

## IIPT COMMENTS FROM ANASTASIA MANN

UGANDA May 20 -25, 2007

Fellow Supporters of Peace through Tourism.....

First of all my apologies for not being here with you in person today. Participating with IIPT and supporting the efforts of Lou D'Amore have been among the most personally and professionally satisfying and fulfilling times of my life. This is truly a cause filled with greatness and purpose.

Had I been here today, I would be once again addressing you on the strategic significance of the American market to this cause. And to tourism in general. Today tourism and peace go hand in hand – a reality driven by the forces of our times and a consequence of the instability in our political arenas and – quite simply – the lives of so many disenchanting people throughout the world. And the irony is that the more acts of terrorism and battles large or small upset the economies and tourism potential of any country – particularly so-called “third world” countries, the more the perpetrators put themselves, their “causes” and their countrymen in harm’s way.

So why does the American traveler matter? Obviously there is the financial impact of tourism from the US. But beyond the now well-recognized benefits to every economy anywhere in the world, the financial boon from travel is only one part of the equation. It is the experience of the individual that we must concentrate on – and care to influence. For Americans absorb. And they care. And they talk. They thirst for knowledge and adventure and they spend their dollars to enrich their lives. Americans born in the years following World War II – known as our “baby boomer generation” - have come of age – without aging. We have worked hard and earned our money and our free time. We got through the Cold War. We want a peaceful and healthy planet for our families and their children and all the planet’s living things – people, plants, and animals.

Africa has so many gifts. So much variation. Minerals, rich soil, vast plains of great beauty and wild game that thrill the hearts of every living soul. Great bodies of water surround this continent. Thrilling deserts. Talented and resourceful people reflecting many cultures and skill sets. Beautiful destinations with excellent facilities. Yet there is strife, poverty and pain and in some cases self-destruction. The world has turned its attention to the African Continent. And well it should. How do we balance the beauty and the “tourism” offerings with the misery that people around the world see on television? The leaders of the nations of Africa must see the big picture and work together for the common good. American celebrities come here and adopt children and make headline news – almost in a competition. But that is not the solution. That is not the way to market your countries to the USA.

Put your attributes on a platter for the world to see. Tell us the stories that enrich our minds and make us long to share these experiences. Americans are seeking new

experiences in new lands. Once South Africa ended apartheid, the doors opened and American travelers have come in droves. South Africa offered a well-kept product few people in the US knew existed. And they delivered the experience. South African tourism went up 37% in one year! Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda – also Namibia, Zambia, etc – are seeing their numbers grow rapidly. Zambia has welcomed not only the working class from Zimbabwe, but its visitors too. And they are doing a great job..

And when these travelers go home with wonderful stories and life altering experiences they tell their friends. Who then tell their friends. Who then call their travel agents.

After my visit to Zambia for IIPT two years ago I started my own Africa Safari company – Anastasia’s Africa. Last year it out grossed my main travel management company which is now 20 years old. Why? Because I talk about Africa. I talk about the earth, the sky, the stars –and yes, the game. And I speak to the beauty and the mysticism of this great place with awe and with love. And my clients, my friends, my associates – they all want to experience this before it’s too late. So how do you reach “us”? People like me who can spread the word to tell people it is safe to come here? How do you counter the vast ignorance that is out there misleading the masses? Brochures are nice; websites can help, but nothing – nothing can top personal experience. Invite the top travel planners to come here... Not just on conventions or for organizational meetings, but as students of Africa. Invite them to learn. Show them the Southern Cross in your night sky. Teach them why leopards are seven times stronger than humans. Tell them about your tribal cultures and local folklore. Teach them that crocodile eggs are buried in the sand at birth and their sex is determined by the temperature around them. Let them know that wild dogs can hear each other “hoo” over 2 kilometers away. Let them FEEL Africa, breathe it, taste it, sense it. Despite what many people still think- and it boggles my mind to know why, the travel “agency” is alive and well in the United States. Today we refer to our companies as Travel Management firms. Because we do manage and consult and recommend – both for business and pleasure- the best way to visit and experience another locale. And to do this well, we need to know what we are talking about.

Yes there are the big Africa “marketers” – the large wholesale companies that service primarily the trade and some public. But they are brochure distributors, not passion-builders. The glue to the client and your arrival gate is the working travel consultant. Help them know you and your country and your offerings – and, trust me, they will come.

Don’t forget the small operator. We are closer to our client and more devoted to our credibility. Day after day. And we love Africa. We will come and our clients will come and together with the knowledge you give us, we will help pave the way and build the road to peace.

Thank you.

Anastasia Mann  
Chairman/CEO  
Corniche Group Inc.  
Corniche Travel & Anastasia’s Africa