

EAST AFRICA TOURISM PLATFORM

SPURRING THE GROWTH OF INTRAREGIONAL
TOURISM WITHIN THE EAST AFRICA COMMUNITY

Nairobi, July 10, 2017





SPURRING THE GROWTH OF INTRAREGIONAL TOURISM WITHIN THE EAST AFRICA COMMUNITY

PREFACE

- » This document borrows heavily from UNCTAD 2017 Report on “Tourism for Transformative and Inclusive Growth”. The report is aligned with the United Nations’ designation of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development; underscoring the significance of tourism to sustainable development. The report calls for strengthening intersectoral linkages, enhancing the capability of tourism to foster more inclusive growth, tapping the potential of intra-regional tourism, harnessing peace and stability and gender mainstreaming.
- » East Africa Tourism Platform, is particularly, delighted that, not only, its efforts of promoting intra-regional tourism are recognized and rewarded, in this report, with the dedication of Chapter 4- to “Increasing intraregional tourism by deepening regional integration” but also it provided an input on how to spur the growth of intraregional tourism within regional economic communities. With this we say a big thank you to the captains of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

INTRODUCTION

- » Over the past 20 years, more Africans have obtained the means to travel and enjoy tourism as a result of increasing disposable incomes and better and more affordable transport. In 1995, 15.2 million Africans travelled abroad; this number increased to 19.2 million in 2000, 26.9 million in 2005, 36 million in 2010 and 44.3 million in 2014¹.
- » Much of Africa’s international travel has taken place within Africa. 4 out of 10 international tourists in Africa originate from Africa; in sub-Saharan Africa, 2 out of 3 international tourists originate from the continent; contributing to 1 out of 14 jobs in the continent.
- » Several factors at the regional level are favourable to intraregional tourism: an open visa regime, enabling the free movement of persons; a comprehensive regional tourism strategy; currencies that are convertible and can be easily exchanged; and convenient and affordable transport, in particular air transport.
- » Visa requirements, for instance, are the central issue when considering the ability to enter a destination. Relaxing visa requirements would thus allow visitors to save time and money, and thus make a destination more attractive and competitive for tourists and investors alike. In the

¹ 1 UNCTAD *Economic Development in Africa Report 2017*



EAC, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda have launched an East African tourist visa; we are optimistic Tanzania and Burundi will follow suit.

PARTING SHOT

- » Intraregional tourism is growing and offers opportunities for economic and export diversification when its potential is recognized at the regional and national levels. It is necessary to make more progress towards implementing the free movement of persons and opening up the skies to facilitate access to tourism destinations and make such destinations more competitive.
- » East Africa Tourism Platform believes that regional tourism cannot flourish and contribute to economic diversification and structural transformation if it is not integrated in regional planning processes. A comprehensive regional tourism policy, therefore, is needed to provide a conducive framework and environment for regional tourism development within the EAC.
- » In order to improve mobility within the region, the African Development Bank (AfDB) backs relaxing of travel rules to spur trade according to the Africa Tourism Monitor Report (2016). The Bank also seeks to make Africa more open, prosperous and interconnected. From the East African Community, other member states should draw lessons from Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda; and scale up visa-on-arrival programmes, simplify visa application process by offering e-visas and offer long-dated visas.
- » East African countries would benefit further if they made additional progress with the free movement of persons, currency convertibility and liberalizing air transport services.



Borderless Borders Celebrate Culture

Experience the rich cultural
heritage of our people

Destination East Africa



EAST AFRICA TOURISM PLATFORM

Kenya Tourism Federation & Secretariat |
KWS Headquarters & Langata Road,
P.O. Box 15013-00509, Nairobi |
Tel: +254208001000/3/1 |
Mobile: +254724624538
Facebook: East Africa Tourism Platform |
Twitter: @TourismEA |
Skype: tourismea