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**FIRST MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

**ON TOURISM OF THE STC IN TRANSPORT**

**TRANSCONTINENTAL AND INTERREGIONAL**

**INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND TOURISM**

**1ST - 2ND OCTOBER 2018**

**AU/STC-TTIET/SC-Tourism/Expert- Rpt (I)**

REPORT OF THE EXPERTS’ MEETING

1. INTRODUCTION
2. The Session of Experts of the First Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Tourism of the STC in Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIIET) took place on the, 1st October 2018 at the Movenpick Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya.
3. In attendance, were representatives from the following Member States: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Capo-Verde, Congo Rep., Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Morocco, Niger, Sahrawi Rep., Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia and Zimbabwe.
4. The following organisations also participated: African Union Commission (AUC), African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), Common Market of East and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), African Airlines Association (AFRAA), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), NEPAD and International Tourism Fair Abidjan.
5. The list of participants is attached herewith – **Annex 1**.
6. OPENING
7. The opening ceremony was officiated by Mr. **Joe Okudo**, Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, Kenya. Mr. Okudo welcomed the participants to the meeting, indicated the key note speakers and proceeded to invite the speakers to deliver their addresses. The session was addressed by the AUC Director of Infrastructure and Energy, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Tourism and Hospitality Industry of Zimbabwe, and by the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Wildlife of Kenya who delivered the opening address.
8. The AUC Director of Infrastructure and Energy, Mr. **Cheikh BEDDA** made his remarks on behalf of the African Union Commission. After welcoming the participants and thanking the Government of the Republic of Kenya for hosting the meeting, the Director recalled that the Sub-Committee on Tourism is one of the three Sub-Committees that were created during the First Meeting of the Specialised Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIIET) which took place in Lomé, Togo in March 2017. He also mentioned that the meeting in Lomé adopted a comprehensive Plan of Action for the development of the Tourism sector in Africa as well as elaboration of a comprehensive strategy for the tourism sector in Africa for realizing the Aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063.
9. In accordance with the Ministers’ requests, the AUC in collaboration with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has initiated the elaboration of a continental tourism policy strategy including a proposal for establishment of a continental tourism body. Furthermore, the AUC is implementing some flagship projects of the AU Agenda 2063 that are expected to contribute significantly to accelerating growth in the tourism sector in Africa. These are: the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM); the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA); the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment, a single African Passport; the Continental High Speed Train (CHSRN); and the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). The Director also emphasized that tourism in Africa is seriously affected by poor transport networks, inadequate infrastructure and prevalence of visa restrictions between African countries. It is, therefore, the primary objective of the African Union to remove these barriers in order to create a strong united and prosperous Africa.

The Director underlined that apart from reviewing the Tourism Plan of Action, the Experts will have the opportunity to deliberate and exchange views on the draft tourism policy strategy document as well as the proposal for the establishment of the continental tourism Organisation. Furthermore, information will be shared on regional programmes as well as on other important initiatives such as tourism and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as well as tourism and the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). Finally, the Director wished the meeting all the success with concrete and achievable outcomes.

