



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM & WILDLIFE
COMMUNICATION OF THE CAF CHAIRMAN DURING
THE
THE 62nd MEETING OF UNWTO COMMISSION
FOR AFRICA
IN
ST PETERBURG, RUSSIA
ON
10TH SEPTEMBER, 2019



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM & WILDLIFE**

H.E MR. ZURAB POLOLIKASHVILI, UNWTO SECRETARY GENERAL

HON. MS. NKHENSANI KUBAYI-NGUBANI, MINISTER FOR TOURISM, SOUTH AFRICA AND 1ST CAF VICE CHAIR

H.E. HAMAT BAH, MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND CULTURE, REPUBLIC OF GAMBIA AND 2ND CAF VICE CHAIR

EXCELLENCIES, AFRICAN STATES FELLOW MINISTERS

MS. ELCIA GRANDCOURT, UNWTO REGIONAL DIRECTOR, AFRICA DEPARTMENT

EXCELLENCIES, AMBASSADORS ACCREDITED TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

PRIVATE SECTOR TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES,

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

First, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the Russia Federation for according us the warm hospitality and for welcoming us to this great Nation.

Secondly, I wish to thank **Mr Zurab Pololikashvili** the Secretary General World Tourism Organization, for hosting the 62nd meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Africa, on the sidelines of the 23RD World Tourism Organization General Assembly. I wish to register the regret of the Regional Commission for Africa Secretariat and the UNWTO fraternity that our 62ND CAF meeting could not be held in Bamako, Mali due to unavoidable circumstances. To the government of Mali, the World Tourism Organization is highly committed to our partnership and we look forward to working together.

Ladies and Gentlemen

May I welcome your excellences, colleagues Ministers, Government delegates, representatives of the tourism and related sectors, affiliated members and all participants to this meeting.

We meet at a period when tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification. The sector has established itself as a key driver of socio-economic development through the creation of jobs and enterprises, export revenues and infrastructure development. The year 2018 was a record year for international tourism in the world. International tourist arrivals worldwide increased by 6% in 2018 with Africa recording a 7% led growth. The growth was driven by a favorable economic environment and strong outbound demand from major source markets, consolidation of the recovery in key destinations affected by previous crises, enhanced connectivity and Increased visa facilitation.

The UNWTO forecasts a growth of 3% to 4% in international tourist arrivals worldwide in 2019, with Africa projected to grow at 3 % to 5 % in line with the historical growth trends and expected downsize risks due to; Economic slowdown, Brexit uncertainty, Geopolitical and trade tensions.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me take this opportunity to thank, **Mr Zurab Pololikashvili** Secretary General, UNWTO, the Regional Department for Africa Secretariat, for their continued and vigorous effort in pursuing the UNWTO Agenda for Africa – *Roadmap to inclusive growth*. This roadmap now serves as a blueprint and a strategic framework to help unlock the tourism potential towards inclusive development in Africa.

I take note of the member's states commitments to implement this agenda. Let us harness, positively explore and sustainably develop tourism through investment strategies and entrepreneurship, education and skills development as clearly provided by the UNWTO agenda for Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I wish to reiterate Kenya commitment during the 61st CAF meeting in Abuja, Nigeria on 5th June, 2018, to spearhead strategies for realizing the African dream of being the highest-ranking tourism destination in the world.

The Government of Kenya in collaboration African Union (AUC), hosted the **First Ordinary Session of the Ministerial Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Tourism of the Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIET)** held on 2 October 2018 in Movenpick Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya, chaired, Zimbabwe the Chair of the Sub- Committee on Tourism.

The First Ordinary Session addressed key challenges facing the tourism industry in Africa with a view to developing appropriate tourism strategies that are well-aligned to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and AU Agenda 2063.

The session identified five (5) key cross-cutting issues areas Member states to explore, and as mentioned below:

1. **Continental strategy for tourism:** the meeting endorsed the Experts' decision and reiterated the urgent need to formulate a continental framework for tourism in Africa, as an indispensable factor for implementing the flagship project of the AU Agenda 2063, which seeks to make Africa the preferred destination for tourism.
2. **Security and Safety:** It was therefore recommended that Africa states should develop strategies to ensure the security and safety of tourism in the Continent.
3. **Environment:** The Continent is facing serious threats from climate change, and environment degradation. The session sited the importance and urgency of considering the environmental

aspect, in its broadest sense, within the context of the Action Plan on the Continental tourism strategy.

