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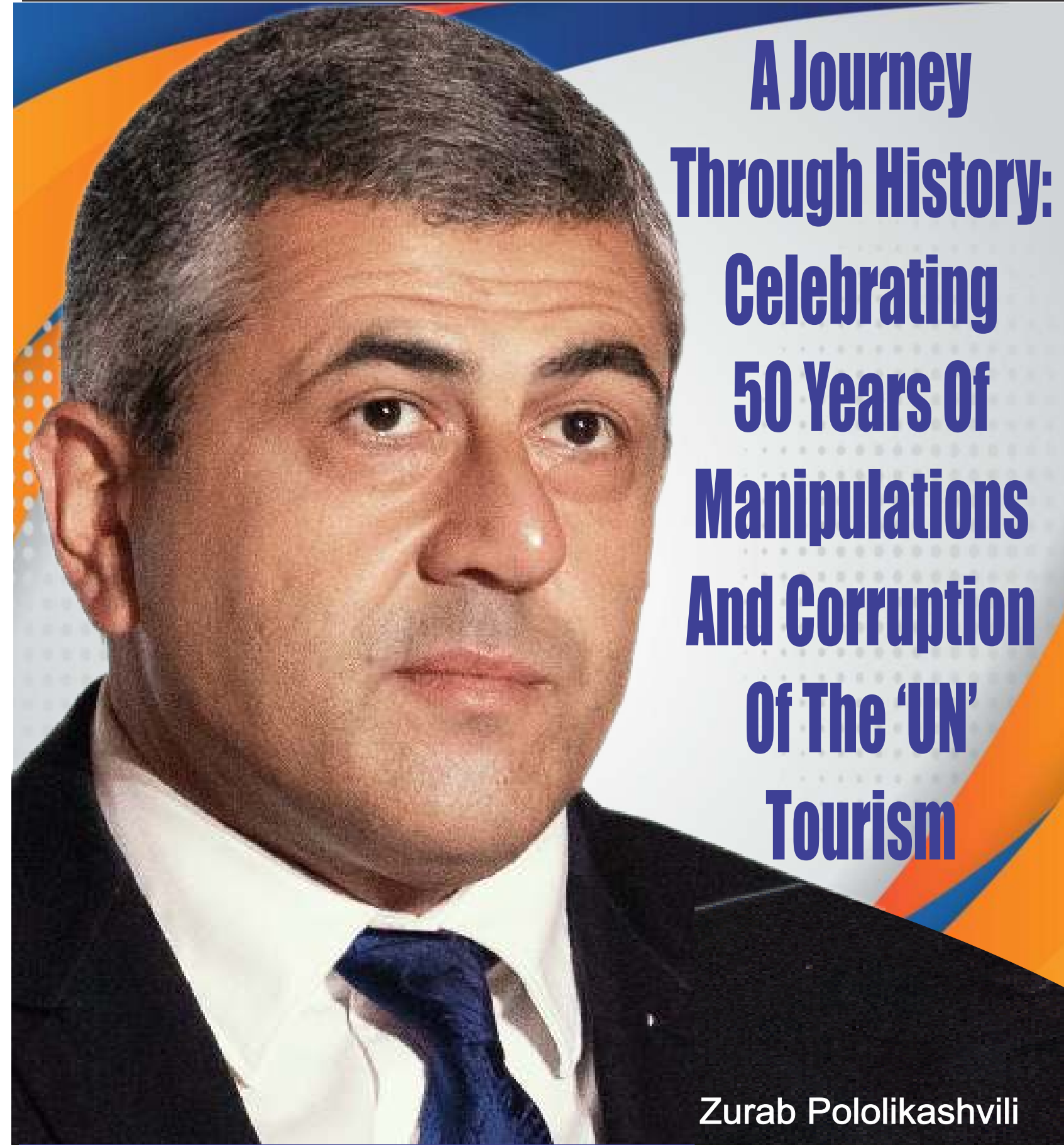
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**A Journey
Through History:
Celebrating
50 Years Of
Manipulations
And Corruption
Of The 'UN'
Tourism**

Zurab Pololikashvili








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Kemi Nanna Nandap, Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Immigration Service

rate at 56.4 per cent.

Furthermore, the top 10 African countries, while submitting only 2.8 per cent of global Schengen visa applications, faced a rejection rate of 44.8 per cent. Half of the 277,792 applicants from the top 10 countries with the highest rejections were denied visas.

The report said: "Looking at broader regional patterns in 2023, the top 20 countries in Africa and Asia submitted 703,894 applications, representing 6.8 per cent of all Schengen visa applications, of which 40 per cent were rejected.

"The top 10 African countries faced particularly high rejection rates, with applicants experiencing a 45 per cent rejection rate, higher than combined Africa-Asia average of 40 per cent."

Prof. Mehari Maru of the School of Transnational Governance and the Migration Policy Centre at the European University Institute and of Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, commenting on the report, said: 'The global mobility divide is widening significantly.

As the Henley Passport Index January 2025 edition reveals, global travel freedom has nearly doubled from 58 visa-free destinations in 2006 to 111 in 2025, but the gap between the most and least mobile nations has reached unprecedented levels.

"Africans face consistently higher rejection rates than their Asian and global peers. In 2023, despite submitting half as many applications as those from Asia, African applicants were twice as likely to be rejected, with rates 14 percentage points higher than Asian applicants."

Nigerians Face Massive Schengen Visa Rejection — Report

Schengen Visa Nigerians are facing significant visa rejections for intending travellers to Schengen nations amidst the growing rate of migration to developed countries. Half of all visa applications to the destination by Nigerians were rejected.

The latest Henley Global Mobility Report January 2025, published by Henley & Partners, indicates that out of 105,926 Schengen visa applications submitted by Nigerians in 2024, 42,940, representing 40.8 per cent of the total application were rejected.

Migration has been part of the Nigerian middle-class psyche for decades, but the migration rate has increased in the last four years as economic hardship continues to bite harder. Inflation soared to an all-

time high of 34.60 per cent in November 2024, fuelling the cost-of-living crisis, unemployment, and lack of opportunities, thereby forcing thousands to seek better opportunities outside the country's shores.

The rejection level thus placed Nigeria among the top 20 countries with the most denied visas to the choice destination and ranked 11th on the list.

According to the report, the rejection, largely driven by passport power and identity-based visa policies, has more than doubled over the past decade and created substantial barriers to economic mobility for Nigerians and other African citizens. Nigeria's passport ranked 94th in the latest

The rejection level thus placed Nigeria among the top 20 countries with the most denied visas to the choice destination and ranked 11th on the list.

global most powerful passports. Similarly, Africa also faced a higher rejection rate compared to other continents despite the insignificant volume of applications from the region.

