Report on the High-level Panel Discussion

“Promoting tourism as an engine of inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa”

Kenyatta International Conference Centre, Nairobi, Kenya
Thursday, 21 July 2016

This report was prepared by the Office of the Special Adviser (OSAA).
Background

To increase international awareness of Africa’s development issues, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa organized a high-level panel discussion on “Promoting tourism as an engine of inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa” in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The panel discussion was organized within the Ministerial Roundtable: Global Services Forum of UNCTAD XIV Conference, on 21 July 2016, in Nairobi, Kenya.

The event was opened and chaired by Mr. Maged A. Abdelaziz, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, United Nations. The keynote speakers included:

- H.E. Mr. Najib Balala, Cabinet Secretary for Tourism of the Republic of Kenya;
- H.E. Mr. Mohamed Yehia Rashed, Minister of Tourism of the Arab Republic of Egypt;
The meeting was attended by Ministers, high level officials, representatives from African regional institutions, the private sector, youth, civil society organizations and the media. About 200 people attended the Forum.

The Panel Discussion was structured by an opening segment, the delivery of keynote address and a question and answer session.

Introduction
Tourism represents about 10% of GDP, 7% of world exports globally, and a great source of potential revenues for developing countries and Africa in particular. In 2015, tourism continued to register a robust growth performance and has been contributing to economic growth and job creation. To harness the potential of tourism, it is important to establish policies and regulations that promote tourism growth. This effort also involves the promotion of travel facilitation, human resources development, local economic activities, job creation and sustainability.

Tourism has the potential to greatly contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly since it is becoming increasingly important for employment, poverty alleviation and farm sector competitiveness and productivity. Tourism has the potential to contribute, directly or indirectly, to all of the goals, as it is included specifically as targets in the following goals:

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Promote sustained, inclusive and sustained economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;

Take urgent action to combat climate change;

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

On the means of implementation notes that potentially, tourism, due to its cross-sectoral nature, may strengthen Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and engage multiple stakeholders in the interest of sustainable development. Furthermore, on 22 December 2015, the United Nations General Assembly through its resolution 70/193 declared 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.
In Africa, tourism is also firmly positioned in development frameworks. The AU recognized the contribution of tourism in the continent and, through the AU-NEPAD developed a Tourism Action Plan (TAP) in 2004. The TAP seeks to optimize the role of tourism as an engine and catalyst for regional integration, inclusive economic development in Africa through the establishment of an enabling environment and regional cooperation. The Action Plan identifies eight priority areas of intervention that can facilitate this objective in particular, through harmonization of policies and standards at national, sub-regional and continental levels.

The 25th Summit of the African Union held in South Africa, agreed to the creation of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) by 2017 through negotiations on liberalization of trade in goods and services. In this context, the African Union recognized the fact that, harnessing tourism will be critical to achieving the SDGs and, the AU has prioritized tourism among the socio-economic sectors in defining the targets and strategies for its social-economic transformative Agenda 2063.

The Framework addresses critical issues for boosting Africa’s tourism, including: removing visa constraints; undertaking joint marketing including packaging and promotion of cross-border attractions; promoting joint projects for infrastructure development and investment, such as promoting cross-border investment in hotels, airport, roads, etc.; and capacity building for people working in the tourism industry. In the African Union’s Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063, sub-goal 5 puts emphasis on the fact that, transformed economies and job creation will be achieved through economic diversification. African countries will have to develop and implement national long-term economic diversification plans, including tourism, within the context of the structural transformation of the economy.

Therefore, the panel explored how tourism could overcome the challenges of becoming enclaves and how the industry could enhance spillover effects and positive externalities to both the environment and society at large. It also examined emerging tourism sub-sector opportunities that developing countries could better exploit, such as green, eco or sustainable tourism, and how public policies should
aim to maximize the benefits and minimize negative social, economic and environmental impacts.

