

Abuja Call for Action for the Development of Tourism Statistics in Africa

We, the African representatives of national tourism administrations and other related sectors, statistical institutes, international and regional organizations, the private sector and the academia gathered at the Seminar entitled: “*Tourism Statistics: A Catalyst for Development*” jointly organized by the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) on 5 June 2018 in Abuja, Nigeria, on the occasion of 61st UNWTO Regional Commission for Africa:

1. Acknowledge that tourism is a transformative socio-economic sector that can contribute substantially to the diversification of national economies and the improvement of livelihoods in our region. The number of international arrivals to and receipts earned by destinations in the region has shown a sustained growth in the past decades. In 2017, international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) to destinations in the region grew an estimated 8% to 63 million, representing 5% of the world total. This strong momentum is expected to continue at a rate of 5% to 7% in 2018. According to the UNWTO long-term outlook Tourism towards 2030 the number of international arrivals is expected to reach 134 million in 2030. This share in worldwide tourism does not fully reflect the huge potential of tourism in our continent.
2. Recognize that an ever-increasing number of destinations worldwide, and, particularly within Africa, have opened up to, and invested in tourism, turning it into a key driver of socio-economic progress through the creation of jobs and enterprises, export revenues, and infrastructure development while, at the same time, contributing towards the conservation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage.
3. Stress the need to better measure tourism with high-quality official statistical information covering all dimensions of sustainable tourism: economic, social, and environmental in order to develop the potential of tourism in Africa, better plan and manage the sector and support effective evidence-based policy decisions in line with the African Union Agenda 2063, which serves as the basis for Africa’s long term socio-economic and integrative transformation.
4. Recognize that, beyond being a technical exercise, the development and implementation of a sound system of tourism statistics is a political and strategic endeavour, requiring wide and consistent stakeholder engagement, collaboration, inter-institutional coordination and leadership.
5. Recognize that the development of tourism statistics requires the collaboration and coordination amongst all relevant national institutions (such as the National Administration, the National Statistical Office, the Central Bank and the Immigration Authority) and the

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private sector involved in the compilation and dissemination of tourism statistics due to the cross-cutting nature of tourism.

6. Strongly commit to implement the two official UN statistical frameworks for measuring tourism adopted in 2008: the *International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008*⁸ and the *Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008*ⁱⁱ. These statistical frameworks enable countries to produce data that is credible and comparable – across countries, over time and in concert with other standards.
7. Reaffirm our commitment to produce appropriate and reliable data that adhere to the 10 Fundamental Principles of Official Statisticsⁱⁱⁱ notably the use of international concepts, classifications and methods in order to promote the consistency and efficiency of our statistical systems at all official levels.
8. Unite behind the Manila Call for Action on Measuring Sustainable Tourism adopted at the 6th *International Conference on Tourism Statistics: Measuring Sustainable Tourism*^{iv} and endorsed by the UNWTO General Assembly^v to advocate for the extension of tourism measurement beyond its primarily economic focus, in order to incorporate environmental, social and cultural dimensions through the development and implementation of a Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism^{vi}.
9. Understand that tourism has a role to play in the achievement of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development^{vii} of the United Nations and that its Member States have included tourism in three of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): economic growth and employment (SDG 8); sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12); and, the sustainable use of marine resources (SDG 14). For monitoring of Agenda 2030 the collection of SDG tourism indicators founded on the Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainable Tourism is a priority.
10. Stress the need for allocating and mobilizing financial and technical resources to strengthen and modernize our data sources including census, survey-based, administrative and innovative sources (e.g. big data), collection mechanisms and dissemination systems while investing in human resources capacity building.
11. Promote international and regional cooperation efforts in the area of tourism statistics, including the development of joint programmes and initiatives, the strengthening of coordination and the transfer of knowledge in order to surmount the different stages of national statistical development in our region.
12. Encourage all African countries to reinforce their contribution to the UNWTO database on tourism statistics which constitutes the most comprehensive statistical information available on the tourism sector and globally disseminated through the *Compendium*^{viii} and *Yearbook of*

Tourism Statistics^x, and further analysed and used in numerous ways, among which the *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer*.

We extend our gratitude to our host, the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, for its warm welcome and outstanding organization of the Seminar as well as for strongly voicing that robust statistics are key to manage a sustainable tourism for development in Africa.

ⁱ United Nations and World Tourism Organization. International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008, (New York, Madrid, 2008). Available at: <http://statistics.unwto.org/content/irts2008>.

ⁱⁱ Commission of the European Communities. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, World Tourism Organization, United Nations. Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework 2008 (Luxembourg, Madrid, New York, Paris, 2008). Available at: <http://statistics.unwto.org/content/tsarmf2008>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (UN General Assembly resolutions A/RES/68/261 adopted on 29 January 2014. Available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx>.

^{iv} Conference organized by the Government of the Philippines and UNWTO in Manila, Philippines, on 21-24 June 2017. For more information: <http://statistics.unwto.org/mstconference>.

^v At its twenty-second session held in Chengdu, China, on 11-16 September 2017. Resolutions available at: http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/a22_resolutions_en.pdf.

^{vi} <http://statistics.unwto.org/mst>.

^{vii} <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

^{viii} <http://statistics.unwto.org/content/compendium-tourism-statistics>.

^{ix} <http://statistics.unwto.org/content/yearbook-tourism-statistics>.