



UNWTO Commission for Africa

Fifty-ninth meeting

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 19 April 2017

Provisional agenda item 3

CAF/59/3
Madrid, April 2017
Original: English

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Report of the Secretary General

Note by the Secretary-General

In this document, the Secretary-General presents to the Members of the UNWTO Commission for Africa his review of major tourism trends, UNWTO's management vision and priorities as well as the status and advances in the administrative and financial matters of the Organization.

Report of the Secretary-General

Introduction

1. The present report to the 59th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Africa addresses the following subjects:
 - A. International Tourism in 2016 and 2017;
 - B. Priorities and Management Vision;
 - C. Mainstreaming Tourism in the Global Agenda;
 - D. Key UNWTO Activities in Africa; and
 - E. Administrative and Financial Matters

A. International Tourism in 2016 and 2017

2. Demand for international tourism remained robust in 2016 despite challenges. International tourist arrivals grew by 3.9% to reach a total of 1,235 million, according to the January issue of the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer. Some 46 million more tourists travelled internationally last year compared to 2015.
3. 2016 was the seventh consecutive year of sustained growth following the 2009 global economic and financial crisis. A comparable sequence of uninterrupted solid growth has not been recorded since the 1960s.
4. By region, Asia and the Pacific (+8%) led growth, fuelled by strong demand from both intra- and interregional source markets. Africa (+8%) enjoyed a strong rebound after two weaker years. In the Americas (+4%) the positive momentum continued. Europe (+2%) showed rather mixed results, with double-digit growth in some destinations offset by decreases in others. Demand in the Middle East (-4%) was also uneven, with positive results in some destinations, but declines in others.
5. Available data for **Africa** points to an 8% rebound in international arrivals in 2016 after two weak years, adding 4 million arrivals to reach 58 million. Sub-Saharan Africa (+11%) led growth, while a gradual recovery started in North Africa (+3%).
6. **International tourism receipts** grew at a similar pace in this period (complete 2016 receipts results will be reported in May).
7. As for **outbound tourism as measured by international tourism expenditure**, available data for the first three quarters of 2016 indicates a positive performance in most of the ten leading source markets in the world - China (+14%), Australia (+8%), the USA (+8%), France (+7%) the Republic of Korea (+5%), Germany (+4%) and the UK (+3%).
8. By contrast, expenditure from the Russian Federation (-37%) was weak reflecting the economic constraints and the depreciation of the ruble against virtually all other currencies.
9. Based on current trends, the outlook of the UNWTO Panel of Experts and economic prospects, **UNWTO projects international tourist arrivals worldwide to grow at a rate of 3% to 4% in 2017.**

10. Europe is expected to grow at 2% to 3%, Asia and the Pacific and Africa both at 5% to 6%, the Americas at 4% to 5% and the Middle East at 2% to 5%, given the higher volatility in the region.
11. Considering that this document was prepared in early April 2017, updated information on international tourism results in 2017, particularly on the performance of Africa, may be provided verbally to the 59th Meeting of the Commission for Africa.

B. Priorities and Management Vision

12. The management priorities for 2016-2017 as approved by the 103rd session of the Executive Council are as follows:

- (a) **Promoting safe and seamless travel:** Building resilience within the sector requires a full integration of tourism systems within the national and local disaster risk and emergency management structure. It further requires this responsibility to be shared amongst all relevant stakeholders at the local, national and international levels. Simultaneously, current security challenges should not lead to a reverse of the recent advances registered in terms of travel facilitation worldwide, as it is proven that travel facilitation enhances tourism's capacity to create economic growth and jobs. On the contrary, improving security and enabling seamless travel can and should be common objectives. In this regard, UNWTO has continued its advocacy efforts in this area while providing technical assistance and capacity building for Member States. The following events have been focused on this theme:

- (1) The 2016 UNWTO & WTM Ministers' Summit on 'Tourism and Security: Promoting Safe and Seamless Travel' (World Travel Market, London, UK, 9 November 2016);
- (2) The UNWTO/UNWTO.Themis Foundation Regional Executive Training on Crisis Communications for Africa (Khartoum, Sudan, 14-18 November 2016); and
- (3) The UNWTO/European Travel Commission High Level Crisis Communication Seminar (UNWTO Headquarters, Madrid, Spain, 12 December 2016).
- (4) The 1st Meeting of the UNWTO High Level Task Force on Tourism and Security, created by the 103rd session of the Executive Council, will be held prior to the 105th session on 10 May 2017 in Madrid, Spain.

