



2017
INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
FOR DEVELOPMENT



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ARTS

CONCEPT NOTE

**International Conference on Promoting Sustainable Tourism, A Tool for
Inclusive Growth and Community Engagement in Africa**

Lusaka, Zambia 16-18 November 2017

*Official Event of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for
Development, 2017*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the framework of the 70th United Nations General Assembly in December 2015, the year 2017 was designated as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. This achievement is an important milestone in the 2030 UN Agenda and in the progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and recognizing tourism as a pillar of development. The Republic of Zambia being part of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation joins the rest of the world in commemorating 2017 as a special year dedicated to tourism by undertaking activities that promote tourism as one of the key drivers of responsible and sustainable development.

The International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017 (IY 2017) presents a unique opportunity to raise awareness on the contribution of sustainable tourism for development among public and private sector decision-makers and overall the public. This is further achieved while mobilizing all stakeholders work together in making tourism a catalyst for positive change. Further, the IY 2017 provides the opportunity for destinations *inter alia*:

- a) To increase the visibility of the tourism sector by highlighting its potential to contribute positively to sustainable development;
- b) To maximize the positive and minimize challenging sides of tourism and how the positives can be enhanced and the challenges being addressed;
- c) To raise awareness about the huge potential of outbound and inbound tourism and how this can be converted to the benefit of Africa in general and Zambia in particular.

In the context of the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development aims to support a change in policies, business practices and consumer behaviour towards a more sustainable tourism sector that can contribute to the SDGs.

The International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 will promote tourism's role in the following five key areas:

- (1) Inclusive and sustainable economic growth;
- (2) Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction;
- (3) Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change;
- (4) Cultural values, diversity and heritage;
- (5) Mutual understanding, peace and security.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Tourism is one of the fastest growing and most important economic sectors in the world and significant growth is forecast to continue, especially for emerging destinations. In 2016, 1,235 million tourists crossed international borders bringing tremendous benefits to communities, economies and societies. The sector generates US\$ 3.2 billion of spending every day globally, represents 30% of world trade in services, produces 10% of world GDP and contributes to 1 in 10 jobs worldwide. By 2030, UNWTO forecasts international tourist arrivals to reach 1.8 billion (UNWTO Tourism Towards 2030).

Besides the positive contribution to economic growth, tourism also plays a crucial role in enhancing conservation and financing of the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, as well as in contributing to social inclusion and decent work in destinations.

In Africa the tourism sector remains a strong driver of development, creating opportunities for millions of host communities and providing revenues for environmental preservation. From 2000 to 2014, international tourists arrivals move up from 26 million international tourists in 2000 to 58 million in 2016, representing 8.5% of Africa's GDP, creating 1 in 14 jobs (21 million jobs in 2014¹) in the region and contributing to infrastructure development. According to UNWTO forecasts, the number of tourists will double by 2030 to reach 134 million. In 2016, Sub-Saharan Africa recorded the highest growth across world sub regions (+11%). Returns on investment in Africa are among the highest in the world (World Bank, 2014). Africa has unique assets but has yet to reinforce its position in the global market as shown by the numbers with untapped potential products such as eco-tourism, beach tourism, business travel, diaspora tourism, nature/adventure tourism, cultural and historical tourism that need to be developed and marketed adequately to maximize the benefits of the sector.

Furthermore, in their commitment to sustainable tourism, several African member states through the coordination of UNWTO and at the initiative of the Kingdom of Morocco, adopted in November 2016 the African Charter on Sustainable and Responsible Tourism on the margins of the twenty-second session of the Conference of the **Parties** to the United Nations Framework Convention Climate Change (**COP 22**) held in Marrakech. In addition, since 2017 has been designated as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development and sustainable tourism in the region is been put increasingly at the core of inclusive growth by encouraging best practices to be shared among public and private stakeholders.

In Zambia, tourism is mainly nature based and the majority of the country's biodiversity is contained within this extensive wildlife estate which accounts for about 80 percent of Zambia's tourism activities. There are 20 National Parks and 36 Game Management Areas which cover 31.4 per cent of the Country's total landmass. The major attractions are wildlife and one of the Seven Wonders of the World which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Mighty Victoria Falls.

The country is endowed with vast untouched wilderness areas such the Rift Valley of the Luangwa River, the Zambezi River system and its escarpments, mountain highlands such as the Nyika and Mafinga, vast wetlands such as the Bangweulu, Kafue and Zambezi flood plains and the magnificent waterfalls in the northern part of Zambia.

There are over 7000 natural and cultural heritage sites which include archaeological, historical, geomorphological, geological and anthropological sites. Compounded with the warm and welcoming

¹ Economic Development in Africa Report 2017, UNCTAD 2017

people, a rich and diverse cultural heritage and a stable and peaceful political environment, the country has great tourism development potential to attract international tourists.

Given the above, government has embarked on transforming the tourism sector into a viable and sustainable economic industry that will contribute more and more to Zambia's Growth Domestic Product (GDP), create jobs for the population and ultimately lead to poverty reduction and wealth creation. Zambia will draw upon its comparative advantage and global market drivers.