1. The Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Environment, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Mr. Munesu MONOWADAFA, thanked the Republic of Kenya for agreeing to host the first Sub-Committee on Tourism meeting. He appreciated the leadership and commitment of the Minister of Tourism and wildlife of Kenya as the current chair of the Commission for Africa of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO-CAF) for his vision and efforts towards the development of tourism at national, continental and International levels. He recalled the First Meeting of the STC-TTIIET held in March 2017 in Lomé, Togo and the First Meeting of the STC Bureau held in July 2017 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia which addressed the key challenges of Tourism as outlined in the AU Agenda 2063.
2. As Chair of the Sub-Committee, the Permanent Secretary underscored that Zimbabwe will lead the continent towards achievement of the main goal of tourism under the Agenda 2063 of making Africa the preferred destination. In that regard, formulation of the continental Tourism policy strategy, establishment of the continental tourism Organisation and establishment of a Tourism Unit within the AUC would be the priority activities to be pursued in the short-tem. The Permanent Secretary expressed appreciation to the roles played by financial institutions, UNWTO, UNECA, NEPAD, RECs and International partners in facilitating development of the tourism industry in Africa and underlined the need to take into account the recommendations made by those institutions.
3. The Key opening address was delivered by **Honourable Najib Balala**, Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and wildlife, Kenya. Hon. Balala started with a warm welcome to all delegates to the “Magical Kenya”. He recalled the 3rd Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly held in July 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, following its adoption by African Tourism Ministers at 41st World tourism Organization Commission for Africa Meeting held in Mahé, Seychelles which recognized tourism as a key instrument for Africa’s transformation and development. He spoke about the abundant wealth of tourism attractions in the continent and referred to the promising growth figures on the tourism industry in Africa. He underscored the need to be innovative and strategize on ways by which Africa could be developed as the preferred destination tapping into the various attractions across the continent without creating unfair competition.
4. The Cabinet Secretary then spoke of the initiatives and efforts undertaken within Kenya and the East African Community to promote national and regional tourism industries including visa relaxations, liberalization of air services and joint marketing of tourism attractions. He advocated for strengthening cooperation on tourism activities through the Regional Economic Communities and indicated the need for a dynamic approach in promoting tourism by targeting all segments and types of tourist markets. He commended the South Africa’s Tourism Indaba and the upcoming Magical Kenya Tourism Expo (MKTE) scheduled in Nairobi from 3rd-5th October 2018, as examples of how Africa can work together and promote tourism within the continent. He called for creation of one Brand Africa out of the diversity of tourism assets in Africa that will contribute to achievement of the African goals.
5. Finally, the Cabinet Secretary called upon the Experts to deliberate comprehensively on all major challenges to the tourism industry in Africa and submit to the Ministers concrete proposals that will ensure that tourism is placed firmly on the AU Agenda 2063. He ended by declaring the First Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Tourism officially open
6. PROCEDURAL MATTERS
7. **Setting-up of the Bureau of the Sub-Committee on Transport**
8. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the STC-TTIET, the Bureau of the Sub-Committee was set-up with the same composition of that of the STC i.e.:

Chairperson : Zimbabwe (Southern Africa)

1st Vice-Chair : Togo (West Africa)

2nd Vice-Chair : Mauritania (North Africa)

3rd Vice-Chair : Ethiopia (East Africa)

**Rapporteur** : Congo (Central Africa)

1. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Munesue Munodawafa, Permanent Secretary and Chairperson of the Sub-Committee Experts Meeting accompanied by the Rapporteur, Mr. MABIMAME Blaise from the Republic of Congo.
2. **Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme**
3. The meeting adopted the following agenda:
4. **PRELIMINARIES**
* Opening Ceremony;
* Adoption of Agenda and Work Programme.
1. **WORKING SESSIONS**
2. ***STC Tourism Action Plan***
	* STC Tourism Action Plan including Monitoring and Evaluation
3. ***Regional Tourism and Agenda 2063 related Flagship Projects***
	* Consideration of Regional Tourism Policies and Programmes
	* The African Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Tourism
	* The Single African Air Transport Market and Tourism
4. ***Continental Tourism Strategy and African Tourism Organisation***
	* Draft Tourism Strategy Paper
	* African Tourism Organisation
5. ***Any Other Business***
6. ***Consideration and adoption of the Experts’ Report***
	* Report of the Experts’ meeting
	* Ministerial Communique
7. **CLOSING**
8. The Agenda and programme of the meeting is attached as Annex 2.
9. PROCEEDINGS

