

AFRICAN DESTINATIONS MEET TO PLAN GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR TOURISM

Madrid, Spain, 9 June 2020 – *Recovery and resilience were the central themes as the members of the World Tourism Organization's **Regional Commission for Africa (CAF)** met for the 63rd time today. Reflecting the extraordinary circumstances, the meeting was held virtually, bringing together Ministers of Tourism from across the region with representatives of the African Union, the West African Monetary Union and from the private sector, to **plot a united course towards a stronger and better tourism sector.***

Held as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) leads the global restart of tourism, the meeting enjoyed the virtual presence of **140 participants from 30 countries**, including 24 Ministers of Tourism. They were joined by representatives of 10 international organizations and by members of the UNWTO Affiliate Members network.

Priorities to unlock Africa's tourism potential

As well as addressing the immediate challenge posed by COVID-19, discussions also focused on the key areas of **UNWTO's Agenda for Africa**, a roadmap designed to guide the sector in **sustainable growth** up to 2030. These priorities include enhancing Africa's tourism infrastructure, boosting air connectivity, easing visa facilitation, ensuring the safety and security of tourists, investing in the development of human capital development, and improving the image of Africa to the rest of the world.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "Africa's tourism potential is undeniable, as is the potential of tourism to drive inclusive development across the continent. The steady easing of travel restrictions, first within nations and then across international borders, will allow the many social and economic benefits of tourism to return. If tourism's restart is managed in a responsible and coordinated manner, harnessing the power of innovation and entrepreneurship, then it can transform millions of lives and help protect and preserve Africa's rich cultural and natural heritage."

Realigning the Agenda for Africa

Joining Mr Pololikashvili for the 63rd meeting of the CAF was the group's current chairman Roland Chitotela, who also serves as Minister of Tourism and Arts, Zambia, and the African Union was represented by its Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid. All participants welcomed the latest initiatives designed at growing

African tourism announced by the Secretary-General, including the **Brand Africa** marketing competition and a fresh emphasis on showcasing **African gastronomy** and using this as a new market for sustainable tourism and job creation.

In the run-up to the meeting, UNWTO's Member States took part in an online survey through which they were invited to share their thoughts on how the UNWTO Agenda for Africa can be utilized to accelerate recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and build resilience for the future. Participants expressed a strong desire to see the top **five key areas of the Agenda for Africa prioritized** in order to support swift and sustainable recovery. These priorities are: unlocking growth through investment and through effective public-private partnerships; promoting innovation and technology; visa facilitation and enhanced connectivity; advocating for Brand Africa, and fostering greater resilience, including through enhanced safety and security for tourists.

Useful Links:

[Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism](#)

[UNWTO: Gastronomy and Tourism](#)

[UNWTO: Innovation and Digital Transformation](#)

[UNWTO: Africa Newsletter](#)