The report showed that six of the top 10 countries facing the highest Schengen visa rejection rates are in Africa.

Comoros leads with a 61.3 per cent rejection rate, followed by Guinea-Bissau at 51 per cent, Ghana at 47.5 per cent, Mali at 46.1 per cent, Sudan at 42.3 per cent, and Senegal at 41.2 per cent.

Three Asian countries and a European country complete the list: Pakistan with 49.6 per cent, Syria with 46 percent, and Bangladesh with 43.3 cent. Greece, despite being a European Union member and part of Europe's Schengen area, holds the second-highest rejection

African Union, Regional Groups In The Development And Promotion Of Tourism On The Continent



Mossa Faki, Chairperson, African Union Commission [AUC].

Tourism has long been recognized as one of the most dynamic sectors for fostering economic growth, cultural exchange, and sustainable development. Africa, a continent rich in cultural diversity, breathtaking landscapes, and a wealth of history, holds immense untapped potential in the global tourism market. However, despite the vast opportunities, Africa's tourism sector has not reached its full potential, mainly due to challenges such as political instability, inadequate infrastruc-

ture, and a fragmented approach to regional cooperation.

In this context, regional organizations like the African Union [AU], the Economic Community of West African States [ECOWAS], the Southern African Development Community [SADC], and other

regional groupings have emerged as critical players in promoting tourism across the continent. These bodies are not only fostering collaboration between African nations but also playing a pivotal role in shaping policies that enhance tourism and cultural and natural development and

ensure the sector's sustainability.

The African Union, founded in 2002, is tasked with promoting unity, peace, and development across the continent. Through its Agenda 2063, the AU emphasizes the importance of tourism as a vehicle for economic transformation and job creation. Recognizing that tourism is a key sector for many African countries, the AU has developed policies and frameworks aimed at fostering the industry. One of the most significant milestones in this effort has been the establishment of the Tourism Action Plan, which is aligned with the broader goals of Agenda 2063 to boost intra-African tourism, increase international visitors, and leverage Africa's cultural and natural heritage.

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Babajide Sanwolu, Governor of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Detty December: Tourism And Diaspora Remittances Key To Festive Season Growth In Nigeria, Says Fashola

Babajide Fashola, former Governor of Lagos State, has highlighted the immense opportunities the festive season presents for Nigeria's economic development.

Speaking on the importance of tourism and inflows from the diaspora, Fashola urged stakeholders to harness the vibrant energy of events like 'Detty December' to stimulate growth and create sustainable economic benefits.

According to premiumtimesng.com,

speaking at the 55th convocation lecture of the University of Lagos [UNILAG] on Monday, Mr Fashola explained the importance of leveraging the country's "Detty December" phenomenon to drive economic growth.

Mr Fashola, who is the Chairperson of the convocation lecture, noted that tourism during this period, coupled with diaspora remittances, "already contributes 4 per cent to Nigeria's GDP," urging stakeholders to explore intentional strategies to capitalise on

this seasonal economic potential.

Detty December refers to Nigeria's festive season, spanning mid-December through New Year's Day. This period is marked by lively celebrations, social gatherings, parties, and festivities.

The convocation lectures themed: "Universities as Hubs for Development and Wealth Creation" was delivered by the Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group [NESG], Oluwatayo Aduloju.

'Detty December' potential

According to Mr Fashola, 'Detty December' has the potential to enhance the country's international image and create economic opportunities, particularly in the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions [MICE] sector.

He encouraged Nigerians to prepare for future events by investing in accommodation and related infrastructure, highlighting the potential

for residents to rent out their homes and earn income during tourism events.

He also emphasised the need for intentional efforts to capitalise on tourism opportunities, citing the positive impact of recent events on Nigeria's international image.

"Tourism has a vast value chain," Mr Fashola noted, stressing the need for investment in accommodations, transportation, and other hospitality-related infrastructure to meet demands during peak tourism periods.

Lagos Earnings

In December 2024, the hospitality sector, including hotels and restaurants, experienced high occupancy rates in major cities like Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Calabar.

A report by advisory firm MO Africa Company Limited showed that Lagos nightclubs generated N360 million daily, with some tables fetching as much as N1.2 million per night.

The report highlighted the significant economic impact of Lagos' "Detty December," which attracted 1.2 million visitors, 60 per cent of whom were domestic tourists driven by insecurity in southeastern Nigeria.

This influx spurred a surge in hotel bookings and short-let apartment rentals, pushing Lagos' December hotel revenue to N54 billion from 15,000 bookings.

In total, the tourism and entertainment sectors generated N111.5 billion in Lagos during December 2024.

"Art offers an opportunity to link different design elements, such as contrasting materials or colours, in a space, ensuring it doesn't feel disjointed. A thoughtfully chosen piece of art can reflect or complement tones in fabrics or wood, tying the room's design together."

Opting for usable art can make buying and displaying artworks fun and accessible. A set of coasters and placemats – created with images by UK photographer Martin Parr and sold by art platform Plinth – is a good example. The aptly food-themed creations feature kitsch, close-up photos of cocktails filled with maraschino cherries, ice cream or tea in traditional cups and saucers.

Art of living

Food is also a major theme in the work of UK artist Selina Snow, whose joyful pieces depict mouth-watering delicacies from around the world – from colourful sushi to the humble full English breakfast. Snow has built up an eclectic collection of art and personal memorabilia that includes paintings and prints by her late father, Peter Snow, an artist and theatre designer, and myriad posters, textiles, objects and artefacts acquired on her travels. These are displayed in her home in the New Forest, Hampshire, alongside her own artworks, against a mainly neutral backdrop of grey and white walls.

The buttercup yellow fireplace in Snow's living room has informed the choice of objects displayed on the mantelpiece and the art on the wall above it. A Balinese theatre mask representing a devil's head and a bust by artist Corin Johnson reminiscent of Marlene Dietrich, both of a similar height, stand at either end of the mantelpiece. Above it hangs an abstract painting featuring a pattern of yellow spots that echo the colour of the fireplace. "I like the way the bust and mask balance each other and frame the painting," Snow tells the BBC.

I like to link colours but not obviously – I don't want pieces to blend together so they lose their individual character, but so they



enhance each other – Selina Snow

But Snow doesn't see her combinations of objects as simply toning chromatically. "I don't want pieces to blend together so they lose their individual character, but so they enhance each other. I like to link colours but not obviously. I've got a sculpture of a violinist standing on a sulphur yellow table that picks up on a black pattern detail in a painting above it."

The mantelpiece in Snow's home (left) is adorned with an eclectic mix; in the bedroom, the sculpted headboard is echoed in the flower painting above it (Credit: Selina Snow)

She also pairs very different pieces that nevertheless share the same motifs. In Snow's bedroom is a wooden headboard carved with flower shapes by her late husband, sculptor Richard Austin; above it is a painting of flowers.

