



Skina Maseko, MIC South Africa Project Manager; Craig Newman, Johannesburg Expo Centre CEO; Jim McIntosh, Director, Business Developer and Marketing at MCI South Africa; Sonia Thomas, UFI Director of Operations; Jana Hofmann, UFI Event Manager; and Lisa Sebogodi, Managing Director at Batsumi Travel.

# UFI CONGRESS 2017

UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, has announced the theme of this year's UFI Global Congress: "Raising the Odds – Pressures and Profits in the Exhibition Industry". The event takes place 1-4 November 2017 in Johannesburg.

## Under the African Sky

Sonia Thomas, UFI Director of Operations, says, "The UFI Global Congress was organised on a few occasions in North Africa but never in South Africa, so we are delighted to be taking the Congress to South Africa for the very first time, from 1-4 November. Johannesburg is such a vibrant, colourful city, an uncut diamond with so much beauty just waiting to be revealed. The Sandton Convention Centre is an ideal location with several world-class hotels a stone's throw away from the Centre. O.R. Tambo airport boasts numerous different airline connections, and the transfer from O.R. Tambo

airport is a mere 15-minute train ride.

The South African exhibition industry is as vibrant and interesting as its population, and the UFI Global Congress delegates, of whom the majority are exhibition organisers seeking new markets and opportunities to do business, will be keen to see what the country has to offer. The 400+ delegates will come from all over the world, and will be eager to discover this rainbow nation. Johannesburg Exhibition Centre, who is the Global Congress host, will also be the venue for the Gala Dinner, "under the African sky", a night for all to remember long after the sun goes down.

We are busy putting the programme

together, the theme of which is "Raising the Odds, Pressures and Profits for the Exhibition Industry". The world faces uncertainty, and pressure from numerous sources, but in that uncertainty are positives, and ways to help the exhibition industry strengthen and grow. A whole afternoon on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November will be dedicated to exploring the South African exhibition industry and the potential for doing business in this dynamic market. Saturday will provide the ideal occasion to relax and discover "history" or "nature", with two separate tours for delegates to choose from."

Craig Newman, CEO of the Johannesburg Expo Centre and Vice Chair of UFI's Middle

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## About Johannesburg Expo Centre

For the past 30 years, the JEC has been consistently delivering events of a world-class standard. Having built a solid reputation for delivering professional and exciting entertainment, the JEC has welcomed a diverse range of exhibitions, conferences and events ranging from Rand Easter Show and Ultra festival to Church events and companies year end parties. As South Africa's largest purpose-built exhibition, congress, convention and events venue, the Johannesburg Expo Centre is a multipurpose venue offering 50 000m<sup>2</sup> of covered space and an additional 100 000m<sup>2</sup> of outdoor space.

East Africa Chapter, said at the launch of the UFI Congress, "We have reached a very important milestone, launching the 84th UFI Congress that will take place in Johannesburg. 10 years ago, when I first attended an UFI Congress, the one thing that came to mind is that I had to make it my mission to come to the South African market. At that time I realised the huge potential for investment into the South African and African market. And bringing the Congress here to Joburg is going to give the local industry the opportunity to expose themselves to investors; people who are looking to grow their markets and looking to invest into companies and organisations focused on the exhibitions industry in South Africa."

## About UFI

UFI is the leading global association of the world's tradeshow organisers and exhibition centre operators, as well as the major national and international exhibition associations, and selected partners of the exhibition industry. UFI's main goal is to represent, promote and support the business interests of its members and the exhibition industry. UFI directly represents around 50 000 exhibition industry employees globally, and also works closely with its 55 national and regional associations members. 700 member organisations in 84 countries around the world are presently signed up as members.

Over 900 international trade fairs proudly bear the UFI approved label,

