The First Ordinary Session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Intercontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism

THEME: Financing Infrastructure in Africa

Tourism and Security in Africa
I. Background

1. Various countries and regions around the world are faced with challenges of ensuring tourism safety and security. Although security issues are experienced globally, Africa has not favorably ranked in terms of safety and security and in most cases, is perceived as a highly volatile and risky tourism destination. Some parts of the Africa have indeed been characterized by inter and intra state conflicts, political instability, civil unrest, inadequate police services and limited tourist safety measures. The situation has been compounded by threats and attacks by terrorists, who have in most cases targeted tourist areas such as in Mali, Djibouti, Tunisia, Egypt, Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda.

2. Safety and Security is a vital component for a destination to remain competitive, attract investment and maintain a positive image as a tourist destination. According to the World Economic Forum (2015) despite the rich diversity in natural and cultural resources, African countries (more especially in Sub-Saharan Africa) are not ranked favorably in the Tourism and Travel competitive index due to a number of challenges they face. Insufficient tourism safety and security is among one of the challenges identified as threatening the sustainability of the tourism industry on the African continent. Most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa score low on the various safety and security parameters which in turn has negatively affected their overall global competitiveness ranking (see Table 1).

Table 1: Global Tourism Safety and Security Ranking for selected Sub-Saharan African Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Overall Global Rank (n=141)</th>
<th>Average Value (score 1-7)</th>
<th>Business costs of Crime and Violence</th>
<th>Reliability of Police Services</th>
<th>Business costs of terrorism</th>
<th>Index of Terrorism Incidence</th>
<th>Homicide Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Based on the above, it can be noted that in order to become a more competitive tourism destination, Africa needs to have particular focus on safety and security issues especially now that more people travel to and within Africa and there is demand for seamless travel and reduced border controls. However the continent still faces a number of challenges (see section 3).

II. Overview of Africa’s Tourism and Security

4. Over the years, a number of continental and regional institutional, administrative and policy frameworks have been established to address security challenges in Africa. These include the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Department, Peace and Security Council (PSC), African Standby Force (ASF) and a number of Continental Early Warning mechanisms have been developed. The AU with other international partners has actively participated in a number of interventions to bring back security in a number of member states including Somalia under the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), in Darfur under African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) among others. The AU has also closely collaborated with various Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs) to ensure a stable and secure environment. In a bid to avert situations of conflict and insecurity a number of REC’s have established varied peace and conflict resolution initiatives across the Continent – as has been the case in IGAD, ECOWAS, SADC among others.

5. However, despite these efforts security incidents have continued to happen in Africa greatly affecting tourism which is a sensitive sector involving varying perceptions, approaches to risk and prone to information distortion, manipulation and exaggeration beyond the actual situation. This paper, therefore, raises a number of key issues (section 4) that need to be discussed by the Specialized Technical committee (STC).

III. Key Challenges

Despite the various efforts to avert and combat insecurity issues in Africa, a number of destinations have continued to face safety and security incidences that continuously undermine the competitiveness of the continent. The key challenges faced include:

6. Lack of a comprehensive institutional framework to coordinate safety and security issues affecting the tourism sector in Africa.

7. Limited research and information about the interrelationship between incidences of insecurity and their impact on the tourism industry.
8. Uncoordinated and harmonised strategies to avert and control security incidences across the REC’s and the continent.

9. Lack of harmonised regional guidelines and standards set to ensure safety and security of tourists and other persons in the tourism sector.

10. Limited capacity within destinations to avert and combat increasing international crime and insecurity – including cybercrime and terrorism.

11. Continued occurrence of inter and intra state conflict and political unrest which negatively affects the image of Africa as a tourism destination.

IV. Key Issues for Discussions with STC Experts

12. As earlier noted, safety and security are vital components of providing quality tourism experiences and ensuring a destination to remain competitive. Therefore, there is need for regional and continental efforts to try and address the key security challenges facing the tourism industry in Africa. The following are the key issues that are brought to the attention of the STC experts – with corresponding questions:

13. **Institutional and regulatory framework** – although there is a general security framework at the AU level there is limited focus on the tourism industry. Therefore what should the structure of the tourism sector-specific framework be that would cater for the industry's safety and security needs?

14. **Reduction or prevention of security incidents** – different destinations and states have employed various strategies to detect and avert security incidences with varying levels of success. What aspects need to be considered in exploring the option of developing regional and continental strategies based on the lessons learnt at destination and national levels?

15. **Stakeholder collaboration mechanisms** – success of security strategies are highly dependent on stakeholder participation. Who are the key stakeholders, what are their respective roles and what is the appropriate coordination mechanism?

16. **Private - public sector engagement** – in most countries security has mainly been controlled and managed by the public sector security organs especially the police and the army. However in the private sector are the main drivers of the tourism sector. Therefore what are the roles of the private sector and what should be the nature and level of their involvement in helping to tackle safety and security issues affecting tourism in Africa?
17. **Tourist safety and security information and education** – tourists play a vital role in safety and security, hence, is there adequate and appropriate tourist information and education? What are the appropriate ways of providing information and enhancing their involvement?

18. **Tourism and security research** – how much research has been carried out on the link between security and tourism performance in Africa? What are the contemporary methodologies in assessing security impact on tourism? What factors influence the severity of impacts on tourism destinations in Africa?

19. **Security emergency planning and coordination mechanisms** – what are the best practices in planning and coordination when security emergencies happen? How have other continents and REC’s managed security emergencies affecting the tourism sector?

20. **Impact mitigation, resilience and recovery strategies after security incidents** – how can destinations mitigate the impacts of security on tourism? What are the factors that influence the resilience of destinations faced by security incidences? What lessons can be learnt from the various recovery strategies implemented by destinations affected by security incidences?

21. **Communication and information management in Post security incident** – how have countries and Africa in general been handling communication when security incidences happen? What is the role of the media in shaping the image of Africa as a tourism destination? How can information distortion, manipulation and exaggeration be minimized?

22. **International Crime and insecurity** – how prepared are the African states to avert and combat international crime and insecurity (including cybercrime and terrorism) that is threatening the global tourism industry?

V. **Policy Recommendations**

23. Based on the challenges faced by tourism arising from security related incidences, the following are recommended to provide guidance on the way forward

24. There is need to carry out a tourism safety and security mapping - to assess the level and nature of safety and security at national and regional level.

25. Carry out institutional and policy analysis to assess the extent to which tourism safety and security issues are integrated in national, regional and continental frameworks
26. Establish a platform(s) at national, REC and continental level where various stakeholders can share and engage in efforts to discuss, design and implement strategies to avert and combat security incidences within the tourism industry

27. Comparative studies be carried out to review best practices from various destination across the world in how to address and handle tourism related security issues

28. Design strategies to enhance research in tourism safety and security – especially how security influences; destination image, perceptions of tourists, travel behaviour, length of stay, visitor spending, among others

29. Design strategies to enhance the image and competitiveness of Africa as a safe and preferred tourism destination around in the world

VI. Conclusion

30. The competitiveness of Africa as a tourism destination is greatly influenced by among other factors how tourists perceive their risk or danger (whether real or not) while visiting the continent. Given the unfavorably low Tourism and Travel competitive index ranking of Africa, it is vital that the continent puts in place measure to addresses a number of issues including limited tourism safety and security. Leveraging on the African Union institutional and policy frameworks, a lot could be done to enhance tourism safety and security which in turn will influence Africa’s ability to maintain a positive image, create a conducive tourism business environment and attract investment. The competitiveness of Africa will improve when safety and security well designed and coordinated strategies are implemented.