

Sandton Convention Centre appoints Matifadza Nyazema as executive director

The appointment of Matifadza (Mati) Nyazema as Executive Director of the Sandton Convention Centre heralds an exciting new future for South Africa's premier meeting, exhibition and special events space. Her appointment is effective from 1st August 2006. Previously Ms Nyazema was Director of Operations at the Sandton Convention Centre, since May 2005.

Her vast experience in many aspects of the tourism and hospitality industries including airlines, hotel groups and tourism boards, spans more than 20 years. During her career, Ms Nyazema has been responsible for managing multinational and multicultural teams across Africa. She has lived and worked in three countries, namely Zimbabwe, Kenya and South Africa, and has extensive experience of conducting business on behalf of multinationals in more than 15 African countries and abroad.

Nyazema's tertiary qualifications include a Bachelor of Administration (Zimbabwe), a Post-Graduate Diploma in Mass Communication (Kenya) and a Master of Science (MSc) degree in International Hotel Management from the University of Surrey in the UK.

She started her career in broadcasting as a television news editor with the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation in the 1980s. But, her passion for the travel and hospitality industry developed when she joined the Zimbabwe Tourist Development Corporation, responsible for public relations and destination marketing management, and later with Zimbabwe Sun Hotels as Reservations Manager.

Nyazema's next career move, to British Airways (BA) in 1992, initially as sales manager based in Harare and responsible for Zimbabwe, Namibia and Malawi, consolidated her vocation in the industry. Realising her potential, BA promoted her to area marketing manager for East and West Africa and she relocated to Nairobi, Kenya, in 1995. From 1996 to 1998, Nyazema found herself in Johannesburg, as area marketing manager for Africa.

A move from the global airline business to hotel operations was next when Nyazema joined Cresta Hospitality as managing director, managing operations at hotels in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana and Namibia.

In December 2000, Nyazema joined Southern Sun Hotels as Executive Assistant to the Managing Director, and has been with the group to date. In 2002 she was appointed Marketing Services Director and key highlights of her tenure included overseeing the relaunch of the group's Frequent Guest programme, and the launch of a new leisure brand for Southern Sun, Woza Breaks.

In May 2005, an opportunity presented itself at the prestigious Sandton Convention Centre. Nyazema took up the position of Director of Operations, and was responsible for aligning the Sandton Convention Centre to the premier brand of the Southern Sun Group following its overall brand strategy repositioning in 2005.