

# **UNWTO/ICAO Conference: Tourism and Air Transport in Africa**

## **OPENING REMARKS**

### **UNWTO SECRETARY-GENERAL**

**(28 March 2019, Santa Maria, Sal Island, Cabo Verde)**

- Honorable President of the Republic of Cabo Verde, Jorge Carlos Fonseca; your presence proves the true commitment of Cabo Verde to sustainable tourism development in Africa. Thank you!
- Dear José Da Silva Gonçalves, Minister of Tourism and Transport and Minister of Maritime Economy – your vision and natural leadership and perseverance have been invaluable to the success of this event. Congratulations to you and the great team behind you!
- Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, President of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization – this unique joint event between our two organizations is long due and is a testimony of the new dynamics that are taking shape between tourism and air transport in Africa.
- Madame Commissioner Amani Abou-Zeid in charge of Infrastructure and Energy at the African Union, thank you for presence at this event, which is critical to the discussions on the implementation of the SAATM.
- I sincerely thank the presence of all the members of Cabinet of Cabo Verde, all African ministers, dignitaries and delegates. If I am

not mistaken, I believe we have a record in turnout for a UNWTO ministerial event in Africa.

**Dear President, Minister Da Silva Gonçalves, Ministers, dignitaries, and authorities.**

- Thanks to their very nature, tourism and aviation are two naturally connected sectors.
- This symbiotic relationship is mutually reinforcing and inter-dependent. This is especially true for a Small Island Developing State such as Cabo Verde, which is almost fully dependent on air transport access.
- Since 2000, Cabo Verde has made considerable progress on various socio-economic indicators. Graduating from least developed country (LDC) status in December 2007, to date it is only one of four countries in the world to have done so.
- Recent tourism figures are extremely positive, growing above the world average last year. Prospects are positive, also considering Cabo Verde's unique geographical advantage making the country an ideal platform for connecting both Europe and North America to Africa and South America.
- The recent agreement between Cabo Verde Airlines and Icelandair is a good example: it is a step towards an Atlantic Hub based on the island of Sal, it will allow the expansion of Cabo Verde Airlines, and it represents is an efficient public-private partnership.

- These efforts are in line with tourism's contribution to diversify the economy of Cabo Verde. Foreign Direct Investment can leverage sustainable development with a view to broaden the tourism offer beyond the "all-inclusive" model in order to secure greater development impact reaching the 10 islands of the archipelago.
- It is also no coincidence that Cabo Verde has decided to take the lead on one of the main priorities of the UNWTO Agenda for Africa – the 10 major priorities our African members have expressed for the continent. Cabo Verde will especially engage on Travel Facilitation.

**Dear Friends,**

- The Yamoussoukro Decision of November 1999 aimed to boost the aviation sector by liberalizing international travel between African countries. While this liberalization has been unevenly implemented, it has contributed to the success of some African carriers such as Ethiopian Airlines, which relies on the Yamoussoukro Decision as a basis for its country partnership negotiations.
- The launch by the African Union of the Single African Air Transport Market initiative in January 2018, a key element of the African Union's Agenda 2063, will give new impetus to more effective operationalization of the Yamoussoukro Decision.
- The agreement has now been signed by 27 countries, representing about 75 percent of intra-African air transport and a population of around 650 million people. Its success will depend on close

collaboration between the industry and government to ease the constraints facing the aviation sector.

- This historic conference, organized jointly with our sister UN-Agency the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO), will build on progress and advancements achieved so far in the tourism and aviation sectors. We will develop pragmatic and forward-looking solutions to maximize and balance the benefits from the future development of tourism and air transport services in Africa.
- We will also look at quality aspects, to balance expected tourism growth, particularly climate change.
- By 2050, aviation emissions are forecast to rise to 3-5% of total global emissions. ICAO suggests that sustainable alternative fuels and market-based measures will need to be embraced, since operational and aircraft technology improvements alone will not be sufficient. This is a major topic that needs to be discussed during this conference.
- We will also present the initial results of the UNWTO Visa Openness Report 2019 for Africa. It continues the analysis of visa policies and progress made in visa facilitation over the past 10 years, supporting destinations with evidence-based policy making and helping prioritize activities within their facilitation policies;
- Visa policies are among the most important governmental formalities influencing international tourism, and closely linked to the development of tourism.

## **Dear friends,**

- Africa is the youngest continent of the world. With 60% of the population under 25. This calls for actions to invest in the youth, to invest in the future;
- This year, UNWTO has a special focus on Education, Skills and Jobs. Africa is the only region in the world where the youth population is increasing, and its economic growth in the coming decades will exclusively depend on human capital investment;
- Opening Skies in Africa will create new skills and generate new jobs for the upcoming 400 million young Africans expected by 2045;
- Investing in human capital will be critical in the prosperity of emerging economies and UNWTO will seek to support its African members in their efforts to bolster human capital investments in the tourism sector.

## **Dear all**

- Tourism can act as a driver of positive change, and together with the development of a sustainable air transport sector in Africa it can multiply its effect on the growth and diversification of its economies.

- Again, I would like to sincerely congratulate our host Cabo Verde for the amazing welcome and organization of this historical conference.
- Thank you President Jorge Carlos Fonseca for the incredible support you provided throughout, and thank you Minister José Da Silva Gonçalves for having managed to successfully bring us all on board for this long due reunion in Sal Island.
- Thank you all again for your participation and commitment towards a more sustainable and responsible tourism.