA and ADHT in Africa.
  - where ATA and ADHT organize their two signature events together.
    - at a different African destination every two years.
- By working in partnership,
  - We can work together to link people with heritage ties to Africa and to preserve their history and culture,
  - While also promoting travel and tourism to the continent.
- I look forward to hearing your thoughts about this proposal,
  - And welcome any suggestions you may have on,
    - How to strengthen the partnership between the ADHT and ATA.
- Thank you.