



## **UNWTO Commission for Africa**

Fifty-fourth meeting  
Tunis, Tunisia, 24 April 2013

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### **Item 2 of the provisional agenda**

#### **COMMUNICATION OF THE CAF CHAIRMAN**

#### **Note by the Secretary-General**

The Secretary-General presents to the Members of the Commission the communication of the CAF Chairman.

**BURKINA FASO**  
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**54<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UNWTO CAF  
Communication of the Chair of the CAF  
Mr. Baba HAMA,  
Minister of Culture and Tourism of Burkina Faso**

**Mr. Jamel Gamra, Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Tunisia,**

- **Dr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General of the UNWTO,**
- **Dear fellow Ministers responsible for tourism,**
- **Distinguished guests,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**
- **Private-sector tourism and hospitality professionals,**
- **Dear Participants,**

The year 2012 ended on a hopeful note for the global tourism industry and particularly for Africa.

For the first time in the history of tourism, the number of international tourist arrivals surpassed the one billion mark in 2012, reaching 1 billion 35 million tourists, as compared to 996 million tourists in 2011.

As for Africa, it exceeded 50 million tourists for the first time in 2012, with precisely 52.3 million arrivals, an increase of 6.3% compared to 2011.

In this regard, I welcome the resumption of tourism in the countries of North Africa that have been severely tested by the Arab Spring; this is the case of Tunisia and Egypt, which recorded growth in tourist arrivals of 33% and 15%, respectively.

These positive results are the result of our combined efforts, which have helped to make our destinations more visible and more attractive.

UNWTO forecasts indicate that our continent will receive 134 million international tourists by 2030, 2.5 times the current number of international tourist arrivals.

Political stability, the promotion of tourism, and its recognition by many of our States as an essential sector for socio-economic development are some of the main factors contributing to this success of African tourism.

Nevertheless, we have to recognize that despite this progress Africa's share of world tourism remains marginal. In 2012, the continent accounted for only 5.1% of worldwide tourist arrivals. To this we must also add the huge disparity that exists between the different regions of Africa in terms of tourism development and the distribution of tourist flows, notably if we compare North and Southern Africa to West and Central Africa.

Notwithstanding the recognition of tourism as an important factor in economic growth and job creation in the region, African destinations, particularly those in sub-

Saharan Africa, still have to face many challenges in order to compete at the international level.

Among other difficulties, I would point out:

- the low level of development of road and rail infrastructure, and of information and communication technologies;
- the low quality of professional services;
- the absence of mechanisms for financing tourism industries;
- insufficiently developed occupational training and human resources shortcomings in terms of quantity and quality;
- the low visibility of our destinations in the main generating markets;
- the weakness of air connectivity and the prohibitive cost of air transport;
- the precariousness of employment in the sector;
- the issue of security, with the threat of terrorism and political crises;
- the poor image conveyed by the international media about our destinations;
- visa requirements (procedures and costs);
- etc.

As you can see, there are many difficulties. That is why I welcome the choice of theme for the international conference, namely “**Current Challenges and Issues of African Tourism: What solutions can be adopted to ensure its competitiveness?**” It will undoubtedly allow us to reflect upon certain issues related to the development of African tourism and to explore avenues to resolve them.

I also propose that, upon the conclusion of our work, a working group be established to further reflect on the findings and recommendations in order to draw up an action plan for implementation in the short term, with a view to meeting the challenge of the competitiveness of our destinations.

Much remains to be done in the field of tourism investment. I would like, in this regard, to congratulate the General Secretariat for conducting the survey on Members’ priorities for the period 2014-2015, which has revealed a number of areas considered to be priorities by our African countries, including capacity building to ensure competitiveness and quality, the accessibility of our destinations, improving tourism statistics, and especially tourism investment. With two-thirds of the respondents—the majority being developing countries—not receiving aid for tourism through public development assistance, this is an issue that should be seriously tackled.

That is why I would like to call for increased support on the part of the UNWTO to help us in identifying sources of funding and in strengthening our national tourism institutions’ capabilities to mobilize funding to meet the needs of our countries in terms of tourism development.

In dealing with the issue of the financing of our sector, I believe it is also important that a particular effort should be undertaken to find mechanisms of financial support at the African level (creation of an African tourism investment bank example).

Burkina Faso, for its part, is fully prepared to make its contribution in such working groups.

Despite the difficulties mentioned, the prospects for the sub-Saharan region of Africa are encouraging. The region as a whole registered 33.8 million international tourists in 2012, which represents an increase of 5% compared to 2011.

This trend is expected to continue in view of the sub-regional policies developed for tourism in West Africa. Indeed, the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) in 2010 adopted a Common Tourism Policy which aims to make the Union a major hub for tourism development Africa. As part of the implementation of this policy, a Regional Tourism Development Programme called PRD TOUR was developed covering the period 2012-2014, whose long-term vision is to make the community space an integrated, attractive and accessible market that offers diversified, high-quality tourism products that are visible and competitive in the generating markets.

Moreover, at the level of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a regional policy on tourism is also being developed.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask for greater engagement by the UNWTO in supporting us in the implementation of these different sub-regional policies.

I welcome the collaboration between the UEMOA Commission and the UNWTO which has resulted in the joint realization of a study on the needs for tourism and hospitality training of the UEMOA countries between now and 2020, whose dissemination workshop was held in March in Lomé.

I personally want to thank the Secretary-General of the UNWTO, Mr. Taleb Rifai for the support from which Burkina Faso has benefited in the context of the implementation of the National Tourism Policy, and in particular the development plan for the tourism zone of the West, the rehabilitation of the Sahel circuit and the improvement of the data collection system for tourism statistics.

I am convinced that if we work with synergy in our actions, we will succeed in making Africa a prime tourist destination, and benefit from the opportunity presented by new markets such as China, which has become the leading tourist generating market in the world in 2012. This ambition is realistic, in my view, because the tourism statistics of 2012 confirmed the rise of the emerging countries, which achieved the best performance with growth of 4.1%, as compared to 3.6% growth in the advanced economies.

With growth of 6.3% in international tourist arrivals recorded in 2012, Africa has positioned itself as one of the most promising regions for tourism companies and entrepreneurs.

In this regard, I would like to congratulate the UNWTO on its initiative of setting up the platform for exchange and business cooperation in the field of tourism between African countries and Spanish companies that is the Tourism Investment and Business Forum for Africa, INVESTOUR. The regular holding of this forum since its inception in 2010 is a point of honour that must be credited to the UNWTO and partners such as Casa Africa and the FITUR International Tourism Fair.

During the fourth edition of this forum, which took place in January 2013, a recommendation regarding the follow-up to the meetings was made. I suggest that for the next edition, an evaluation report of the INVESTOUR forum could be prepared, quantifying its impact in terms of partnerships formed and investments made; and this could be presented in the form of a communication. This will allow us to eventually have a catalogue of success stories to further mobilize partnerships.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming the readiness of the African countries in general, and Burkina Faso in particular, to work together with the General Secretariat in the projection of the organization we share and in the consolidation of what has already been achieved.

Together let us strengthen our solidarity and, through the force of our ideas, may we arrive at new prospects for action and new initiatives that will contribute to the development of African tourism. In this way, we will be able to meet that challenge we face, namely: making tourism a vehicle for poverty reduction and a means of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Thank you!