



NEPAD PLANNING AND COORDINATING AGENCY

PRESS RELEASE

NEPAD Agency signs MoU with UN World Tourism Organization

Abidjan - The NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency and the UN World Tourism Organization, signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 19 April 2016, in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. The ceremony took place on the margins of the 58th UNWTO Commission for Africa (CAF) and the 10YFP Sustainable Tourism Conference and Symposium. CAF is the Assembly of the African Ministers of Tourism.

The objective of the Memorandum of Understanding is to enhance cooperation between the NEPAD Agency and UNWTO in identified areas of mutual interest; with a view to: promote tourism as a tool for development in Africa in line with UNWTO's priorities and Africa's Agenda 2063 aspirations and goals on sustainable economic growth and inclusive development, as well as build strong partnerships to support the development of the tourism sector in Africa.

Amongst the identified areas of cooperation, include support to the implementation of the NEPAD Tourism Action Plan as the core strategy of the African Union on tourism, taking into account the current continental and global challenges and within the context of the NEPAD's vision and Agenda 2063 aspirations and goals.

In his speech, Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, the CEO of the NEPAD Agency, said, "Africa's Heads of States and Governments have adopted Agenda 2063 as the structural transformation framework of the continent. This Agenda integrated tourism as a critical driver of inclusive growth, job opportunities and wealth creation, through industry and service". According to Dr. Mayaki, the role of the NEPAD Agency - as the technical arm of the African Union - is to ensure that the mechanisms to facilitate regional integration, such as visa facilitation, air access and transport are effectively implemented. Therefore, the signing of the MoU is a very important step for the NEPAD Agency for mainstreaming sustained and competitive tourism, he added.

UNWTO was represented by its Secretary-General, Dr. Taleb Rifai who underscored the importance of giving more attention to the tourism sector, given the role that tourism creates in the sustainability of economic growth and development. According to Dr. Rifai, "travel and tourism represent nine percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and one out of every 11 jobs."

Earlier in the day, H.E. Mr. Daniel Kablan Duncan, the Prime Minister of Cote d'Ivoire officially opened the meeting. The Prime Minister in his welcome remarks pointed to the need to take the tourism sector seriously, given that Africa will rely on travel and tourism for economic opportunities and job creation. Tourism and travel created over 200,000 jobs in 2015, in Cote d'Ivoire, according to the Prime Minister. The meeting was also attended by ministers of tourism from over twenty African countries, members of the diplomatic corps,

UN Agencies, development partners, the media, and civil society.

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About the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA)

The **NEPAD** Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), is a technical body and development vehicle of the African Union (AU). The NPCA is responsible for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (**NEPAD**), a strategic framework for pan-African socio-economic development. In order to address critical challenges facing the continent, the NPCA facilitates and coordinates development programmes and projects, pushing for partnerships, resource mobilisation, research and knowledge management.