REPORT OF

THE DONORS CONFERENCE FOR THE FUNDING OF THE "REGIONAL PROJECT FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN A NETWORK OF CROSS BORDER PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS IN WEST AFRICA"

27-28 May 2011
Dakar - Republic of Senegal

In order to mobilize the funds needed to finance the Regional Project for Sustainable Tourism Development in a Network of Cross-Border Parks and Protected Areas in West Africa, the Steering Committee of the concerned project organized under the High Patronage of His Excellency Maitre Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal and Current Chairman of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), a Conference of Donors at Meridien President Hotel in Dakar, Republic of Senegal, on 27 and 28 May, 2011.

This conference was preceded by the holding of a coordination meeting of the Steering Committee in the presence of focal points and managers of parks and protected areas on 26th May, 2011.

This meeting was attended by:

Representatives of the recipient States of the project namely: the Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, the Republic of Guinea, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Republic of Mali, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Republic of Niger, the Republic of Senegal and the Republic of Sierra Leone;

It is worth noting in this regard that the Delegations of Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone were represented by their Supervising Ministries.

- The delegation of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) led by His Excellency the Secretary General Mr. Taleb RIFAI;
- The OIC delegation led by Mr. Cheikh Oumar SOW, Director General of Economic Affairs and Representative of His Excellency Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of OIC;
- The Delegation of the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) led by Mr. Houcine RAHMOUNI, Adviser to the Director General;
- The Delegation of the Republic of Guinea, Regional Coordinator of the Project, led by HE Elhadji OUSMANE BAH, Minister of State in charge of Public Works and Transports representing H.E the President of the Republic of Guinea, Professor Alpha CONDE. It included the Minister of Hotel Trade, Tourism and Handicrafts and the Delegated Minister for Environment;
- Mrs. Dho YOUNG-SHIM, Representative of KOICA and the STEP Foundation;
- Mr. Abdel Wahab CHERIF, Representative of the Regional Office of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) in Dakar;
- Mr. Savas Alpay, Director General of the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC);

(The list of conference participants is attached in annex)

I/ OPENING SESSION/

The opening session was chaired by H.E Mr. Souleymane Ndéné NDIAYE, Prime Minister of the Republic of Senegal, Representative of HE Maitre Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal and Current Chairman of the OIC.

The welcoming address was delivered by H.E Mr. Thierno LO - Minister of Handicrafts, Tourism and Relations with the Private Sector and the Informal Sector of the Republic of Senegal. On this occasion, HE the Minister said that the international bodies and national governments are increasingly recognizing the role that tourism plays in reducing poverty. The project, he said will enable the ten Member States, project stakeholders to pool their efforts to strengthen their socio-economic and environmental advantages and derive most benefit from their enormous potential of ecotourism. He also stressed that this project will surely achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the 2015 deadline, particularly Goal 1 (Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger), the Objective 2 (Sustainable Management and Conservation of the environment) and Goal 3 (Develop a global partnership for development). H.E has also recalled the main objective of the Donors Conference, namely the presentation of the Funding opportunities Portfolio to donors and investors so as to guarantee the funding commitments of proposed activities. Finally, HE thanked the OIC, the STEP Foundation, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and WTO for their technical and financial support to the project and finally H.E invited partners, donors and funders to support this project on which the countries concerned set much hope.

After the welcoming speech, a documentary film produced by ICDT on the Cross border Parks and protected areas of West Africa (CPA) was presented to participants. It gave a vivid and realistic idea of the current state of the concerned Parks and Protected Areas and the challenges and opportunities expected from the Conference.

Then, the Representative of KOICA and the STEP Foundation, Mrs. Dho Young-Shim called for the continuation of this project in an aggressive and resolute manner until the phase of its implementation. She also recalled the forthcoming General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in the Republic of Korea and at the same time proposed to organize a meeting of Ministers of the recipient countries of the project. Within this framework she added that she would be ready to support strongly this project at the level of her country for its funding.