**Agenda item 1: STC Tourism Action Plan**

1. The presentation on the STC Tourism Action Plan including Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism was made by the African Union Commission. In the first part of its presentation, the AUC first recalled the origins of the STC on transport, transcontinental and interregional infrastructures, energy and tourism and then specified the objectives of the Lomé action plans as followings**:**
2. Actions towards the implementation of AU/NEPAD Action Plan and harmonisation of Tourism Policies
3. Integration of cross-cutting issues into tourism in particular safety and security;
4. Establishment of the proposed African Tourism Organisation and elaboration of a continental tourism Policy framework;
5. Building the human capital in the tourism industry in Africa; and
6. Resource mobilisation for the Tourism industry.
7. The presenter also said that during its meeting in Addis Ababa in July 2017, the Bureau of STC-TITTET recommended the prioritization of projects based on the criteria of readiness of the project (in terms of preparation), funds availability and implementation plan. Also the Bureau underscored the need to have an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism. In line with the decision of the Bureau, the Lomé STC Action Plan has been reorganised to respond to the specific decisions in the Report and Declaration of the STC. Practical classification of activities has been made to enable effective allocation of efforts and resources as well as monitoring and evaluation:
* Priority level
* Work streams (technical, advocacy)
* Task level: P (Political advocacy/decision-making), O (Operational), S (specialised agency responsibility)
* Responsibility sharing (Lead institution and collaborating partners)
* Timelines/deadlines
* Status of implementation
* Indicators
* Availability of resources
1. The AUC representative indicated that the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanism of implementation of the STC Action Plan is already embedded in the action plan itself. The Action Plan has categorized the decisions/actions into policy, strategic and operational categories assigned performance indicators, timelines and sharing of responsibilities among the stakeholders for each activity. However, he said, additional proposals to complement and complete the M&E mechanism are as follows: To designate focal persons in all stakeholder institutions and the Member States and establish effective lines of communications for regularly updating the lead institutions for each activity as well as the AUC on the implementation progress and challenges; and establishment of a follow-up team comprised of the Chairperson of the Bureau of the STC Sub-Committee, AUC, AfDB, UNECA and NEPAD to make regular follow up with Member States and implementing institutions and provide regular reports to meetings of the Bureau convened by the AUC twice a year
2. Finally, he reminded the participants that, the main recommendation on the way forward is for the meeting to review the Action Plan and for each stakeholder to affirm commitment to the specific role and responsibility assigned in each task as applicable. The Meeting is also called upon to review and agree on the proposed monitoring mechanism with any necessary improvements, he said.

**Discussion**

1. The discussions consisted of observations as well as contributions from the participants.

**Safety and Security**

1. Participants indicated that the issue of safety remains critical for the tourism sector. Insecurity inhibits efforts made by several African countries to raise the tourism sector. Several regions in Africa are considered uncertain destinations, without security, resulting in a significant shortfall for the tourism sector. More specifically, the representative of ICAO pointed out that there are 4 African States whose airspace above their territories is considered unsafe in reports circulated by private entities. In addition, ICAO has put in place safety and security indicators goals and targets relating to international civil aviation activities.Participants recognised that Member States’ safety and security issues are covering a wide range of issues and sectors within the African States. Participants agreed that given the different levels of development of Member States statistical accounts on matters of safety and security there was not sufficient comparable data to develop a safety and security index. They further recommended that the focus should be on the development of strategies to ensure tourism safety and security in the continent. Participants agreed on matters of that where comparable continent-wide data exists e.g. aviation data such information could be made available. Participants also agreed that there is a need for Africa to take control of its own message so as to ensure that facts are communicated about the real state of affairs on matters of safety and security in the continent.
2. The extension of security issues were outlined as well. The security comprises all other aspects endangering human being such as Road safety, Geohazard Risks, Diseases; etc. The integration of all these aspects of security by Continental Tourism Strategy Framework was questioned

**Environment**

1. The environmental issue is at the heart of tourism at the time of depredation of natural environments. However, it does not appear clearly and sufficiently in the action plan. The Delegate of the Republic of Cabo Verde remarked that his country is made up of Islands and that the increase of tourist capacities poses a major environmental problem in view of the fragility of the land configuration. Also, since the entire continent is subject to climate change, the participants stressed the need and urgency to take environmental issues into consideration in the plan of action.

**Digitalisation**

1. Digitisation in the Tourism sector was also one of the major concerns of the audience which pointed out that this emerging theme was ignored in the action plan. They hoped that appropriate actions will be planned to be implemented in order to bring out the benefits of technology for the tourism sector in Africa. The Meeting took note of ongoing partnership between the AUC and the World Bank in the Tourism sector.

**Funding**

1. The participants insisted on the issue of the financing modalities of the action plan from the following angles: source of funds and involvement of Member States; community involvement; involvement of international partners. Having noted the relevance of the contributions, the AUC noted that 14 STCs make up the AU's work structure and that some cross-cutting issues such as environment and security are addressed more deeply within some of the relevant STCs. It also called on member states to take up their funding responsibilities as well as international partners to support the initiative. However, the African Union Commission is responsible in setting up its budget for the implementation of coordination activities and the one directly related to the continental level.
2. Finally, having noted the scarcity of financial resources, participants underscored the necessity of prioritizing actions in order to achieve efficient allocation of resources.
3. In terms of implementation of the activities, the participants were concerned with the coordination of the activities of the action plan as well as the assignment of responsibilities. In response to these concerns, it was suggested the rapid establishment of the African Tourism Organization. In addition, the African Union Commission has pointed out that the action plan itself indicates who is responsible for each activity. Once again, participants emphasized the prioritization of actions. The principle of equalization was desired by the representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone who wanted the plan not only to take into account the richest of the continent but could be as inclusive as possible to take into account the weakest countries.

