

UNWTO Adapts Agenda for Africa to Accelerate Tourism Recovery

Madrid, Spain, 26 June 2020 – Member States from across Africa have shared their priorities for tourism against the backdrop of COVID-19. As with every other global region, African destinations have been hit hard by the restrictions on travel introduced in response to the pandemic. The sudden and unexpected drop in tourist arrivals has placed many millions of jobs at risk and threatened to roll back the progress made in sustainable development.

Now, as UNWTO leads the restart of tourism, African Member States have set out their **vision for the sector**. This builds on the UNWTO Agenda for Africa – Tourism for Inclusive Growth, the **roadmap for African tourism** that was adopted at the UNWTO General Assembly in 2019, and is based on the responses to a survey sent out by the Regional Department for Africa.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: “This feedback from our African Member States will help us guide tourism through the challenging months ahead. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on tourism across the continent. However, UNWTO is committed to helping Africa grow back stronger and better and for tourism to emerge from this crisis as an important pillar of economies, jobs and sustainability.”

Investment and innovation key priorities at continental level

At the continental level, the survey revealed that the five key areas of the UNWTO Agenda for Africa that Member States would like to see prioritized in order to better support them as they recover from the impact of COVID-19 are:

- Unlocking growth through investment promotion and public-private partnerships
- Promoting innovation and technology,
- Promoting travel facilitation, including enhanced connectivity and tourism visa policies
- Fostering resilience, including through promoting safety and security and crisis communications
- Advocating for “Brand Africa”

At the same time, the survey answers showed that Member States would like to see the part of the Agenda for Africa focusing on Fostering Resilience to be realigned to reflect the current situation. This will allow for a more effective response to the impact of COVID-19 on tourism and to **accelerate recovery**. Alongside this, Member States across Africa also expressed a wish for UNWTO to focus future capacity building and training sessions on the topics of crisis management and communications, marketing, developing domestic tourism and promoting innovation and entrepreneurship.

Sub-regional priorities outlined

The survey also revealed the different priorities of Member States from different parts of Africa. In North Africa, the number one priority is **expanding capacity building**, including through the provision of more training; in both Western and Eastern Africa, Members named promoting better travel facilitation and unlocking tourism growth through investments and public-private partnerships as their priorities.

Meanwhile, advocating for “Brand Africa” emerged as the number one priority for Member States in Southern Africa, and in Central Africa, the focus is on strengthening tourism statistics systems. Furthermore, the survey also found that Member States from across the continent would like to see UNWTO add a new section to the Agenda for Africa focusing on the promotion of **regional and domestic tourism**.

Last but not least, Member States also suggested UNWTO undertake a **range of actions both at the political and technical level**, including strengthening collaboration between governments, facilitate the creation of investment funds to support tourism and provide practical support to SMEs. These actions would be particularly beneficial to countries whose GDP heavily depends on the tourism sector including the Small Island Developing States (SIDS).