

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CURRENT CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FOR AFRICAN  
TOURISM: What Solutions can be adopted to Ensure its Competitiveness?**

**Tunis, Tunisia, 25-26 April 2013**

**TECHNICAL NOTE**

**I. Background**

African destinations are increasingly showing their potential in the global market. Political stability, attractive destinations and recognition of tourism as a key sector for socio-economic development, are some of the main factors that have contributed to the positive results of tourism in Africa in the past years. With international tourist arrivals growing by 6% in 2012, Africa is establishing itself as one of the most promising regions for tourism developers and companies.

UNWTO forecasts anticipate that Africa will receive in 2020, 85 million international tourist arrivals and 134 million in 2030, representing respectively 6,3% and 7,4% of international tourist arrival at the worldwide level. The growth in Africa during these periods will be the fastest compared to other regions.

However, African countries are still facing many challenges to compete internationally, despite the fact that tourism has been identified as an important contribution for economic growth and employment creation in the region. Some of the major included the issues of visa facilitation and connectivity, financing tourism development in Africa and the role of technology and communications.

The present International Conference, organized in the framework of the 54<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Africa in Tunis, Tunisia, will provide a unique occasion to discuss and debate about these challenges and future issues related to the development of tourism in Africa.

Good public-private partnerships (PPP) have become one of the main challenges today and the need to create coordination mechanisms and processes is very crucial for the development of tourism. In the African region, where most of the tourism destinations are incipient, this fact has an increased importance, in order to achieve successful results in the development of the tourism. In

this regard, this International Conference has a major component of PPP in all the areas to be covered.

The conference is jointly organized with the Secretariat of the UNWTO Affiliate Members, which will bring the expertise and perspectives of the private sector in the areas to be discussed. It will also give the opportunity for the participants to know more closely about the role and programme of the UNWTO Affiliate Members, as well as the opportunities they provide to the African tourism public and private sectors.

## **II. Objectives**

In organizing this international conference, the UNWTO aims to bring together tourism public and private players to exchange information, ideas and discuss about some of the most important present and future challenges of tourism development in Africa. The conference will provide an opportunity for African countries to envisage ways and means to address issues like visa facilitation, air connectivity, and technology in the tourism sector, at the national, regional and international levels.

The conference has the following three main objectives:

- a) Discuss and envisage solutions for some of the most important current and future challenges of the tourism sector in Africa;
- b) Contribute for the improvement of the public and private sectors coordination in the African tourism sector;
- c) Increase the public and private partnerships and collaboration in the tourism sector across the region; and
- d) Better understanding of the programme and benefits of the UNWTO Affiliate Members for African countries.

## **III. Issues to be covered**

### *1. Visa facilitation and air connectivity*

Visa facilitation and lack of competitive air connectivity are some of the main challenges that African countries face when it comes to tourism development. Finding solutions in these two areas is central to improve the competitiveness of African destinations, considering that most of them rely on long-haul outbound markets.

### *2. Financing tourism development in Africa*

Africa's potential for tourism is enormous and varied and opportunities for investment and funding in the sector are more than promising. In the current global economic situation, African

countries need more than ever to be well prepared to attract investment and funding to the tourism sector. Appropriate investment environment with attractive incentives, project proposals well-built and political stability, are key to attract foreign investors and funding institutions into the tourism sector in the region.

### 3. *Technology and Communication to successfully promote destinations*

The UNWTO is aware of the need of guidance to embrace the new information technologies that African Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) and tourism businesses have. In this sense and bearing the regional situation in mind, this segment of the round-table will cover the relevant impact of the technology and communication in the field of tourism marketing and management.

## **IV. Participants**

This International Conference is addressed to representatives of the following entities / organizations, from African countries:

- National and local government
- Accommodation providers of many types and sizes
- Attractions, events and cultural organisations
- National Park authorities
- Transport providers
- Market intermediaries
- Local tourism consortia and partnerships
- Business support and skills training organisations

## **V. Languages**

The Conference will be conducted in both English and French. Simultaneous translation will be available in both languages.