

**UNWTO GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON LINKING TOURISM,
CULTURE AND THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES: PATHWAYS TO
RECOVERY AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, Lagos**

Federal Republic of Nigeria

Symposium on UNWTO Digital Futures for SMEs

Monday 14 November 2022

DAY 1:

1.1 The Session was anchored and moderated by the Head of Station WE FM 106.3, Abuja, Mr. Benjamin Ubiri and co-anchored by the Deputy Director, Regional Department for Africa UNWTO, **Mr. Jaime Mayaki**. He stated that Nigeria is one of the key supporters in the digital places.

1.2 The Session featured various interesting lectures on Pathways to recovery and inclusive development was narrowed to how pandemic has assisted in the digitalization of tourism and creative industry for economic growth and jobs creation: "DIGITAL FUTURES FOR SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (**SMEs**)" for the promotion of innovative policies.

1.3 The lectures were presented consecutively as below, to mention but a few:

2.0 **1STLECTURE: INNOVATION TECHNOLOGY**

Director of Innovation Technology – UNWTO, Mrs. Natalia Bayona

Mrs. Natalia remarked that innovation technology has the power to give a voice to the younger generation while persistence is key for sustainability, adding high value to tourism eco-system, government, institutions, and the academia working together. She also emphasized on the need to increase competitiveness of tourism value harnessing the following: **innovation, digitalization/digital transformation, education, social responsibility & investment and added value jobs.**

She further stated that the biggest challenge in the innovation system is SMEs which require a lot of funds to have accessible investment. More so, 85% of the tourism value chain is made-up by SMEs.

Additionally, UNWTO Presented the Digital Futures Programme, which was explained as designed to accelerate the adoption of new technology among tourism enterprises. Developed in collaboration with some of the world's leading technology, finance and business companies, including Amadeus and Mastercard present at the event. It is focused on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which make up 80% of all tourism businesses.

It was shared that UNWTO aims to reach at least 1 million tourism SMEs over the lifetime of the Programme, providing them with the foundational skills and knowledge needed to harness the power of new and emerging technologies. Specifically the message shared was the intention of the Digital Futures Programme to help countries like

Nigeria to recover from the impacts of the pandemic and drive the sector forward, powered by innovation and new technology by providing SMEs with tailored guidance and tools.

It was also elaborated that the Programme is built on a Digital Readiness Diagnostic Tool that benchmarks SMEs across five key digital dimensions – Connectivity, Business Growth, E-Commerce, Big Data and Analytics, and Payments and Security.

Lastly, guests were invited to join the programme and take the diagnostic tool.

2.1 **2ND LECTURE: GOOGLE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

Head of Brand & Reputation, Mrs. Mojolaoluwa Aderemi-Makinde (Google)

She harped on E-commerce having huge potentials and gradually taking the fore to transform the world's economies as global sales are projected to grow to \$7Trillion USD by 2024 but the youth are being relied on, to take off. It was further affirmed that the youth possessed over 50% of the creative abilities/talents/skills. She also expatiated that in Africa, online commerce is booming with over N125 Trillion worth of digital payments were made by Nigerian consumers during the first quarter of 2022.

Furthermore, she outlined 5 means of Digital Paths: **Connectivity, Business growth, E-commerce, BigData & Analysis and Payments & Security.**

OBSTACLES/CHALLENGES

- i) More than 50% of Nigerian consumers are skeptical of online businesses;
- ii) Business owners are inundated with queries about their products and services;
- iii) Many entrepreneurs struggle to establish a digital presence.

The major tools needed by entrepreneurs to build credibility, differentiate their businesses, and reach out to new customers include:

- **Google Business Profile:** Find your customers on google search/map
- **Google Ads:** boost your visibility & revenue on web and
- **Google Analytics:** appraise performances and ensure improvement

AVAILABLE ADVERTISING:

- Search advertising
- Display advertising and
- Video advertising

2.3 **3RD LECTURE: REBUILDING TOURISM**

Manager, SME Solutions, East & West Africa, Mr. Khalid Mosuro (Mastercard)

The Manager explained that to rebuild tourism is to power digital acceleration of SMEs. Tourists and customers expect a digital first experience. Currently, investment in digital infrastructure is offering SMEs better prospects despite the pandemic accelerating momentum growth, paying off with huge turn-over and employment opportunities. Hence, the Micro & Small Medium Enterprises (**MSME**) is exploiting the move to digital future and

prosperity harnessing digital education, tools and resources tools and resources to help them stay open for e-market with more safety and online-in-person.

