

# Editorial

In 2013, economic data revealed that Nigeria had become the largest economy in Africa and so it is appropriate that our first theme issue from the continent addresses the question: *What are the issues facing human capital development (HCD) in the hotel industry in Nigeria and how might they be addressed?* Theme editors Belinda Nwosu (from academia) and Trevor Ward (from industry) assembled a writing team consisting of six academics, an international hospitality consultant, a government official, a hotel entrepreneur, an expatriate general manager, a former human resources director of an international hotel chain and the former chief executive of the largest quick service restaurant chain in Nigeria. I am delighted to say that the composition of the team and the blend of insights fully reflect the purpose of this journal. I should also like to thank Belinda, Trevor and their contributors for a fruitful collaborative effort and for producing an engaging and comprehensive collection of articles. Taken together, the issue offers an excellent analysis of service sector challenges in Africa's fastest growing economy.

*Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes (WHATT)* aims to make a practical and theoretical contribution to hospitality and tourism development and we seek to do this by using a key question to focus attention on an industry issue. If you would like to contribute to our work by serving as a WHATT theme editor, do please contact me.

**Richard Teare**  
*Managing Editor, WHATT*

## **What are the issues facing HCD in the hotel industry in Nigeria and how might they be addressed?**

Nigeria has an estimated population of over 170 million, a significant percentage of whom are below 25 years of age. Coupled with the huge investments in oil and gas, telecommunications, banking, agricultural and tourism sectors, Nigeria is the largest and fastest growing market in Africa. Specifically, in the hotel industry in Africa, Nigeria has the highest number of planned new international hotels in the development pipeline on the continent. All of the major hotel chains are actively seeking to expand their presence in the country or to establish a foothold, especially in Lagos and Abuja. These developments are stimulating demand for human capital to support this growth, but where and how this human capital will emerge has no ready answer. There is a chronic shortage of people with the right industry-based education and training to occupy operational and managerial positions, not only in these international hotels but also in the myriad of unbranded hotels that are being developed by local entrepreneurs. Concerns have been raised about the absence of a strategic government policy for HCD in Nigeria's tourism sector, a task that individual businesses address in a fragmented and inefficient manner – and sometimes not at all. Likewise, a weak regulatory framework has given rise to imbalances in the employment relationship and business operations that do not create an enabling environment, a primary condition for developing knowledge, skills and attitude to acceptable service levels. These are just a few of the concerns about HCD in the hotel industry in Africa's largest economy, an industry which has the capacity to create much-needed employment. This theme issue aims to explore the strategic question: *What are the issues facing HCD in the hotel*

*industry in Nigeria and how might they be addressed?* There are ten articles from stakeholders in academia, government and industry, and taken together they offer a robust discussion on an issue of pressing concern and of ever-increasing importance. It is our hope that you find this issue insightful and helpful in understanding our complex but fascinating country. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our contributors for finding the time to complete their articles despite very busy schedules. We would also like to thank our reviewers who provided constructive feedback and assisted us in the task of proof-reading and improving the contents of this issue.

**Belinda Nwosu and Trevor Ward**  
*Theme Editors*

### About the Theme Editors

Belinda Nwosu FIH is Head of Academics at Wavecrest College of Hospitality, Lagos Nigeria. She received a Bachelor degree in Mathematics and Statistics from the University of Lagos, Nigeria, and another in Hospitality Management from Manchester Metropolitan University; she also received a Master's degree in Hospitality Management from the University of West London (formerly Thames Valley University), UK. Since 1998, she has specialised in developing manpower within the hospitality industry in Nigeria and the UK particularly in skills training centres. Her key competencies are in workforce-based research, curriculum development, training needs assessments and delivery, and education-industry collaborations. In 2014, she successfully negotiated the memorandum of agreement between InterContinental Hotel Group and Wavecrest College, thus establishing the first IHG Academy in West Africa. Her experience includes advising and delivering training solutions to numerous hospitality organisations in the accommodation and foodservice sectors. She has been actively involved in the hospitality conference circuit in the UK, Croatia, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates. Belinda's research contribution includes a publication on women's empowerment through hospitality education in an international journal and co-authored a book chapter on responsible governance and the internal stakeholder. She is a fellow of the Institute of Hospitality, UK. Belinda is the Area Consultant for West Africa and a board member of the European Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education, the official federation for Europe, the Mediterranean Basin and Africa of International CHRIE. She can be contacted at: [belinda.n@wavecrest.edu.ng](mailto:belinda.n@wavecrest.edu.ng)

Trevor Ward FIH IHSC is a specialist consultant in the hospitality, leisure and real estate industries. He is the Principal of the W Hospitality Group and a Founding Member of Hotel Partners Africa, with offices in the UK, Dubai, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. He started his consultancy career in 1983, having previously completed a university degree in hotel management at the University of Surrey and worked in hotel management positions in the UK. From the late 1980s, he has specialised in the provision of advisory services to clients in developing countries, and since 2003 has been based in Nigeria, advising clients there and throughout Africa. His international experience includes advising clients on hotel and tourism development in more than 80 countries in Europe, North and South America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia. With a special focus on sub-Saharan Africa, he is working with many of the international hotel groups who are seeking a presence there, from the oil-rich countries of the west to the tourism hotspots of the south and east. He is regarded as one of the foremost experts on the hotel industry in sub-Saharan Africa,

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and is engaged primarily in development consultancy ranging from investment appraisals to operator selection, owner’s representation and asset management, valuations, financing, development management, procurement and agency. In addition to his advisory work, Trevor is an active member of the Institute of Hospitality, for which he is their Ambassador for Africa and of the International Society of Hospitality Consultants. Trevor is a regular speaker at industry conferences and writes in various professional and Africa-focused journals, including the *Hotel Yearbook*.