The goals of sustainable tourism are:

- i. To develop a greater awareness and understanding of the significant contributions that tourism can make to the environment, people, and the economy;
- ii. To promote equity in development; to improve the quality of life of the host community;
- iii. To provide a high quality of experience for the visitor and
- iv. To maintain the quality of the environment on which the foregoing goals depend on.

Achieving the above goals requires a vision which encompasses a larger time and space context than that traditionally used for community planning and decision making. The demands for sustainable tourism development is growing hence the need to link all aspects of tourism to economic sustainability, ecological sustainability, long-term viability of tourism and the acknowledgement of tourism as a part of the overall strategy for sustainable development

3.0 PURPOSE

The aim of this concept paper is to position Zambia and the African continent as a region that supports and promotes Sustainable tourism Development which brings economic, social and environmental benefits to the local communities. Furthermore, it is an opportunity for Zambia to showcase some of the activities that are being carried out under the banner of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017 with a focus on the South Luangwa National Park and the Pamodzi Carnival, an annual international cultural festival held in Lusaka, Zambia.

The celebration of these activities is the IY 2017 flagship event for Africa which will be featured in the final report of the IY2017 publication on sustainable tourism for development that will be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly in 2018.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

Taking advantage of this rare opportunity presented by the UN, it is proposed that:

4.1 South Luangwa National Park is declared an International Sustainable Wildlife Park. By doing so, Zambia will be setting the precedent and will be the first country on the African continent if not the world over to declare its national park and the surrounding areas as Sustainable Wildlife Park. This will ensure that the National Park remains a natural wildlife sanctuary that is managed in a sustainable manner.

4.2 The International Conference is aimed at discussing ways and means of making tourism work particularly for the local community who have been targeted as major partners and beneficiaries. The theme will be centred on “Promoting Sustainable Tourism, a Tool for Inclusive Growth and Community Engagement in Africa”.

4.3 The annual Pamodzi Carnival will be officially launched within the proposed event. This will showcase Zambia’s cultural heritage products and ultimately market Zambia as a preferred tourist destination. Members from the region are encouraged to participate actively in this carnival and showcase the cultural attributes of the African continent.

5.0 OBJECTIVE

The main objective is to raise awareness and discuss about the contribution of Sustainable Tourism for Development, at a local and regional level and engage decision makers from the public private sector as well as stakeholders to drive tourism as a tool for inclusive development for Africa. Moreover, the event will serve to foster change in policies, business practices and consumer behaviour toward a more sustainable tourism sector in the region.

6.0 WHY SOUTH LUANGWA NATIONAL PARK AND PAMODZI CARNIVAL

6.1 SOUTH LUANGWA NATIONAL PARK

Established in 1938 as a game reserve and becoming a national park in 1972, South Luangwa National Park covers a land mass of 9.059 km². The Park is considered as one of the Africa’s remaining ecologically unspoilt wilderness areas. Of the three Zambian National parks located in the Luangwa Valley at the southern end of the Great Rift Valley, South Luangwa is the most popular and accessible National park. The meandering Luangwa River has created a number of oxbow lagoons over time, adding to the spectacular natural setting of this unique Zambian and African wildlife sanctuary.

Many safari and other travel experts have christened South Luangwa to be one of the greatest wildlife sanctuaries in the world, and not without reason. The concentration of animals around the Luangwa River, and its oxbow lagoons, is among the most intense in Africa.

The Luangwa River is the most intact major river system in Africa and is the life- blood of this 9059 km² Park. The Park hosts a wide variety of wildlife, birds and vegetation. The now southern African famous ‘walking safari’ originated in this Park and is still one of the finest ways to experience Africa’s pristine wilderness first-hand. The changing seasons add to the Park’s richness, ranging from; dry, bare bushveld in the winter, to a lush, green wonderland in the summer months. There are 60 different animal species with a large population of leopards that offer visitors spectacular sightings in the park, hence earning itself the nickname: ‘The valley of the leopard’. The Park also boasts of housing over 400 out of the 732 different birds, species, including 39 birds of prey and 47 migrant species. The only notable exception is the rhino, sadly poached to extinction.

The other unique attribute of this valuable park is the rich Zambian bush vegetation. Some magnificent trees and plants grow in the Luangwa Valley and it certainly adds to the richness of one’s experience to be able to recognize the different tree species and to discover exotic wildflowers.

Among the more common trees in the valley are the mopane, leadwood, winterthorn, the tall vegetable ivory palm, the marula and the magnificent tamarind tree. There are some magnificent baobab

specimens and a few large ebony forests to admire.

With the above credentials, there is no doubt that the South Luangwa National Park needs to be recognised as a sustainable destination and be managed as such.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The main conclusions will emerge from the conference debates followed by the endorsement by all participants of the declaration of Promoting Sustainable Tourism, a tool for inclusive growth and community engagement in Africa.