Snow puts postcard-sized reproductions of paintings in inexpensive frames to elevate them and make them stand out. But for original artworks, she recommends investing in a professional framing service in order to preserve them well.

Roberto Ekholm, a London-based artist, curator and art advisor, who has mounted art

shows in his own home, raises a similar point: "Be careful how you look after the medium. Don't let direct sunlight fall on framed paintings. You might have to install a UV protective window film over glass in brighter spots."

Ekholm also points out that while sculpture might be associated by many with monumental works in galleries, it has a place in the home, too. "It can be limiting using only tables, plinths or floor space to display sculptures," he says. "At home, I like to arrange mine on affordable free-floating shelves at different heights and in various sizes, which creates an interesting domestic display."

While Snow and Ekholm have art collections that grew organically, aided by long-standing art-world connections, many people establish theirs from scratch. So what criteria should apply when you're acquiring your first original artworks? "Visit art exhibitions and auctions to explore what kind of art resonates with you," advises Kittoe. She cites the London Art Fair [on later this month], Affordable Art Fair and British Art Fair as good places in the UK to source art, as well as art trails and open-studio events.

Kittoe also suggests making

use of a "try before you buy" service: "Many galleries allow you to see works in your own space before committing to the purchase. This can be useful as homes are so different to a brightly lit gallery, and this arrangement allows you to see the works at different times of the day and try them in different parts of the house. When hanging several pictures together, play with potential configurations by laying them out on the floor before committing them to fixed spots on the wall."

In the end, go with what feels right for you. As Cathy Glazer puts it: "Whether it's travel posters, collages or flea market finds, your collection should reflect what resonates with you. But if you're unsure where to begin, it can help to adhere to a theme, for example a grouping of botanicals, portraits or black-and-white photography. Choosing art can feel intimidating but it's not about right or wrong, it's about what speaks to you."

Artfully Walls A decorated living space with art hanging on the walls, glass table and a yellow couch

[Credit: Artfully Walls]



Festus Keyamo, Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development.

Nigeria Secures Aircraft Financing Deal With Afreximbank

By Dickson Omobola

A development financing institution, African Export-Import Bank, Afreximbank, has agreed in principle to collaborate with Nigeria on aircraft financing.

Afreximbank, while announcing plans to launch a leasing subsidiary, which will soon take delivery of 25 aircraft to be leased to African airlines, said it will provide Nigerian airlines with access to dry-leased aircraft that would enable them to better service Bilateral Air Service Agreement, BASA, routes and domestic operations.

A statement by Tunde Moshood,

special adviser on Media and Communications to the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, said the partnership was achieved during a side meeting held with the Afreximbank team at the four-day Aviation Economic Conference in Dublin, Republic of Ireland.

The statement reads: “A significant milestone in Nigeria's aviation sector was achieved during a side meeting held with the Afreximbank team at the ongoing Aviation Economic Conference in Dublin, Republic of Ireland. The meeting, facilitated by Boeing's Senior Director of Finance,

Lerece Rose, brought together key stakeholders to discuss aircraft financing opportunities for Nigerian airlines.

“The meeting was attended by the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo SAN, who led the Nigerian delegation. The delegation included distinguished members such as the Chairman, Senate Committee on Aviation, Senator Abdulfatai Buhari; Chairman, House Committee on Aviation, Abdullahi Idris Garba, Chairman, Senate Committee on Banking, Insurance, and Other Financial Institutions, Senator Abiru Adetokunbo; Director

General of the NCAA, Capt. Chris Najomo; Managing Director of Fidelity Bank, Dr. Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe; COO of Air Peace, Toyin Olajide; CEO of XEJet, Emmanuel Iza; Chairman, ValueJet, Kunle Soname and his Managing Director, Capt. Majekodunmi, and Chairman/CEO of Bellagio Air, Dr. Oludare Akande, among other aviation stakeholders.

“At the meeting, Afreximbank, led by its Director and Global Head of Project and Asset-Based Finance, Helen Brume, agreed in principle to collaborate with Nigeria on aircraft financing. Highlighting the bank's extensive experience in supporting airlines such as Arik Air, Kenya Airways, and TAG over the past two decades, Brume emphasized the need for robust aviation infrastructure to enhance the competitiveness of African airlines.

“To address this, Afreximbank announced plans to launch a leasing subsidiary, which will soon take delivery of 25 aircraft to be leased to African airlines. This initiative aims to provide Nigerian airlines with access to dry-leased aircraft, enabling them to better service Bilateral Air Service Agreement, BASA, routes and domestic operations.

“Lerece Rose commended the Minister for his efforts in improving Nigeria's aviation ecosystem, particularly in raising Nigeria's Cape Town Convention score from 49.5% to 75.5 per cent. This progress underscores the country's commitment to creating an enabling environment for aircraft financing and leasing.

“The Minister highlighted the critical need for partnerships that would enhance access to aircraft financing for Nigerian operators, facilitating growth and improved service delivery. In response, Afreximbank affirmed its readiness to work with the Nigerian government, signalling a promising future for the country's aviation industry.



Netflix, Other Streaming Platforms Will Continue To Struggle In Africa

As global streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney expand their reach across the world, Africa has become an increasingly important market. However, these services are facing significant challenges in the region, particularly due to high data subscription costs and the unique needs of African consumers.

Despite the potential for films and TV shows from international streaming platforms to attract audiences, their success in Africa is not as certain as it is in other regions. The combination of infrastructure limitations, high data costs, and diverse consumer behaviour points to a difficult road ahead for streaming platforms in Africa.

The Challenges

One of the most significant barriers to widespread

adoption of streaming services in Africa is the prohibitively high cost of internet data. In many African countries, data is expensive by global standards. Africa is home to some of the highest mobile data costs in the world. In countries like South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya, a substantial portion of the population cannot afford the large data bundles needed to stream video content without facing financial strain.

To put this into perspective, in regions like North America and Europe, consumers pay relatively low prices for unlimited high-speed internet, making streaming services like Netflix viable and affordable for the average person. However, in Africa, even middle-class families often struggle to afford enough data to stream films and shows regularly.

While Netflix and other platforms have lowered

their subscription prices, the data fees associated with streaming remain a major obstacle. It's not uncommon for users to face difficult choices between streaming and using data for essential tasks like communication or online banking.

Limited Access

Even when consumers can afford data, the quality of internet access presents another issue. Internet penetration and connectivity remain low in many parts of Africa, particularly in rural areas. While cities like Lagos, Nairobi, and Johannesburg have better infrastructure, many rural and remote areas lack reliable internet access. High-speed broadband is also scarce, with many regions still relying on slower 3G or even 2G networks.