H.E Cheikh Oumar SOW - Director of Economic Affairs at the OIC conveyed the message of H.E Ekmeleddin IHSANOGLU, Secretary General of the OIC, in which he expressed his deep thanks to the President of the Republic of Senegal, H.E Maitre Abdoulaye WADE for his constant support to programs and activities aiming at
consolidating growth and development in OIC Member States. He also commended the efforts of H.E Taleb RIFAI for his dedication to the implementation of the project and the financing of the project feasibility study by the Korean Agency for Cooperation (KOICA). Furthermore, H.E has cited the initiation by the OIC of various programs to promote free trade in goods and services as well as the creation of several investment funds including the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (FSID) which since 2007 has disbursed 605 million U.S. dollars for various projects to reduce poverty in 28 OIC Member States. Then, HE informed participants of the measures taken at the 7th Ministerial Tourism Conference held in Tehran in November 2010 with proposals for the creation of the Award Prize of the tourism city and the OIC Excellence Label Award for handicrafts to allow tourism to regain its leading role, as driving force of socio-economic development among the OIC Member States. Finally, he urged regional and international partners to contribute to the execution of the project.

Then H.E Dr. Taleb RIFAI - Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), recalled in his speech that during the 16th Session of the General Assembly of WTO held in December 2005 in Dakar, H.E Maitre Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, who chaired the opening ceremony of the meeting stated that the "Regional Project on Sustainable Tourism Development in a Network of Cross Border Parks and Protected Areas in West Africa" is a priority for his country as well as for other States parties to the project. Then, HE described the trends in the tourism sector in 2010 and outlined the prospects for 2011. In this context, he cited the performances achieved by the African continent. Tourism is an essential development factor he said and for Africa in particular, it is a fact given its countless eco-tourism resources. H.E also announced the creation in 2003 by his organization of a special program for sustainable tourism development for the benefit of the African continent. Finally, he urged donors and partners to provide valuable support to this project on which the peoples of the States parties to this project are pinning all their hopes.

Finally, H.E Maitre Souleymane Ndéné Ndiaye, Prime Minister of the Republic of Senegal, took the floor expressing the regrets of His Excellency Maitre Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal and Current Chairman of OIC, for not being able to attend the Conference in view of other commitments. He then conveyed his deep thanks to the Secretary General of the WTO, the Representative of the Secretary General of OIC and Mrs. Dho Young-Shim-Representative of the STEP Foundation and the Korean Cooperation (KOICA) and the other participants for their presence at this important meeting. This project, he said, will contribute to reducing poverty by strengthening the socio-economic and environmental advantages in the ten respective states and the emergence of a vast regional tourism market. After expressing great satisfaction at the choice of his country to organise this conference, he presented the history of the project and underlined that it has been initiated at the right time given the current evils of climate change and the various crises, which occurred in recent years weakening populations and threatening natural resources which are increasingly scarce. Faced with this situation, he said, the international community has attempted to provide solutions through the organization of several summit meetings. At the level of the African continent, he cited the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) of which HE Maitre Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal is one of the originators as well as the Programme of the Great Green Wall which both of them, provide appropriate responses in Africa. At the sub-regional level, he stressed the
importance of the Additional Act to the Treaty of WAEMU devoted to adopting a common policy of Tourism. He then reaffirmed the hope recipient States are pinning on the success of this project which, in addition to the tourism sector, will develop several other sectors. Moreover, the recent United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDCs) held in May 2011 in Istanbul, he added, has served as a platform to stress the highly important role of tourism in LDCs. Therefore, HE invited all public and private partners to support this project in all its implementation phases. Finally, H.E congratulated the Members of the Steering Committee, the Consultant and the Focal Points of recipient countries for the quality and exhaustiveness of the study and also for the appropriateness of selected measures.

II/PROCEEDINGS:
The Conference was marked by the following presentations:

Session 2: Introduction to the Conference
Moderator: Mr. Mohamed SAKHO, Regional Coordinator of the Project

In this section, Mr. Sakho Mohamed, Regional Coordinator of the Project outlined the history of this project by recalling the key stages of its implementation, including its genesis in March 2005 during the conference of Tourism Ministers as well as its institutional anchoring on the occasion of the 16th General Assembly of the UNWTO in November-December 2005.

✓ Presentation of the regional project by Frédéric PIERRET, Executive Director of the WTO

In his speech, the Executive Director of the WTO stated that this project is the first of its kind because it is the result of an initiative taken by 10 States of West Africa.