The discussion focused around the following questions:

1. What opportunities does a peaceful and secure Africa create for tourism and how can African countries create better linkages between tourism and other sectors of the economy?
2. What advocacy role could tourism play in facilitating effective implementation of both 2030 agenda for sustainable development and AU Agenda 2063 and its 10-year implementation plan?
3. How can tourism contribute to the envisaged increase in intra-Africa trade in services?
Panel Discussion

In his opening remarks, Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, re-emphasized the powerful role of Tourism as a vehicle for harmony among nations, inclusive growth and sustainable development and recalled that the United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/193 declared 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

He then highlighted statistical facts about the contribution of tourism to Africa’s GDP while noting that Africa was the second fastest growing tourism destination globally, behind south-East Asia. He noted the role of tourism in eradicating poverty through job creation, the importance of tourism in preserving the environment and biodiversity and stressed the potential for its development in Africa particularly as the continent was receiving only 5% of worldwide earnings.

Mr. Abdelaziz then highlighted the key challenges affecting the development of tourism including poor infrastructure development, the lack of skilled workers, weak price competitiveness, difficulties in obtaining visas, limited legislative support from governments and difficulties in land acquisition and ownership. He also noted that Africa suffered the impact of climate change and health risks as was illustrated by the Ebola outbreak in 2015; and challenges due to political instability, terrorism, violent extremism as witnessed in Egypt and more recently in Tunisia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, and Kenya. Mr. Abdelaziz emphasized that Tourism was an instrument that will facilitate effective implementation of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063 in Africa.

Facts: In 2015, tourism...
- contributed to about 8.1% of Africa’s GDP
- generated more than 20 million jobs across Africa
- only represented a 5% share in worldwide earnings, making the sector an untapped goldmine
In his keynote address, the Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Tourism, H.E. Mr. Najib Balala emphasized that tourism had become a source of livelihood in Africa through its value chains that links various parts of the population. He noted that tourism represented 11% of Kenya’s GDP and contributed to job creation, attracting investment, preserving ecosystems and biodiversity, protecting cultural heritage, and promoting inclusiveness, empowerment and ownership of local communities. For instance, safaris contribute to the livelihood of local communities who are in turn custodians of the heritage and the environment.

Cabinet Secretary Balala emphasized the critical role of peace and security for tourism development and development in general. In this regard, he referred to the impact of terrorist attacks on African countries. He stressed the importance of avoiding putting travel advisories and bans on African countries. Such travel bans cause a double tragedy to African countries since they are not only affected by the terrorist attack but also economically affected through the cut of income and increased unemployment. This would push youth to radicalism and violence. On this note, he called for avoiding a double standard treatment while reacting to terrorist attacks in Africa and the rest of the world. Mr. Balala emphasized that once any country is hit by a terrorist attack the rest of the world should stand together and show solidarity. He explained that tourism was about business because it has ramifications to all the economic sectors through the value chain.

Tourism relies on a peaceful and stable environment hence it can support efforts to build and consolidate peace and security. [...] Developed countries are quick to issue travel advisories when a developing country is attacked [...] but stand in solidarity with other developed countries when attacked. This is double tragedy for the developing countries who suffer for being attacked and also economically due to the advisories.
With regards to Kenya’s experience in policy formulation for tourism development, H.E. Mr. Balala noted the inclusiveness of the process. To ensure that all the stakeholder’s concerns and voice are heard, the Kenyan government has established a framework for interaction. Twice a year, the President of the Republic of Kenya meets all the stakeholders during a roundtable, which serves to design policies to address issues of the sector and address bottlenecks. In preparation of these roundtables the Cabinet Secretary for tourism holds consultation meetings with all the stakeholders. Through this framework, the Kenyan government has been able to abolish value-added tax (VAT) for tour operators and service charges in order to address expensive price of tourism products in Kenya. He also mentioned the measure allocating 30% of all government procurement for women, youth and persons with disability. Mr. Balala also emphasized the country’s strategy in attracting investors in marginalized areas, while focusing on inclusiveness, accountability to promote inclusive growth and sustainable development.