This means that even if individuals purchase data, streaming in high-

definition [HD] or standard-definition [SD] may be impossible due to slow internet speeds. As a result, many potential subscribers may avoid services like Netflix, as the user experience would be frustrating, with buffering, low-quality visuals, and frequent interruptions.

Data Saving Solutions

Given the constraints on data affordability and internet access, many African consumers have turned to data-saving solutions. Some mobile carriers offer “zero-rated” content, which allows users to access specific services or websites without consuming their data. In some cases, streaming platforms partner with telecom companies to offer data-saving solutions or localized content that consumes less data.

However, these services remain niche and are not as

widespread as streaming platforms that require large data consumption. Additionally, streaming services must invest heavily in local infrastructure or form partnerships with telecom companies to develop more affordable, data-saving options. Without such initiatives, the very nature of their business model streaming high-bandwidth content like films and series becomes unsustainable for a large portion of the population.

Content Disconnect

Another reason why global streaming services may struggle in Africa is the cultural and content disconnect. Platforms like Netflix predominantly offer content produced for Western audiences, which may not always resonate with African viewers. Although Netflix has made efforts to include local content by commissioning African films and series, there is still a vast gap between the local storytelling traditions and the dominant international ones.

In many African countries, people tend to consume media that reflects their culture, language, and social issues. For instance, Nigerian Nollywood productions, with their high-energy storytelling and culturally relevant themes, dominate many African homes.

Similarly, South African viewers often prefer content in languages like Zulu, Xhosa, and Afrikaans, which may not be well-represented on Netflix. The proliferation of local TV channels and production companies focused on indigenous

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Dzifa Ablah Gomashie, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts, Ghana.

Africa: Ghanaian President Mahama Names Dzifa Gomashie as Tourism and Creative Arts Minister

President John Dramani Mahama has appointed Dzifa Ablah Gomashie to steer the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Creative Arts. Her appointment signals a renewed commitment to revitalizing Ghana's cultural heritage and creative industries.

According to modernghana.com, the appointment of the Ketu South Member of Parliament [MP] has been met with widespread anticipation, particularly within the creative arts community, where many had expected this decision. Gomashie's long-standing presence in both the arts and politics has positioned her as a key figure in the

country's cultural development.

With decades of experience as an actress, cultural advocate, and policymaker, Gomashie brings a wealth of knowledge to the ministry. Her previous tenure as Deputy Minister for Tourism, Culture, and Creative Arts during Mahama's former administration allowed her to contribute significantly to the growth of Ghana's tourism and creative industries. She was instrumental in advancing initiatives that promoted the nation's rich cultural heritage on both local and international platforms.

Industry stakeholders,

including cultural commentators and experts, have lauded Gomashie for her deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the creative arts sector. Her hands-on experience and unwavering dedication to preserving Ghana's cultural identity make her an ideal candidate to lead the ministry and continue its work in strengthening the country's position as a hub for tourism and arts in Africa.

Her new role presents an exciting prospect for the creative industry, which has high hopes for her leadership and vision in the coming years.

Netflix, Other Streaming ...

content means international streaming platforms may struggle to match the strong connection African consumers have with homegrown content.

Moreover, the success of U.S. or European content may not be guaranteed, as tastes, humour, and social norms vary significantly across the continent. With over 2,000 distinct languages and cultures, Africa's diversity makes it challenging for foreign content to dominate the market.

Rise of Local Platforms

Local streaming platforms are capitalizing on the gaps that Netflix and others cannot fill. African streaming services like Showmax [a subsidiary of MultiChoice], IrokoTV, and Kwesé Play offer content that resonates more deeply with African viewers. These platforms typically provide a wider range of locally produced films, TV shows, and even sports content.

Moreover, African streaming platforms understand the market's unique characteristics, such as the need for affordable subscription models, local language support, and optimized data solutions. For example, Showmax has tailored its service by offering a data-efficient mobile app and cheaper mobile-only subscription options.

As of November 2024, Showmax had 2.1 million African subscribers, compared to Netflix's 1.8 million. Netflix's subscriber base in Nigeria, one of the continent's largest markets, reportedly fell below 300,000.

Analysts argue that the high costs of internet services and electricity supply are major factors affecting all streaming platforms on the continent, except in South Africa, which accounts for over 80% of the region's streaming service subscribers.

Adaptability and the Future

While the African market holds enormous potential, Netflix and other international streaming platforms are likely to face significant challenges in achieving widespread success unless they adapt to the unique needs of African consumers. High data costs, unreliable internet infrastructure, and a preference for locally produced contents [even musics] mean that streaming services from the West must rethink their strategies to penetrate the market successfully. The future of entertainment in Africa may be shaped not by global streaming platforms, but by locally driven solutions that cater to the region's needs and embrace its rich cultural diversity. Unless issues related to data affordability, internet access, and local content are addressed, platforms like Netflix will continue to face obstacles in winning over African audiences.

By Lucky Onoriode George, Executive Director, African Travel Commission [ATC] www.africantravelcommission.org and Publisher, African Travel Times www.africantraveltimes.com



How To Transform Your Home With Art

Dominic Lutyens

"It's about what speaks to you".

Displaying paintings, prints, textiles and sculptures can all help create a fresh living space for the new year – here's how, according to the experts.

January is a popular time of year to refresh priorities – and perhaps our surroundings too, creating a new mood for a new year. New artworks can transform a living space, and also inspire future interests, intentions, or the desire for fresh goals. Even repositioning our existing paintings, prints and photographs can revitalise a home and feel like a new start.

Imaginatively chosen and displayed art can both revive cherished memories and prompt feelings of wellbeing – and it can change the whole ambience of a space. Abstract art, for instance, evokes moods in a non-literal, suggestive way – a large painting or print dominated by loose,

expressionistic mark-making can give a home a romantic, free-spirited feel, while a more hard-edged, graphic style gives a space a modern, urban feel.

Acquiring and displaying art isn't the preserve of homeowners, either; in fact, it's a great way to make a rental home feel more personal, without having to redecorate – and your pictures can move on when you do. It's this

flexibility that makes art such a useful element of home décor – artworks can be arranged, then reconfigured to change the character of a room. "A piece doesn't have to be in one location forever," says Katherine Kittoe, founder of Kittoe Contemporary, an online and physical art gallery and art consultancy that promotes emerging and established artists. "A re-hang of artworks every few

“Chossing art can feel intimidating but it’s not about right or wrong, it’s about what speaks to you.”

years – similar in principle to re-hangs in large public galleries, though obviously on a more modest scale – can be hugely rewarding and refreshing."