He especially emphasized the importance for African countries and particularly the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to develop the tourism sector owing to their eco-tourism resources. To that effect, he added that the impact of tourism promotion is likely to encourage the States parties to the project to develop the means of transport, improve the quality of accommodation and strengthen the capacities of actors working in this sector.

In his opinion, the portfolio of project financing opportunities as developed facilitates the intervention of donors because it has targeted components and allows them to invest in this project according to their focus and / or skills.

In conclusion, Mr. PIERRET opened three topics of reflection, namely:

1. All contributions will be useful regardless of the nature or level of commitment. The most important being the mobilizing nature of the project;

2. Beyond the sources of public funding, the project should later focus on private investment. For this purpose, new management methods should be devised in order to attract private partners and involve them in park management. The example of Southern Africa can fuel the reflection;

3. To involve in project governance the ministries concerned, the OIC and the WTO.
According to Mr. PIERRET, in order to implement the plan of action, it is necessary to imagine flexible, efficient and effective running based on existing sub-regional structures such as the WAEMU.

Presentation of the Feasibility Study and the portfolio of funding opportunities:

✓ Through a document entitled "Funding Opportunities", Mr. Jean Sécheresse, Representative of the Research Firm «Secheresse Consultants”, presented the project, described the current precarious situation of CPA of West Africa and underlined the ways and means to develop the eight components of the plan of action for the implementation of the project and enable later its tourism exploitation.

Session 3: Mobilization of support and funding means required for the implementation of the project

- Presentations of donors, technical and financial partners

Moderator: Mr. Houcine Rahmouni, Adviser to the Director General of ICDT

During the introductory phase of this session, Mr. Houcine Rahmouni, Moderator of the session, stressed the urgency of pooling together resources and policies to redress the very precarious situation of the infrastructure of the regional project, federator of cross border parks and protected areas concerned and to breathe a new life and restore hope to local people and communities living in and around these parks and protected areas with a view to promoting tourism in the medium and long term and ensure sustainable development of this ecosystem. He also added that all ingredients are at present combined (Feasibility Study and Funding Opportunities Portfolio) to succeed in this important project for the socio-economic development of the region and it is now up to donors and development partners to transform the hopes of local people into reality.

He then invited H.E Mrs. BALDE Hadja Mariama BAH, the Minister of Hotel Trade, Tourism and Handicrafts of the Republic of Guinea, Regional Coordinator of the project to deliver her speech.

After expressing the condolences on her own behalf and on behalf of recipient countries to Mrs. Tourism Minister of Niger upon the death of her husband, H.E put emphasis in her speech on the following:

➢ Her appreciation of cooperation between Member States participating in the project and the work done so far by the Steering Committee;
➢ The precarious state of CPAs in West Africa and the importance of providing solutions to local people living around and whose incomes are less than 1 U.S. dollar per day;
➢ The socio-economic benefit of this project for the development of the sub-region especially for poverty reduction.

Finally, H.E Mrs. the Minister of Hotel Trade, Tourism and Handicrafts of the Republic of Guinea, Regional Coordinator of the project, expressed her full support to this project.

Then Mr. Rahmouni asked donors and development partners to give their views and comments on the project. Accordingly, the following representatives took the floor:
The Representative of the African Development Bank (ADB)

In her speech she stressed the following:

1. With respect to the project:
   - Quality of the Study;
   - Integrated and regional approach;
   - The innovative project;
   - The multi-sectoral nature of the project and its extension to medium term.

2. With respect to ADB:
   - In several areas and sectors the project is in phase with the strategy of the ADB;
   - Its regional and innovative nature implies a financing through additional funding and some cost-sharing in relation to regional projects. Indeed, there is a cost-sharing mechanism for regional projects in ADB;
   - Identification of specific areas of intervention by the Department of Agriculture and Environment of the ADB, which already implies a firm commitment;
   - The project in other areas can be discussed in Tunis at the level of several other departments of ADB, which involves commitment promises;
   - Clear commitment of the ADB in strengthening the infrastructure of water and energy.

3. At the level of the management and governance of the project
   - Importance of a structure of aid coordination and donors’ interventions;
   - Importance of coordination between recipient countries;
   - Importance of requests to be made globally to donors with a regional vision;
   - Importance of coordination at the level of ECOWAS and WAEMU;
   - Another stage of governance to be clarified with the private sector is the importance of the existence of a public-private platform; a call was made to the private sector to this end.