**Agenda item 2**:  **Regional Tourism and Agenda 2063 related Flagship Projects**

**Consideration of Regional Tourism Policies and Programmes**

1. The Economic Communities of EAC, IGAD and COMESA made presentation on Regional Tourism Policies and Programmes. East African Community (EAC) is made up of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa made up of Burundi, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sudan, Swaziland, Seychelles, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe and The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (**IGAD**) is made up of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda.
2. **EAC** gave an overview of tourism development in the sub- region. The presentation highlighted progress made in implementation of Single Customs Territory and Common Market Protocol with significant removal of non-tariff barriers to trade. EAC is one of the largest regional economic blocs and has one of the largest single markets in Africa with a total population of about 170 million. It was observed that a number of milestones have been made in tourism development in the sub-region including development of a common criteria for classification of hotels and restaurants and joint participation at international tourism trade fairs. Currently EAC is reviewing its Regional Tourism Marketing Strategy in order to take into account the changing trends in the industry. The Strategy is also expected to give a thrust to promotion of intra-regional tourism. Implementation of free movement of persons received a major boost by the agreement on the use of Identity Cards as travel documents within East Africa for Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda.
3. **COMESA** gave a presentation focused on the role that the tourism sector plays in the economic and socio development in the COMESA region. The importance of the sector in terms of jobs creation and poverty alleviation in the region was highlighted. The sector in the region is growing at a rate ranging between 6.3% and 8.6% per year according to the statistics of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). It is also considered among key priorities areas retained within the adopted COMESA Medium Term Strategic Plan 2016-2020 of the COMESA. In the past recent years, the member countries adopted the COMESA Sustainable Tourism Development Strategic Framework in 2013, as a guiding tool. In addition, the region inaugurated the first Tourism and Wildlife Heritage Handbook in Kigali, Rwanda, in August 2017 as an instrument for marketing wildlife tourism assets that the region is endowed with. In the short and long term, COMESA has in plan to attend to following interventions to improve the policy harmonization in the tourism sector and promote the region as a single destination:
* Promote COMESA Transboundary tourism packages strategy reflecting diversity of the region;
* Encourage and facilitate introduction of new tourism products such as historical tours, religious tours, mountains climbing, birding, among others;
* Continued support to member States to ensure that the whole environment of doing business improves and incentives are given to the private sector players in the industry;
* Advocate and support countries for more skills development for the tourism sector;
* Promote linkages between tourism and other sectors such as ICT, transport and others;
* Introduce a COMESA single tourist visa
1. **IGAD** recognised the growing significance of the tourism industry within the region. In this regard, IGAD has formulated its Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (2013-2023) that was formally launched in 2013. The main aim of the IGAD STMP is to provide member states with a regional framework for sustainable tourism development with a view to contribute to socio-economic development and poverty alleviation and to promote regional integration. It was noted that though still not as fast as expected, implementation of the STMP has been ongoing with Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya having already formulated their own tourism plans in line with the IGAD one. Annual regional stakeholders meetings have been held for the past two years to assess the progress.

**The African Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Tourism**

1. The African Union Commission briefly presented the African Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The presentation indicated that on the 21st March 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda, Africa began the journey of creating one market to overcome historical fragmentation by signing the Kigali Consolidated Text of legal instruments establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The Consolidated Text contains the framework Agreement, Protocol on Trade in Goods, Protocol in Trade in Services and Protocol on Rules and Procedures on the Settlement of Disputes. **Tourism is one of the priority sectors identified under the negotiations on Trade and Services**. The African Continental Free Trade Area is an economic space encompassing all 55-member states of the African Union to promote duty-free flow of goods and services. It is a market of 1.2 billion people. This population is projected to grow to 1.7 billion by 2030. In 2030, the African middle class, which is also growing will be 600 million people. The AfCFTA is a business opportunity, and African tourism stakeholders must “smell the coffee in the room”, and exploit opportunities in African markets.