This, though, raises the practical but important question of how to repair walls dented by holes left after hanging. "Small nails are your best friend – they're easy to patch up with spackling paste when it's time to move out," says Cathy Glazer, founder of Artfully Walls, a curated site for art-buyers in the UK and US. "Lightweight pieces can be hung with thin nails and hooks from a basic picture-hanging kit. Most standard picture-hangers hold up to 30lbs. It's easier still to lean art on ledges or on stacks of books, mantelpieces or consoles for a very casual look."

Of course, when art is added to a home, it must coexist with furniture and homeware accumulated over time. Yet it needn't vie for attention with existing elements or get visually lost among them – it can be artfully displayed adjacent to homeware with similar qualities, for example echoing the bold, colourful pattern in a rug or the sensual curves of ceramics. And it can be shown with ephemera – from postcards to family snaps – to create aesthetically pleasing juxtapositions.

Whether it's travel posters, collages or flea market finds, your collection should reflect what resonates with you – Cathy Glazer

Wall-hung art can counterbalance the bulky, imposing look of furniture that occupies a permanent spot, such as sofas, according to Sophie Goldhill, co-founder of Liddicoat & Goldhill and its interior design arm, Hector Interiors: "A striking painting can serve as a visual focal point paired with sofas and tables, and can offset the weight of larger pieces that could otherwise dominate a space," she tells the BBC.

And introducing a new artwork into a room can make the space more cohesive, Goldhill adds.

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Darryl Erasmus, Chief Operations Officer, South African Tourism

South African Tourism Appoints Darryl Erasmus As The New Chief Operations Officer

South African Tourism [SA Tourism] is delighted to announce the appointment of Darryl Erasmus as the organisation's new Chief Operations Officer with effect 07 January 2025.

As Chief Operations Officer, Darryl will be responsible for the oversight role of South African Tourism's Corporate Services functions, while supporting and ensuring effective operations of its internal business units. In addition, he will fulfill the responsibility of driving in-country localisation and execution of global strategies.

Darryl, who previously worked for South African Tourism as Chief Quality Assurance Officer in the Tourism Grading Council business unit, brings a wealth of expertise and leadership experience having worked in the hospitality, tourism, and corporate communications sectors.

His other roles have seen him hold senior marketing, sales, and leadership roles with brands such as Travelport, Protea Hotels, and Intercontinental Hotels. He was also Managing Director at BLAZE Integrated Hospitality Marketing

Agency which specialises in integrated marketing communications. Most recently he provided advisory and consulting skills for commercial services in the tourism and hospitality sector, in the form of Director at DAX Advisory Services.

"We are pleased to welcome Darryl Erasmus back to South African Tourism as our new Chief Operations Officer. This appointment will not only strengthen our management structures but will also contribute to driving our strategic objectives forward, while improving our destination's competitiveness. I have no doubt that his leadership will enhance our operational excellence and global impact," said Nombulelo Guliwe, SA Tourism Chief Executive Officer [CEO].

Erasmus notes: "I'm excited to be rejoining SA Tourism, returning to an organisation for which I have a deep affinity and personal connection. I extend my sincere gratitude to the CEO and Board for the opportunity to serve South Africa and the tourism sector at large once again. I am committed to collectively building a capable and high-performance entity that

champions the growth of tourism, amplifying its economic impact, raising the sector's profile, and displaying the beauty of our country to the global community.

Darryl's appointment was approved by the South Africa Tourism board in December 2024. He is completing a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Studies from Henley Business School; has completed a Postgraduate Global Executive Development Program from GIBS; and a Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing and Business Management from Oxford Brooks University. He also has qualifications in Financial Management, Training Management, Manager Development, Marketing and Business Management.

"I eagerly anticipate reconnecting with the team and collaborating with industry stakeholders domestically and abroad to promote our exceptional destination that delivers unforgettable and uniquely authentic South African experiences," ends Darryl.

Continued from page 7

highlights the values, culture, and community he learned from his Nigerian upbringing. Whether in the ring or at charity events, he champions Nigerian values of hard work, perseverance, and resilience. Despite his global fame, Joshua has never shied away from speaking about the challenges facing Nigeria, including the socio-economic issues that continue to plague the country. However, unlike Badenoch's critical view, Joshua often frames these challenges as obstacles to be overcome rather than insurmountable flaws. He believes in the potential of Nigeria and its people, seeing his own success as a testament to the strength of his heritage.

Joshua's active involvement in Nigerian charity work and his return to the country for both professional and personal reasons highlight his continuous bond with the land of his ancestors.

His pride in being Nigerian is evident, and he stands as a symbol of how individuals from the diaspora can embrace their heritage while still thriving in their adopted countries.

The juxtaposition of Kemi Badenoch and Anthony Joshua provides an insightful lens into the diverse experiences and viewpoints within the Nigerian diaspora. While one is proud being a Yoruba woman, but not Nigeria, the other is proud of being Nigerian and his Yoruba roots; their relationship with Nigeria could not be more different.

Badenoch's critical stance underscores the behaviour of not just Nigerians in Britain, but in the West in

general and not limited to Nigerians alone, but other developing nations diasporas as well - which is why some nations do not tolerate dual citizenships. It's either you are their national or you hold on to the foreign identity.

On the other hand, Joshua's enduring connection to Nigeria is a powerful reminder of how strong cultural pride and deep-rooted gratitude for one's heritage can transcend the limitations of geography and circumstance. He represents the belief that Nigeria, despite its challenges, has contributed something meaningful to his identity and success.

Without a doubt, the contrasting stories of Kemi Badenoch and Anthony Joshua serve as a microcosm of the complexities faced by Nigerian diasporas around the world. One a critical political leader, distances herself from Nigeria's struggles, while the other, a champion in the boxing ring, embraces his roots with unshakable pride.

Succinctly put, Nigerians in the diaspora must emulate the Anthony Joshua's family of not only seeing the negatives about Nigeria, but the positives' identity, pride and greatness of what Nigeria can achieve.

Badenoch and Joshua highlights the diverse ways in which the Nigerian diaspora navigates their heritage, each carving their own path to success, whether through disillusionment or deep respect.

By Lucky George,
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Olukemi Olufunto Adegoke Badenoch, Leader of the British Opposition and Leader of the Conservative Party.



Anthony Oluwafemi Olaseni Joshua, former Unified World Heavyweight Championship twice between 2016 and 2021.

Nigerian Diasporas: Two Contrasting Perspectives Of Olukemi Badenoch And Anthony Joshua

In the vibrant landscape of the Nigerian diaspora, two prominent figures stand out as symbols of distinct journeys and contrasting outlooks on their heritage. Olukemi Olufunto Adegoke Badenoch, a British politician and Leader of the Opposition and Anthony Oluwafemi Olaseni Joshua OBE, a world-renowned British boxer, have both carved their names in the annals of their respective fields. However, their views on Nigeria, the land of their parents birth place paint a striking contrast.

