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MINISTERS OF AFRICAN UNION STRATEGIES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM TO ACHIEVE AGENDA 2063 GOALS



Nairobi, Kenya, 02 October 2018: The African Union Ministers responsible for Tourism endorsed the crucial role of the Tourism sector in the attainment of the main goals of the AU Agenda 2063 of continental integration, prosperity and peace. The Ministers affirmed their commitment to develop sustainable Tourism through the adoption of a sound continental Tourism Strategy framework with a view to enhancing the competitiveness of the sector and the establishment of an African brand.

The declaration of the Ministers is followed by the outcomes of a day-long experts' First Ordinary Session of the Sub-Committee on Tourism of the Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIET) that was held on 01 October 2018 in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya.

While urging the African Union Commission to continue its leadership and coordination role for implementation of the STC-TTIET Tourism Plan of Action, the Ministers also insisted all Member States to urgently implement practical measures to facilitate the free movement of persons and goods in the Continent, in particular the removal of visa requirement.

In her statement Hon Priscah Mupfumira's, Minister of Environment, Tourism and Hospitality Industry and Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Tourism of the STC-TTIET said "it is envisaged that the Continental Tourism Framework will provide a clear roadmap of activities towards the achievement of the African Union objectives, within the framework of AU Agenda 2063 First Ten Year Implementation Plan. "Today's meeting is therefore a continuation of landmark decisions and commitments for us to turn promises into action", she stressed. *(The complete speech is available on www.au.int).*

Speaking at the opening session Hon. Najib BALALA, Cabinet Secretary for Tourism & Wildlife of the Republic of Kenya reiterated that he believes Africa has better products ranging from the beaches in Gambia, Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe and Safari alongside wild beast migration in Maasai Mara among others. He emphasized the need to establish the African Tourism Organization as an innovation platform to market the enormous touristic product of the continent.

Addressing the ministerial session, H.E Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy at the AUC stated that the African Union Commission has long recognized the crucial importance of Tourism to the achievement of the aspirations of AU Agenda 2063. “The AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government have decided to work collectively towards making: Africa the Preferred Destination for Tourism in the world as the overall goal of Tourism under the agenda 2063 framework”, she recalled. *(The complete speech is available on www.au.int).*

“Across Africa, Tourism is one of the highest potential sectors for improving societies, economies and livelihoods. More than 62 million international arrivals in 2017 earned the region 38 billion US dollars”, said Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, UNWTO Secretary General. He further added that by 2030 Africa is expected to host 134 million arrivals that define the importance of tourism as an economic driver to deliver on the Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030.

Tourism is one of the most promising sectors in Africa. The value of the industry now stands at over USD 165 billion accounting for 7.8% of the continent's GDP, which exceeds the contribution from manufacturing and the banking sector. The industry accounts for more than 6.2% of total investments valued at USD 28.5 billion and employs over 20 million people hence accounting for 6.5% of the total workforce. It is further projected that at 5%, the tourism industry will grow much faster than forecasted 4.8% economic growth rate for the continent over the next ten years.

The First Ministerial Sub-Committee on Tourism meeting concluded its deliberation with a final Communiqué.

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