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Directorate of Information and Communication

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AU Commissioner for Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism: Tourism supports 21 million jobs in Africa



The African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism, H.E. Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid said that the Tourism industry employs over 21 million people in Africa, hence accounting for 6.5 per cent of the total work force in the African continent.

The Commissioner made her remarks at the 61st United Nations World Tourism Organization Commission for Africa, Conference, in Abuja held under the theme “Tourism Statistics: A Catalyst for Development” from 4 to 6 June 2018.

While noting the theme of the meeting, H.E. the Commissioner stated, “the value of the industry now stands at over 160 billion dollars accounting for almost eight per cent of Gross Domestic Product, thus exceeding the contributions from manufacturing and banking sectors. That is why we are making sure it takes its due place”.

In her opening speech, the Commissioner also addressed the challenges of the continent in the promotion of the tourism sector in Africa. She insisted on tourism promotion strategies, improvement of Africa’s image and branding tourism in the Continent globally.

“Our priority on the continent now should be to optimize the role of tourism based on the agenda NEPAD/AU action plan. As flagship projects of AU Agenda 2063, the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) and the Continental Free Trade Area are first steps and excellent opportunity for boosting the tourism sector in Africa,” the Commissioner underscored.

The gathering attracted 36 tourism ministers from the region and key tourism stakeholders from most 50+ countries. Participants showcased ways tourism contributes to poverty alleviation, the importance of finding innovative approaches to developing tourism in the region, and the need to find and foster new partnerships and resources to develop the sector. In this context, the need for establishing a Statistical Framework for the Measurement of Sustainable Tourism was addressed.

Meanwhile, with the objective to boost activities by the African Union Commission to improve the development of the tourism sector in Africa and to forge new partnerships, Commissioner Abou-Zeid held bilateral meetings with Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, the Secretary General of UNWTO; Hon. Priscah Mupfumira Minister of Tourism & Hospitality Industry and current head of subcommittee for tourism; Hon. Najib Balala Minister of Tourism and wildlife of Kenya and current head of CAF and a number of other ministers and high level representatives and key stakeholders.

The meetings discussed the role and the importance of statistics in Africa and particularly in the tourism sector. It was also emphasized that tourism will drive Africa’s socio-economic development and structural transformation through job creation and growth in other productive sectors.

In the meetings, the Commissioner reiterated the vision of the African Union Commission “Making Africa the Preferred Destination through the creation of a unique “Brand Africa” and also reaffirmed the AU’s resolve to strengthen cooperation and collaboration with UNWTO which is a key partner for the success of this huge project.

The meetings agreed to harmonies strategies and enhance coordination to guide activities in the Tourism sector in Africa as well as also promoting digitalization.

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