



## **Regional Seminar on Responsible Tourism: Opportunities for Women and Youth Held in Conjunction with 53rd UNWTO Commission for Africa Final Conclusions**

These conclusions set out the key challenges and opportunities that were identified during the seminar. They also provide general recommendations and suggest specific steps for moving in this area.

### **Challenges**

There are three main challenges for the fair inclusion of women and youth in the African tourism sector.

**First**, we lack systematic information on women and youth in the tourism sector. While we have some preliminary data on women's participation from the Global Report, we are still short of detailed studies and current data. Moreover, while we have general data on youth labour market participation and unemployment, we are missing any substantive data on youth in tourism. As identified by the presenters, there is also a gap between available funding opportunities and the capacity of women and youth to access information on these.

**Second**, there are some strong barriers to women and youth participation in the sector. For women, there are both participation and leadership barriers. Women's *participation* in the tourism sector is limited by the lack of equal opportunities in employment markets, shortcomings in women's economic literacy, challenges in forming profitable and sustainable cooperatives, and lack of inclusion into tourism supply chains. Women's *leadership* can be constrained by cultural stereotypes that originate in communities that limit women's aspirations. There is also often a gap between women's ambitions for leadership in the sector and the level of training, capacity building and overall knowledge of tourism. The issue of land is also important to highlight, as African women are not usually the title holders of land and property, making it difficult to guarantee long term stability and sustainability of women's tourism businesses. Youth also face barriers to full participation in the tourism sector. Many of the issues are the same – in particular in terms of cultural stereotyping - but the need for appropriate vocational training and skills development training are particularly pertinent in the African youth context.

**Third**, the high proportion of contributing family workers is an issue to be addressed. As highlighted in the ILO's Global Trends for Youth report, a large proportion of young people are performing unpaid work in family businesses. We know that for women, there are more contributing family workers in tourism than in other sectors, in Africa and in most world regions. We need to look in more detail about how women and youth's status as contributing family workers may be limiting their fair inclusion into the tourism sector.

### **Opportunities**

As well as a number of challenges, the opportunities for women and youth in the tourism sector are significant. Women already make up the majority of workers in the hotel and restaurant sector and are more likely to be employers, own-account workers and ministers in this sector than in other sectors. At the same time, an average of 2.1 million young people will be entering the labour market in sub Saharan Africa between 2012 and 2015.

The tourism private sector is poised to harness the significant potential of women and youth and to stem youth migration from rural to urban areas, both for the sustainability of the sector and African development as a whole. In addition to this potential, a complementary African policy framework is in place to support these goals. The Africa Action Plan, Tourism Action Plan, Gender Policy and Youth Charter all affirm their strong commitment to the fair inclusion of women and youth in Africa's economic development. The seminar identified a number of opportunities each thematic area.

In *leadership*, women and youth leadership should be considered at all levels starting with the community level, developing grassroots leadership programmes and working upwards from there. In *entrepreneurship*, a suggestion was made to combat the volatility of tourism seasonality – by encouraging handicraft production during the low season with the reception of tourists in the high season. In *capacity building*, an interesting case was mentioned in Botswana of the training levy for tourism which is systematically included in tourism pricing, establishing a fund to ensure resources are generated for this area. Intangible cultural heritage also offers significant opportunities for women and young people, and we need to think about how to involve young people in a positive and empowered way in this process.

## **General Recommendations**

### **Information**

- Collect data and information in the form of statistics and qualitative research such as interview and in-depth case studies – particularly important in the area of youth as we simply do not have the necessary information to proceed in this area
- Identify more best practices, including in-depth engagement with potential best practices to see what works and why
- Create an African Network of Women in Tourism in order to share best practices and provide support to women's business
- Establish a focal point for information on funding activities and facilitate the dissemination of these opportunities among women and young people

### **Economic empowerment**

- Promote economic literacy programmes for women and youth
- Support women's and youth cooperatives
- Conduct interventions to overcome the constraints to the entry of women's cooperatives in tourism supply chains
- Provide training to access funding and use this in an optimal way in order to produce long term and sustainable results
- Promote a gradual shift from microenterprises to small and medium-sized enterprises for women and youth in order to ensure greater profitability in the long-term
- Secure women's access to land, credit and property to promote the sustainability of women's tourism businesses

## **Institutional aspects**

- Forge cooperation between tourism private sector and women and youth organisations
- Work together to eliminate barriers to women and youth's fair and sustainable inclusion
- Develop gender training across all levels in order to work on these issues
- Include women and youth as active participants in the formulation of policy and projects
- Encourage tourism companies to introduce and comply with their own codes of conduct in order to ensure decent work and prevent any form of exploitative practices in the tourism sector

## **Moving forward and next steps**

This seminar should help to set in motion a combination of macro (gender mainstreaming strategy, national policies and coordination by UNWTO, WITEP pilot programme) and micro (specific policies, programmes and projects, for example collaboration on one or more components of WITEP) activities. A focal point/means of communication should be established – a Gender and Tourism Portal could be a potential tool for this, as well as the proposed African Network of Women in Tourism. In addition to the practical aspects of collaboration, it will be helpful to consider the different priority areas in current funding streams which might offering opportunities: for example, MDG3, women's economic empowerment, decent work, vocational training and youth participation. New funding streams will also open up as the development policy agenda is reformulated post-2015, presenting an opportunity to ensure that Africa is at the forefront of the contribution of the tourism sector to global development.

Based on the overall conclusions of the presentations and debates of the seminar, it is evident that NTAs need substantive assistance in order to promote the fair inclusion of women and youth in African tourism. UNWTO should provide ongoing technical support and establish itself as a reference point for communication, exchange and information in this area.

## **Proposal for Collaboration**

Based on these conclusions, UNWTO recommends the development of an Empowerment Programme for African Women and Youth in Tourism. This will be a regional level project developed with the support of UNWTO's Commission for Africa and the Ethics and Social Dimensions of Tourism Programme. Based on the blueprint for the UNWTO Women in Tourism Empowerment Programme, this will be further developed by drawing on the specific challenges and opportunities presented in African countries, as highlighted by the Calabar seminar. A draft proposal will be drawn up by UNWTO in collaboration with the Commission for Africa in order to be presented to bilateral or multilateral donors.