



UNWTO Commission for Africa

Sixty-fifth Meeting

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Draft speech by the Chair of the UNWTO Commission for Africa
H.E. Mr. Siandou Fofana, Minister of Tourism, Côte d'Ivoire

65th meeting of the Regional Commission for Africa
Arusha, 5-7 October 2022

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my warm thanks to Her Excellency the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, **Samia Suluhu** and to the Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, His Excellency **Dr. Pindi Hazara Chana**, for the welcome extended to us in the context of the holding of this 65th meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Africa here in Arusha.

I would also like to express appreciation for all the means deployed to make our stay pleasant, thus allowing us to discover this fabulous country, demonstrating the particularity and beauty of our magnificent continent: Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to lead our work today as Chair of this Commission, at a time when our sector is recovering and rising from the ashes, after having suffered the full impact of the health crisis due to COVID-19. I also present my compliments to all of you, colleagues and guests present at this 65th Commission, demonstrating your strong commitment and determination to deal with the sensitive issues that concern us.

Thanks to the decrease in intensity of the coronavirus pandemic, we are finally seeing a way out of the crisis at the end of 2022, enabling us to relaunch our projects and the initiatives undertaken by our continent. Our States have shown their resilience in the face of this unexpected event and it is high time to remobilize in order to resume the work begun.

Africa will not cease to be the continent of tomorrow and to this end we must now work in order to be able to step forward and walk together to the place of giving and receiving. Many challenges lie ahead. The time has therefore come to strengthen our resolve to continue the development of our sector.

Tourism will always remain a leading sector and it is our duty to promote it. The “**World Tourism Day**” that we celebrated this year in Indonesia, more precisely in Bali, is a substantial instance of advancement towards better knowledge of the tourism sector. We can also recall the perfect

organization of the Global Youth Tourism Summit this summer in Italy, which helped to raise awareness among future generations of the issues facing our sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This 65th meeting of our Commission ought to serve as the ideal forum to reset the scene of an Africa at work, of a mobilized and united Africa, in order to close the gap with other continents. The conclusions of our debates should allow us to address topics that are still as crucial as ever, such as issues related to financing, Brand Africa and connectivity. Thus, I encourage you to actively contribute to the exchanges that will be proposed.

Thus, the matter of setting up a pan-African guarantee fund must be treated seriously to solve the thorny problem of financing the sector with a view to the emergence of African national champions. It is important to address the issue of digitalization and the development of start-ups in our ecosystem in order to meet the challenges of these new times.

This global pandemic is a reminder of the need for African tourism to take the issue of health and public hygiene seriously. The same goes for the authentic environment that gives originality to our continent.

Finally, I would like to thank the General Secretariat of our shared Organization, and more particularly **Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili** for his tireless efforts and his interest in our continent. My congratulations also go to the Director for Africa, **Ms. Elcia Grandcourt**, and her entire team for the success of this meeting. I wish all of us an excellent session of enriching work, and may God bless Africa and our common Organization.

Thank you.