Olukemi Olufunto Adegoke Badenoch

Olukemi Badenoch, known as Kemi Badenoch,

was born to Nigerian parents but rose to prominence in British politics. As Leader of the Conservative Party and Leader of the Opposition since November 2024, Badenoch has become a defining figure in contemporary British politics.

However, her relationship with Nigeria has been notably critical, full of disrespect and sheer arrogance.

Badenoch has often spoken out about the challenges Nigeria faces, expressing frustration over the country's political instability, corruption, and lack of infrastructure. Despite her Nigerian roots, her comments about the

country have frequently leaned towards the negative, highlighting her disillusionment with the state of affairs in her parents' homeland. She has openly criticised the Nigerian government's failures and the impact of such shortcomings on its citizens.

Her stance on Nigeria is starkly different from the typical perspective of those who view their homeland as a place to which they remain emotionally and culturally tied. Badenoch's reflections on Nigeria reflect a deep frustration, and while she acknowledges her heritage, she has distanced herself from identifying with the

country in a personal or political sense. This connection to his disconnection, however, is not just a personal sentiment but seems to reflect Joshua's journey to global stardom in boxing has been deeply intertwined with toward self-reliance and skepticism about international aid and governmental reform in developing nations like Nigeria.

Anthony Oluwafemi Olaseni Joshua

In contrast, Anthony Joshua, the former unified world heavyweight champion, represents a completely different perspective on the Nigerian identity. Born in Watford, England, to Nigerian parents, Joshua has main-

tained a strong and unyielding connection to his Nigerian heritage throughout his career.

Joshua's journey to global stardom in boxing has been deeply intertwined with toward self-reliance and pride in his Nigerian roots. From his name that pays homage to his Yoruba heritage to his frequent references to his parents' homeland in interviews, Joshua has often expressed admiration and gratitude for Nigeria.

His connection to the country is not just a cultural one, but an emotional and moral compass that informs much of his public persona. In Joshua's interviews and speeches, he consistently identifies with the

Continues on page 14



out time to explore the tourism assets in Calabar. He commended the efforts of previous governors of the state for sustaining the carnival over the years. "For those that are coming for the first time, please don't go very quick, try and stay back and enjoy the full hospitality of our people. "Let me salute our forefathers. His Excellency Gov. Duke, His Excellency Gov. Imoke and Prof. Ben Ayade, for building on what was started by Governor Duke until it got here," he said.

Dr Gabe Onah, Chairman, Calabar Carnival Commission appreciated the various sponsors for the carnival, in the likes of: Afrixim Bank, Arias IIP, the IAI International Insurance, MTN, First Bank, United Bank of Africa and more. He, however, called on them to take ownership of the tourism and hospitality sectors for sustainability.

"We are experiencing a rebirth. We are here to speak to the ignition of community spirit, to speak to the community of Africa, and what we are ready to offer the world. "The dance party on the streets tells the story. The Carnival is allegorical, it is didactic, it is educational, it is theatre for development. "No wonder Afrixim Bank, Arias IIP, the IAI International Insurance, MTN, First Bank, UBA are here as sponsors. We thank you for this, but we believe that we can take over this sector and run with it for sustainability, competition, and appreciation by the communities," he said.

Also speaking, Gov. Usman Ododo of Kogi commended Gov. Otu for uniting the people of Cross River through the carnival. "This is a historic event. Here, I can see love, understanding, compassion, and liberty. "Your excellency, Gov. Otu, your leadership style has paid off, and I must commend you for unlocking the potentials in the youths. You are actually taking the lead," he said.

Also, Gov. AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq of Kwara said, "I am glad to be back here. I am witnessing sustainability and progress here." This puts Nigeria on the global map, and it improves the Internally



Toke Benson, Lagos State Commissioner for Tourism, Arts and Culture.

Tourism Ministry Wraps Up Randle Centre 30-Day Christmas Village Event

... Says 2025 Holds Greater Promise for Fun, Entertainment, and Tourism Growth

The Lagos State Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture has officially wrapped up the 30-day Christmas Village event at the J.Randle Centre for Yoruba Culture and History, Onikan.

The festive celebration, which began in early December 2024, attracted thousands of residents and visitors who gathered to experience the magic of the holiday season at the Centre.

Speaking at the event's grand finale, the Commissioner for Tourism, Arts, and Culture, Toke Benson-Awoyinka, described the Christmas Village as a resounding success. She emphasised its role in reinforcing Lagos State's position as a hub for cultural diversity, entertainment, and tourism.

"The Christmas Village has once again demonstrated Lagos State's commitment to promoting our rich cultural heritage while fostering community engagement. It was truly heartwarming to see families, tourists, and residents come together in unity and joy to celebrate the festive season,"

Benson-Awoyinka stated.

The Commissioner acknowledged the contributions of local artisans, performers, and vendors, whose collaborative efforts brought vibrancy and excitement to the Christmas Village. She also praised the creativity and energy that made the event a memorable experience for attendees.

Expressing mixed emotions about the event's conclusion, she said, "It is bittersweet that we must end the Christmas Village today. However, with schools resuming academic activities tomorrow, January 6, 2025, we must prioritize the smooth transition for our children. We look forward to welcoming everyone back later in the year for an even grander celebration."

Looking ahead, Benson-Awoyinka expressed optimism for 2025, promising an elevated tourism experience in Lagos. "2025 holds tremendous promise for Lagosians and visitors alike. We are committed to delivering innovative programmes, enhancing infrastructure, and creating an inclusive calendar of events to make Lagos the ultimate destination for leisure and cultural exploration in Africa."

Nigeria: Transcorp Hotel Gets New Boss

Transcorp Hotel, the hospitality subsidiary of Transnational Corporation Plc, has appointed Uzo Oshogwe as its new managing director/chief executive officer.

Mrs Oshogwe, who took over the reins on 2 January, is replacing Dupe Olusola.

In a post on Facebook on Monday, Tony Elumelu, the chairman of Transnational Corporation, welcomed Oshogwe to her new role, while commending Ms Olusola for her impactful tenure.

"I want to also thank Dupe for her leadership and contribution, which have laid a solid foundation for our ongoing success," said Mr Elumelu, who also chairs the board of directors at United Bank for Africa.

"Transcorp Hilton Abuja is where Nigeria welcomes the world, and with our new 5,000-seat event centre, I know with Uzo we will be taking our hospitality offering to new heights," he added.

