



AFRICA DAY 2023

MESSAGE BY UNWTO SECRETARY-GENERAL ZURAB POLOLIKASHVILI

Africa is home to the world's youngest population, as well as to a rapidly expanding middle class. It is a vast and diverse continent, with vibrant cities and rich cultures. Africa is also a hub of entrepreneurship and innovation and boasts some of the most exciting tourism destinations on the planet.

For many millions of people across the continent, tourism is a real lifeline. But the sector's potential is still to be truly realized. Managed properly, tourism can accelerate socio-economic recovery and growth. It can spur wealth creation and inclusive development.

The removal of tariff barriers and the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area undoubtedly brings new opportunities for Africa. Facilitating the free movement of individuals for business, for work or for studies, will help reduce economic disparities between regions, and deliver more opportunities, particularly for the most vulnerable, including women, who form the majority of the tourism workforce. At the same time, regional collaboration and harmonized aviation policies in line with the Single African Air Transport Market will help us achieve the objectives of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the UN Agenda 2030.

We have also realigned our UNWTO Agenda for Africa: Tourism for Inclusive Growth. It aims to directly support our Member States responding to the current challenges of tourism, particularly the need for more trained workers, more decent jobs and more and better-targeted tourism investments. Above all, we will continue to advocate for tourism as driver for positive change and a pillar of economic growth for the continent.

On behalf of everyone at UNWTO, I wish you all a happy Africa Day.