

# **“Sustainable Tourism Development in Africa: A Transforming Opportunity for Inclusive Growth”.**

**The High Level Forum**

## **Opening Remarks: The Leadership and Institutional Question**

**By**

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Zimbabwe**

**The AU Specialised Technical Committee      Vice  
Chairperson for the Tourism Sector**

**&**

**UNWTO Executive Council Member (2017- 2021)**

**Venue: African Union Conference Room, 5th Floor, AU Permanent  
Observer to the United Nations, 3 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, 305**

**East 47th Street, New York, NY 10017**

**21st September 2017**

**H. E. Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki**, CEO, NEPAD Agency,

**Mr. Faeuuddin Ahmed**, Special Representative of the World  
Tourism Organization in New York,

**H. E. Moussa Faki**, Chairperson African Union Commission,

**Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi**, Secretary-General of the United Nations  
Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD),

Distinguished Delegates,

All Protocols observed

Let me begin by extending my heartfelt gratitude to my good friend Dr Mayaki for creating this unique opportunity to speak to this valuable and relevant constituency on the development of tourism in our continent. As the African Union endorsed candidate in the most recent bid for the position of Secretary General of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation my mind is still very fresh with the issues that are besetting African tourism and the promise I made to the world in my transformation agenda for global tourism.

Our base year for global tourism is 1950 when the sector was a 2 billion tourism economy and received 25 million tourists. The

sector has since grown exponentially with 2016 closing as follows:

- \$1.235 billion arrivals
- \$1.5 trillion in direct export earnings.
- \$8 trillion GDP impact equivalent to 10% of global GDP
- 30% of global service exports and 7 % of Net exports.
- 300 million people employed directly and indirectly, equivalent to 1 in every 11 people employed globally
- ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in global total exports after fuels and chemicals with foodstuffs and automobiles coming fourth and fifth respectively.

The tragedy Ladies and Gentlemen is that Africa's market share is just a mere 3-5% of these statistics.

I am happy to note that **Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi**, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will speak and I want to thank him upfront for his contribution for raising the awareness on the significance of

tourism as captured in the Economic Development in Africa Report 2017: **Tourism for Transformative and Inclusive Growth** which has been used as a theme for this NEPAD High Level Forum.

I had the occasion to launch it in my own country, Zimbabwe a couple of months ago and I recommend it as a reference tool for national economic planners in Africa that may be missing tourism in their fiscal and budgetary and economic development assumptions.

I am sure he will ably speak to the report. I wish to take a diversion from statistics to the African tourism leadership question which in my opinion the missing link to the transformative opportunity we all seek out of this sector.

- Good plans without a purposeful leadership will come to nought.
- Equally good reports, resolutions and targets without implementation will still see us being the tail in global tourism performance.
- Our failure is ultimately the result of lack of institutional accommodation of the sector at the very apex of our

governance in the African Union itself. The sector is buried under the Commission for Energy, Infrastructure and Tourism. National government economic blueprints acknowledge Tourism as an economic pillar. Equally, government structure either positions it as a standalone Ministry or couples it to Aviation, Environment, Arts or Culture with tourism itself being the lead department. National Tourism Policies have gone even further to redefine tourism beyond its traditional luxury narrative to a more inclusive product offering. Even the SDGs, acknowledge a cross-cutting presence of tourism in all the 17 Goals going forward to 2030. Given the importance of the first two sectors (infrastructure and energy), it goes without saying that coupling tourism to them undermines the visibility and attention it so requires. This is why I am happy to share with you the outcome of the **First Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism** of the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2017 which I have the pleasure to serve as Vice Chairperson of the Specialized Technical Committee on Tourism.

In mitigation to the above, we undertook to:

- come up with an African Tourism Organization as an enabling institution for sustainable tourism development in Africa.

- establish a Tourism Unit for Coordination and Harmonization at the AUC as a matter of urgency and operationalise it. Its number one objective should be to set up the African Tourism Organisation.
- come up with a Continental Tourism Strategy, and
- implement the AU Lomé Declaration of March 2017 that prescribed 5 percent allocation from National Budgets to tourism (fiscal support for tourism varies from 0.1 to 5%).

**I raise this issue of institutionalisation to drive the point that there can never be sustainability of this sector without being anchored by strong institutions and efficient structures in Africa.**

At the very apex of intergovernmental agency representation is the UNWTO. Industry, academia and communities are represented by a plethora of organisations. Only just last week, the world's largest source market, China, inaugurated the World Tourism Alliance (WTA) because China is anticipating to unleash between 600 to 700 million outbound tourists by Year 2020 and can never do so without being supported by organisational efficacy and representation. Africa is readying itself to double its Tourism's direct contribution to GDP forecast to grow from US\$73 billion in 2015 to US\$121 billion in 2026 (WTTC) yet it is very weak in structure. This problem is compounded further by a high rate of

attrition of Tourism Ministers, in the process, undermining the much needed institutional memory.

Without taking anything from the ensuing pane discussion I submit for your consideration the issue of building strong tourism institutions at Regional Economic Community level as building blocs for the much anticipated African Tourism Organisation without which our role in the operationalisation of SDGs going forward to 2030 will be fragmented and haphazard. Without institutional order and unity of purpose even when presented with leadership opportunities that could assist Africa in advancing its own agenda in global tourism performance and market share, we will still miss it - its high time Africa dispense with the elephant in the Zoo mentality and starts serious agenda setting.

**I thank you.**