**The Single African Air Transport Market and Tourism**

1. A presentation on the Single African Air Transport Market and Tourism was made by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The presentation indicated that air transport in Africa supports 6.2 million jobs and $55.8 billion in GDP (ATAG 2018). Specifically, aviation induced catalytic and indirect jobs in the tourism sector is around 4.5 million with a corresponding revenue of $45.5 billion. The African air transport market is forecast to be among the fastest growing of all world regions, with a 4.9% projected annual growth rate for international traffic over the next 20 years. By 2037, air passenger traffic will double to over 350 million annually. With air connectivity having a direct correlation with tourism, leveraging the SAATM would result in huge growth in air travel, tourist arrivals and receipts. Globally, an average of 57% of all international tourist arrivals is by air and this is even higher for some African countries. Research shows that for every 30 new tourists to a destination one new job is created.

1. The presentation recognised that though the future for Africa air transport and tourism growth looks great, it would not just happen unless some fundamentals impacting both sectors are addressed. For aviation to play its lead role in bringing international tourists to Africa the operating landscape must be made more competitive for both operators and tourists. This requires addressing the bottlenecks of connectivity, costs, travel facilitation (visa/immigration), safety and security and infrastructure. In addition, aggressive destination marketing by both the aviation and the tourism sectors as well as encouraging regional trade and business among African countries will help realise the growth potential envisaged.
2. The starting point to achieving this is for the African Union, RECs and AFCAC to champion a multi-sector dialogue involving aviation, tourism and trade sectors on the wider benefits that air transport and tourism brings to Africa. IATA remains committed to bring its global expertise and resources to support the opening up of African air transport market to African airlines.

**Discussion**

1. The meeting took note of the information provided.

**Agenda item 3: Continental Tourism Strategy and African Tourism Organisation**

**Draft African Tourism Strategy (2019-2028)**

1. Recognizing the socio-economic potential of the tourism industry, the African Union through Agenda 2063 identifies the sector as key to Africa’s economic transformation, continental integration, and as a source sector for Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM) towards financing its implementation. Subsequently, Agenda 2063 identifies ‘making Africa the preferred destination for tourism’ as one of its flagship projects. Towards the realisation of this goal, the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of the Agenda 2063 spells out key targets for the tourism sector and calls for the formulation and full implementation of the Continental Tourism Strategy and establishment of the African Tourism Organisation as key prerequisites. Further, through the 2017 Lomé Ministerial Declaration and the Plan of Action for Tourism (2017-2019), the First Ordinary Session of the AU Specialised Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism meeting held in March 2017 in Lomé Togo affirmed the urgent need for the formulation of the African Continental Tourism framework as a key requirement towards the realisation of the AU agenda 2063 flagship project of making Africa the preferred destination for tourism.

1. In view of the above policy framework, the African Tourism Strategy 2019-2028 (ATS 2019-2028) is formulated with the Vision that “By 2028, Africa becomes the preferred destination for tourism offering unique and diverse African experience and committed to sustainable and inclusive tourism development that contributes to regional integration and the socio-economic well-being of the African People.” The Strategy focuses on key priority intervention areas considered essential to guarantee competitiveness and which would serve as enduring frameworks for sustainable and long term tourism growth. In this context, the ATS 2019-2028 seeks to realise three core Strategic Directions: (1) Development of a globally competitive African Tourism Brand, (2) Ensuring that African tourism is sustainable, inclusive and a driver for regional integration, and (3) Formulation of enabling tourism policy, regulatory and institutional framework.
2. To realise the Vision, outcomes and impacts sought by the African Tourism Strategy 2019-2028, ten Strategic Priority Areas are identified for implementation including: Quality and diversified tourism product; Development of tourism facilities and services; Tourism promotion and marketing; Destination accessibility and support infrastructure; Tourism human resource development; Mainstreaming participation of the local communities and private sector in the tourism value chain; Visitor safety and security; Natural and cultural heritage conservation and protection; An enabling tourism policy, regulatory and institutional framework and; Research and knowledge management. Under each Strategic Priority Area, key objectives and strategic actions are identified.