With regard to sustainable development, H.E. Mr. Balala noted that tourism offers potential as reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the inclusion of tourism in 3 of the 17 SDGs. He then explained the importance of sustainable tourism which would involve activities that are energy efficient, climate change conscious, reduce wastage of water and harvesting of water, conserve the ecosystem, promote Cultural heritage and traditional values, enhance Peace and Security, generate local income and integrates local communities with a view of improving livelihoods and reducing poverty.

In Kenya, sustainable tourism is the pillar of the national tourism policy. Environmental protection and conservation are necessary for sustainable tourism which is promoted within the safaris. Community partnership is key to ensure that local stakeholders become the custodians. Kenya has been a leader in wildlife conservation through efforts undertaken in the country since pre-independence days (such as burning of ivory and advocating for total ban on trade in ivory). Eco tourism initiatives are also important as they encourage environment friendly practices through eco-rating, eco-labelling and eco-warriors awards done by Eco-Tourism Kenya. In conclusion, H.E. Mr. Balala encouraged the development of intra-African tourism.
In his keynote address, H.E. Mr. Mohamed Yehia Rashed, Minister of Tourism of the Arab Republic of Egypt, emphasized that tourism should be considered from the social and economic perspectives rather than from the political one. In this regard, he stressed the critical importance of not imposing unnecessary bans to travel because it involves a lot of people around the world. The international community should protect the tourism industry against terrorism. Tourism is a source of foreign exchange and employment for many countries. It can help eradicate poverty, promote foreign investment, support trade, foster rural development and local culture, protect cultural heritage and conserve natural habitat.

By highlighting the linkages between key SDGs that pertain to sustainable tourism development, Minister Rashed was able to demonstrate how tourism could contribute to achieving the SDGs as follows:

- **Goal 1**: he noted that tourism can foster economic growth and development at all levels and provide income through job creation and promoting entrepreneurship and small businesses, thus, achieving poverty reduction.
- **Goal 2**: he pointed out that tourism could spur agricultural productivity by promoting the production, use and sale of local produce in tourist destinations. In addition, agro-tourism can complement traditional agricultural activities and improve the livelihood of local communities.
- **Goal 3**: foreign earnings and tax income from tourism can be reinvested in health care and services to improve maternal health, reduce child mortality and prevent diseases.
- **Goal 4**: he reiterated the global call for investment in inclusive and quality education and trainings with a view to provide job opportunities for both genders and ensure an improved level of services.
- **Goal 5**: Minister Rashed emphasized the role of tourism in providing income-generating opportunities for women, while promoting diversity in the society.
• Goal 6: he stressed the importance of providing clean water and promoting efficient consumption of water resources and maximizing the return on investment in the tourism industry.
• Goal 7: Minister Rashed emphasized the role of green tourism to promote reliable and sustainable access to renewable energy such as solar energy.
• Goal 8: he recalled that tourism was providing 1 in 11 jobs worldwide, therefore decent job opportunities for people.
• Goal 9: Mr. Rashed highlighted the importance of infrastructure development for tourism development which would enhance the welfare and better living conditions for local communities, as well as the development of new suburban communities.
• Goal 10: he highlighted that tourism could help reduce regional imbalances by encouraging urban renewal and rural development.
• Goal 11: he noted that tourism development entails enhancement of cities so as to provide the best conditions to attract tourists. In this regard, citizens benefit from improved living conditions and constant urban development.
• Goal 12: he highlighted the sustainable consumption patterns related to tourism activity which would result in better economic, social and environmental outcomes.
• Goal 13: Minister Rashed emphasized the importance of lowering energy consumption and shifting to renewable energy in the tourism industry in order to mitigate the impact of climate change.
• Goal 14: he highlighted the importance for tourist destinations to adopt programmes for the preservation of the coastal and beach areas as a means of promoting sustainable and eco-friendly tourism.
• Goal 17: based on its multi-faceted nature, tourism has the ability to foster public-private partnerships and engage all stakeholders in working together to achieve the SDGs, by taking care of the people so that they can take care of the tourism industry.

