

Marriott International expected to increase Africa portfolio by 50%

Marriott International has announced its expansion plans across Africa, with five new hotel signings, which is estimated to drive investment growth of over \$250 by property owners, and generate economic activity. The additional signings will further consolidate Marriott International's presence in Ghana, Kenya, Morocco and South Africa and mark the company's entry into Mozambique.



Image Supplied - AC Hotel by Marriott Cape Town, Waterfront

The hotel signings have put Marriott International on track to increase its portfolio by 50% with over 200 hotels and 38,000 rooms by 2023; estimated to generate 12,000 new job opportunities. The expansion plans reinforce Marriott International's commitment to Africa and underscore the emphasis that countries across Africa are placing on the travel and tourism sector.

"Marriott International's acquisition of Protea Hotels followed by the acquisition of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide has given an impetus to our organic growth on the continent."

"Today we are seeing strong owner interest in our brands, backed by our combined loyalty program, the collective strength of our global platform and our highly-experienced, local teams," said Alex Kyriakidis, president and managing director, Middle East and Africa, Marriott International.

"African economies have sustained unprecedented rates of growth, which have mainly been driven by a strong domestic demand, improved macroeconomic management and increased political stability. The continent is still under capacity as far as branded hotel supply is concerned, presenting us with a fantastic opportunity to grow our brands and enhance our footprint."

Conversion strategy spurs growth

The company continues to see increased interest from owners looking to maximise the value of their assets quickly, with many conversion opportunities across Africa. "The increasing demand for conversion deals from new and existing partners is a strong reflection of Marriott International's powerful network, loyal customer base and commitment to deliver value for

owners," said Kyriakidis.

"We've developed a conversion-friendly strategy, which allows us to deliver value to our partners through a flexible, cost-efficient process that yields almost immediate results. That strategy gives our partners access to world-class reservation systems and our loyalty program."

Recent conversions to the company's brands include Four Points by Sheraton Nairobi, Hurlingham, Four Points by Sheraton Arusha, The Arusha Hotel, Tanzania and the iconic Mena House, Cairo which joined the Marriott Hotels and Resorts global brand portfolio earlier this year.

Amongst new conversion deals, Marriott International has signed the Marriott Marrakech Hotel in Morocco. With over 360 rooms, the hotel is slated to be rebranded in 2020.

Select-service brands in high demand

Marriott International's select-service brands, including Four Points by Sheraton, Protea Hotels by Marriott and AC Hotels by Marriott, are experiencing unprecedented demand with vigorous expansion in both mature and emerging markets.

The company has signed two new hotels under the Protea Hotels by Marriott brand including Protea Hotel by Marriott Accra Kotoka Airport, Ghana and Protea Hotel by Marriott Nairobi, Kenya.

Protea Hotel by Marriott Accra Kotoka Airport is planned to be a 200-room hotel strategically located in the prestigious airport residential area of Accra offering a restaurant, a lobby bar and lounge, small conference and meeting facilities, an aircrew lounge, a gym and a roof-top pool bar and lounge with uninterrupted views of the city. Protea Hotel by Marriott Nairobi will be located approximately 5km from Jomo Kenyatta International Airport on Mombasa Road.

Expected to open in 2021, the 250-room hotel will include a restaurant, a bar, a fitness centre, a pool and 600 square meters of meeting space. Earlier this year, Marriott International signed Protea Hotel by Marriott Pretoria Loftus Park, South Africa, which is slated to open later this year.

The company also signed Four Points by Sheraton Nampula, Mozambique, which will be its first hotel in the country. The hotel, expected to open in 2023, is part of a mixed-use development comprised of a shopping centre, apartments, residential homes, a hospital, offices and the hotel. The 185-room property includes 100 hotel rooms and 85 extended stay units, food and beverage facilities, conferencing facilities, a fitness centre and a pool.

Later this year, Marriott International will debut the AC by Marriott brand into Africa with the opening of the 188-room AC by Marriott Cape Town, Waterfront, conveniently located minutes away from Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, and a 25-minute drive from Cape Town International Airport. The company has also signed its second AC by Marriott hotel in Africa, AC by Marriott Umhlanga Ridge, KwaZulu Natal, Durban. The 205-room hotel will be a part of a mixed-use development comprised of offices and high-end residential apartments and boasts dramatic views of the Indian Ocean. Slated to open in 2023, the

hotel is within easy access from major highways and in close proximity to the King Shaka International Airport.

The company expects to introduce some of its other well-known select-service brands like Aloft Hotels, Element, Courtyard by Marriott and Residence Inn by Marriott with hotels already under development. It is also looking for opportunities to bring Fairfield by Marriott to the continent.

Mixed-use development projects

Speaking on the increased interest in mixed-use development projects, Kyriakidis said: "As cities evolve and grow into flourishing urban centres, we will continue to see a lot of activity in this space. An international hotel brand can bring cachet to a project that positions it significantly above its peers. Our portfolio of diverse brands lends itself to grow in all markets providing developers with the flexibility and choice to identify the right brand for the right location."

"We believe this also provides an incredible opportunity to develop branded residences with our luxury brands such as The Ritz-Carlton, St. Regis and W Hotels and we are actively pursuing this. Today our brands account for nearly 60% of the global hospitality-branded residences market."

"Africa is a very compelling story for us. With our history on the continent, our footprint and strong pipeline, a diverse portfolio of brands and a robust management infrastructure, we believe that we enjoy the trust and the confidence of Africa's hotel development community."

New hotel openings for Marriot International in Africa includes its first hotel in Mali - Sheraton Bamako - as well as the first Marriott Hotel in Accra. The company also debuted the Protea Hotel by Marriott brand in North Africa with the opening of Protea Hotel by Marriott Constantine.

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