



65th UNWTO COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

CONCEPT NOTE ON AGENDA ITEM 5:

“Policy discussion on the recovery of the tourism sector in Africa”

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been one of the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting economies, livelihoods, public services and opportunities. It was a major shock for the African economies and an emergency for the most vulnerable people across the region.

Yet, the pandemic brought about an opportunity to rethink how tourism interacts with our societies, other economic sectors and our natural resources and ecosystems; to measure and manage it better; to ensure a fair distribution of its benefits and to advance the transition towards a carbon neutral and resilient tourism economy.

Although vaccine equity remains a major challenge, the increased rate of vaccination combined with the easing of travel restrictions across the continent, have all helped release pent-up demand in 2021. Africa (+171%) recorded strong growth in international tourist arrivals January-July 2022 compared to 2021, reaching 60% of 2019 levels. With travel restrictions and COVID-19 protocols easing by the minute, more and more African destinations no longer require fully vaccinated visitors to undergo PCR testing prior to departure or on arrival.

Despite the visible improvement, major downside risks threaten the African recovery including deteriorating economic conditions, aggravated by the military offensive of the Russian Federation on Ukraine. High energy prices and rising inflation are additional disruptions to the slow and uneven pace of recovery to the tourism economies on the continent, putting extra pressure particularly on long haul travel from other regions to Africa.

AIM OF THE POLICY DISCUSSION

With this backdrop, item 5 of the 65th Commission for Africa is aiming to give member states the opportunity to update each other on their tourism recovery efforts, share their experiences and best practices regarding the policies that have helped them to restart their tourism sector and identify main challenges going forward.

Questions for discussion:

- **What are the short-term prospects for tourism recovery in your country/in the region?**
- **Please share main lessons learned from the crisis?**
- **Please identify main challenges being faced to accelerate recovery and consolidate tourism development in your country/in the region?**

The Policy Discussion will be structured as an interactive debate moderated by Ms. Elcia Grandcourt, Regional Director for Africa.

Speakers are not expected to make formal presentations or to use PowerPoint slides and kindly invited to keep their interventions within the **max 3-5 minutes time limit**.