



## **REGIONAL TRAINING SEMINAR ON TOURISM POLICY AND STRATEGY FOR EAST AFRICA**

**Opening remarks by Mr. Helder Tomas  
UNWTO Deputy Regional Director for Africa**

Honourable Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism  
Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and  
Tourism  
Directors and Chiefs  
Dear Guests and Participants  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me particular pleasure to say a few words at the opening of this Regional Training Seminar on Tourism Policy and Strategy for East Africa. The first reason for my pleasure obviously lies in the fact that it has been quite a long time since we started planning for this event, and the second reason is that this event provides me the opportunity to once again visit this beautiful country of Tanzania.

But before I proceed, I would like on behalf of the UNWTO Secretary-General and the entire UNWTO family, to convey our condolences to the families of the victims of the Zanzibar ferry boat tragedy two days ago.

Minister,

I would like to start by thanking Tanzania, and you in particular, for hosting this seminar on behalf of the East Africa region, and for putting together all the necessary technical and logistical conditions for its success. In fact it comes as no surprise if we look back at the successful UNWTO events held in Tanzania in the last years.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to start by sharing with you some thoughts about the evolution and importance of the tourism sector in general.

At the time the World Tourism Organization was founded in 1975, the tourism industry was only beginning to emerge as an important economic sector. In that year, there were 222 million international tourist arrivals, and 75 per cent of these arrivals were concentrated in only 15 countries, almost all from the developed world.

- Currently, tourism is recognized to be a major economic and social activity in most countries;
- International tourist arrivals have more than quadrupled since 1975 and will soon reach 1 billion;
- International tourism receipts rose from a modest US\$ 40 billion in 1975 to US\$ 944 billion in 2008, representing now a significant proportion of international trade in services;
- The contribution of tourism to GDP is now measurable and it reaches substantive percentage points in a number of developed and developing countries alike.
- In employment terms, tourism has been lately one of the few sectors in the economies of many countries which has offered the opportunity of creating new jobs, especially for women and young people, for a wide range of skills and at all levels, and for promoting entrepreneurial capabilities through the creation of small and micro enterprises;
- The growth rate of tourism employment creation in the OECD countries, for instance, has been double that of the economy as a whole during the first decade of the current century.

In developed countries tourism is now accessible to all layers of population thanks to a significant reduction in its relative costs. Developing and least developed countries on their part attract today nearly 50 per cent of total international tourist arrivals, against less than

20% in 1975, and in many of them tourism has become the main source of foreign exchange earnings and a key sector in terms of employment. Indeed, it is now widely recognised that tourism is the only service industry in which developing and least developed countries enjoy a comparative advantage. The so-called emerging economies have become major tourist-generating countries too, and their share in international tourism is growing, attracting the attention of many destinations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The training seminar we are starting today is part of the UNWTO assistance and commitment with the development of tourism in the African countries. It is part of our contribution to the Africa's efforts to achieve sustainable development, that have traditionally been hindered by conflicts, insufficient investment, limited market access and many other constraints. The Millennium Development Goals, adopted by all 189 member-states of the United Nations, has put poverty reduction at the top of the list of the most crucial challenges we are facing. Poverty reduction, education, gender equality, the empowerment of women and environmental sustainability are millennium goals related to tourism and included in the programme of work of UNWTO.

How does tourism fit into this picture? Well, as a global business and one of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy, it is right in the middle of the picture. It is right in the middle of all the Global Challenges that are shaking our world. It is in the middle of the debate about saving our planet and related to issues as far ranging as water pollution, congestion, global warming and climate change.

The UNWTO is responding to these challenges through a number of programmes and initiatives taking especially into consideration the needs of the developing countries. Let me share with you some of these initiatives:

- ***Global Leaders for Tourism Campaign (Tourism Golden Book)*** – this initiative has been launched within the objective of positioning tourism as a priority in the global agenda. The campaign is a joint initiative by UNWTO and WTTC. Both organizations are presenting an Open Letter to Heads of State and Government worldwide, seeking their acknowledgement of the relevance of travel and

tourism in facing today's global challenges. Presidents Zuma, Guebuza, Kibaki, and Compaoré.

- ***ST-EP (Sustainable Tourism for the Elimination of Poverty)*** – Part of the development assistance extended by UNWTO to its least developed and developing Member States referring to the alleviation of poverty through sustainable forms of tourism. The initiative was launched five years ago and includes actions such as awareness-raising, capacity building and over 90 pilot projects implemented in numerous Member States, mainly in Africa, Latin America and Asia.
- ***UNWTO Technical Product Portfolio*** - Technical Cooperation is core to UNWTO's programme of work. The wide range of technical services and products that the Secretariat has offered, for the last 30 years or so, to developing and developed Member States has now been standardised and gathered in one document: the UNWTO Technical Product Portfolio. A document which will continuously be completed by the Secretariat in order to respond to new needs expressed by the Members.
- ***Platma*** ([www.platma.org](http://www.platma.org)) - the online professional network for the UNWTO Affiliate Members has been under development for the past year and was officially launched at the Spanish Tourism Fair (FITUR) in Madrid, January 2011. The network, which is now open for use by all Affiliates has been developed to help Members share knowledge, experiences and best practices.
- ***Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*** - The Code provides a comprehensive set of basic principles whose purpose is to serve as a frame of reference for the different stakeholders in the tourism sector: governments, industry and travellers alike. The Code implementation is coordinated by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics. This Committee is an independent and impartial body made up of eminent personalities of high moral character and recognized competence who serve in the Committee in a strictly personal capacity. It features a balanced distribution of representatives from the public and private sector with outstanding credentials, including leading figures from the academia and the civil society.

Allow me at the juncture to express our warm thanks to Minister Magie, for accepting to be one of the Guests of Honour, alongside Her Majesty Princess Leticia of Spain, the Honourable Jorge Sampaio, High Representative of the United Nations Alliance for Civilizations, among other internationally renowned personalities at the forthcoming First International Congress of Tourism and Ethics, to be held later this week, in Madrid, Spain. Thank you Minister.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to end this intervention, by saying that the format of this training seminar is a result of the first meeting of the East Africa Ministers of Tourism held last June in Mombasa, Kenya, in the occasion of the UNWTO Executive Council meeting. In that Ministerial meeting it was clear that the way forward for tourism in East Africa, and all Africa in general, is through a very close and smart regional cooperation. The participants present in the room this morning reflect the spirit of the Mombasa meeting.

The programme of the seminar, which combines theory and practice, was carefully prepared by our colleagues of the UNWTO Themis Foundation, with the assistance of the two very capable and efficient experts who will share with you in these coming busy days, their knowledge and a lot of important and useful information.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These introductory remarks were intended to expose you to the big picture – the world in which the tourism industry must operate. This training seminar will not directly address all these issues, but deal more specifically with the knowledge and tools you need to be a good tourism professional. However, good professionals will not ignore the social, environmental and economic challenges we face globally. Good professionals should care about people and the future of our world. Good professionals – I would dare to say – can only be called good (a moral and ethical concept) if the ultimate goal of their work and efforts is to help make our world a better place.

I wish you all a very interesting and rewarding seminar. Thank you!