



UNWTO COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Fifty-third meeting
Calabar, Nigeria, 25 June 2012

CAF/53/6.2.2
Madrid, May 2012
Original: English

Item 6 of the agenda: Presentation of global and regional initiatives

Item 6.2: Regional initiatives

Item 6.2.2

FIRST PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON: “SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN AFRICAN NATIONAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES”

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General informs the Members of the Commission about the technical note of the first Pan-African conference on: “Sustainable Tourism Management in African National Parks and Protected Areas: Challenges and Opportunities”.



FIRST PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON: “SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN AFRICAN NATIONAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES”

TECHNICAL NOTE

I. Introduction and background

Nature-based tourism (and/or eco-tourism) is a large and growing global industry, partially dependent upon the attributes of the natural environment and biodiversity (wildlife and scenery) which represents one of Africa’s strategic competitive advantages as a destination.

If managed by integrated and efficient strategies, and leveraged responsibly for tourism, parks can make a significant contribution to a country’s economy with its benefits for job creation, foreign exchange generation and the stimulation of SME’s. Hence, tourism will also provide additional resources for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of public and private land.

The balance between environmental and cultural protection and tourism development involves important policy and management issues as well as a regulatory framework in order to sustain high quality visitor experience.

Despite the high potential for a sustainable tourism development, many of Africa’s National parks and protected areas suffer from constraints like:

- Lack of public policy recognition,
- Lack of integrated planning,
- Lack of effective governance,
- Limited management expertise and commercial skills,
- Limited scientific expertise for biodiversity management,
- Poor infrastructure and transport facilities,
- Inadequate tourism products and distribution channels,
- Poor accommodation and lack of quality in superstructure,
- Limited economic and social benefits to the surrounding communities,
- Negative consumer image on safety and security.

II. Objectives of the conference

The conference aims to encourage professional approach to:

- Better position “park tourism” as an essential an integrated component of overall national park management in Africa,
- Acquire an overview of the current challenges in terms of demand and supply chain,
- Discover how to re-engineer park management structures through new partnership and business models,
- Provide insight into the necessary tools to maximize the economic and social benefits to the local communities.

III. Main themes

The conference is planned to take place over 2 days and together with a theoretical background, there will be presentations and discussions representing success stories and good practices on the following themes and areas:

- Government policies and tourism master plans recognizing national parks as tourism destinations, “responsible tourism” approach,
- Biodiversity management,
- Market intelligence, segmentation, statistics and reliable analysis,
- Product portfolios and new product development,
- Distribution channels and regional synergies for promotion,
- Accessibility and infrastructure development,
- Soft investment incentives,
- Corporate management (parks and protected areas) PPPs and governance models, legislative framework,
- Image management,
- Economic and social benefits to the local community,
- Quality management,
- Skill development,
- Safety and security,
- Potential of trans-boundary parks.

IV. The targeted participants

- National Tourism Administrations,
- Regional and local authorities,
- Public (Government) authorities in charge of Environment, Forestry, Wildlife, Agriculture, etc.
- Public authorities in charge of transport,
- National park managers (public and / or private) and related institutions and networks,
- Scientists and experts who collaborate with National Parks,
- Relevant national and international private operators (transport, tour operators, accommodation facilities, tour guides, etc.)
- Potential investors,
- Donors, NGOs, foundations.