**African Tourism Organisation (ATO)**

1. The United Nation Economic Commission for Africa t made a presentation on the proposed African Tourism organisation (ATO). To inform the establishment of the ATO, a number of existing sub-regional tourism organisations were reviewed. This was done to enable an assessment of the appropriate institutional and regulatory framework, and the specific instruments and strategies designed to guide the development of their respective tourism sectors. These organisations were: the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) under the Association of Caribbean States (ACS); the Regional Tourism Organization of Southern Africa (RETOSA) under the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC); the European Union (EU) in which tourism is under the Department of Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs – (previously Department of Enterprise and Industry); the East Africa Community (EAC); and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in which tourism is coordinated under the Trade, Industry and Tourism programme. This review enabled the drawing of best practice lessons that could inform the establishment of ATO including the need for: a clear institutional framework; a lean organization structure; involvement of the private sector; and a sound funding mechanism.
2. Narrowing down on the ATO, it was recommended that given its anchorage in Agenda 2063, it be established as a Specialised Agency of the African Union. This could be done through a treaty/protocol and its main mandate would be to advise the AU Member States and RECs on tourism matters and contribute towards: meeting Agenda 2063 goals and aspirations; putting in place quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that tourism in the region achieves and maintaining international standards; assisting RECs, Member States and tourism ministries and agencies to identify and implement good tourism practices; developing human resource capacity in all disciplines of tourism in the region; and promoting equal opportunities for all citizens in the region to participate and enjoy tourism activities and facilities including those with special needs. Finally, draft statutes of ATO were presented.

**Discussion**

1. The deliberations of the meeting on the Strategy framework focused on the process of involving Member States in the validation process of the document.
2. Following the presentation and ensuing discussions, the meeting recommended that:
3. Continental framework undergo the African Union validation process. This will entail consideration of the document by Tourism industry Experts and Tourism industry stakeholders, which will be followed by validation by Member States and submission to the STC-TTIIET for approval. The Timeline to finalise the document is indicated below.
4. The creation of a task team from representatives of regional communities to facilitate finalisation of the African Tourism Strategy framework.

On the ATO:

1. The meeting recommended the establishment of the ATO and recommended that the draft institutional framework undergo the AUC validation process with the view to have this presented at the Head of States in July 2019.
2. In addition, the meeting recommended that the creation of a working group consisting of representatives of the regional communities with technical inputs from the African Union Commission, NEPAD and the United Nations Economic Commission, be tasked with the responsibility of further refining the institutional, financial and legal framework of ATO as an African Union Specialized Agency for Tourism.
3. The meeting recommended the need for appointing a champion with responsibilities to advocate for the creation of the ATO and the Tourism sector in general. The Champion should be able to participate in the decision making process of the AU.
4. The following roadmap was recommended for the Strategic framework:
* Finalisation of the Draft Strategic Framework Document by UNECA – end Nov 2018
* Circulation of document to Tourism Sector Experts and Stakeholders – Mid Dec. 2018
* Consideration of Document by Sector Experts and Stakeholders – end February 2019
* Continental validation workshop by Member States Expert – March 2019
* Submit validated document to AU Decision organs (STC-TTIIET, STC-Legal,, AU-Summit)
1. Roadmap for the establishment of the ATO:
* Finalisation of the Statues of the ATO– end Nov 2018 by the Task Force
* Submit Statues to the AUC for review – Mid Dec. 2018
* Share document with Member States to consider the financial and legal implication – end January 2019
* Consideration of the ATO statues by STC-TTIIET – (TBD)
* Consideration of the ATO statues by STC-Justice and Legal Affairs – (TBD)
* Submit validated document to AU Decision organs (STC-TTIIET, STC-Legal, AU-Summit) July 2019 tentatively.
1. ADOPTION OF THE EXPERTS’ REPORT
2. The meeting considered and adopted its report as amended.
3. The meeting also considered and agreed on the draft agenda of the Minister’s meeting and the draft Ministerial Final Communique with amendments.
4. CLOSING
5. The AUC Director of Infrastructure and Energy thanked the participants for their effective participation in the proceedings of the meeting. He also expressed his gratitude to the Chairperson of the meeting for his effective management of the deliberations leading to a fruitful outcome. He deeply appreciated the value of the outcome which he considered as a sound guidance to the work of the AU Commission in the Tourism sector for the foreseeable future.
6. The meeting was finally closed by the Chairperson of the Expert meeting. In his closing remarks he appreciated the energy exhibited by the participants in the discussions. He indicated that the robust deliberations and conclusions were a reassuring sign that the Sub-Committee will be a serious continental organ for effectively addressing and finding practical solutions to Africa’s Tourism challenges.

**Annexes:**

* **Annex 1: Attendance list**
* **Annex 2: Agenda and Programme of the Ministers’ Meeting**
* **Annex 3: Draft Communique**