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UNWTO Agenda for Africa – the way forward

Note by the Secretary-General

In this document, the Secretary-General presents to the Members of the UNWTO Commission for Africa his vision for the region translated into the UNWTO Agenda for Africa. This document is the result of a consultative process initiated with the Member States back in January 2018 during FITUR, consolidated and discussed in March 2018 during ITB Berlin and presented now in the framework of the 61st CAF meeting.

Background

1. In recent years, there has been a clear recognition and momentum regarding the potential impact of the tourism sector on Africa's economies and its ability to be a key contributor to its transformation and diversification. The resiliency of the tourism sector among other sectors has also proven to be a valuable asset for national development strategies that want to rely less on extractive industries. As a result, Member states from Africa have recognized the importance of Tourism as a tool for inclusive growth and job creation.
2. UNWTO has historically been providing a timely technical assistance to African Member States on a different range of topics, helping them elaborate their tourism strategies, improve their statistical systems, formulate new or revised hotel classification criteria, and develop their marketing and communication strategies in order to ensure that tourism development is integrated with the development of other sectors.
3. However, global trends have evolved in the travel and tourism sector, along with its set of challenges. Climate change and its derived negative environmental effects pose a direct threat to natural resources and biodiversity. The latter have forced countries to rethink their approach to tourism by incorporating sustainability as a core element in the development of their tourism sector. Furthermore, in order to respond to the issue of job creation among the youth that the continent has to bridge, African decision-makers need to develop a new set of instruments, policies and strategies to enhance their tourism sector and create the enabling environment for the private sector to emerge, invest and drive the job creation efforts.
4. Following the adopted change in management during the 22nd session of the UNWTO General Assembly in Chengdu, China on September 2017 where I was appointed, African Ministers of Tourism put forward their willingness to have a dedicated program for the region. A program that would respond to the more relevant and current issues pertaining to the continent, notably in terms of innovation and technology where Africa has made tremendous strides in the start-up scene with 442 existing tech hubs. With a strong focus on the Brand and Image of Africa where unfortunately the continent still suffers from an inadequate perception that has an impact on the attraction of investments and promotion of destinations.
5. My vision, as Secretary General, matched seamlessly this approach thus, I started working even ahead of my official mandate on the preparation of a program that would reflect the priorities expressed by you, the Member states of the Africa region. To this end, I instructed the Regional programme for Africa team to specifically put in motion the design of a comprehensive framework entitled Agenda for Africa that would aim at unlocking the potential of sustainable tourism in Africa and that will serve as a roadmap during the next four years to assist the members in successfully developing and implementing their tourism strategies.
6. On this note, I am pleased to recall the consultative process behind the preparation of this Agenda and its presentation today. Two important meetings were held in the margins of the XI Tourism Investment and Business Forum in Africa (INVESTOUR) in January 2018 during FITUR and the following one in the framework of the International Tourism Fair Berlin (ITB) in March 2018. The purpose of these meetings was to take stock of your comments in order to elaborate a consolidated version which reflects our common vision (See annex I) and to decide on the Action Plan that will result from it.

C. The UNWTO Agenda for Africa – core principles and elements of success

7. Together we have built a truly common action plan to serve your objectives with the following core priorities:
 - to alleviate poverty through tourism projects;
 - to find innovative approaches to developing tourism in the region; and
 - to find and foster new partnerships and resources.
8. To enable the effective implementation of the said Action Plan, UNWTO will support its CAF members in a concerted strategy approach that will need the following elements :
 - (i) CAF Members need to take full ownership of the agenda and be the main drivers towards the achievement of the UN Agenda 2030 in line with the Agenda 2063 of the African Union;
 - (ii) We must work in synergy with a view to approach external donors and financial institutions to support the implementation of the Action Plan;
 - (iii) UNWTO will take the necessary measures to secure extra-budgetary funds to commence the activities (for instance, as it will be the case with the UNWTO/Chimelong initiative on Branding Africa, and also through UNDP, World Bank and the African Development Bank, among others). However, , those funds shall be considered as “seed” capital that need to be supported by all CAF members, in view of UNWTO’s limited role as implementing agency.
 - (iv) UNWTO will explore with CAF Members the possibility to set up a regional office to better plan, monitor and deliver on the ground our programme of work, and will present a proposal to UNWTO Governing Bodies for approval¹
 - (v) UNWTO will further enhance the relationship with the African Union (AU) through its existing framework of cooperation. The organization will also support the recommendation of its Commission for Africa (CAF Tourism Ministers) in their advocacy for mainstreaming tourism as a priority within the AU structure and their national development agenda.
9. UNWTO will present at the 62nd UNWTO Commission meeting a first progress report on the implementation of the Action Plan and present if needed, new activities emanating from the priority areas.

C. The ten priorities of the Agenda for Africa

1. The priorities identified and to which the Sustainable Development Goals correspond to are as follows:
 - Advocating the Brand Africa, SDGS 8,10,11,14,15
 - Promoting Travel Facilitation (Connectivity / Visa) SDGS 8,9
 - Strengthening Tourism Statistics Systems SDGS 8,15,17
 - Expanding of Capacity Building incl. Training Facilities SDGS 4, 8,10,17
 - Promoting Innovation and Technology SDGS 8,9,17

¹ For more information on the conditions and criteria for the establishment of UNWTO Offices, please refer to Article 12 (j) of the Statutes and to Annex II of Document A/21/8 (I) (f)

- Fostering Resilience (Safety + Security, Crisis Communication) SDGS 8,12,13,16
- Unlocking Growth through Investment Promotion by Public Private Partnerships SDGS 8,9,11,12,14,15,17
- Empowering Youth and Women through Tourism SDGS 5, 8,10
- Advancing the Sustainability Agenda (esp. Biodiversity) SDGS 12,13,14,15
- Promoting Cultural Heritage SDGS 8,16