In his statement he identified the following areas:

   - Sustainable management of natural resources;
   - Rehabilitation of infrastructures;
   - Promotion of public-private partnership;
   - Promotion of SMEs;
   - The impact on the economic and social development:
   - Employment and decentralization.

Representative of the French Cooperation:

   In his speech, he highlighted the following:

   - This project contributes to a better regional integration;
   - The importance of the evaluation of parks and protected areas through tourism;
   - The importance of synergy between all actors;
   - The progressive tourism development of CPAs.

He therefore, declared that the French Cooperation might be interested in certain actions related to the project.

Finally, he raised the issue of the involvement modalities of local populations in the project.
Similarly he pointed out that the French Development Agency intervenes in the park Diawling and is developing a project in Saint Louis.

Besides, he recommended the involvement of French, European and African local collectivities.

**Representative of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB)**

In his speech, he highlighted the following:

- The importance of the unifying nature of this project for the sub region;
- The importance of good coordination of interventions to avoid work duplication.

He has also stated that some areas of the project are in harmony with the vision of the IDB Group namely:

- The public sector infrastructure;
- Poverty reduction;
- The private sector development.

He finally stressed the importance of the procedure for submission of requests to the IDB Group namely:

- The priority aspects of the project development plans of recipient countries;
- Presentation of requests through the governor of each recipient country to the IDB.

It is therefore, necessary to note the commitment of the IDB in areas developed by the project and in its effective implementation.

**Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

He stressed in his speech that:

1. The UNDP priorities focus on:
   - The fight against hunger and poverty;
   - conservation and protection of biodiversity;
   - the importance of tourism as a growth factor;
   - the economic and social development;
   - Capacity building;
   - Communications.

2. The importance of coordination in ensuring a certain synergy between interventions

3. The importance of political and strategic aspects including:
   - Harmonization of regulations and policies;
   - Poverty Reduction based on regional tourism;
   - Importance of pooling efforts and resources.

He finally said that UNDP will contribute and accompany the project in its implementation and will plea in favour of this project at the level of other partner institutions.

**Representative of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC)**

In his speech, he made a reflection on how to improve the outcome of the Conference in relation to the project by emphasizing the following:
1. The OIC policy in the field of Tourism development:
   ✓ Tourism is considered as a priority sector in the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action;
   ✓ Tourism forms the subject of a Ministerial Conference which meets every 2 years;

2. Funding opportunities within the OIC and in this case within the IDB Group;
   ✓ The existence of a window within the IDB for investment guarantees;
   ✓ The existence of a bank for the private sector;
   ✓ The existence of a solidarity fund for development in principle with a budget of U.S. $10 billion primarily for poverty reduction, of which 2 billion have been disbursed;
   ✓ The existence of a Special Programme for African Development endowed with a budget of U.S. $12 billion, of which $ U.S 4 billion, were disbursed.

In other words, funds are available and there is reason to rethink the project in such a way as to develop private initiative to better promote it while avoiding the involvement the public sector in its management.

3. The successful experience in some countries like Turkey, Morocco, Malaysia and Tunisia in the field of tourism shows that the private sector has contributed significantly.

He therefore, proposed to reframe the project so that it relies much more on the private sector than on the public sector in order to better sell to the private sector while also drawing on the funding opportunities intended for this sector.

It is therefore necessary to give more space to the private sector and ensure that members change their orientation so as to concede the management of parks and protected areas to the private sector.

This idea was welcomed by the audience which recommended rather a public-private partnership in managing this project.

The Representative of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)

In her speech she stressed the following:
   ✓ 6 Project Member States are Members of WAEMU;
   ✓ Several areas of the project are part of the common WAEMU policy and of its regional program;
   ✓ The Union area can be very attractive in many respects;
   ✓ Several projects of the WAEMU Commission are in total harmony with the project.

She said in this respect that the WAEMU Commission could play a major role in the development of this unifying project, therefore, the interest of the WAEMU in this project is total.

