



Executive Council

Ninety-fourth session
Campeche, Mexico, 23-25 October 2012
Provisional agenda item 2

CE/94/2
Madrid, 22 August 2012
Original: English

Communication of the Chair

Message of the Chair of the UNWTO Executive Council, Honourable Danson Mwazo, Minister for Tourism, Kenya

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I take this opportunity to welcome you to the 94th session of the Executive Council of this great organization, in the beautiful city of Campeche, Mexico. I wish to thank the President of Mexico, His Excellency Felipe Calderón, for the support he continues to give to the UNWTO. I particularly want to thank him for being the first president to join our Global Campaign, through which we encourage government leaders to appreciate the role of tourism in the general economy and give it the appropriate support. This confirms the Mexican government's recognition of the importance of tourism in its economy. On the same vein, I thank the Mexican government for hosting this session of the Executive Council.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all need to seriously work towards realizing the mandate of the UNWTO, which is to ensure sustainable development of the tourism sector. This is because the number of people crossing international borders is rapidly increasing, as seen in the first four months of this year during which international tourist arrivals increased by 5% and are bound to go higher during the year moving towards the 1 billion mark projected by the UNWTO.

It is my hope that this trend of increased arrivals and receipts will in the future be felt across all destinations. International tourist receipts in 2011 hit a record US\$1,030 billion, a large share went to Europe at 45%, Asia and the Pacific at 28%, the Americas 19% while the Middle East and Africa only had 4% and 3% respectively. According to the forecast we made for this year, we are expecting the emerging economies to regain the growth lead with it being stronger in Asia and the Pacific and Africa (4% to 6%) followed by the Americas and Europe (2% to 4%). We should work towards ensuring that the receipts to these economies grow close, if not equal, to what the developed economies get from tourism. This, I believe, should be one of the key tasks of this great organization.



We will be able to realize these numbers and perhaps more if we enhance and ease travel facilitation. We should continue with the efforts of convincing countries against the imposition of illegal taxes on the industry such as the Air Passenger Duty and reviewing the lengthy visa procedures which all hinder travel. I rally all member countries to work towards the E-visa regime which I mentioned in my communication during the 93rd session. I believe this will dramatically increase the number of travellers and consequently have a highly positive impact on the world economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I take this opportunity to appreciate the good work being done by the Working Group on consumer protection and believe that they will come up with a generally acceptable document. This will make the tourism industry safer and more organized in the event of unexpected disasters.

We all celebrated World Tourism Day in September under the theme, Tourism and Sustainable Energy: Powering Sustainable Development. I hope that we all put much thought to the shared best practices in energy sustainability in the tourism sector. The UNWTO, as the specialized UN agency responsible for promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, should ensure that all Member States develop and adopt uniform best practices in this area.

It is my wish that as we work towards increasing global tourist arrivals, we will put more efforts towards the protection of destinations and their tourism resources for posterity. This is the only way that we can ensure sustainability for the tourism industry for current and future travellers. On the same breath, we should ensure that the local communities are protected from exploitation in order for them to constantly appreciate and support tourism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As members suggested in the 93rd session, we have reviewed the agenda of this meeting in order to give more time for members to debate and deliberate on substantive issues and other matters of special interest to the members. This, however, should not be at the expense of the foresight role expected of this Council in guiding the operations of the Secretariat. I call for your engagement and full participation in this meeting so as to realize its objective and urge you to also present issues from your various countries that will help the Organization deliver its mandate effectively. As tourists to this country, please also take time to explore and enjoy the nature and traditions of the Mayans in this beautiful city.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I take this opportunity to thank all the Member States for having confidence in Kenya and indeed Africa and electing us to chair the sessions of this important arm of the UNWTO. I thank all of you and especially the Secretariat for the support shown that ensured that my chairmanship was successful. I believe that we were up to the challenge and wish to reaffirm our support for the incoming chair.