Until her appointment, Ushogwe was the managing director at Lagos-based Afriland Properties Limited. She previously held prominent roles in organisations such as Accenture and the UBA Group.

degree in Chemistry from Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State. She is also a holder of a Master of Science degree in Information Systems Design from the University of Westminster, London.

She also holds a professional certificate in Real Estate Management from Harvard Business School, Massachusetts, USA.

She is a Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors-accredited civil and commercial mediator and a fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants.

She is also an alumna of the Lagos Business School and IESE Business School, Spain, having attended the Advanced Management Programme [AMP] and the Chief Executive Programme of the institutions respectively.

"Uzo Oshogwe's exceptional leadership skills and extensive experience in driving organizational growth make her the right person to continue building on Dupe Olusola's remarkable achievements at Transcorp Hotels Plc," Emmanuel N. Nnorom, the chairman of Transcorp Hotel, said in a statement.

"Her expertise aligns perfectly with our vision to create value and deliver excellence in the hospitality industry," he added.

Gov. Otu Promises To Take Calabar Carnival Global In 2025

Gov. Bassey Otu of Cross River has pledged to take the Calabar Carnival global in 2025 to build on the event's already impressive reputation as Africa's biggest street party. Otu made the promise while declaring open the carnival's street party on Saturday in Calabar.

The News Agency of Nigeria [NAN] reports that the street party would have seven competitive bands and seven non competitive bands engage in different forms of performances from the

Millennium Park through to the UJ Esuene Stadium in Calabar.

The 2024 Calabar Carnival, which began in November, is meant to run till Dec. 31 has its theme as "Our Shared Heritage." The Carnival had witnessed three editions of dry run from October to test run how the carnival would be. The governor said, "Today is a great day in the Calendar history of Calabar. We are indeed very, very humbled that we are celebrating about two decades of this particular event.

And I know that we've been

building and adding value daily. "The buyers have increased. And we know even next year, because the diaspora is pressing very, very hard, we might be able to add the diaspora band that will come on full strength. "But as Cross Riverians, we want to thank all those who have come, and we say come and live and share with us. I declare this open in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son, and in the name of the Holy Spirit."

Otu appreciated the dignitaries present as well as tourists across the nation, as he urged them to take



Ms. Evelyn Cheluget, Director General of Immigration Services, Kenya

Kenya Lifts Travel Permits For Ethiopia, All African States Except Somalia, Libya January 22, 2025

Kenya has dropped pre-arrival authorization requirements for visitors from most African nations, including neighbouring Ethiopia, the cabinet announced on Tuesday, as East Africa's second largest economy moves to boost tourism and regional integration.

Under the new directive, African visitors, except those from Somalia and Libya, will no longer need to obtain Electronic Travel Authorisation [ETA], which replaced traditional visas last year.

The implementation date remains unclear, with various ministries given a week to propose new guidelines for improving "travellers experience at all Kenyan airports," the cabinet statement said.

The controversial ETA system, which requires visitors to pay 30 US dollars for a 90-day authorization at least three

days before travel, replaced a more lenient regime where visitors from over 40 countries, including several African nations, could enter Kenya with just a passport stamp at no cost.

The system's introduction contributed to Kenya's drop in the 2024 Africa Visa Openness Index, where it fell 17 places to rank 46th out of 54 nations.

The move aligns Kenya with other African nations that have recently liberalized their entry requirements. Ghana announced visa-free access for all African passport holders earlier this year, while Rwanda already allows African visitors to enter without visas.

Studies have shown that Western travellers often face fewer restrictions when visiting African countries compared to African citizens themselves, a disparity the African Union seeks to address through promoting visa-free travel within the continent.

Tax Cuts To Lower Air Travel Costs In West Africa

Transport Ministers across West Africa's regional body Ecowas met in Lomé in November 2024 to address the high cost of air travel in the region. Taxes and fees on international plane tickets emerged as a key focus, with commitments to reduce these burdens by January 1, 2026.

An analysis by Jeune Afrique reveals disparities in ticket taxes across major airports. In Cotonou, taxes can reach 92,560 CFA francs [€141] for economy flights within Ecowas and 128,560 CFA francs for first-class tickets to non-ECOWAS countries. Abidjan imposes the lowest taxes: 30,000 CFA francs for African destinations, rising to 52,500 CFA francs for others. Lomé's charges range from 37,500 to 42,500 CFA francs.

The union plans to cut passenger and security-related fees by 25% and eliminate non-compliant taxes to boost passenger traffic, regional integration, and economic growth. But axes are only part of Africa's air travel cost challenges. ICAO opposes taxes not

directly linked to aviation, including VAT, calling them trade barriers. Cotonou's "tourism development tax," amounting to 55,000 CFA francs in business and first class, exemplifies the issue.

Key Takeaways

Fuel prices, 12% above the global average, and high operational costs--aircraft leasing, maintenance, and personnel--also drive ticket prices. --while ECOWAS aims to standardize taxes, the broader goal of affordable travel requires addressing these structural challenges. Regional airlines argue that infrastructure costs often passed to passengers, should be seen as part of national development planning.

Even with Ecowas's planned tax reforms, achieving a regulatory framework remains uncertain. Addressing taxes alone will not resolve pricing issues, as competition, fuel, and operating costs continue to play significant roles in shaping ticket prices.

Mauritius Crowned World's Top Honeymoon Destination In Tripadvisor's Travelers' Choice Awards 2025

The island nation of Mauritius has been named the World's Best Honeymoon Destination in TripAdvisor's prestigious Travelers' Choice Awards 2025, surpassing renowned romantic destinations including Bali and the Maldives.

This recognition highlights Mauritius's unique positioning in the luxury travel market, where world-class hospitality seamlessly blends with authentic cultural experiences. The island's

winning formula combines pristine beaches, luxury accommodations, and rich cultural heritage, setting a new standard for romantic getaways.

"This accolade reflects Mauritius's commitment to providing an unparalleled experience for honeymooners," said Richard Duval, Minister of Tourism. "Our island offers more than just beautiful beaches - it's a destination where luxury meets authenticity, creating perfect moments for couples starting their life journey together."



Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General, UN Tourism.

A Journey Through History: Celebrating 50 Years Of Manipulations And Corruption Of The 'UN' Tourism

This year, the UN Tourism marks its 50th anniversary, a milestone that encapsulates over five decades of development, adaptation, and leadership in the global tourism sector.

The journey began with the founding of the International Union of Official Travel Organizations [IUOTO] in 1947, transformed into World Tourism Organisation [WTO] in 1975, and ultimately became the UNWTO under the auspices of the United Nations in

2003.

Today, as UN Tourism celebrates its half-century, we reflect on its evolution and its pivotal role in shaping the global tourism landscape.

