

**WELCOME ADDRESS OF THE HONOURABLE MINISTER  
OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND NATIONAL ORIENTATION,  
CHIEF EDEM DUKE, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF  
THE 53<sup>RD</sup> MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS WORLD  
TOURISM ORGANIZATION/COMMISSION FOR AFRICA  
(UNWTO/CAF), HELD AT TINAPA BUSINESS,  
CONFERENCE AND LEISURE RESORT, CALABAR,  
CROSS RIVER STATE ON 25<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2012**

## **PROTOCOL**

It is with great pleasure and a deep sense of honour that I welcome you all to the 53<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the UNWTO/CAF holding here in Calabar, Nigeria. I am particularly delighted at the decision of the UNWTO to host this meeting in Nigeria at a time that the President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR is repositioning the Tourism sector with a view to creating opportunities and making it possible for all Nigerians to benefit from a properly organized and focused tourism industry.

2. Let me seize this opportunity to express the gratitude of the Federal Ministry of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation to Mr. President, Members of the National

Executive Council, the National Assembly and other stakeholders for the emergence of the new Visa regime which was recently approved. We are particularly encouraged by the fact that the intendment by the new Visa regime is to boost tourism among other benefits. We shall take positive advantage of this development by intensifying our efforts, cooperate and collaborate with national and international agencies particularly the UNWTO that the renewed official interest in tourism development is sustained. Let me also thank the Executive Governor of Cross River State, Senator Liyel Imoke who agreed to host this meeting, and for his immense support not only to the organization of this meeting but to all programmes and activities of our Ministry. Your Excellency, with the facilities and ambien of Calabar and it's environ you have clearly demonstrated what responsible tourism should be.

3. The theme of this meeting which is "Responsible Tourism: Opportunities for Women and Youths" is very



timely and relevant, and it is of particular interest to us in the Ministry. This interest is derived from our belief in the robust potentials and ability of Nigerian Women and Youths to contribute to and enhance the rapid growth of this sector through their active participation. This meeting therefore provides an opportunity to discuss our ideas in this area and rub minds with other stakeholders with a view to evolving the best ways of further mainstreaming our women and youths into the business of tourism. To this end the ministry had started the implementation of the Nigeria Tourism Development Masterplan which is the roadmap for the development and sustenance of the entire Nigerian tourism industry. We are working with the relevant professionals and stakeholders in the industry to implement the policies and programmes contained in the Masterplan. We shall also be needing the expertise and guidance of the UNWTO in the process of implementation.

4. Permit me to also express our happiness at the 2011 Report of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)

which indicate that tourism contributed 2.9% of total employment in Nigeria and added 3.3% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the same year. We hope to double this contribution in 2012. In order to achieve this and maximize the benefit that could accrue to women and youths from tourism, there is the need for institutional synergy by stakeholders in the tourism sector particularly in funding tourism projects and investments especially Small Scale Tourism Enterprises. This is because tourism business is capital intensive and has long gestation periods, and also the fact that, corporate funds are far from the reach of women and youths.

5. I will like at this juncture to thank the Secretary-General of the UNWTO, Mr. Taleb Rifai and his team for giving Nigeria the opportunity to host this meeting again. We note your interest in the growth and development of the Nigerian tourism industry and promise to work with your organization in our collective effort to make tourism beneficial to people around the world. Mr. President,

Honourable Ministers, the Governor and distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is therefore my singular honour to welcome you all once more to Nigeria and particularly to Calabar for the 53<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of United Nations World Tourism Organization/Commission for Africa (UNWTO/CAF). I wish you all fruitful deliberations, and a nice and enjoyable stay in Nigeria.

6. I thank you for your attention.