4. **Digitalization and connectivity:** Digitalization in the tourism sector was one of the major concerns raised by the meeting noting it's absent in the Action Plan. it was recommended to make plans for short-term concrete actions to incorporate the strategies in the continental tourism strategy to enable African tourism benefit from the current technological development.
5. **African Tourism Organization:** the meeting endorsed the recommendations made by the experts to set up an African organization to take charge of the tourism sector, in accordance with the schedule and procedures specified by the experts.

I wish to reiterate the call as per the final communiqué that urged Africa Ministers to urgently implement practical measures to facilitate the free movement of persons and goods in the Continent including removal of visa restrictions or at least offer visa on arrival and call on all Member states to subscribe to the solemn commitment establishing the Single African Air Transport Market, including encouraging and supporting low cost carriers to improve access and affordability

Let me thank Mr Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General, UNWTO, Zimbabwe, Chair of African Union Sub-Committee on Tourism and H.E. Dr. Amani Abu-Zeid, African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, colleague Ministers and distinguished delegates for honoring our invitation and attending the session, your contribution and resolve to enhance tourism development in Africa and beyond.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me reiterate my call during our 61st CAF meeting in Nigeria in June 2018 for member states to actively refocus on strategies to increase connectivity, ease entry visa procedures and encouraging comparative rates at hotel accommodations. Visa policies are among the most important governmental formalities influencing international tourism.

According to UNWTO report in 2018, 53% of the world's population was required to obtain a traditional visa before initiating their international visits. Another 10% of the population was allowed to apply for an eVisa while 16% were able to apply for a visa on arrival. Only 21% of the world's population did not require a visa when travelling for tourism purposes. Although only 10% of the world's population was exempt of visa when visiting Africa in 2018 the region continued to have the highest percentage of countries whose visitors are able to obtain a visa on arrival (33%) and is the second region behind Asia and the Pacific showing the strongest efforts in regard to eliminating the option of traditional visa. In 2008, on average a total of 88% of the world population needed to obtain a traditional visa when travelling to Africa, only 45% needed to do so in 2018. Fellow colleagues this is highly commendable.

I call upon member states to put into action and advance the innovative, sustainable solutions to foster the development of air connectivity and seamless travel in the African continent as resolved during the first ICAO/UNWTO Ministerial Conference on Tourism and Air

Transport in Africa, held from 27 to 29 March 2019 in Santa Maria, Sal Island, Cabo Verde.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Tourism has the potential to be a vehicle for the empowerment of women, youth and persons with disability worldwide. Tourism provides better opportunities for women's participation in the workforce, women's entrepreneurship, and women's leadership than other sectors of the economy.

Tourism should be a vehicle for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment at the household, community, national and global level. Enhancing gender equality contributes to the overall quality of the tourist experience, with considerable impact on profitability and quality across all aspects of the industry.

I call upon member states to Increase awareness of the important economic role that women play in the tourism industry and promote women's participation in tourism and take proactive steps to mainstream gender in tourism policy, planning, and operations.

I urge all member states to mark the date and attend the upcoming **Regional Congress on Women empowerment in the tourism sector-focus in Africa, Accra, Ghana from 25 to 27 November, 2019.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our 62nd CAF meeting provides an excellent opportunity to discuss ways and means to promote intra-Africa travels and tourism, leveraging on our vast and unique resources and our number, for mutual benefit to all member states. We have as part of our Agenda, an item to determine, regional representative in the UNWTO organs (Executive Council and various committees).

While deciding which member state to opt for these responsibilities, let all member state be involved in affairs of the organization equally. It is my expectation that during this meeting we shall establish stronger linkages and functional collaboration among member states in order to realize the Africa tourism strategic goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank all the Commission for Africa (CAF) Member States for electing Kenya as the Chair of the UNWTO Commission for Africa (CAF) **Gambia** and **South Africa** for Vice-Chair positions of the Commission for the period 2017-2019. We are humbled for the trust and honour you entrusted on us to lead the Tourism agenda in Africa.

Let me thank you all, for your kind attention, and hereby extend my best wishes and fruitful deliberation to all delegates during these 62ND CAF meeting and the 23rd UNWTO general assembly, and enjoyable stay here in Russia.

THANK YOU ALL FOR LISTENING TO ME