

African Tourism United to Transform Sector for Growth and Opportunity

Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, 7 October 2022 – *Tourism leaders from across Africa have come together to rethink the sector and its central role in driving growth and opportunity across the continent.*

The 65th meeting of the UNWTO Regional Commission for Africa brought together around **25 Ministers of Tourism and high-level representatives from 35 countries** as well as leaders from the private sector. Taking place in Tanzania just days after UNWTO celebrated World Tourism Day, the Commission meeting embraced that day's theme of **'Rethinking Tourism'**, with a focus on innovation, branding, jobs and education and partnerships.

Welcoming delegates, UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili provided Members with an update of the Organization's activities and accomplishments in the 12 months since the previous Commission meeting. He said: "Tourism in Africa has a long history of bouncing back. And it has shown its resilience again. Many destinations are reporting strong arrival numbers. But we must look beyond just the numbers and rethink how tourism works so that our sector can deliver on its unique potential to transform lives, drive sustainable growth and provide opportunity everywhere in Africa."

Tourism recovery underway in Africa

The Regional Commission of Africa meeting was held as tourism's recovery gets underway across the continent. According to the latest UNWTO data, for the first seven months of the year, **international arrivals across Africa were 171% up on 2021 levels**, driven largely by regional demand. To help Members capitalize on the sector's return, and to **build greater sustainability and resilience**, UNWTO is prioritizing jobs and training alongside greater and more-targeted investment in tourism. On the eve of this week's meeting, UNWTO launched a set of Investment Guidelines focused on Tanzania, designed to support foreign investment in the country.

His Excellency Kassim Majaliwa, Prime minister of the United Republic of Tanzania warmly welcomed all delegates and UNWTO officials, calling on them to "embrace sustainability" and highlighting the work Tanzania has been undertaking to protect the natural habitats and wildlife that help make it a popular destination while also increasing inclusivity in the sector. Tanzania's Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Pindi Hazara Chana, also noted that the country is looking to diversity its tourism sector in order to boost arrival numbers and revenues over the next five years.

Short-term recovery and long-term transformation

Discussions at the the Commission meeting focused on both the immediate and longer-term recovery of tourism across the continent, including through redefining the roadmap of the **UNWTO Agenda for Africa 2030**. Key topics highlighted by the high-level participants included accelerating tourism for inclusive growth, advancing the sustainability of the sector and the role of public-private partnerships in achieving both of these goals. Alongside this, the heightened relevance of air connectivity, including low-cost air travel within Africa, as well as the pressing need to support small businesses (SMEs) in gaining the digital tools and knowledge they need to compete, was also discussed.

To conclude the meeting, Members came to a consensus to host the meeting in Mauritius in 2023 and Algeria in 2024.

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