- (b) **Enhancing the role of technology in tourism:** In this area,

- (1) UNWTO organized, jointly with the Ministry of Energy, Tourism and Digital Agenda of Spain and the Region of Murcia, the 1st World Conference on Smart Destinations in Murcia, Spain on 15-17 February 2017, to advance and shape a tourism model for the 21st century based on innovation, technology, sustainability and accessibility.
- (2) The Secretariat also presented, during ITB 2017, the preliminary findings of the research on the 'new platform tourism services' (or the so-called sharing economy) at an event with the participation of representatives from local and national destinations (www2.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/unwto_npts_itb_2017_jk2sc_rev.pdf)
- (3) The Secretariat has nominated a Special Advisor on this issue to prepare an Action Plan for this key area.

- (c) **Placing sustainability at the heart of tourism development and promoting the contribution of tourism to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** The Secretariat has continued to advance this area through three main pillars:

- (1) **The UNWTO International Network of Observatories of Sustainable Tourism (INSTO):** INSTO is a network of tourism observatories monitoring the economic, environmental and social impact of tourism at the destination level, committed to regular monitoring of tourism in order to better understand destination-wide resource use and foster responsible tourism management. There are currently 18 observatories in operation worldwide.
- (2) **Measuring Sustainable Tourism Initiative (MST):** UNWTO has made significant progress on the Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) initiative which has been highly welcomed and supported by 48th Session of United Nations Statistical Commission, held between 7 and 10 March 2017. The initiative, being implemented in cooperation with the United Nations Statistics Division, aims to develop a new statistical framework for tourism — integrating the various dimensions of sustainable tourism (economic, environmental and social) across relevant levels (global, national and subnational). Measuring Sustainable Tourism (MST) will be the central focus of the 6th International Conference on Tourism Statistics: Measuring Sustainable Tourism, to be held in Manila, the Philippines, 21-24 June 2017.
- (3) **10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP):** As one of the co-leads of the 10YFP Sustainable Tourism Programme (STP), UNWTO continues to contribute to the progress of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP), a collaborative platform to bring together and scale up existing initiatives and partnerships to accelerate the shift to sustainable consumption and production. In this context, the International Symposium of the Sustainable Tourism Programme of the 10YFP was held in Morocco on the side-lines of the 22nd Session of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP22) on 11-12 November 2016, to increase awareness of tourism's role and commitment to fight climate change. In this context, UNWTO has also supported the adoption of the first African Charter on Sustainable and Responsible Tourism and the Declaration on 'Tourism and Climate Issues in Africa' on the occasion of COP22. Both documents pave the way for the implementation of sustainability and responsibility principles in the tourism sector in Africa.

C. Mainstreaming Tourism in the Global Agenda

13. Promoting tourism's contribution to economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability in the national and international agendas is one of the priorities of the Organization. The support of tourism at the highest level is essential for the development and implementation of policies that support the growth and sustainability of the sector and to ensure that the sector contributes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With the adoption of the universal SDGs at the end of 2015, the advocacy work of UNWTO has been geared to ensure the support to tourism as an effective tool to contribute to the achievement of the 17 SDGs.
14. The **UNWTO/WTTC Open Letter on Travel and Tourism** campaign continues to advance. Since its inception in 2011, a total of 84 Heads of State and Government have been presented with the Open Letter. The initiative aims to promote the role of the sector at the highest level, foster cross-cutting policy coordination on tourism issues and raise awareness among decision makers of

pressing challenges facing the sector. In Africa, a total of 19 countries have so far adhered to this initiative (by date of acceptance: South Africa, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mozambique, The Gambia, Seychelles, Tunisia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Algeria, Rwanda, Uganda, Angola, Ethiopia, Morocco, Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire and Republic of Sudan).

15. The Secretariat continues to work to position tourism in the United Nations (UN) system agenda as well as in the agendas of other relevant international and regional organizations.

In this framework, it is worth highlighting:

- (1) **Official opening of the UNWTO Geneva Liaison Office:** UNWTO has officially opened its liaison office in Geneva in January 2017. The Office aims to enhance the support to Member States as well as facilitate the coordination with the United Nations and other multilateral organizations in the context of the 2030 Agenda. The Liaison Office is hosted at the International Trade Center (ITC). On the occasion, the Secretary- General debriefed the Ambassadors and heads of International Organizations in Geneva on the International Year on Sustainable Tourism 2017, underlining the importance of tourism in the global development and trade agenda.
- (2) **International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017:** The United Nations 70th General Assembly has designated 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (A/RES/70/193). In the context of the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the International Year aims to support a change in policies, business practices and consumer behaviour towards a more sustainable tourism sector than can contribute to the SDGs. The IY2017 will promote tourism's role in the following five key areas:
 - (1) Inclusive and sustainable economic growth
 - (2) Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction
 - (3) Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change
 - (4) Cultural values, diversity and heritage
 - (5) Mutual understanding, peace and security.