Tourism can be a positive force bringing economic, social, and environmental benefits to destinations around the world: increased revenue, job opportunities that help eradicate poverty, foreign investments, a positive contribution to trade balance, rural development, promotion of local culture and products, and protection of cultural heritage and conservation of natural habits.

Minister Rashed then discussed the role of tourism in Africa highlighting that African countries should leverage on their tourist assets and strengthen their destinations brands as well as promoting intra-African tourism by developing the cross-border infrastructure
and the intra-regional air transport. He noted the importance of sharing knowledge and best practices in destination management and investments for tourism development. He also encouraged joint marketing campaigns, the expansion of niche products activities, enhance cities attractiveness with entertainment facilities, promoting local products and enhance the quality of services.

Turning to Egypt’s experience, he described the pillars of the country’s tourism strategy which covered development of infrastructure, facilitating travel to Egypt, greening Egypt’s tourism industry, and mobilizing investments.

In conclusion, Minister Rashed called for the establishment of an African Tourism Organization by 2017.

In his statement, H.E Mr. Chaibou Laouali, Commissioner for Trade Customs and Free movement and Tourism of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, stressed that tourism was a powerful vehicle for sustainable development, job creation and trade opportunities. He noted that tourism could create 3.8 million jobs in sub-Saharan Africa in the next 10 years. Turning to ECOWAS region, he noted that tourism represented about 10% of the region’s GDP and with a large variety of tourism products.

H.E. Mr. Laouali then presented ECOWAS’ vision 2025 to develop tourism in the West African region as captured by the ECOWAS Revised Treaty’s article 34. The vision is about strengthening regional cooperation on tourism and promoting the development of tourism related businesses through harmonizing policies and rules, developing cross-border tourism products, promoting ECOWAS destination around the ECOTOUR 15/25 strategy. The main goal is to ensure that tourism promotes urgently needed employment opportunities, private sector development and establish a regional and integrated tourism space.
according to five programmes which cover the protection and promotion of heritage, the development of skills of stakeholders, promoting tourism products and developing norms and a monitoring system.

He noted that implementing the ECOTOUR vision requires the adoption of a related regional tourism development policy. So far, based on the coordination achievements of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, the 15 Member states of ECOWAS have been able to formulate and validate at the expert level a regional policy and a plan of action for tourism development. ECOWAS Ministers will adopt both instruments in 2016.

In his keynote address, **Mr. Márcio Favilla**, Executive Director of the United Nations World Tourism Organization, supported the fact that countries that are affected by terrorist attacks should not be left alone and stressed the importance of showing solidarity to affected countries rather than imposing travel bans. In this regard he informed that next governing meetings of the UN-World tourism Organization would take place in Luxor, Egypt in October 2016, in solidarity with Egypt, after the frequent terrorist attacks that affected Egypt’s tourism industry.

Mr. Favilla then provided stylized facts on the performance of world tourism noting that tourism had been growing overtime despite economic, health and security challenges. He mentioned that international tourism represented 30% of global trade since it generated about US$ 1.5 trillion of tourism exports or US$ 4 billion a day on average. Turning to Africa, he noted that it had been the most dynamic region over the past 35 years in terms of international tourism growth, highlighting the 53.5 million tourist arrival in 2015.

Mr. Favilla then emphasized that tourism could be an engine for inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa by highlighting the specific role of tourism in 3 SDGs notably on targets 8.9, 12.b and 14.7, respectively: to foster economic growth that creates jobs and promote local culture and products (target 8.9); to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns; and to increase the benefits to SIDS.
and LDCs from the sustainable use of marine resources. He also noted that tourism could contribute to gender equality, protect natural and cultural heritage, fight climate change, foster mutual understanding and support efforts towards building a culture of peace, and ultimately contribute to achieve all the 17 SDGs which connects well with the African Union Agenda 2063.

