The Mauritius Declaration
A new Path for Africa Tourism through Global Partnerships and Investment

We, Ministers of Tourism and Delegations of the member states of Africa of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) meeting on the occasion of the UNWTO Conference in the framework of the 66th Regional Commission for Africa on Rethinking Tourism for Africa: Addressing Global Challenges; Promoting Investment and Partnerships, on 27 July 2023, under the high patronage of H. E. Mr. Louis Steven Obeegadoo, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning and Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Mauritius, and of H.E. Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, UNWTO Secretary-General, hereby:

REASSERT

That the sustainability and resilience of the tourism sector are pivotal to unlock economic growth, create jobs and livelihoods, attract investment, and strengthen partnerships in the face of unprecedented challenges. We recognize the need to re-think tourism for and within Africa as a cross-cutting sector.

RECALL

The African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, envisioning an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa driven by its citizens, the United Nations (UN)'s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the African Tourism Strategic Framework 2019-2028. We acknowledge the Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa and the United Nations-African Union development, aiming to streamline working modalities and improve collaboration towards Africa’s advancement.

RECOGNIZE

The detrimental effects of the global pandemic on the African tourism sector, and the imperative to address global challenges such as climate, war and conflict, inflation, recession and rising food and energy prices. We also recognize the essential need to ensure the safety and security with a particular attention to the Sahel countries, sustainability, and support of tourism enterprises for the successful recovery of the sector. Additionally, addressing the economic and social disadvantages of vulnerable populations will be pivotal to foster a balanced and prosperous recovery for African tourism.
FURTHER RECOGNIZE

Key barriers to growth in Africa’s tourism sector include high debt levels, limited access to financing, and the skewed vulnerability assessment that hampers Africa’s access to critical resources. Promoting good governance practices, including transparency and accountability, is vital for sustainable development. By tackling these challenges, Africa can unlock the potential of tourism to attract investment, partnerships, and drive inclusive and sustainable growth.

ARE ALSO AWARE OF THE FACT THAT

Africa’s young people’s resilience and dynamism, combined with women’s key role in the tourism sector, will contribute to the recovery. A population of more than 1.3 billion people, alongside its rich cultural and natural heritage, offers opportunities to transform Africa into inclusive and sustainable tourism destination. By harnessing Africa’s strengths and embracing sustainable practices, we can drive economic growth, gender equality, social inclusion, and job creation.

UNDERLINE THAT

Sustainable development and economic growth require a fundamental re-evaluation and re-imagining of the tourism sector, both globally and in Africa. A holistic strategy, capitalizing on Africa’s youthful potential, engaging the middle class for economic growth, and empowering micro, small, and medium enterprises, as well as start-ups to energize the "Made in Africa" initiative, is necessary.

FURTHER RECALL

The UN resolutions with resilient tourism at the forefront, supporting a stronger role for tourism in societies and global sustainability processes. The African Union's decision on crisis management and resilience building in the tourism sector highlights the importance of global trust, safety, and resilience for sustainable growth.

RECOGNIZE

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and its protocol on investment, enhanced cooperation among regional economic communities, the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), the African Tourism Strategic Framework, and the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons. These initiatives promote regional integration, facilitate travel, and enhance the tourism potential and employment opportunities for youth.

REASSERTING

The "Windhoek Pledge on Advocating Brand Africa," that leverages tourism as a potent tool, broadcasting Africa’s vibrant stories, utilizing digitalization, and embracing African culture and the need for responsible tourism practices guided by the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics.
Governments, businesses, civil societies, and communities must seek sustainable and innovative solutions to speed up socio-economic recovery through tourism. Inclusivity, innovation, digital transformation, and new technologies should be encouraged. By establishing clearer legal frameworks, protecting tourists and empowering them as consum’actors, while balancing responsibilities among stakeholders, we can harmonize standards and ensure tourists' protection at all levels.

The need for all member states to adopt an integrated and regional approach, which involves collaboration, public-private partnerships, the development of tourism infrastructure and the pooling of resources for tourism development in Africa; and also to create a conducive and business-friendly environment for investments and partnerships at the national level, within sub-regions and at the continental level:

Our commitment to strengthen the development of sustainable tourism as a transformational force for African economies and societies and to boost collaboration, investments, and partnerships at the bilateral, continental and international levels.

The interdependence of human health and biodiversity, the need to enhance climate ambitions in the tourism sector, and the importance of transitioning to a circular economy, considering the special needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

African nations should provide incentives, create a business-friendly environment, and support the private sector for effective participation in African tourism and the economy.

A Programme of Action aiming to promote sustainable and resilient tourism ecosystems through multi-sectoral partnerships, ethical practices, investment promotion, nature-based solutions, decarbonization, public health coordination, policy alignment, and data-driven decision-making:

- **Establishment of Partnerships and Tourism Ethics;**
  *Foster partnerships between tourism authorities, local communities, businesses, and environmental organizations*
  *Develop joint action plans for sustainable tourism practices*
Ratify the UNWTO Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics
Integrate ethical principles into national and regional tourism policies
Develop an ethical guide for African cultural tourism-based products

- **Investment Promotion, Innovation and Financial Access;**
  - Encourage investment in traditional tourism infrastructure and services
  - Support travel technology and mobility start-ups
  - Review investment policies and address barriers to investment in the tourism sector
  - Improve financing accessibility for tourism projects
  - Promote education and awareness on innovation and technology in the tourism industry
  - Support the growth of travel and tourism tech start-ups across Africa
   - Invest in infrastructure development and human resources, particularly in the preservation and promotion of local heritage.
  - Advocate for stronger integration of green finance in member countries.
  - Encourage promotional efforts by African destinations in target markets, focusing on eco-friendly, sustainable, and ethical tourism products.