UNWTO has been mandated to facilitate the organization and implementation of the Year, in collaboration with governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders.

This is a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the contribution of sustainable tourism to development among public and private sector decision-makers and the public, while mobilizing all stakeholders to work together in making tourism a catalyst for positive change and thus we call upon all Members States to get engaged and make this opportunity a priority (see detailed information in document CME 42/6). See detailed information in Annex I).

D. Key UNWTO activities in Africa

16. In view of the current and immediate challenges facing tourism development in Africa, namely in terms of image and perception, as well as the long-term objective of advancing the development of the sector in the region as a key pillar of sustainable development, the Secretariat has continued to implement the 2017 Programme of Work in the region.
17. A detailed report on the activities carried out by the Organization since the last report to the 59th Commission Meeting is included in document CAF 59/4. In this framework it is worth highlighting the following activities:
 - (1) Regional Executive Training on Crisis Communications in Tourism (Khartoum, Sudan, 14-18 November 2016);
 - (2) The VIII edition of the Tourism Investment Forum for Africa (INVESTOUR) (19 January, Madrid, Spain);
 - (3) Regional Statistics Capacity Building Programme – First Workshop (13-15 February 2017, Algiers, Algeria)
 - (4) The conclusion of eight technical cooperation projects in seven countries in the region in 2016 and the ongoing development of 11 new projects in ten countries in 2017.

E. Administrative and Financial Matters

18. The year 2016 closed with contribution income balancing budgetary expenditures and enabling a partial reimbursement of the advance made by the Working Capital Fund in 2015.
19. 2016 UNWTO Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 2016, including the unqualified opinion of the External Auditors, are submitted to the 105th session of the Executive Council.
20. On a separate note, the United Nations Chief Executive Board for Coordination is reviewing a system-wide approach to the large liabilities raised by the After Service Health Insurance scheme of staff. This has proven to be a protracted issue, this review being a necessary step for its addressing. The detailed reports on the current status of financial and administrative matters of the Organization as of early 2017 will be presented to the 105th Executive Council.
21. During 2016, UNWTO continued to focus on accountability and financial management improvements including: (a) online budget and finance information is provided through Athena (UNWTO financial management information system) to managers and staff by programmes/projects thereby enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of programme implementation; (b) continued the enhancement of Athena (Athena II plan) to develop modules on: (i) purchase management, and (ii) accounts payable. Athena II modules will go live in mid-2017. Enhanced IT systems reduce manual intervention and increase the efficiency of the organizations processes, extending well beyond accounting and finance matters and affecting all operations; (c) publication of the third edition of the UNWTO IPSAS Policy Guidance Manual to provide guidance on the policies and accounting practices established by UNWTO in the application of IPSAS
22. In order to improve the safety, reliability and availability of the Organization's ICT services, the possibility of updating the existing Data Processing Center (DPC) was studied and, after carrying

- out the relevant studies, a new DPC was created. The new DPC contains a completely new physical infrastructure, with greater capacity for future growth and that meets all the standards of safety and protection in force.
23. In relation to Human Resources policies and following UN General Assembly Resolutions 70/244 and 71/264, a new compensation package for staff in the professional category and above in the UN common System is being implemented in UNWTO since January 2017, replacing the dual salary scale by a unified scale and providing separate allowances for single parents.
 24. Furthermore, the International Civil Service Commission carried out a Place-to-Place survey in Madrid during October 2016 to evaluate expenditure patterns and other characteristics of the households of staff in the professional and higher categories in comparison with the cost-of-living in New York. The outcome of the survey will be announced in the second trimester of 2017.
 25. UNWTO has concluded with the UNDP an Agreement concerning the management of the UN wide Junior Professional Officer Programme. Through this framework agreement the UNWTO is able to receive any JPO postings from Member States who wish to place their young professionals in UNWTO for 1-3 years by financing the post.
 26. Following approval by the Executive Council, a full renewal of the ground floor, lobby and reception area of the headquarters building has been satisfactorily completed in 2016.