The Beginnings: The International Union of Official Travel Organizations [IUOTO]

The story of the UN Tourism Organisation starts in the aftermath of World War II when the global tourism industry was

struggling to recover from the devastation caused by the conflict. In 1947, a coalition of national and regional tourism organizations came together to form the International Union of Official Travel Organizations [IUOTO].

The primary goal of IUOTO was to support the post-war revival of international tourism, which had been severely disrupted by the war. IUOTO's founding members included



UN Tourism

UNITED NATIONS
WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION

national tourism organisations and state-run tourism bodies from around the world. The union worked to coordinate efforts to promote travel, establish industry standards, and create a unified voice for the growing global tourism sector.

During this early period, IUOTO focused on several key objectives: enhancing international cooperation, improving tourism-related infrastructures, promoting cultural exchange, and addressing the economic impact of tourism in individual countries. It played a crucial role in creating an international tourism network that would lay the foundation for the future success of global tourism.

The Transition to the World Tourism Organization [WTO]

By the 1970s, the global tourism landscape had evolved significantly. The post-war boom in international travel and the rise of mass tourism meant that the industry had grown beyond its early stages. In response to these changes, the IUOTO underwent a reorganization to reflect its expanded responsibilities and to address emerging issues in the tourism sector.

In 1975, the World Tourism Organization [WTO] was officially established, with a broader mandate and greater capacity to influence policy at the global level. Unlike the IUOTO, which had been focused mainly



Zurab Pololikashvili, UN Tourism Secretary General, Lai Mohammed, former Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism with representative of Dangote's Group receiving a Tourism Award at a controversial event in Lagos.

on promoting travel and providing services for official tourism bodies, the WTO was positioned as a specialised agency that would provide policy guidance, technical assistance, and capacity-building in tourism development.

The WTO sought to harness the economic, social, and cultural benefits of tourism while also addressing challenges such as sustainability, equity, and the responsible management of tourism resources.

The WTO worked closely with governments, international organizations, and the private sector to develop tourism as a key driver of economic growth. It also established programs to ensure that tourism would have a positive impact on local communities and environments, laying the groundwork for sustainable tourism practices.

The Shift to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO]

The WTO's transformation into the United Nations World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO] in 2003 marked a new era for the organisation. This shift was part of a broader effort by the United Nations to integrate tourism into

its development agenda. The UN recognised tourism as a vital part of global economic development, poverty alleviation, and intercultural dialogue.

As the UNWTO, the organisation gained further legitimacy and influence on the global stage, with a stronger focus on the sustainable development of tourism, human rights, and the protection of cultural heritage. The UNWTO became instrumental in promoting the concept of sustainable tourism, encouraging practices that minimize negative environmental and social impacts while maximizing the economic benefits of tourism for host communities.

One of the most significant initiatives launched by the UNWTO was the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, adopted in 1999. This code outlines guidelines for responsible tourism practices and calls for the respect of cultural diversity, the protection of the environment, and the fair treatment of workers in the tourism industry. The UNWTO has since continued to advocate for these principles while working on major global campaigns such as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development in

2017.

UN Tourism over 50 Years

Global Advocacy: UNWTO has been a leader in advocating for the tourism sector's contributions to the economy and society, with



Ignatius Amaduwa Atigbi [Mr. World Tourism Day]

tourism now recognised as one of the world's largest and fastest-growing industries. Its annual reports and data collection efforts have provided valuable insights into global tourism trends and their economic impact.

Sustainable Tourism Initiatives: From the beginning, the UNWTO has promoted the idea of tourism that balances economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Its role in advancing sustainable tourism has been central to its mission, and today it continues to encour-

age destinations to embrace responsible tourism practices.

Capacity Building and Technical Assistance: Through its technical assistance programs, UNWTO has helped developing countries build their tourism infrastructure, improve services, and create jobs in the tourism sector. The organisation's capacity-building initiatives have been key to enhancing the skills of tourism professionals globally.

Promoting Tourism as a Tool for Development: UNWTO has consistently championed tourism as a means to promote socio-economic development, particularly in developing and least-developed countries. By encouraging local entrepreneurship, creating employment opportunities, and fostering cultural exchange, tourism has been shown to be an effective tool for poverty reduction and community development.

The Future of UN Tourism

As UNWTO celebrates its 50th anniversary, the organisation is

looking toward the future of tourism, one that is increasingly focused on sustainability, technology, and inclusivity. With the rise of digital technologies, the sector is witnessing a transformation in how people travel, interact with destinations, and access services. The UNWTO is working to ensure that the tourism sector embraces these changes in a way that benefits all stakeholders, including local communities, tourists, and businesses.

Moreover, as the world faces challenges such as climate change,

political instability, and the need for greater inclusivity, the UNWTO is focusing on creating a tourism ecosystem that supports resilience, diversity, and equity. By advocating for responsible travel behaviours, ethical tourism, and inclusive policies, UNWTO aims to ensure that tourism remains a force for good in the world.

50 Years of Impact and Progress

The journey of the UN Tourism Organisation, from its early days as IUOTO to its current status as UNWTO, has been one of evolution and expansion, marking five decades of contributions to the global tourism industry. As the world celebrates the 50th anniversary of UN Tourism, the organisation stands as a testament to the power of international cooperation and collaboration in shaping a sustainable and prosperous future for tourism.

With a legacy of promoting sustainable development, fostering economic growth, and encouraging cultural exchange, the UNWTO's work remains more relevant than ever. As we move into a new era, the organisation's commitment to shaping the future of tourism for the benefit of people, communities, and the planet remains steadfast.

The needed Reforms that must be made

UN Tourism needs to undergo reforms to align with best practices followed by other UN agencies. One key reform that is urgent is limiting the term of the Secretary General to a maximum of two terms, rather than allowing the current head to manipulate the system for a third term.

Another necessary change is the introduction of a system where each continent nominates a representative to serve a single, non-renewable term of no more than four years. Currently, the continental directors often prioritise their own personal



Zurab Pololikashvili with John Momoh, Managing Director of Channels Television signing a Tourism Promotion Agreement that never worked.

interests, leading to selfish behaviour that has hindered the organisation's progress.

Zurab Pololikashvili's obsession with securing a third term as

operated more like a regular institution, not as a specialised United Nations agency, which now has a strict two-term, four-year limit for all heads of its

IUOTO into the WTO and also initiated the creation of September 27th as World Tourism Day [WTD], marking the day this



Zurab Pololikashvili with Lai Mohammed.

secretary general is misguided, as it seems to be driven by a desire to mirror the tenure of Francesco Frangialli, who served from 1997 to 2009. However, that period occurred in a time when the organisation

agencies.

It's important to acknowledge and appreciate the pivotal role played by the African Travel Commission [ATC]. The ATC was key in the transformation of

historic change occurred.

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