



**REGIONAL SEMINAR ON**  
**TOURISM AND AIR CONNECTIVITY IN AFRICA**

Luanda, Angola, 29 April 2014

Remarks by UNWTO Secretary-General

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Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

On behalf of the World Tourism Organization, the United Nations  
Specialized Agency for Tourism, it is my pleasure to welcome you all  
to this Seminar.

Allow to me to start by expressing our heartfelt appreciation to the  
government of Angola and its people for their warm welcome and  
hospitality – muito obrigado!

Allow me as well to thank ICAO, through its representative Dr Djibo, for joining us on this important occasion. UNWTO and ICAO, two UN agencies, have been long working together to promote a closer coordination between tourism and air transport – two interlinked activities which unfortunately too often work in a dissociated manner – and we are thus very pleased to have ICAO partnering with us in the organization of this Seminar.

Dear Friends,

### **Tourism's growth and significance**

The tourism sector has grown in recent decades to become one of the most dynamic socio-economic activities of our times.

In 2013, 1.087 million international tourists travelled the world, up from less than half million in the early 90s. Tourism generates 9% of the world's GDP, one in eleven jobs and as much as 6% of all exports.

Even amidst economic challenging times, such as the ones we have lived in recent years, the sector continues to expand as shown by the results of 2013; in 2013, a total of 52 million more tourists travelled abroad despite the a weak global economy; 3 million more visited Africa.

And the sector is expected to continue growing. According to UNWTO's long-term forecast, *Tourism Towards 2030*, by 2020, 1.4 billion people will be crossing international borders for leisure, business or other tourism purposes and by 2030, this number will reach 1.8 billion.

This growth has been particularly strong in emerging economies and developing countries, to which tourism has become one of the main sources of income. As an example, tourism is today the first or second source of export earnings in 20 of the world's 48 least developing countries.

In Africa, international tourism, which accounts for 6% of all exports in the continent, grew from 26 million tourists in 2000 to 56 million last year generating as much as US\$ 34 billion to local economies.

## **Tourism and Air Transport**

Dear friends

There is little doubt that for African countries, tourism can be an essential lever for economic and social development: for many the sector is already a vital source of employment, foreign currency earnings, and so much-needed economic diversification.

And 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.

Yet, it is also truth that several challenges still hamper the development of tourism in the continent and there is a lot of work ahead if we are to fully realize the potential that tourism has to become one of the key pillars of development in Africa.

Among these challenges is that of connectivity, particularly in terms of air transport.

If the issue of air connectivity is fundamental for the development of tourism worldwide considering that 51% of all tourists arrive at their destinations by air, it is even more so in the case of Africa whose main source markets are located in Europe. Indeed, tourism in the region is still much limited by lack of air capacity, limited infrastructure development and restrictive regulations.

During today's seminar we will try to address some of these issues, share experiences and device how together we can work to enable air connectivity in Africa to the benefit of both air transport and tourism development.

Before we hear from our panelists and experts, to whom I take this opportunity to thank for their participation, allow me to highlight three issues which I think are essential to our discussions:

1. **The regulatory framework:** Research by the World Bank demonstrates that the measure of air connectivity is closely correlated with important economic variables including the degree of liberalization of air transport markets.

Nonetheless, since the establishment of the Chicago Convention and its failure over the decades to reach a multilateral agreement in the use of air space, international air transport markets have been predominantly governed by bilateral air service agreements between national governments.

We are not here to promote liberalization per se, but we do call upon governments to make a comprehensive assessment of the economic impacts of air transport liberalization; an assessment that encompasses its direct and indirect effects not only on air transport, but also on tourism, trade, job creation and economic growth.

2. **Infrastructure and its financing:** This issue is of paramount importance for the development of tourism in Africa. The

outcome of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Africa, held in Botswana, in 2005 according to which “poor interconnectivity, high costs and inadequate infrastructure continue to afflict air transport within Africa, to the detriment of aviation, tourism and African economies at large” still holds true almost a decade after.

3. **Taxation:** The economic impact of taxes, airport service fees and customs duties on both air transport and tourism is of increasing concern among in developed and developing countries alike.

In this regard, it is essential to look for a balance between the need to have legitimate fiscal revenues and the interest to promote a satisfactory development of air services and tourism, seeking for a fiscal policy that, at the end of the day, benefits the economy as whole.

Finally, when addressing all the above one should never forget the specific circumstances of Africa. In this regard, UNWTO continues to call for the implementation of the **Essential Tourism Development Route (ETDR) concept**, which would provide both a safeguard against rapid liberalization and a tool for the development of new tourism streams in developing countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends

I trust that the debate that will follow will help us identify the key issues that need to be addressed to promote better air connectivity in Africa, promote a closer cooperation between tourism and air transport policies in the region and 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 I thus take this opportunity to call upon the participation of all African countries at the highest level and for your strong engagement in this event as only together can we advance this important agenda.

Before I close, I would like to sincerely thank once again on behalf of all participants, the Government of Angola for hosting this seminar and the Ministers of Tourism and Air Transport of Angola for providing us this example of collaboration.

I wish you all a very productive meeting. Thank you. Muito obrigado.