Mr. Favilla then provided ten suggestions to governments, private sector, international organizations and development partners to harness the potential of tourism in Africa, as follows:

- Include tourism as part of the national development strategy for its capacity to generate exports and jobs, diversify the economy through its value chain, and foster backward and forward linkages; hence put in place the relevant policies accordingly;
- Develop a conducive regulatory and legal framework to attract foreign direct investment plus domestic investments, as well as to formalize businesses, as tourism has low technical and capital barriers for entry;
- Put the three pillars of sustainability (economic, socio-cultural and environmental issues) at the core of the relevant policies and monitor them;
- Strengthen the productive capacity of tourism businesses, including their human capital and management;
- Implement the “Single African Air Transport Market” with highest levels of safety and security as well as with fair and equal opportunity for all;
- Promote a safe, secure and seamless travel framework, including a visa policy aligned with both tourism and trade policies’ objectives (some African countries are among the most open in the world whereas others are some of the most closed);
- Integrate tourism into the national emergency set-up and vice-versa in order to foster resilience as well as risk preparedness and management;
- Build on existing tourism products (e.g. wildlife watching), diversity and add value to them;
- Align the tourism branding with that of the country or the region and develop a marketing policy accordingly; and
- Implement a multi-stakeholders governance system that brings together the public and private sectors, local communities, international and regional organizations, the civil society and other relevant stakeholders in order to enhance the dialogue, cooperation, policy coherence and its effectiveness.

In conclusion, he called upon Africa’s development partners to place tourism higher on their agenda as an instrument for achieving the SDGs.
In her address, **Ms. Elizabeth Wheeler**, Chief Executive Officer of Micato Safaris, stressed the importance of investing in tourism and mobilizing investment in Africa to support its development and local communities. She provided concrete examples implemented by MICATO Safaris in Kenya. An education-based foundation was created whereby every safari conducted by a tourist sponsors one child in school from the local areas which is a strategic intervention to break the inter-generational poverty. She emphasized the important role of leadership in promoting tourism development in Africa and the critical role of putting investment-friendly measures to boost investments in the tourism sector.

In his statement, **Mr. Vincent Oparah**, Senior Advisor Tourism at the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, recalled the potential of tourism in addressing Africa’s unemployment, poverty and inequalities challenges. He encouraged African governments to enhance the existing policies and frameworks and to leverage Africa’s diverse natural capital and cultural heritage.

Mr. Oparah then identified five Sustainable Development Goals that would promote tourism as an engine of inclusive growth and inclusive sustainable development in Africa, including: economic growth; job creation, entrepreneurship and inclusiveness; environmental preservation and effective
The focus of my intervention is on government roles to promote tourism as an engine of inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa. It could be recalled that within the 17 SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, 5 of the goals are directly linked to tourism: The goals are underpinned by economic growth; job creation, entrepreneurship and inclusiveness; environmental preservation and effective resource management; the promotion and protection of cultural values and heritage, and cultural diversity, mutual understanding and peace. Translating these goals to African Development Goals, resonate with the African Union Agenda 2063, of which tourism was identified as a key sector for implementing Agenda 2063. The question is: how could the African Governments make the SDGs Afro-centric?

To promote tourism in Africa, he then made the following recommendations which are aligned with African Union’s structural transformation Agenda 2063:

- Have good governance and policy coherence to facilitate the formulation and implementation of effective policies, create space and capacity for political participation, ensure effective and efficient public institutions and systems, as well as peace and security. This would enhance private sector investment.
- Develop skills to create new perspectives through increased employment and income opportunities for young people in Africa.
- Promote tourism by giving it enough visibility, as well as reflect it on the national budget.
- Creating an enabling environment for Public-Private- Partnership should be encouraged through the establishment of institutional framework, policies and operational guidelines for effective models of PPPs in the African context.
- Develop infrastructure and regional integration for sustainable tourism on the continent. The implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) is imperative.
- Harmonize visa policies across the continent in order to sustain investment in tourism. The African passport, which was launched in Kigali, at the 27th African Union Summit in July 2016, needs to be promoted by African Governments.
• Deregulate air services, and promote regional air markets for transnational competition as enshrined in the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision.
• He then reiterated NEPAD Agency’s commitment to implement the NEPAD Tourism Action Plan in support of touristic initiatives.