The following digital steps are necessary to successfully rebuild and transform tourism online services: Self-Assessment, Digital Business Education, Digital Tools and Get Paid.

2.4 **4TH LECTURE: NEW FRONTIERS IN DIGITAL EDUCATION, EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES** by Mrs. Onyekachi Eke (IE University)

EFFECTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SMEs:

- i) Some industries were more negatively affected than others.
- ii) Some companies were able to flourish in the midst of a pandemic due to their adaptability, preparedness for the digital space, and their ability to meet the changing needs and demands of people quickly.
- iii) Those who could not adopt digital business model for their business, struggled.
- iv) **Which industries suffered the most?** – the tourism, hospitality, energy and travel.
- v) **Why?** – It is due to heavy reliance on personal interactions or travel.
- vi) Companies that were able to survive were those who could adapt their services to online and / or those that had a huge stockpile of cash to ride out the worst of the pandemic.

TOP 10 SKILLS OF 2025:

- Analytical thinking and innovation
- Active learning and learning strategies
- Complex problem-solving
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Creativity, originality, and initiative
- Leadership and social influence
- Technology use, monitoring and control
- Technology design and programming
- Resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility
- Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation

Emergence of Better Financial Services during Covid-19 Pandemic: These are E-Banking, the thrive of cashless policies, development of soft-code in partnership with commercial banks, reforms of financial policy and digital skills

In summary, she recapped that opportunities are vast but takes an open eye and a knowing mind to recognize it, boldness to take it, hence, find your place by investing in education (take advantage of global economy) – learn & keep learning, practice, network and be adaptable.

2.5 5TH LECTURE: DATA & BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE SOLUTIONS FOR DMOs and SMES Angelica Mkok (Amadeus)

- i) Understanding the challenges face by DMOs and their SMEs value chain.
- ii) Identifying the traveler journey and the pain points as opportunities for SMEs through data
- iii) Consumer and business digital marketing tools and solutions
- iv) Measuring customer conversions through data-driven technology

3.0 ROUND-TABLE SESSION

The Round-Table Session resumed after the recess and was coordinated by the Master of Ceremony, Mr. Benjamin Ubiri and moderated by **Ojoma Ochai**, Managing Partner of the Creative Economy Practice, CCHUB

It featured the following activities:

- (i) Success stories on tourism investments were shared by three (3) Nigerians, namely:
 - **Akin Brauthwaite**, Co-Founder of Kasooko Communications Ltd.
 - **Tosin Adelowo**, Co-Founder of CHEKKIT and
 - **Luther Lawoyin**, CEO & Founder of PricePalley.Com

In summary, they all enlightened on their achievements and the importance of technology and the power of startups to serve the tourism sector. They provided clear examples on how their startups and solutions strengthen the tourism subsector, with examples on: Retail and consumers, communication solutions for travel agencies, pharmaceutical products and quality and supply of foods including the pivotal roles of governments and relevant agencies in promoting and strengthening Tourism Policy and regulations to enhance customers' satisfaction at its peak.

4.0 TOURISM HACKATHON NIGERIA

- (ii) Selected finalists from the Tourism Hackathon Nigeria were invited to pitch their scalable and sustainable projects for Nigeria.

The Pitch session was anchored by **Ayoola Gbade Bello**, Tourism Expert from Hackathon Nigeria.

Selected Finalists were as follows: Shantali Express (Shantex), TravelBunny, See9ja, Trispal, FastBunch, Tour Web App, Waka XR, High Table, Yayayawo, SafeTrip .

*Following deliberation by jury members, the **TravelBunny App** was selected as the winner. The Travelbunny application is a digital platform to help tourist find attractions, plan, split costs and organize tours across Nigeria. The app's founder will be invited to present their solution at an upcoming UNWTO conference in 2023 as winner of the Hackathon.*

Following the announcement of the winner during the awards ceremony, all finalists and the winner were invited back to the stage to receive their prize, a scholarship to the [UNWTO Online Academy](#).

(iii) Questions & Answers: inferred from the presentations by Jury Members.

4.0 **CLOSING REMARKS**

4.1 The Master of Ceremony for the day, Mr. Benjamin Ubiri thanked all participants and attendees for their contributive efforts towards a successful Conference/Symposium which hit fruitions.

4.2 It ended with group photographs.