

**RESPONSIBLE TOURISM: OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND YOUTHS
BEING THE TEXT OF A PAPER DELIVERED BY MUNZALI DANTATA
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Introduction

Tourism is a global business that promotes the visiting and hosting of people for mutual benefits. It is a complex network of exchange of wealth and experiences. Tourism involves the visitors and their hosts as well as the gamut of professionals and enterprises which provide not only the tourism product and services but also the desired enabling environment to make the sojourn feasible and worth the while of all stakeholders.

As a heterogeneous and human oriented product, tourism is a strong global socio-economic force that can generate sales, employment, foreign exchange earnings, balance of payments and critical infrastructure development that benefit both the local communities and the visitors alike (Oh, 2005; Durbarry, 2004; Narayan, 2004; Frechtling and Horvath, 1999; Glasson et al, 1995; Lankford and Howard, 1994).

Furthermore, by attracting the consumer to the product at the point of production rather than transferring the product to the consumer in his home, tourism serves as a catalyst for development in the tourist receiving region (UNWTO, 2004:9). Such development, according to the World Travel and Tourism

Council (WTTC, 2011:1) are in the areas of job creation, exports generation and investment stimulation. The job opportunities created by tourism are mainly in the micro, small and medium size enterprises. Tourism creates jobs for the self-employed, for indigenous communities and for women and young people whether they are highly skilled or unskilled.

In 2011, the global direct and indirect employment generated by tourism was 258 million (8.8% of total global employment) according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2011.1). In Nigeria, the figures are put at 1,774,000 jobs (2.9% of total jobs). This is expected to rise by 6.8% in 2012 to 1,895,500 jobs and rise by 4.4% pa to 2,912,000 jobs in 2022 (WTTC, 2012: 3)

The direct contributions of tourism to Global Gross Domestic Product (GGDP) on the other hand are estimated at US\$1.8 trillion in 2011 and the total contributions at US\$6.0 trillion (9.1% of GGDP). In Nigeria, the total contributions of tourism to GDP according WTTC (2012: 2) was NGN1, 232.2 billion (3.3% of total GDP) in 2011 and a forecast to rise by 10.8% in 2012 and by 7.0% pa to NGN2, 690.8 billion in 2022.

Similarly, spending by foreign visitors will continue to be vital to the economic fortunes of many nations as such visitor exports are expected to grow by 6.6% per annum, reaching US\$1.8 trillion in 2021 (WTTC, 2011:2). More so, industry investment, currently estimated at US\$652 billion is forecast to double in real terms over the next ten years to reach US\$1.5 trillion, with particularly rapid growth in emerging and developing economies (ibid, 2011:2).