She cited in particular:
   ✓ Support to protection activities;
   ✓ The harmonization of the statutes of parks;
   ✓ Capacity-building;
   ✓ The harmonization of regulations and a Common visa for the 6 Member Countries of WAEMU.
She also stressed the existence of a WAEMU-UNWTO partnership.

**The Representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**

In her speech, she depicted her institution's experience in sustainable management, through the biosphere reserves, in the Park of Serengeti and Kruger National Park.

**CONCLUSION:**

Overall, it appears from the speeches and debates of this crucial session that the project was appreciated by the present Donors and development partners who have all expressed their commitments (not in figures) in supporting this project in its implementation phase, wholly or partially and showed a willingness to work in synergy so as to meet the concerns of governance and coordination of various stakeholders on the assumption that there is better coordination between and with recipient countries.

However, emphasis was put on the importance of involving the private sector in the management of this project in a more effective manner

- Presentation and answers to the questions of the Officers responsible for Parks and Focal Points

**Moderator: Mr. Ousmane Ndiaye, UNWTO Regional Director for Africa**

The final session was devoted to the presentations and answers of focal points, representatives of the parks and the Consultant.

On this occasion, the speakers highlighted their specific experiences and issues contained in the performance of their duties at the parks and protected areas.

At the end of the meeting the participants issued recommendations contained in the document annexed to the report entitled "Recommendations of the Conference".

Mr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary General of the WTO, has renewed the commitment of WTO to contribute effectively to the success of the project and, in the same vein, emphasized its relevance given the process and content. He urged countries to as well as the Tourism Ministers of recipient countries to show more commitment at the next General Assembly of WTO in South Korea.

**III/ CLOSING SESSION:**

The Closing Ceremony was chaired by Mr Cheikh Sadibou DIA, Director of Office of H.E the Minister of Handicrafts, Tourism and Relations with the Private Sector and the Informal Sector of the Republic of Senegal.

First, the floor was given to Mr. Ousseynou DIENG Director of Studies and Tourism Planning in Senegal for the presentation of the report and for the reading and adoption of the recommendations of the Conference.

Then the following speeches were delivered by:

- The Executive Director of the WTO - Frédéric Pierret, on behalf of the organizers;
- The Head of Cabinet of the Ministry of Handicrafts and Tourism of Mali, Mr. Abdoulaye Alkadi in charge of presenting the motion of thanks to the Senegalese authorities;
- Her Excellency the Minister of Hotel Trade, Tourism and Handicrafts of the Republic of Guinea who extended her sincere thanks to the Senegalese authorities for their hospitality and offered gifts to the representatives of WTO, OIC, ICDT and SESRIC and to the ST-EP Foundation with a view to expressing to them the profound gratitude of the Governments of Member States for the quality of their technical and financial support and to urge them to carry on their assistance until the effective implementation of the project.

Then, the Head of the Cabinet, Mr. Cheikh Sadibou DIA, read out the statement of HE the Minister of Handicrafts, Tourism and Relations with the Private Sector and the Informal Sector of the Republic of Senegal who seized this opportunity to recall that the objectives and outcomes of this Conference, are in phase with the concerns of the international community, because the realization of this project whose cost is estimated at 46,863,527 Euros, i.e 31,000,000,000 CFA francs, will contribute to alleviating poverty, improving living conditions as well as preserving the environment and resources. He pointed out that The 3rd Session of the meeting; which was devoted to the mobilization of funds needed to finance the project, has allowed the identification of real funding potentials on behalf of partners and donors and showed the need for a reframing of the project and its governance for greater involvement of private sector and other departments concerned, all under the coordination of the Ministries of Tourism. H.E then asked the donors and partners to put their commitments into a concrete shape and ensure the effective mobilization of resources for the project. Finally, H.E thanked the OIC, WTO, IDB, ADB, STEP Foundation and the French Cooperation for their support of the project.

In addition, on the sidelines of the Conference, it was agreed within the Steering Committee to consider the possibility of organizing a similar meeting with the private sector (donors, investors and private donors) in order to strengthen the implementation of this project in compliance with the recommendation of the management of cross border Parks and Protected Areas in public / private partnership while recommending to invite the recipient countries of the project to allow beforehand, state-owned concessions to that effect.

Done in Dakar, May 28, 2011