Addressing Africa’s Narrow Range of tourism Products

By
Dr Geoffrey Manyara

First Ordinary Session of the African Union STC on Transport, Intercontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism

Lome, Togo 13th – 17th March 2017
Outline of presentation

- Introduction
- Historical Perspective
- Challenges
- Conclusion and recommendations
Tourism is an important economic sector, it –

✓ 8% of continent’s GDP

✓ Is larger than manufacturing and banking sectors combined

✓ Generates 7.1% of total employment etc

✓ Projected to grow faster than continent’s average growth rate

But, the sector faces a range of challenges – narrow range of products
Historical perspective

• Tourism arguably rooted in the colonial era

• Colonial legislation – created national parks and reserves e.g. Nairobi (1946), Tsavo (1948), Mt Kenya (1949), Serengeti (1951)

• Postcolonial – national parks and reserves developed into key tourist attractions targeting the Western markets
  • Conservation efforts mainly driven organisations e.g. AWF, WWF, IUCN under programmes e.g. COBRA supported by USAID, CBNRM of which CAMPFIRE is a strand, CORE

• Most countries major source markets remain respective the former colonisers

• Perspective enables an understanding of what has informed and is informing tourism product development in Africa
Narrow range of tourism products dependence has led to:

- Perpetuation of the *myth of the uncivilised*
- Homogeneity of African tourism products
- Unsuitability of products for African market
- Overexploitation natural resources, resulting in conflicts – human-wildlife, encroachment, armed conflicts etc
- Minimal benefits to local communities – low linkages and high leakages of benefits
• The narrow range of tourism products is a challenge to the development prospects of the sector

• There is urgent for diversification informed by innovative and creative ideas – R&D key
THANK YOU!
MERCI BEAUCOUP!

more info: gmanyara@uneeca.org