

# A SINGLE UNIVISA FOR FIVE SOUTHERN AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO BE INTRODUCED SOON



Five southern African countries, including Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, recently announced their commitment to expand the use of a special common visa known as the Univisa. The Univisa allows entry into multiple countries and is currently utilized in Zambia and Zimbabwe, enabling day trips to Botswana via the Kazungula border post.

The regional leaders intended to extend Univisa to other conservation zone states and the Southern African economic bloc. This move aims to facilitate the movement of tourists and increase regional arrivals. Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema and Botswana's Vice President, Slumber Tsogwane, **confirmed their countries' support for adopting this transnational visa.**

The Kaza member states have taken a bold step in their conservation efforts. They have decided to urge the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna) to lift the ban on the trade in elephants and ivory. CITES, an intergovernmental organization with 184 members, regulates the wildlife trade to protect certain species from overexploitation. The organization banned the trade in African elephant ivory in 1989 after the animal's population declined sharply over the previous decade. With their stockpiles of ivory worth \$1 billion, the Kaza states are looking to trade this resource to fund conservation programs. This potential economic boost could be a game-changer in their conservation efforts, offering a glimmer of hope for the future of wildlife in the region.

These five southern African countries are not alone in pursuing regional visa projects. Earlier this year, Thailand launched a single Schengen-style visa project that would allow foreign visitors to enter five other Southeast Asian countries: Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, and Vietnam. This move is part of a growing trend in the region, **with GCC (the Gulf Cooperation Council) also approving a similar project for a tourist visa that would be valid in its six member states** (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman). It is expected to be launched by 2025. This trend is set to revolutionize travel in these regions, offering a new level of convenience and accessibility for tourists.

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