



Opening Ceremony of the 56th UNWTO CAF Meeting

Luanda, Angola, 28 April 2014

UNWTO Secretary-General

HE Mr Manuel Vicente, Vice President of the Republic of Angola

- On behalf of the World Tourism Organization, the United Nations Specialized Agency for Tourism, allow me your Excellency to extend to you our gratitude for your attendance to this opening ceremony; your presence with us is a testimony of the growing importance of tourism in Angola and an important message of support to our sector.
- Angola is a country where tourism is coming of age and we are very happy to bear witness to such progress.
- Today over half a million international tourists visit Angola every year; a staggering figure when we look back at the 100.000 that came to the country only a decade ago.
- With key measures such as advancing an open skies policy, visa facilitation and a transparent investment framework, tourism will surely

continue to flourish, contributing to Angola's economy and the wellbeing of its people.

- Angola has always demonstrated exemplary dynamism and leadership in its relations with UNWTO. It is thus with great pleasure that we celebrate the UNWTO Commission for Africa Meeting for the second time in your country (the first time was in 2003).
- And as the tourism sector continues to advance in Angola, please rest assured Mr. Vice President of UNWTO's fullest support to your country.

H.E. Mr. Pedro Mutindi, Minister of Hospitality and Tourism of Angola, *Estimado amigo*

- Thankyou, and your team,for working hand in hand so wellwith the UNWTO Secretariat in the preparation of the 56th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Africa.
- On behalf of all those attending this meeting, we sincerely thank you and your people, for your warm welcome and for making us feel at home.

H.E. Mr. Walter Mzembi, CAF Chairman and Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry of Zimbabwe,

Dear Ministers of UNWTO African Member States

- Welcome to the 56th Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Africa. We trust this will be another important step in consolidating the immense role that tourism has to play in the development of Africa and in further strengthening our joint work.

Dear Representatives of the African Union and of the Southern African Development Communities (SADC)

- Thank you for joining us on this occasion.
- At UNWTO we believe in the value of partnerships and we are thus very pleased to see our partnerships with you advancing; we trust that this is the only way possible if we are to maximize the potential of tourism as an engine and catalyst for regional integration, economic development and growth in Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends, queridos amigos

- It is a great pleasure to be in Luanda, to be in Angola.
- As we prepare to initiate the works of the 56th UNWTO Regional Commission Meeting allow me to share with you a few thoughts on two

main issues that I trust will help shape our discussions in the coming days:

1. The situation of tourism in the world and in Africa; and
2. The challenges we are must address if we want to ensure tourism continues to advance as one of the main pillars of development for Africa

Tourism in Africa – growing from strength to strength

Dear Friends

- Despite the lingering challenges of a weak world economy, despite geopolitical shifts, and beyond UNWTO's initial expectations, international tourism continued to progress strongly in 2013 with the number of international tourists growing by a surprising 5%.
- With an additional 52 million tourists travelling the world, the total number of international tourists reached last year 1,087 million. Meaning, more than one billion people visited another country, either for business or leisure, in 2013.
- Africa was again one of the star performers of world tourism. The number of international tourists in the region increased by 6% to a new

record of 56 million as destinations in North Africa continued to rebound (+6%) and those in Southern Africa consolidated the growth of the past years (+5%).

- Although Africa's share of the international tourism market is still too small for its potential (5% of all arrivals), the truth is that tourism in Africa has been growing from strength to strength and that this growth is set to continue.
- The numbers speak for themselves. From 26 million international tourists in 2000 to 56 million in 2013; and set to continue growing to a forecasted 134 million by 2030.
- Tourism has become one of the most important sectors for Africa's economies and is increasingly recognized as a fundamental tool to create jobs and opportunities for small enterprises, foster investment and generate foreign exchange. Today, tourism accounts for as much as 7% of all exports in Africa and 58% of its service exports.
- Moreover, tourism through its numerous linkages to other sectors brings numerous opportunities to local communities while generating means to support the conservation of natural and cultural resources, which in Africa are central to the tourism product.

Poaching, travel facilitation and connectivity – key issues on the agenda

Dear Friends

- Despite such strong expansion and potential, tourism in Africa still faces many challenges.
- In the coming days we will discuss some of the most pressing issues facing the future of the tourism sector in the region and we hope to leave Luanda with a roadmap to guide our actions on three key issues: poaching, visa facilitation and air connectivity.

1. Poaching

Wildlife in Africa is, no doubt, facing one of its greatest crises in decades. In 2012, an estimated 22.000 African elephants were killed illegally; for 2013, WWF estimates this number to have escalated to 35.000.

Throughout the continent, poaching and illegal wildlife trade has reached unprecedented levels with a rapid increase in the illicit trade of ivory, rhino horn and other wildlife parts.

Poaching is a threat to wildlife but also to the very future of tourism in Africa. Indeed, the survival of Africa's wildlife and its tourism sector are today seriously endangered by the illegal killing and trade of wildlife.

UNWTO aims to support the on-going efforts of the international community in fighting this crime and encourages the tourism sector to collaborate in raising awareness of the need to strengthen anti-poaching measures.

Last March, African Tourism Ministers met under the leadership of UNWTO to raise this debate at the highest level and discuss how to build a tourism coalition against poaching.

The meeting was also attended by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the German Secretary of State for Environment, in a clear show of support from the international community to this pressing issue.

The Statement issuing from that Meeting demonstrates the will of African Ministers attending to advance this agenda and we look forward for the debate on this topic taking place during the Commission Meeting.

2. Travel Facilitation

Despite the clear advancement seen in recent years in the area of visa facilitation - UNWTO Openness Index shows that the share of the world population requiring a traditional visa before travelling declined from 77% in 2008 to 64% in 2013 – complicated visa processes still constitute an important barrier to the growth of our sector.

Africa is among the regions better positioned in terms of visa on arrivals but also still one of the regions lagging behind when it comes to no visa required – only 9% of the world population needs no visa to travel to Africa as compared to 18% worldwide.

Good examples of regional cooperation are also emerging in the region such as Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda single visa and we trust this meeting will be a good opportunity to share those experiences.

3. Connectivity

Considering that 51% of all international tourists arrive to their destinations by air, UNWTO has made it a priority to promote a closer coordination between tourism and aviation policies as to ensure mutual benefits.

If the issue of air connectivity is fundamental for the development of tourism worldwide it is even more so in the case of Africa. Tourism in the region is still much limited by lack of capacity, limited infrastructure and restrictive regulations, issues that particularly hamper the growth of intra-regional travel.

In this framework, the meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Africa will be complemented by a Regional Seminar on “Tourism and Air Connectivity in Africa”, which we trust will help us identify the key issues that need to be addressed to promote better connectivity in the region and the way forward.

- This seminar, organized in cooperation with ICAO, will further help us set the scene for the important upcoming UNWTO/ICAO Ministerial Conference on Tourism and Air Transport in Africa to be held in October in the Seychelles.
- The meeting in October will be a first of its kind as it will bring together the Ministers of Tourism and the Ministers of Transport and we are very pleased to take this important first step here in Africa. We hope to count on your participation and strong engagement to advance this important agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends

- Thank you for joining the 56th Meeting of the Commission for Africa.
- I would like to sincerely thank once again on behalf of all participants, the Government of Angola for hosting this event and I wish you all a very productive meeting and an excellent time exploring Angola.

Thank you. Muito obrigado.