



DECLARATION

Recognising the importance of biodiversity, national parks and protected areas for tourism and the commitment to sustainable tourism adopted in the outcome document of the Rio + 20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Recognising the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity, and on-going work in this area,

The First Pan-African Conference on development of sustainable tourism in African national parks and protected areas, met in Arusha from 15th to 18th October 2012 :

Considering the extreme diversity of nature parks and protected areas in Africa in terms of management style, governance, infrastructure, services, marketing, attendance, economic benefits as well as flora, fauna and countryside particularities,

Considering that the experience of several African countries shows sustainable tourism management in parks and protected areas may contribute to:

- Funds to support biodiversity conservation, protect endangered species and develop public interest for development and sustainable tourism,
- Improve the quality of life of local communities and effective poverty reduction,
- Create opportunities for employment and decent jobs,
- Create small and medium enterprises linked to tourism,
- Provide resources to the relevant States,
- Support social stability in relevant regions and countries.

Considering that Africa's potential in terms of biodiversity could be considerably developed sustainably and responsibly for the well-being of the local and communities,

Considering that the dissemination of best practices, exchange of knowledge and sharing of experiences between African countries constitute a key element of development of tourism in parks and protected areas;

1. Encourages African governments to consider the role and potential for sustainable tourism in national parks and protected areas as a priority in their national policies,
2. Recommends countries to have high consideration of issues related to good governance of sustainable tourism and particularly,
 - The need to directly associate local communities in management of parks and protected areas to ensure that they gain concrete benefits in terms of employment and income generation,
 - The need of coordinate and consolidate public policies and strategies related to tourism and park management,
 - The need to create synergies among the relevant stakeholders, and especially between the public authorities and private sector.
3. Suggests that countries consider opportunities for collaboration on ways to improve policies for and management of tourism in National Parks and Protected Areas, and to exchange knowledge and technical expertise towards this end; and notes the potential for countries that have more limited experience in these areas to benefit from best practices elsewhere in Africa,
4. Requests the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), in association with its member States as well as concerned International Organisations and NGOs, to consider the creation of observatories to develop scientific, environmental, economic knowledge and social awareness regarding national parks and protected areas in Africa,
5. Decides that the conference to meet biannually on a rotational basis in order to maintain a permanent forum on the subject.