

Agenda item 2

**Communication of the Chair**

CE/117/2  
Madrid, 24 October 2022  
Original: French

The UNWTO is going green. All Executive Council documents are available on the UNWTO website at [www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org) or use the Quick Response code here.



**Draft speech by the Chair of the UNWTO Executive Council,  
H.E. Mr. Siandou Fofana, Minister of Tourism and Leisure, Côte d'Ivoire**

**117th session of the Executive Council  
Marrakesh, 23 November 2022**

Mr. Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization,  
Madam Minister of Tourism, Handicrafts and Social and Solidarity Economy,  
Dear Members of the Executive Council, Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the beginning of my remarks to thank His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God be with him, for making it possible to hold this important meeting of the World Tourism Organization in the Kingdom of Morocco.

My thanks also go to our colleague, Minister Fatim-Zahra Ammor for her warm welcome and special attention to all our delegations.

I would also like to thank all the delegations present from the Member States of the Executive Council for coming here in force to contribute to the development of our sector.

Chairing this 117th session of the Executive Council, is an honour for our country, Côte d'Ivoire, and it is once again a pleasure to be in this magnificent city of Marrakesh, a leading tourism city and a major economic centre of the Kingdom.

I would like to congratulate our colleague responsible for tourism and her predecessors who have positioned Marrakesh as a veritable tourism brand and a must-visit destination.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting is the second of 2022 and contributes to consolidating our reflections on how to exit the crisis, which is foreseen in the estimates for 2023. We are delighted that Africa is hosting this 117th session of the Executive Council, and it must be recalled that the 24th General Assembly of our Organization should have been held here had it not been for the COVID-19 crisis. As this major event for our Organization is being held today in Africa, we must seize this opportunity and take cognizance of the lag that Africa is experiencing so that we can generate a synergy of actions that can benefit it.

What do we need to do to truly secure the revival of African tourism? Faced with this concern, we must recognize that while global tourism is at 10%, Africa is at only 5%. The total flows generated by African tourism is less than the flows that the most tourism-oriented countries manage to mobilize individually.

With Africa hosting this meeting, I would be remiss if I did not emphasize that fact. More than 50% of the treasures recognized as wonders of the world are found here on this continent and this enormous potential should allow it to attract a greater number of international tourists.

At the end of our meeting, we should be keen to address the issue of financing startups, the development of an SME business fabric to foster the emergence of national champions, and especially the development of "Brand Africa" by positioning ourselves solidly on the preservation of the environment in relation to ecotourism.

If Africa is the cradle of humanity, let us give it the means to be the cradle of green tourism. Anthropological and social studies are favourable to this; they contribute to positioning Africa as a pilgrimage destination for all of humanity. Let us make the world discover our common origin, where we come from and where human life took shape.

During this 117th session, let us make sure to that it resonates strongly to the favour and the benefit of Africa by pooling our efforts.

Let us stand by Africa, whose people and youth are at risk of giving up on their dreams, at a time when we know that the rate of extreme poverty in Africa has increased by 60% according to World Bank statistics, affecting 390 million people.

At the last meeting of the Regional Commission for Africa, it was proposed to bring a number of issues before the Executive Council, including the establishment of an investment and guarantee fund for the development of an African brand in the hospitality sector and to address connectivity issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The global economic crisis we are currently experiencing, resulting from external shocks, is about to create a convulsion in the economy in general and in particular in the tourism economy because the monetary inflation we are witnessing and the upheavals to which we are subjected necessarily require us to call for more moderation on the part of our populations eager for innovations and changes.

Financial difficulties oblige us to find the means to avoid slowing down the activation of the recovery in our sector, despite the strong headwinds in the economic and social context.

In fact, it pushes us to lay the foundations for a deep reflection aimed at taking decisions and recommendations to maintain the pace of a sustained recovery of the tourism sector.

You will agree with me, dear Colleagues, that following the serious crisis of the coronavirus pandemic that has significantly impacted our sector, we were far from imagining that a politico-military crisis in one part of the world would undermine tourism, which needed an unencumbered recovery.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like us, all together, to express our will, the will of all Members, to establish closer relations through the opening of regional offices.

This matter has already been discussed and put into practice. This meeting should allow us to move forward in order to continue our reflections together, to ensure respect for precise criteria for hosting them in the member countries, and to implement the policies provided for this purpose.

In my capacity, I wish you all an excellent session, rich in discussions and resolutions for the benefit of our sector.

Thank you.