



ECO-BENIN NEWS

Working for Nature and Communities Welfare

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Dear Friend,



Ecotourism has attracted increasing attention in recent years, not only as an alternative to mass tourism, but as a means of economic development and environmental conservation. Much of ECO-BENIN's work over the past years has focused on developing successful solutions to local communities' welfare challenges that can be applied around the world. From 30 November to 2 December 2005, ECO-BENIN attended the UNCTAD expert meeting on ICT and tourism for development to talk about the importance of new information and communication technologies as new ways to expand the markets in which we compete by tailoring products and services to our needs, and to restructure our business strategy to gain competitive advantage. As one of the world largest and most pervasive industries, the tourism sector is exposed as any other to the forces of change that are being brought about by ongoing developments in the ICT arena. It is a new challenge for us in developing countries. Find more details at http://ecobenin.africa-web.org/article.php?id_article=86

1. ECOTOURISM, A NEW PRIORITY FOR BENIN'S AUTHORITIES



Back from the TOURCOM conference organised jointly by the World Tourism organization and the government of Mali at Bamako from May 8th to May 11th, 2006 and that talked on the theme " **COMMUNICATION IN TOURISM** ", **Dr TOLEBA**, Benin Minister of Tourism, organised a press release attended by several journalists and tourist promoters on Monday 22 May 2006 in his Ministry at Cotonou. It was at that occasion that, Minister TOLEBA announced his principal interests concerning tourist development. He will especially invest himself in the following domains :

- ▶ Local tourism ;
- ▶ Elite tourism ;
- ▶ Regional tourism.

A particular attention has been carried on **ecotourism** and the necessity to work in partnership with promoters of the sector. Find more details at www.ecobenin.africa-web.org/article.php?id_article=550

2. ECOVOLUNTEERING WITH ECO-BENIN & PLANÈTE URGENCE



Since 2005, **ECO-BENIN** and **Planète Urgence** are cooperating in setting up ecotourism sites around Ahémé Lake in the South Western Benin. Thanks to all of you who have so far shared with us your ideas and suggestions on how to improve our volunteering service and processes. The many responses we received gave us a sense of your enthusiasm for volunteering and your commitment in unfolding its full potential. Our role as volunteer manager is to motivate and inspire volunteers. It is important for a volunteer to feel valued by and part of our communities. We achieve this by keeping the volunteer feel like a community member, doing overall

activities and by giving due recognition to the volunteer's contribution. We are looking to more volunteers to develop more activities and perfect the ongoing ones. Find more details at www.planete-urgence.org/missions/selectionner3.php?PR=540

3. BIRDWATCHING DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTHERN BENIN



ECO-BENIN and Cybelle Planète have just launched a mission of ecovolunteering to set up a birdwatching circuit around the Toho Lake in the Southern Benin. Indeed, the potential of development offered by the activity of birdwatching is still unknown and unexploited by local communities in Benin. It is to establish a birdwatching demonstration site that ECO-BENIN has chosen certain sites of the Mono valley where these water birds are more common but threatened through trappings of birds and massive pickup of eggs notably around the TOHO Lake. During this mission, identification and the censuring of birds around the lake and peripheral sites are the main tasks that ecovolunteers will have to lead. The work will consist in helping a team of ECO-BENIN and the riparian fishers (local guides) who already have an experience in this kind of activities to identify and count birds of wetlands areas. Censuses will be associated to activities of sensitization and animation on the protection of birds in schools and villages where ECO-BENIN is establishing a club of bird friends. Lasting 15 days in the field, ecovolunteers are going to contribute to the setting up of birdwatching circuits as a support to ecodevelopment effort in Benin. Register today to bring your grain of salt to the valorization of water birds. Find more details at www.cybelle-planete.org/ecobenin.html

4. ROUNDTABLE ON ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BENIN



Benin Ecotourism Concern (ECO-BENIN NGO) is collaborating with the local NGOs, Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), tourism operators, and other conservation organisms to hold a Roundtable on Ecotourism in Benin. As an associated event of the 2007 World Tourism Day, this Roundtable discussion will occur in Benin. The chief aim of this Roundtable is to bring important issues of Ecotourism development for environmental protection in Benin and to generate issues. This will be accomplished through building partnerships, sharing concerns and defining priority needs associated with the development of Ecotourism. The Roundtable is designed to help meet the Benin Ecotourism Concern objectives by generating technical input and developing recommendations for ecotourism development. This event will therefore differ somewhat from previous workshop exercises in Benin in that it will be designed a strategic

action plan with a monitoring plan for Ecotourism and e-tourism development in Benin, and will have a more explicit focus on building new partnerships and new mechanisms for cooperation, within Benin and foreign ecotourism and e-tourism organizations. The Roundtable will bring together experts from the International Ecotourism Society (TIES), regional and local partners who have a high degree in ecotourism planning and management. We are still raising funds to perfect the program ; so any kind of support is welcome. Contact us for more information

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- ▶ To become ECO-BENIN member, Register at www.ecobenin.africa-web.org/article.php?id_article=23

- ▶ To receive the Newsletter regularly, please go to www.ecobenin.africa-web.org/article.php?id_article=551&var_mode=calcul

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