- **Nature-Based Solutions and Community Well-Being;**
  - Develop nature-based tourism initiatives with environmental conservation as natural resources and public goods
  - Support local wellbeing through community-based tourism initiatives

- **Decarbonization and Green Infrastructure;**
  - Implement measures to reduce emissions from tourism activities
  - Support the development of low-carbon transport and sustainable infrastructure

- **Public Health Coordination and Crisis Management;**
  - Establish crisis management and health emergency protocols for the tourism sector
  - Facilitate information sharing between tourism and public health authorities
  - Encourage all relevant stakeholders to join the UNWTO Global Working Group on Health and Travel and Tourism
  - Develop joint activities and sharing of best practices

- **Domestic and Regional Tourism Integration;**
  - Align air transport and tourism policies to enable seamless travel within Africa
  - Conduct marketing campaigns to promote domestic and regional tourism
  - Stimulate the uptake of Visa facilitation
  - Design and promote combined cross-border tourist offers between African countries

- **Promotion of responsible and solidarity tourism;**
  - Promote responsible tourism that benefits local communities.
  - Establish multi-country tourist products promoting solidarity tourism between African countries.
  - Create a platform for exchange among tourism operators (hotels, travel agencies, etc.) to develop common and complementary products
• Implementation of Blue Tourism;
  *Build Blue Tourism based on economic performance, inclusive social development, and respect for coastal areas and the environment.

• Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):
  Establish integrated national financing frameworks to align financial flows with the SDGs.
  Establish an Observatory for Sustainable Tourism Development in Africa.
  Establish mechanisms to monitor the allocation of funds to sustainable tourism projects.

• Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
  *Develop Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) to align financial flows with the SDGs

• Establishment of mechanisms to track fund allocation for sustainable tourism projects;
  *Enhance data collection and analysis for evidence-based policymaking
  *Embrace the UN Resident Coordinators Reform to maximise resources mobilizations

• Conduct regular market assessments to identify emerging trends and challenges;
  *Promote coordination along the tourism value chain
  *Support product development for diverse and competitive tourism experiences
  *Promote Africa's Positive Narrative:
    -Encourage African citizens to share positive stories and change negative perceptions
    -Support initiatives that showcase Africa's cultural, natural, and historical heritage

• Public-Private-Community Partnerships and Governance Models:
  *Create governance models that promote partnerships among stakeholders

• Sustainable Tourism Pan-African Fund;
  *Set up and operationalize a sustainable Tourism Pan-African Fund.
  *Allocate funds to support the recovery of the tourism sector in Africa

• Safety, Security, and Traveler Confidence;
  *Develop regional and continental safety and security policies
  *Enhance traveller confidence by proposing consistent safety standards

• Strengthening Capacity-building and Digitalization;
  *Develop capacity-building programs aligned with national and regional policies
  *Support digitalization of tourism businesses, especially MSMEs and start-ups

• Data Intelligence and Evidence-Based Policies;
  *Establish data intelligence systems to measure the impacts of tourism.
  *Use data to inform policymaking and develop sustainable tourism strategies

• Protection of Tourists and Safeguarding Rights;
  *Promote and implement the International Code for the Protection of Tourists.
CALL ON, the UNWTO member states, the Africa Union Commission, the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the regional aviation institutions, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Afreximbank, international assistance partners, donor communities, as well as other banking institutional frameworks, in accordance with their respective mandates, to provide technical expertise, resources and support for the implementation of the above actions.

We hereby express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to our host, the Republic of Mauritius, for its warm hospitality and the excellent organization of the 66th UNWTO Commission Africa on Rethinking Tourism for Africa: Addressing Global Challenges; Promoting Investment and Partnerships, and its key contributions to advancing the synergies between tourism, investment, partnerships in response to global challenges to accelerate socio-economic recovery for Africa leaving no one behind.

Adopted in Mauritius, on this 27th day of July 2023.
Annexes of The Mauritius Declaration: A new Path for Africa Tourism through Global Partnerships and Investment

i) The African Union (AU) Agenda 2063
ii) The United Nations (UN)'s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
v) The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted in 1999 by the General Assembly of UNWTO
vi) The UN Resolution A/RES/77/269 adopted on 06 February 2023 on Global Tourism Resilience Day
vii) The Decision 51 of the 35th Ordinary Session of the African Union’s Assembly/AU/Dec. 818(XXXV) on the APRM reports
viii) the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which entered in force on 30 May 2019
ix) Protocol on Investment (POI or Protocol) to the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)
x) The enhanced cooperation and co-ordination among the eight Regional Economic Communities in Africa (REC)
xii) The Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons
xiii) The Regional Economic Communities in Africa
xv) The Glasgow Declaration: A Commitment to a decade of Tourism Climate Action
xvi) The Global Tourism Plastics Initiative
xvii) The Global Roadmap for Food Waste Reduction in the Tourism Sector
xviii) Tourism pan-African Fund that will support the recovery of the tourism sector in Africa further to the heavy economic impact incurred by the continent during the COVID-19 pandemic (CE/DEC/3 (CXVII).
xix) The First African Tourism Education Forum in Algeria 2023 (CAF/CR/8/(LXV) and the creation of an African Tourism Training Academy (CE/DEC/3 (CXVII).
xx) The UNWTO’s Marrakesh Call to Action
xxi) The UNWTO International Code for the Protection of Tourists
xxii) The UNWTO Global Working group on Health and Travel and Tourism Terms of reference