Interactive Discussion

In the ensuing interactive discussion, participants raised issues related to ways and means to enhance the free movement of people in Africa and around the world, the importance of diversifying African tourism products with a particular focus on sports tourism, culture, heritage products and more. Also, participants enquired on the role of new technologies and regulations of companies such as Uber and Airbnb on the development of tourism in Africa.

In Africa, several countries such as Ghana have taken major steps to streamline visa processes and issue visa upon arrival at the airport, this should be emulated by other countries.

It is important to promote African tourism and understand that Africa has no borders. Countries should work together to offer multi-products. It is important to market what Africa has to offer.

With regard to new companies, it is important to be more innovative and forward-looking. Taxes, security, health legislation could be ways of creating norms and regulation for new kind of businesses.
Key Messages

- Tourism is a critical instrument for achieving the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063.
- Tourism offers great potential for inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa.
- Tourism deserves adequate attention and resources for its development in Africa. It is important to invest in tourism to support Africa’s development and local communities to fulfil the goal of leaving no one behind. It is important to provide more budget resources to the sector. Development partners should place tourism higher on their agenda as an instrument for achieving development objectives in Africa.
- Promoting tourism development requires free movement of people, goods and services.
- It is important to streamline the visa processes and facilitate access to African destinations. Support should be provided to promote the African Passport across the continent.
- In support of free movement of people, it is critical to fast-track the implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA).
- It is important to implement the "Single African Air Transport Market" with highest levels of safety and security as well as with fair and equal opportunity for all. This will deregulate air services and promote regional air markets for transnational competition as enshrined in the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision.
- Promoting sustainable development through tourism requires the lifting of any travel bans and advisory.
- When faced with terrorist attacks, health or climate challenges, countries should stand together and express their solidarity to the affected countries. There should not be double standards. Tourism should not be stopped in order to avoid socio-economic impacts on countries. Tourism should be separated from politics. Unnecessary travel advisories issued whenever there is a terrorist in African countries should be discouraged, as it affects the tourism industry.
- It is important to build on existing tourism products (e.g. wildlife watching), diversify, add value to them and invest in tourism products in Africa such as sports, culture, heritage products and more.
- It is important for Africa to market its tourism product at national and regional levels, by aligning the tourism branding with that of the country or the region and...
develop a marketing policy accordingly. Countries should work together to offer multi-products.

- With regard to new companies, it is important to be innovative and forward-looking. Taxes, security, health legislations could be ways of creating norms and regulation for such new services based on new technologies.
- At the national level, inclusiveness is essential. Governments should establish a framework for interaction with all key stakeholders to design policies, address issues of the sector and unlock bottlenecks.
- Tourism should be part of the national development strategy for its capacity to generate exports and jobs, diversify the economy through its value chain, and foster backward and forward linkages; hence put in place the relevant policies accordingly.
- It is important to mobilize adequate resources and investment for tourism development in Africa. Governance and policy coherence are essential to foster private sector investment and public-private partnerships.
- It is important to develop a conducive regulatory and legal framework to attract foreign and national direct investment, as well as to formalize businesses, as tourism has low technical and capital barriers for entry.
- It is essential to strengthen the productive capacity of tourism businesses, including their human capital and management. It is also key to develop skills related to the industry along a tourist friendly mind-set for the local communities.
- Integrate tourism into the national emergency set-up and vice-versa in order to foster resilience as well as risk preparedness and management.
- It is important to implement a multi-stakeholders governance system that brings together the public and private sectors, local communities, international and regional organizations, the civil society and other relevant stakeholders in order to enhance the dialogue, cooperation, policy coherence and its effectiveness. In this regard, an African Tourism Organization should be established by 2017.
Promoting Tourism as an Engine of Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development in Africa (UNCTAD XIV, 21 July 2016)

Ministerial Round Table: Global Services Forum

